CHAPTER II

Party Organisation

Organisation is a pre-requisite of any kind of collective human effort. A political party is inconceivable without an organisation. It needs organisation to articulate, aggregate and represent various interests in society and for the achievement of the objectives which it sets before itself. Even formal participation in the democratic process by a political party in a country needs organisation. Being an important means for the creation of a collective will in its members and followers, organisation is the only device through which a political party can hope to acquire political power. The chances of its success will presumably depend upon the degree to which it is effectively organized. As A. Rossi argues, "no amount of correct policy will make the party effective unless it is supplemented by good, sound organisation."¹

Organization is all the more important for a communist party as it proclaims to represent the working class, the weakest element in any society. The working class can demonstrate its strength only through organization. Lenin had rightly emphasized that in its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization. He made it clear that the decisive role in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat shall be played by the party and the party will remove all obstacles in its way by dint of its organizational efficiency.

Organization has generally been defined in sociological theory as "a set of structures with differentiated roles." But to view organization simply in structural terms is inadequate for the purpose of studying the organization of a communist party. This inadequacy becomes clear when we take into consideration the role of ideology in the working of communist party organization. Ideology not only determines structural framework but also influences organizational processes and behaviour. The definition of organization as "structures of differentiated roles which require the ordered exercise of power" needs to be broadened so that other important aspects of communist party organization are better understood.

understood. In our framework organization refers to a body of people committed to a common ideology and collectively engaged in the task of coordinating activities for the achievement of certain goals.

While studying the organization of the party our major concern would be to find out how ideology and strategy influence organizational structure, processes and behaviour. The theoretical hypothesis that will be tested here is that organizational forms, procedures and behaviour are significantly influenced by ideology and strategy of the party. A study of party organization from this perspective would require a discussion of the formal organizational structure and processes like recruitment, decision-making, communication, etc. and finding out how changes in these aspects of party organization over years were influenced by ideology and strategy. We begin our discussion with the organizational structure.

Organizational Structure

Structure is an important aspect of party organization. It helps us in understanding the distribution of authority, mode of decision-making and pattern of communication in an organization. While organizational structure is partly the outcome of historical developments and reactions to the changing environment, it is also invariably influenced by the ideology and strategy of the party. It will be interesting to find out how the organizational structure of the party has been affected
by changes in its ideology and strategy. While dealing with the organizational structure of the party we shall first trace its evolution at local, district and state levels and then try to find out how changes in structure influenced organizational processes and behaviour. We begin our discussion of organizational structure from the grass roots level.

Local Level Units

The primary unit of party organization before 1998 used to be the cell. The cells were generally organized on territorial basis and their membership was limited to 3 or 5 persons. Each cell had cell secretary who was responsible for conducting the meetings of the cell. The cells implemented the decisions of the higher organs of the party. There was one intermediate organizational unit between the cell and the district committee which was known as Area, Taluka or Tehsil committee. There were separate Area committees for the cities which were known as City committees. The territorial jurisdiction of these committees was decided by the concerned district committee. An important aspect of the functioning of local level units was that they had no independent powers of their own and had to work under the direction and supervision of the district committees. But as their membership was limited, effective participation in party debates, proper implementation of decisions and effective control by higher units was ensured.

This discussion on the working of party organization before 1998 is based on informal discussions with old party activists.
But the organizational structure of the party underwent significant changes as a result of the decisions of the Extraordinary Party Congress held at Amritsar in 1958. The new organizational changes were necessitated by changes in party's ideology and strategy. The decision of the party to become an open and mass party committed to functioning within the framework of the Indian constitution required a new type of organizational structure. The cell was replaced by branch as the primary unit of party organization. The branches were organized on territorial and functional basis and their membership was considerably enlarged. At present each branch has a secretary and an assistant secretary and if its membership exceeds 25, it has a branch committee also. The secretary, assistant secretary and members of the branch committee are elected by the branch conference which is held once every year. It also elects delegates to the Area conference. The branch conference is held after consultation with the Area committee and under the supervision of one of its members. 5

The intermediate units of party organization between the branch and the district level units were retained. However, their membership was enlarged and they were given considerable autonomy in dealing with local issues. At present these units are known as Area, Block or City committees. The territorial

jurisdiction of an Area committee is generally coterminous with the area covered under a developmental block but there are exceptions to this rule in some districts. The Area Committee is responsible for the conduct of party work in the Area and for coordinating the work of the branches directly under it. It keeps a record of its activities and is supposed to send a report on its work to the district council every month.

The organizational changes made in 1958 were intended to introduce decentralization and democratization in the working of local level units. Their membership was enlarged and they were given greater freedom in dealing with local issues. But the working of these units since 1958 has shown that the desired results have not been achieved. On the contrary, these changes produced some harmful consequences for party organization. Party reports indicate that the functioning of local level units is most unsatisfactory. The organizational report of the Ninth State Party Conference held at Muktsar in 1971, for example, mentioned that there are very few branches and Area committees that function regularly. They become active only during agitations and elections. This lack of activity on the part of local level units separates the party from the masses on the one hand and makes it difficult to implement party policies and


decisions on the other. It also leads to indiscipline as members of the party at the local level do not feel any involvement in party work. Activation of local level units is one of the most serious problems that the party has to face at present.

**District Level Units**

The organizational structure of the party at the district level before 1958 consisted of the district committee and the district secretariat. The members of the district committee were elected by the delegates to the district party conference and the district committee elected the district secretariat from amongst its members. The membership of these bodies was limited. The district committee generally consisted of 7 or 9 members and the district secretariat of 3 members. The real powers were in the hands of the district committee which was responsible for organizing party work in the district. The function of the district secretariat was to implement the decisions of the district committee and to look after its day to day working.

As a result of the organizational changes made in 1958, the district committee and the district secretariat were replaced by the district council and the district executive as units of party organization at the district level. Their membership was enlarged and they were given more powers to organize party work at the district level. The district
council at present represents district organization as a whole and is the highest authority in the district between two party conferences. It also reviews the work done by the district executive. The members of the district council are elected by the delegates to the district conference which is normally held every three years in preparation for the State conference. The district executive is responsible for implementing the decisions of the district council and higher party organs. It also directs the work of lower party units. Its members are elected by the district council from amongst its members.

The organizational structure of the party at the district level before 1958 was compact and facilitated proper discussion and implementation of party decisions. But it was undoubtedly centralized as the district level units could not take important policy decisions without the approval of the state level units. It became more democratic and decentralized after 1958 as the membership and powers of the district level units were enlarged. However, by allowing the members of the state level units to become members of the district councils and district executives at the same time the control of the state leaders over the working of district party organization has been ensured. The district committees, because of their enlarged membership, have become ineffective in performing their functions and most of their powers are exercised by the district executives.
Party Organization Before 1958

State Control Commission

Provincial Conference
  Provincial Committee
  District Conference
    District Committee
      Area Conference
        Area Committee
          Cell

Lines of responsibility (election): ___________________________

Lines of authority: ___________________________

Lines of appeal: ___________________________
State Level Units

The state level units of the party organization before 1998 consisted of the Provincial Committee, the Provincial Secretariat and the Provincial Control Commission. The Provincial committee, elected by the delegates to the provincial conference, was responsible for formulating the strategy and tactics of the party in the State. It also supervised the work of the district level units. The members of the Provincial Secretariat and the Provincial Control Commission were elected by the Provincial Committee. The Provincial Secretariat was responsible for implementing the decisions of the Provincial committee and the Provincial control commission heard appeals in disciplinary cases. However, these state level units were replaced by the State Council, State Executive Committee, State Secretariat and State Control Commission in 1998. The State council, elected by the delegates to the State party conference, is the policy making body in the State and the State Executive Committee is responsible for implementing its decisions. The State Executive Committee also implements the directives of the higher party organs, directs and coordinates the work of the lower party units. The State Secretariat looks after the day to day work of the State Executive Committee.

Centralization and Decentralization of Power

A basic question which may be examined in relation to organizational structure is the pattern of centralization and
decentralization of power. Two opposite models regarding such
distribution have been presented by Roberto Michels and
Eldersveld. Roberto Michels, through his "Iron law of
oligarchy" pointed out that a minority inevitably assumes
leadership and control of parties and such rule is an intrinsic
part of any large scale organization. Such leadership manages
to perpetuate itself making democratic behaviour a farce. On
the other hand, S. J. Eldersveld has pointed out the possibility
of "stratarchy" characterized by the proliferation of the ruling
group and the diffusion of power throughout the structure.
Strata commands exist which operate with a varying but
considerable degree of independence. The very heterogeneity of
membership and the subcoalitional system make centralized
control not only difficult but unwise. The task of mobilizing
votes and support results in some deference to the local
structural strata.

Our discussion of the formal structure of party
organization indicates that it was compact and centralized
before 1958. The power of taking policy decisions was vested
in the state level units and the district and local units had
to work under their supervision and control. The function of
the lower units was to implement the decisions of the higher

8. Eldersveld, Samuel J. Political Parties: A Behavioural
Analysis, op. cit., p. 9.
units and they had no independent powers to deal with local issues. While pointing out to excessive centralisation in party organisation the resolution on party organisation adopted by the Extraordinary Party Congress (1953) stated that "in most states, the real state leadership of the party has come to mean two or three comrades only" which leads to excessive centralisation and bureaucratism.

The organisational structure has been considerably decentralised and democratized since that report was written. There are many provisions in the new party organisational structure which point out to the democratic functioning of party organisation. The party members are free to express their opinion and participate in discussions at various levels. They have also the right to criticize various units and functionaries at party meetings. In case of disagreement with any decision of a party unit the members have a right to communicate their opinion to higher committees. No disciplinary action can be taken against a member without giving him an opportunity to be heard in person. The members also have a right to make an appeal to the State Control Commission for the review of decisions concerning disciplinary action against them.

But in spite of these provisions there is considerable

centralization in the working of party organization. In the first place, conferences at various levels can only be held with the prior permission of the higher committees and under the supervision of observers sent by them. The members of outgoing committees at each level participate in the conferences as delegates. Moreover, each committee has the power to dissolve any committee below it in the chain and to postpone the convocation of a lower conference. All these provisions go against the principle of elections.

The electoral procedure gives undue weightage to outgoing committees and leaves scope for manipulation of elections. It is rather interesting that the panel of names is submitted by the outgoing committees and elections take place only if the panel is not accepted unanimously by the delegates. The delegates to the conferences show more deference to the wishes of the higher committees than to the organs which had elected them.

In fact, elections at the lower level are only a formality as the panel of names is almost invariably approved unanimously. In some cases at the branch level even this formality is not observed. The branch secretary decides everything himself in consultation with the area secretary. At the district and state levels also elections are only an exception and unanimity is the rule. In fact, the number of members of the committees at different levels has been increased to such an extent that
it is possible to accommodate all shades of opinion in the committees. The principle of cooption further helps in this process of mutual accommodation. Elections take place only in those districts where there is strong factionalism in the district organization and unanimity is not possible in any case.

The working of party units at each level is influenced by party leaders. The absence of horizontal links between units at the same level further strengthens the position of party leaders and leads to centralization. The party organization is thus a combination of centralization and democracy, of authoritarian leadership and articulate membership.

After examining the organizational structure of the party we now turn to the study of organizational processes and behaviour. Here our concern would be to discuss such aspects of party organization as recruitment, education and promotion of party activists, decision-making, communication and discipline. We shall be interested in finding out how changes in ideology, strategy and organizational structure influenced these aspects of party organization.

Recruitment

The process through which and the criteria according to which new members are recruited in the party are significant features of party organization. It is so because they enable us to understand the nature of rewards and incentives that the organization offers to new members. And secondly, the manner
of recruitment in some sense determines the shapes the organization will take in the future. But there is a basic difference of manner of recruitment of party members in a relatively open political system and a closed system. We have to see how the CPI managed this situation as it turned from a secret organization to an open and competitive political party in the Indian political system. Precise data on the manner in which people become involved and active in party work is of fundamental importance in understanding the operation of party structure. It also helps us in understanding subsequent attitude and behaviour of the individual party activists. 10

As W. H. Morris Jones has pointed out recruitment also helps us in understanding the circulation of elites within the party. 11 The relative openness and closeness of the recruitment process helps us in understanding the flexibility and rigidity of party organization.

Motivations for Entry into the Party

The motives with which party activists join the party reflect the incentives or appeals of their parties. In fact, the very viability of party organization depends upon its ability to satisfy the needs and expectations of its members.


Some party recruits, we may assume, would be motivated by personal gains, such as social contacts, recognition, prestige, others for pecuniary reasons, still others may join the party out of impersonal motivations such as moral or ideological considerations. It is also possible that a combination of motives may determine the entry of a person into the party.

Party activists data on whom are reported here were asked open ended questions about (a) how they joined the party and (b) what were the main agents of their recruitment to the party. Their recollections about their entry into the party were taken down. In order to cross check the information so obtained the respondents were asked to tell the satisfaction that they derived from doing party work and the material gains, if any, they obtained from their party position. It was found that there was a lot of heterogeneity in the responses relating to the motivations at the time of joining the party. Some illustrative examples of why the party activists joined the party are given below and the main agents of recruitment are presented in tabular form in Table 2.3.

It appears that a large number of respondents were motivated by impersonal considerations. They were impressed by the ideology of the communist party and the socio-economic changes that it proposed to bring about. Thus "bringing about workers rule", "establishment of an egalitarian society", "to put an end to all exploitation", "to ensure equitable distribution of resources", "to improve the lot of the poor..."
and down trodden" and "to ensure the establishment of a socialist society" were some of the motivations that the respondents mentioned. Some of the respondents, especially belonging to the lower classes, joined the party because they realised that their interests were better protected by the CPI than other parties. Various popular movements launched in the province from time to time, e.g., Ghadar Movement, Praja Mandal Movement, Tenant Movement and Anti-betterment Levy Agitation also motivate some respondents to become members of the party. Poverty, social oppression, party activity of some of the older leaders who may have shown a spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of personal hardships, relatives and friends also led some respondents to join the party. An interesting thing to note is that none of the respondents mentioned personal gain as a motivation for entry into the party. But on cross checking it was found that 19.9 per cent of the respondents reported that their party position proved helpful to them in getting recognition in society. It is thus clear that people may have joined the communist party due to impersonal considerations but their continuation in the party depends upon the satisfaction of their psychological needs and the material gains that they derive from their party position.
### Table 2.3
Agents of Recruitment (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>State N=50</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attraction of ideology</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party and Trade Union leaders</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family members</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144.0</td>
<td>126.6</td>
<td>134.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total percentages exceed hundred because of multiple responses.

It is clear from the above table that the largest percentage of respondents considered party and trade union leaders as the most powerful agents of recruitment to the party. It was stated by 55.4 per cent of the respondents that they joined the party through party and trade union leaders. Appeal of party ideology was mentioned by 53.6 per cent of the respondents as a factor that contributed to their entry into the party. Ideology played a more important role in the case of state level party activists than in the case of district level activists. It is because the state level party activists
are comparatively more educated and many of them joined the party during the early period when the influence of communist ideology was very strong. Friends, family members, literature and other factors played less significant role in the recruitment to the party. The data thus confirms the fact that recruitment to the communist party is no exception to the general pattern of Indian politics where leaders and personalities play an important role in determining the political preferences of the people. The data also confirms Michels argument that in large scale organisations recruitment is controlled by party elites.

In order to know the role of these factors in recruitment to the party the data on agents of recruitment was cross-tabulated by period of entry of the respondents into the party. The results so obtained are reported below in Table 2.4.

**Table - 2.4**

Agents of Recruitment by Period of Entry into the Party (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Upto 1957</th>
<th>1958-64</th>
<th>1965 and after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party and Trade Union leaders</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and family members</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136.7</td>
<td>135.2</td>
<td>130.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages exceed 100 cause of non responses.
Table 2.4 indicates that ideology and party leaders played an important role as agents of recruitment till 1957. But during 1958-64 period party leaders became more important and the influence of ideology declined considerably as only 29.4 per cent of the respondents who joined the party during this period stated that they were influenced by ideology. It appears that the mass line adopted by the party in 1958 contributed to the decline in the role of ideology during this period but its decision to increase the membership of the party increased the importance of party leaders. The data thus indicates that when a communist party becomes an open and mass party it is likely to lose some of its insistance on ideological considerations. However, after 1965 ideology and friends and family members gained importance but the role of party leaders and literature as agents of recruitment considerably declined. The increase in the influence of ideology after 1964 can be attributed to the fact that most of the old leaders of the party went over to the side of the CPN at the time of the split and the party had to recruit young party activists from the educated youth. The decline in the importance of party leaders during this period indicates liberalization in the recruitment policy of the party.

Recruitment Process

In order to understand the implications of the mass line of the party for its recruitment process, the respondents were
asked to tell how easy or difficult it is to become a member of their party and whether any change has taken place in this respect over a number of years. They were further asked to explain the relaxation, if any, in the recruitment policy of the party and to tell the criteria according to which new entrants to the party were recruited. The information thus obtained was tabulated and the findings are reported below in tabular form:

Table - 2.5
Perception of Recruitment Process (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>State N=50</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither too easy nor too difficult</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that 50.9 per cent of the respondents felt that it is neither too difficult nor too easy to become a member of the communist party. They had a feeling that it is not as difficult to become a member of the party these days as it used to be before the party gave the slogan of building a mass party at its Amritsar Congress in 1950.
In spite of this liberalisation in the recruitment policy, they still had a feeling that it is not as easy to become a member of the communist party as in the case of bourgeois parties like the congress, the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh. A substantial number of respondents (40.9) considered it easy and some of them "damned easy" to become a member of the party. Party reports indicate that there are some bogus members also in the party. The Eighth party conference held at Bhatinda in 1968, for example, took a decision that the recruitment of such bogus membership should be stopped. The difference between survey data and information contained in party documents is a clear indication of the problems that a researcher has to face while applying sample survey technique in third world countries. In fact, recruitment to the party is sometimes made by fixing targets of membership for a particular period. The party wholetimers make indiscriminate recruitment during such periods in order to meet the targets allotted to them, with a view to finding out the difference in the perceptions of recruitment process by respondents belonging to different periods, the data on recruitment process was cross-tabulated by period of entry. The findings are reported in Table 2.6.

Table - 2.6
Perception of Recruitment Process by Period of Entry (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Upto 1957</th>
<th>1958-64</th>
<th>1965 and after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither too easy nor too difficult</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 indicates that a majority of the respondents (49.1) who had joined the party before 1957 considered it easy to become a member of the party these days. They had a feeling that the old practice of rigorous testing of a person before admission to the party had disappeared. The majority of respondents who felt that it is difficult to become a member of the party also belonged to this period. It seems that their responses were influenced by the difficulties which they had experienced while becoming members of the party. However, the majority of respondents who joined the party after 1957 considered it to be neither too easy nor too difficult to join the party. They had a clear perception of the relaxation in recruitment process but still had a feeling that it is not as easy as in the case of non-communist parties. The above
data indicates that when a communist party becomes an open and mass party, it is likely to throw its doors open to all comers in order to meet the problems of mass mobilization. In this process it would, in all probability, lose its organizational cohesion and ideological purity among its members.

**Reasons for Liberalization in Recruitment**

All the respondents agreed that it is easier to become a member of the communist party these days than what it was fifteen years back. A majority of the respondents (80 per cent) stated that this relaxation in the recruitment pattern of the party is largely due to the change in the character of the party. At its Amritsar Congress (1958) the party decided to become an open and mass party and this role obviously required some relaxation in the recruitment pattern of the party. The party wants to increase its members so that a proper ratio between the membership and mass influence of the party could be established. However, 20 per cent of the respondents reported that there is no fear of government repression on the party these days and as a result the party has become careless in its recruitment policy.

**Who are Recruited to the Party**

The communist doctrine, particularly as formulated in Lenin's writings, describes the membership of the party as a fully conscious revolutionary elite. The earlier communist
practice attempted to enforce this principle by requiring a period of candidature and a stringent screening of recruits before admission. In order to know whether such a practice is followed by the party these days the district level respondents were asked to tell how new members were admitted to the party. The majority of the respondents (51.7) stated that acceptance of party programme and ideology entitles a person to become a member of the party. Other considerations that were mentioned included work in the mass organizations of the party, participation in agitations and movements launched by the party, those who are politically conscious and sympathize with the cause of the party. The data thus indicates that the party has been affected by the politics of populism and does not give much weightage to testing a person before recruitment.

Table - 2.7

Criteria of Recruitment (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those who accept party programme and ideology</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who are active on fronts and participate in agitations</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who help the party at the time of elections</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentage exceeds 100 because of multiple responses.
It is thus clear that the recruitment process of the party has undergone significant change after the party assumed the role of a mass party. Rather than limiting admission to the party to ideologically committed persons belonging to the lower classes, the party in reality admits everyone who is willing to enter its fold. The relaxation in the recruitment policy of the party has contributed to the growth of "alien class habits" in party organization and confusion in the party on issues of ideology and strategy.

Education of Party Activists

Lenin laid a lot of emphasis on the "training" and "education" of party activists. It is only through this process that they can become "professional revolutionists". Education of party members aims at their indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist ideology and giving them practical training in organizational work. Education is essential for raising the intellectual level of the members and for protecting them against non-proletarian tendencies.\(^\text{13}\)

The party has an elaborate organizational network for imparting education to party activists consisting of an "education department" at state level and similar departments in all districts. All front organizations have their own education departments. These departments organize party

---

Schools from time to time at various levels. Schools are
generally organised front wise but sometimes there are mixed
schools also. Thus there are schools for youth and students,
women, trade union workers, kisan cadres, college and schools
teachers, district secretaries, branch secretaries, etc.

The participants in these schools are given extensive
lectures on subjects like fundamentals of Marxism Leninism,
Party Programme, Party History, Policy and Organisation,
National Movement, Economy and Politics of the State and the
Problems of Mass Fronts. The ostensible purpose of the party
is to provide instruction to members at all levels with a view
to ensuring their ideological development and indoctrination.

In order to ascertain the level of education of party
activists, they were asked to tell the party schools which they
had attended. The highest schools attended by a respondent was
taken down and the information thus obtained is presented in
Table 2.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Party Schooling</th>
<th>State N=90</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Schools</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Level Schools</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Level Schools</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Schools</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Schools</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The schools in the above table are not ordinary schools,
but party schools.

It is clear from the above table that all respondents had attended party schools. A majority of the respondents (49.1) has attended state level party schools and 19.1 per cent had attended even national schools. However, the level of schooling of district level respondents is low as compared with state level respondents. While 34 per cent of the respondents at the state level had attended national schools, the corresponding figure for the district level respondents is 6.7 per cent only. The low level of education of the district level respondents perhaps prevents them from participation in the national level schools. It is interesting to note that at least one respondent reported to have attended a Russian school.

In spite of the high level of schooling of our respondents, the party, it appears, has not paid proper attention to the education of its members. The Organisational Report of the Special Party conference lamented that in spite of the party’s efforts in this direction, education of party cadres and mass of party membership has remained a neglected field. This failure has been attributed to the lack of whole time party teachers and casual attitude towards education on the part of party members. Report on party organization adopted

15. Jathabandak Report (Organisational Report) of the Special Party Conference, Chandigarh (December 13 to 16, 1973), (Chandigarh : CPI Publication), Hereafter it has been cited as "Organisational Report of the Special Party Conference".
by the Tenth Party Congress (1975) noted "a tendency among party cadres not to attend schools especially organized for them." In fact, the pre-occupation of the party with electoral politics has made the party members careless about education. Due to their pre-occupation with routine party work, the party activists have little time for party schools. A party teacher has stated that a large part of the state and district level leadership of the party does not feel the need and urgency for going through central level school although their educational training is very little.

There is an indication in party reports that some schools failed due to meagre attendance. For example, the organizational report of the Ninth State Party Conference (1971) stated that district level schools organized for branch secretaries and party members failed because of poor attendance. It has also been noticed that party members belonging to land labour and poor peasants are more keen to get political education than those from the middle class.


19. One party teacher has noticed that if a party school consisting mainly of participants belonging to the middle class is organized, the teacher has also to perform the duty of keeping the participants awake. Chain Singh Chain, "Some Lessons of Party Schools in the State", op. cit., p. 14.
The above discussion on the education of party activists indicates that the attitude of party leaders and members towards participation in party schools has undergone a change during recent years. The members do not feel the necessity of receiving education in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and are more interested in routine party work. As a result, the mass of party membership is not in a position to contribute anything to ideological debates. This has created considerable ideological confusion in the party.

**Promotion and Upward Mobility**

In order to provide incentives to party members it is essential that the party organization must have avenues of promotion at each level. An objective criterion for this purpose is essential lest subjective considerations enter and influence in the promotion of party activists. But apart from the standards fixed for evaluating the work of party activists while providing promotional avenues to them, their mobility within the organization is likely to be influenced by their socio-economic background. With a view to finding out the criterion of promotion in the organization, the respondents were asked to tell how members were promoted in the party. The information thus obtained is given below in Table 2.9. The influence of socio-economic background on the upward mobility of party activists was measured by counting the number of years that a respondent had taken in becoming a member of the
district committee/council after joining the party and relating this time span with the socio-economic background of the respondents. The results thus obtained are given below in Tables 2.10, 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13.

Table - 2.9
Factors in Promotion (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>State N=50</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence and ability</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated work</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party discipline</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>160.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>157.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total percentages exceed 100 because of multiple responses.

It is clear from the above table that the promotion of party activists largely depends upon the dedication that they show in doing party work. The dedication must be of such a high order that all orders received from superiors are obeyed without hesitation. However, evaluation of dedication to party work, the single most important factor in promotion, leaves scope for subjective considerations. Some of the respondents stated that members belonging to the majority faction in the
organization manage to get better reports than others for doing the same type of party work. A second factor in the promotion of party activists, though less significant, is the observance of party discipline. Any violation of party discipline in doing party work or in personal life is likely to spoil a member's chances for promotion. Other factors that count in promotion include ideological clarity, sycophancy, and time devoted to party work. Ideological clarity, which up to early 90's was given great weightage in entrusting a party activist with greater responsibility, is now at a discount. It is because the party organization has become so action oriented that the value of a person is not judged by his ideological knowledge but by the actual work done by him for the party. It is interesting to note that some respondents mentioned sycophancy as an important factor in ensuring quick promotion. It is an indication of the fact that promotion within the party organization is sometimes influenced not by dedication to party work but by the likes and dislikes of the party leaders. Other things being equal, those who always keep themselves on the right side of the party leaders are likely to be promoted earlier than others. The time devoted to party work is also a consideration in promotion, whole-time party workers are likely to get promoted earlier than others.

While measuring the upward mobility of party activists it was found that some party activists move faster within the
organization than others. The data showed that 24.5 per cent of the respondents took up to 3 years, 32.7 per cent 4 to 6 years, 18.2 per cent 7 to 9 years and 24.5 per cent 10 or more years in becoming district level leaders after joining the party. In order to know the reasons for this difference in the upward mobility of the respondents, the data was cross-tabulated with their socio-economic background. The findings are reported below:

![Table - 2.10](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time taken to become a district level leader</th>
<th>Higher castes</th>
<th>Middle castes</th>
<th>Lower Middle castes</th>
<th>Lower castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 years</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 and above</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100.0 100.0 100.0 100.0

Note: For a description of these caste categories, see page 123.

It is clear from the above table that in spite of their indifference to party schools the middle caste respondents showed better upward mobility than respondents belonging to other castes. While 37.2 per cent of the middle caste respondents became district level leaders within 3 years the
corresponding figures for higher, lower middle and lower castes are 14.8, 12.5 and 12.5 per cent respectively. The better organizational mobility shown by middle caste respondents is perhaps due to their socio-economic position in society. In the peculiar socio-economic setting of the state, middle caste Jats constitute the "dominant caste". Their better social status and economic position helps them in achieving better organizational mobility than respondents belonging to the other castes. It is interesting to note that 29.6 per cent of the respondents belonging to higher castes took 10 or more years in becoming district level leaders whereas the corresponding figures for middle, lower middle and lower castes are 23.5, 25.0 and 18.8 per cent respectively. The low level of mobility among respondents belonging to higher castes is perhaps due to the political insignificance of these castes in the politics of the state. The traditional weakness of the party among these castes further weakens the position of the party activists belonging to these castes in party organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time taken to become a district level leader</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Upper Middle</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Lower</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 years</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9 years</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years and above</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be observed from Table 2.11 that the respondents belonging to the upper middle income group showed better organisational mobility than others. Whereas 32.5 per cent of the respondents from the upper middle income group became district level leaders within 3 years, the corresponding figures for upper, lower middle and lower income group are 12.5, 24.3 and 13.6 per cent respectively. Similarly, respondents belonging to the lower middle income group showed better mobility than respondents belonging to the upper and lower income groups. Our data also indicates that respondents belonging to the upper income group proved to be the slowest upward mobiles. The better mobility shown by the respondents belonging to upper middle income group is perhaps due to their economic position which enables them to devote more time to party work and contribute to party funds. It also helps them in acquiring mass contacts. Similarly, the slow mobility shown by the respondents belonging to the upper income group can either be due to their less involvement in party work or because of the conscious efforts on the part of party leaders to keep them away from responsible positions, lest the image of the party among the masses is spoiled. It appears that a reasonably good level of income is a prerequisite for reaching higher levels of party organisation but a high or low level of income seems to be a liability.
Table - 2.12
Upward Mobility by Education (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time taken to become a district level leader</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Semi-literate below matric</th>
<th>Matric but below graduate</th>
<th>Graduate and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 years</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9 years</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years and above</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.12 indicates that there is a close relationship between the level of literacy of the respondents and their mobility within the organization. While 41.5 per cent of the respondents who were graduates became district level leaders within 3 years, another 36.6 per cent took 3 to 6 years. Similarly, 17.1 per cent of the respondents who were matriculates became district level leaders within 3 years and another 34.3 per cent within 6 years. Thus majority of the respondents in the graduate and above and matric but below graduate categories became district level leaders within 6 years after joining the party. However, majority of the respondents in illiterate and semi-literate categories took longer in becoming district level leaders. Our data thus indicates that educated
persons showed better mobility within the party organisation than illiterate and semi-literate persons. Better education helps the party activists in understanding issues of ideology and strategy and ensures their effective participation in organisation. It also helps party activists in acquiring other skills associated with leadership. Educated party activists are in a better position to express their views and influence people. It is also possible that better education may itself be related to higher caste and upper income background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time taken to become a district level leader</th>
<th>Rich peasant</th>
<th>Middle peasant</th>
<th>Poor peasant</th>
<th>Professions</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 3 years</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 years</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 9 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years and above</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total                                       | 100.0        | 100.0          | 100.0        | 100.0       | 100.0    | 100.0  |

It can be observed from the above table that respondents belonging to rich and middle peasants showed better mobility than those belonging to poor peasants, professions, business
and labour. While 50 per cent of the rich peasants and 36.4 per cent of middle peasants became district level leaders within 3 years, the corresponding figures for poor peasants, professions and labour are 26.9, 22.2 and 13.6 per cent respectively. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents belonging to business was in a position to become a district level leader during this period. The better mobility shown by rich and middle peasants is perhaps due to their caste and income background. As members of the "dominant caste" having fairly good economic status, they are in a position to build up mass following which helps them in reaching higher levels of party organization. The traditional weakness of the party among professions and business becomes an obstacle in the mobility of the respondents belonging to these groups.

It is also possible that respondents belonging to professions and business, by the very nature of their occupations, are not in a position to devote as much time to party work as rich and middle peasants. The low mobility of respondents belonging to labour category is perhaps due to their socio-economic background and low level of education.

From the above discussion it is clear that socio-economic background of the party activists played an important role in their mobility within the organization. Party activists belonging to the upper middle income group, having better education and belonging to the "dominant caste" showed
better mobility than others. Education appears to be the most important single factor that determined the mobility of party activists. Most of the respondents who became district level leaders within 3 years after joining the party were graduates and matriculates irrespective of their income and caste background. The requirement of better education for reaching higher levels of party organisation indicates the intellectual orientation of the communist movement in the state. Caste seems to be more important than the level of income in influencing the upward mobility of party activists. The role of caste in influencing the mobility of party activists indicates the influence of the environment of the state on the working of party organisation.

The importance of education, income and caste in influencing upward mobility of party activists considerably explains the failure of the communist party to have proletarian leadership at higher levels of party organisation. With their low level of education and lower caste and income background, party activists from the working class cannot compete with party activists from other classes for leadership of the party. It is thus clear that higher level leadership in the communist party would largely come from the upper middle and lower middle classes and rarely from the proletariat. A majority of the members belonging to the proletariat would, in all probability, remain confined to the lower levels of party organisation. The
pattern of mobility also indicates that working of party organization would be controlled by leaders having better socio-economic background than those belonging to the proletariat.

Activist Participation

The success of party organization depends upon the participation of its members in various activities that the party undertakes. Organizational goals cannot remain theoretical propositions and their achievement involves the participation of party activists in their set organizational roles. A high degree of activist participation would reveal greater involvement in organizational work and would thus contribute to the success of the party organization. However, a low level of participation would indicate a defective system of rewards and poor organizational performance.

With a view to knowing about the activist participation in organization, the respondents were asked to tell how frequently they participate in party meetings and how much time they devoted to party work. They were also asked to tell whether they participated in agitations and movements launched by the party and were ever sent to jail for doing party work. The results of the responses thus obtained are given in Table 2.14.
Table - 2.14
Activist Participation in Party Meetings (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in party meetings</th>
<th>State N=50</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most of the meetings</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About half</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just a few</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the above table that party activists took keen interest in party meetings and 94.5 per cent of the respondents had participated in most of the meetings of the party. Similarly, it was found that 87 per cent of the respondents were doing whole-time party work and only 13 per cent were working on part time basis. According to party rules a whole timer is supposed to devote ten hours and a part timer one hour daily to party work. It was reported by 95 per cent respondents that they had participated in all agitations and movements launched by the party and 76.7 per cent respondents had gone to jail in connection with party work. The data further indicated that 23.2 per cent of the respondents had gone to jail more than three times.

The above data indicates that the level of activist participation in organizational work is fairly high. In fact, a majority of the state and district level party activists are whole time party workers and the whole organization is dependent on them. However, party reports indicate that attendance at party meetings is not always satisfactory.21 Some party members come late to party meetings and leave before the meetings come to an end. There are others who keep themselves busy with other jobs.22 There is no proper check up of the work of whole timers and it is not known whether they devote the same time to party work as required by party norms. Participation in agitations and movements launched by the party and court arrest in connection with party work has become a part of the duty of whole timers and they have to perform it willingly or unwillingly.

The data seem to suggest that though in appearance activist participation in organization is fairly good, in reality there has been a decline in the activity norm of party activists with the change in the character of the party. Organisational work has become so routinised that party activists have lost their enthusiasm for it. Gabriel A. Almond has rightly pointed out that when a communist party becomes an

21. During the period between Bhatinda State Party Conference (1966) and Muktsar State Party Conference (1971) the average attendance in State Council Meetings was 47.4 per cent and in those of the State Executive Committee 56 per cent. See Organizational Report of the Ninth State Party Conference, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

22. Ibid., p. 6.
open and mass party, there is a decline in its activity now and it loses some of its momentum.23

Decision-making

The decision-making in the communist party is regulated by the principle of democratic centralism. It requires a two way process in which the lower units of the party discuss issues and make recommendations to higher units. The higher units of the party make decisions on the basis of these recommendations. Once the higher units have made their decisions, complete discipline is required in their implementation. However, it is essential that party leaders should make the rank and file understand the reasons for the decisions made so that a proper rapport is maintained between higher and lower units.

However, the important issue which needs probing is how the principle of democratic centralism works in actual practice and what is the involvement of rank and file in decision-making. In order to probe their involvement in the decision-making process, our respondents were asked the following question. "How much say do you have so far as the decision-making in your party is concerned?" The answers are tabulated in table 2.15. The district level respondents were further asked, "would you say that the members of the district

council should have more say than they do have in running the party's district organisation, it is about right now or should they have less say?" The findings are reported below.

Table - 2.15
Activist Participation in Decision-making (Per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of participation</th>
<th>State N=30</th>
<th>District N=60</th>
<th>Total N=110</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table indicates that party activists at both the state and district level felt that they had a fair degree of involvement in the decision-making process of the party. However, state level respondents showed better involvement than district level respondents. While 21.7 per cent of the respondents at the district level felt that they had only nominal say in decision-making, the corresponding figure for state level respondents is only 2 per cent. The above data indicates that decision-making in the party seems to be a collective enterprise. But this involvement can also be explained as a fair amount of participation by party activists.
in the discussion before decisions are taken. It was noticed that 87.8 per cent of the respondents at the district level felt that they had sufficient influence in running the district party organization.

Demands of the People and Decision-Making

With a view to knowing how far the decision-making in the party is influenced by the demands of the people the district level respondents were asked: "How do you ensure that the demands of the people become a part of the decisions of the party?" An analysis of their responses is presented below.

Most of the respondents (51.7) reported that district units send suggestions to the higher organs about the demands of the people. The higher organs discuss these demands and take appropriate decisions on them. Another 16.7 per cent of the respondents stated that the party comes to know about the demands of the people through mass organizations. Leaders and members of the party working on different fronts bring the problems and demands of the people before the party and appropriate decisions are taken after discussions. A few respondents (10 per cent) reported that they pass resolutions at the district level about the pressing demands of the people. There were others who reported that party always keeps the demands of the people in mind while taking decisions. However, surprisingly some of the respondents stated that no effort is made to ensure that decisions are based on the views and
demands of the people. From the above data it appears that there is no regular channel for ensuring that the demands of the people become a part of the decisions of the party. It appears that the lower units of the party send suggestions to higher units of the party about the demands of the masses and they generally pass resolutions on them. But concrete organizational tasks are outlined when the demands of the masses do not clash with the power interests of the party.

It appears that the decision-making in the party has undergone considerable change after 1958. The decentralization and democratization of party organization as a result of the decisions of the Extraordinary Party Congress held at Amritsar (1958), have increased the importance of lower units in decision-making. The lower units are free to make decisions concerning their day to day functioning but these decisions should in no way come into conflict with the decisions of the higher units. The decisions at the state level are generally taken keeping in view the suggestions and recommendations of the lower units. However, these suggestions are not binding on higher units and may sometimes be ignored. Moreover, these suggestions are considerably influenced by the views of state level party leaders who are present in the meetings of the lower units. This does not mean that the discussion at the lower levels serves no purpose. This is, above all, intended to ensure that the policies of the higher organs of the party
are based on the opinion of rank and file. It also provides a means of directing resentment away from the higher organs.

The decision-making in the party, it appears, is influenced more by party leaders and their factional conflict than by popular demands. While participating in discussions, the party activists are conscious of their group affiliations and generally project their views in a way that suits the interests of their group. However, party leaders try to ensure greater consensus while taking decisions on controversial issues, particularly when the consequences of such decisions are unpredictable. In order to save themselves from the awkward situation where the responsibility of taking an unpopular decision is squarely placed on their shoulders, the party leaders try to ensure greater participation and consensus on such issues.

The Communications System

The importance of the study of the communications system of the party lies in the fact that it enables us to understand the dissemination of information and coordination of work between various levels of party organization.

Apart from its openly circulated journals and pamphlets which are addressed mainly to party members and sympathizers, the party has a regular system of private communication. The most important source of communication in the hands of the
party is the Party Letter. It contains detailed information about party policies and decisions. The party units at various levels also issue circulars which frequently contain instructions and information about organizational matters. In addition, there is a regular system of reporting from higher to lower units and vice-versa. The district secretaries or other important state level party leaders working in the districts verbally report the discussions and decisions of the higher organs of the party to the members of the district councils. Similarly, at the lower levels, the party chairmen report the decisions of the higher committees to the members of the party. The party constitution provides for a regular written system of reporting from lower to higher units. But the Organizational Report of the Ninth State Party Conference stated that the system of sending written reports from lower to higher units is almost non-existent. In fact, the lack of activity on the part of local units and pre-occupation of district units with routine party work leaves little scope for regular reporting. Moreover, the non-utilization of the reports of lower units by higher units also leads to an attitude of indifference on the part of the former.

24. I was informed that Party Letter is issued at irregular intervals.

In transmitting these inner party communications, the party ordinarily does not rely on Indian postal service. It has got its own secret network which provides for courier service between the district and provincial units. Sometimes this assumes interesting proportions such as entrusting the letters to truck and bus drivers. Information about party meetings and campaigns is also given through Newsmans, the daily paper of the party.

In principle, the communications system of the party in vertical and each unit receives information about party policy and activity only through communications flowing from the state centre. In practice, however, each unit gets considerable information through informal contacts. As the state centre possesses control over the information received from the central organs of the party, the communications system gives considerable power to the state level leadership which controls it.

The party's communication system, however, has not been perfected as an instrument of authority. The power which accrues to the party leadership through control over the party's communication system is reduced to insignificance by the illiteracy of members and relative inefficiency of the system itself. But it has undoubtedly been an indispensable aid to leadership for ensuring the ideological indoctrination of party members. As the communication moves upward or
downward and never horizontally, the arrangement has helped in reducing security risks. It has another advantage also.
A large number of party members are called upon to act, in one context or the other, as leaders.

**Discipline**

Discipline is indispensable for preserving and strengthening the unity of the party and for enhancing its strength and capability. Without strict discipline the party cannot lead the masses in their struggles nor can it discharge its responsibility towards them. Discipline is not something imposed from above by party leaders but it is the self imposition of restrictions with an understanding that the interests of the people and party are more important than one's personal interests. It is based on the conscious acceptance of the aims, the programme and policies of the party. Any violation of party rules and decisions as well as any other action and behaviour unworthy of a member of the communist party constitutes a breach of party discipline and is liable for disciplinary action.

It is essential to note that communist party discipline embraces the private as well as personal lives of its members. Since the party endeavours to shape the total life of its

---

members all their activities come within the purview of party discipline. Disciplinary action against party members is not always taken due to political error but is occasionally the result of their being strike breakers, habitual drunkards, betrayers of party confidence etc. One inner party document, for example, states that a party member was turned out of the party for being a habitual drunkard and another for having connections with the C.I.D. and still another for not leaving the correspondentship of the Link magazine. The party members are thus expected to set high standards of human behaviour in all walks of life.

Disciplinary action is normally taken where other methods, including persuasion have failed. Disciplinary action can take various forms i.e. warning, censure, public censure, removal from party posts, suspension from membership and expulsion from the party, depending upon the nature of the breach of discipline and the view taken by the concerned committee. However, before proposing any disciplinary action against a member it is essential that he should be informed of the allegations and charges against him. The members also have a right to be heard in person by the party unit in which their case is being discussed. They also have a right to appeal to higher units in all cases of disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken not only against individual members but also against units as a whole. The State Council and the District Councils have a right to dissolve or take disciplinary action against a lower committee in cases where there is a persistent defiance of party decisions, serious factionalism or breach of party discipline.

With a view to knowing about the state of discipline in party organisation the district level respondents were asked to tell if there are such members in the party who do not obey the decisions of the party, especially when the decisions are not to their liking. A majority of the respondents (53.3) admitted that there are violations of party decisions, particularly at the time of elections. These violations sometimes take the form of an open defiance of party decisions. The Ludhiana District Council, for example, revolted against the decision of the State Council to have an adjustment of seats with the Akali Dal during the General Elections in the state in 1962 and put up its candidates in four constituencies in the district. Indiscipline also takes the form of lukewarm attitude towards party decisions and non-implementation of the directives of higher committees. In fact, violations of party decisions and expression of dissident opinion both by members and leaders has become a common occurrence.

There are many factors that have contributed to this high degree of indiscipline in the party. Indiscriminate recruitment, predominance of middle class members, existence of factionalism, lack of collective functioning and neglect of political education of party members are some of the factors that have contributed to indiscipline in party organisation. Rapid changes in policy arising out of the power interests of the party and also because of changes in policies in Moscow, have also contributed to confusion and indiscipline in the party.

Main Weaknesses in Party Organisation

Party organisation suffers from certain serious weaknesses and leaves much to be desired. Instead of being an asset to the party, organisation has developed so much looseness and flabbiness that it is posing a serious problem for the further advancement of the party.

Some of the principles which Lenin laid down for a sound party organisation have been undermined. The principles of "democratic centralism" and "criticism and self criticism" have been replaced by individualism, liberalism and bureaucracy.29 The principle of democratic centralism involves that the higher committees will have the right to

guide the lower committees and they will report about their work to the lower committees.

But there are very few units at the district and local level who send regular reports about their work to the lower units. As a result, the lower units sometimes do not cooperate with the higher units and oppose their decisions in practice. The higher units adopt bureaucratic attitude towards the suggestions of lower units. There is lack of criticism and self-criticism in the party and it has been replaced by individualism and liberalism. Consequently, some members of the party criticize party decisions and party leaders in public.

Individual functioning and reliance on spontaneity are two other evils which have crept into the organization. Taking individual decisions and implementing them on one’s own, making serious political and other commitments without reference to committees, gathering some young members around oneself are some of the manifestations of individual functioning. The party whole timers are burdened with routine work and are not in a position to give proper direction on organizational and ideological problems. The emphasis on peaceful transition to socialism and participation in bourgeois parliamentary institutions has led to the penetration of bourgeois ideology in party organization. A general tendency has grown among party members to think that by
working among the masses the party will get built automatically. Thus the task of building the party and its mass organizations as a specialized task has been neglected.

There is a general tendency to show negligence towards the internal disputes of the units and an effort is made to postpone them without finding a solution to them. These small disputes assume alarming proportions after sometime and lead to stoppage of work. Social and personal problems of the cadre also remain unattended.

Party organization is characterized by chronic factionalism. To a certain extent factionalism is unavoidable and serves a useful purpose in the organization. In a sense it helps in fixing and realizing organizational goals. But beyond a certain point it acts as a break on the efficient working of party organization. Factionalism in the party appears to be based in part on class distinctions such as those between intellectuals and peasant leaders and in part on functional distinctions as those between organizational leaders and members of the party in the state legislature. The competition among factions proceeds peacefully within the confines of the party so long as no particular interest is drastically neglected. Factional competition becomes more intense when the party line gives undue emphasis to one set of interests at the cost of the other. The net result of this
factionalism is the lack of team work among party leaders and cadres which makes collective functioning and proper implementation of decisions impossible.

The most serious weakness of party organization is the lack of functioning on the part of the local level units. A majority of the branches and Area Committees do not function on regular basis. Their activity mainly centres around collection of party funds, organizing conferences and election campaigns. Lack of regular contact and guidance from higher units, low political level of membership and inability of the party to translate party policies in terms of jobs to be done at the local level, are some of the factors which have contributed to inactivity on the part of lower units. Generally there is no discussion on political issues and no regular discussion on local issues. This lack of activity on the part of the local level units has weakened the party's links with the masses. There is no regular functioning of units and no proper co-ordination of work.

The party leaders and the rank and file are increasingly becoming victims of bourgeois habits. Enthusiasm for party work has decreased and members are concerned more about earning money and leading a better life. There is an increasing desire among party members to occupy offices in Panchayats, Block Samitis, Cooperative Banks, Municipalities, etc. These offices are misused for personal and group
Party legislators nourish their constituencies in bourgeois manner and lose all revolutionary perspective and class approach. Some members of the party even oppose the struggle of land labour for better wages and social justice.

The above organization/weaknesses are the result of the party's decision to become an open and mass party and also of its acceptance of the peaceful path to socialism. The mass line of the party has led to the entry of uncommitted persons into the party. They have brought with them their bourgeois ideology and all the vices connected with it. The participation of the party in bourgeois parliamentary institutions has led to a shift in the activity of party workers. In place of revolutionary mass movements, bourgeois parliamentary institutions have become the centre of the thinking and activity of the party. The whole attitude towards organizational work has changed. Revolutionary mass activity has been replaced by electioneering and lobbying.

**Summing Up**

The communist party organization does not neatly fit in any single model of organization. We have neither found a complete elitist-monoolithic authority structure nor have we found a complete strarchical-pluralistic structure. It is something between these two extremes. Though it has some

---

of the features of Michels "Oligarchy Model" but it is quite different from it in certain other respects. It seems to be a mixture of oligarchy, bureaucracy, democracy and indiscipline. Oligarchy manifests itself in the role of leaders in the working of party organization. Recruitment, promotion, decision-making and communication in organization is considerably influenced by the views of party leaders. The principle of hierarchy and lack of horizontal links between organizational units further strengthens the position of party leaders and facilitates their control over organization.

However, leaders do not enjoy unlimited powers and there are many factors which moderate the influence of oligarchy in party organization. The top leadership of the party consists of clusters of powerful individuals rather than a homogeneous inner core. In this situation the leaders act as a check upon each other and limit the exercise of unlimited authority. The existence of factionalism in the party inhibits the majority group from taking decisions arbitrarily. The fear of losing popular support and non-implementation of decisions by the rank and file act as further checks upon the autocracy of party leaders.

There are some bureaucratic tendencies also in party organization. Bureaucracy manifests itself in this form that the views and suggestions of the lower units are not valued much. Criticism from the lower units is not taken up
in a healthy way. The higher units try to impose their views on the lower units. The leaders assume an attitude of self-righteousness and refuse to learn from their mistakes. No attention is paid to the problem of cadres.

The party organization has got some democratic features also. The committees at each level are formed through democratic elections. They enjoy considerable autonomy in dealing with local issues. The higher committees are supposed to send a written report about their work to the lower committees. Similarly, higher units are supposed to ascertain the views of the lower units before taking important decisions. However, the operation of these democratic features is limited by the control exercised by party leaders over the working of committees at each level.

Another feature of party organization is its rampant indiscipline. Indiscriminate recruitment, factionalism, frequent changes in policy and the influx of bourgeois habits among party members have made indiscipline a serious problem. The decisions of the party are sometimes challenged in actual practice and are not properly implemented. The violation of party decisions in practice has considerably undermined the principle of democratic centralism.

In fact, party organization and its working have been significantly influenced by the ideology and strategy of the party. The organizational structure of the party before 1998
reflected the requirements of an ideology that emphasised struggle against imperialism, feudalism and the bourgeoisie and a strategy that aimed at the revolutionary reconstruction of Indian society. As a result, party organisation during this period was compact, closed and highly centralised. It required a greater degree of ideological commitment, involvement and sacrifice from its members. However, an ideology that laid emphasis on peaceful coexistence, peaceful transition and cooperation with progressive sections of the bourgeoisie and a strategy which aimed at achieving revolutionary objectives through peaceful means required a different type of organisation. The Extraordinary Congress of the Party (1958) made significant organisational changes to meet the requirements of the new situation. As a result of these changes the organisational structure was considerably decentralised and democratised. In order to make the organisation more broad-based, the membership and powers of the units at each level were increased and recruitment to the party was also liberalised. Changes in ideology and strategy not only influenced organisational structure but also organisational behaviour. During the pre-1958 period the behaviour of party members reflected ideological commitment and enthusiasm for dedicated and disciplined party work. The members were imbued with a spirit of selfless sacrifice for the party. But during the post-1958 period the behaviour of
party members was characterized by love for easy going life, lack of ideological commitment and enthusiasm for party work, indiscipline and selfishness. In fact, the participation of the party in bourgeois parliamentary institutions has led to the growth of bourgeois habits among party members. The acceptance of parliamentary path to socialism by the party has decreased revolutionary consciousness among its members and led them to believe that all problems could be solved within the framework of this system. As a result, electioneering and parliamentary combinations and manipulations have become the main form of activity for party members while organizing and mobilizing the masses through revolutionary mass actions got relegated to the background. The decision of the party to become an open and mass party led to indiscriminate recruitment which further resulted in an increase in factionalism and indiscipline in party organization.

It can be inferred on the basis of above discussion that when a communist party becomes an open and mass party and accepts parliamentary path to socialism, its organization would become loose and develop bourgeois norms. It would, in all probability, be characterized by decline of ideology and increase of bureaucracy, factionalism and indiscipline.

The working of party organization is influenced not only by ideology and strategy of the party but also by party
leaders. The formulation and implementation of policies, one of the major tasks to be performed by organization, is determined by party leaders. They are the channels through which ideology and strategy influence organization. We shall discuss this part of our problem in the next chapter.