Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

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Trade unions occupy an important place in the economic and social framework of highly industrialised countries, particularly those in which the incidence of unemployment is comparatively low. They function as an organised force in the economic field and constitute an important source of political strength for those who lead them. The union leaders negotiate and bargain with the employers from a position of strength when they are backed up and supported by a highly skilled labour force which cannot be replaced easily. In Britain and many other industrialised countries, trade unions are an integral part of some political parties which have frequently held reins of power. In the USA, "the labor unions have become organisations that select and form leaders who, upon becoming successful, take their place alongside corporate executives in and out of government, and alongside politicians in both major parties, among the national power elite."

In developing countries, the organised workers constitute only a small percentage of the economically active population. However, in some of these they wield a disproportionately large influence on the existing economic and political institutions because they man a critically important sector of the economy. It is a group equipped with means through which it can present, and occasionally does impose, its views upon the larger society.

In fact, we can talk of at least three interlocked concepts which are relevant in a multitude of ways: first, the labour leaders, whose importance arises out of the identity of political and union leadership and/or out of the 'quality' of their leadership; second, the industrial workers, who derive their importance from their role as possessors and transmitters of industrial skills; third, the leader-labour-union syndrome, potentially a very important economic elite which, because of its control over major means of production, produces a definite impact on the society as a result of its power and ability to lead urban masses.

The history of the Indian trade union movement is closely related to the history of the national liberation movement. The latter needed the support of the mass of industrial workers as well as of other sections of the society; at the same time, a trade union movement, isolated from the political mainstream, could not have made much headway under the conditions obtaining in India under British domination. At every stage the two movements interacted. Although trade unions were never formally affiliated to any political party in the country, their leaders were often also the leaders, or at least active supporters, of one political group or another. Many important political leaders were openly associated with the labour movement. Consequently, the labour movement in India has traditionally reflected a cross-section of the prevailing political ideologies and, to some extent, faithfully reproduced even intra-party factional disputes.

According to one view, the working class in India was not mobilised by its own leaders for class economic gains but by the professional middle class as part of the nationalist effort to weaken the British hold. The working class did not, therefore, develop autonomous structures and remained dependent on the political movement. Such an association has been described by Kochanek, Kennedy, and Bogaert as 'political unionism'. Political unionism, according to this view, may cover a diversity of relationships ranging from ideological sharing of views or policies to explicit cooperation and shared leadership, even leading to a situation in which unions are used for political purposes entirely irrelevant to or only remotely connected with the employment interests of the workers. It is contended that, in the post-independence period, continued political unionism has been used to mobilise electoral support to political parties.

An explanation of the phenomenon of political unionism in India in the specific historical context of the emergence of the trade union movement in India has been attempted by Dutt and Sen. According to them, there was no political movement till 1920s on the basis of a socialist ideology. The concept of a class struggle

did not figure in the political movement. In consequence, the so-called 'outsiders' derived from the non-proletarian classes, who came forward to organise the working class, did not initially possess an adequate understanding of the aims and the needs of the working class movement. Their political ideology was coloured with middle class conceptions incompatible with the idea of class conflict. Later, a small group of young Indian intellectuals with socialist orientation inducted themselves into the labour movement and introduced into it an element of class struggle. This resulted in the evolution of a working class political consciousness and marked a qualitatively new stage in the creation of the leadership of the Indian labour movement.

In the pre-independence period, almost all socialist and communist leaders worked under the umbrella of the Indian National Congress under a system of dual membership which enabled them to belong to their separate organisations also. In the trade union field, there used to be a common affiliating organisation, namely, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). As a result of the different perceptions and consequent interpretations of the communist and non-communist leaderships on the issue of support to the British war effort after Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, there occurred a major split in the AITUC. In 1947, the non-communist leadership organised the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) as a rival to the AITUC.

In the post-independence period, many other political parties, in a bid to capture the allegiance of the industrial proletariat, also set up their own trade union organisations.
The AITUC which had been in existence since 1920, now became the exclusive stronghold of the Communist Party of India (CPI). The INTUC was controlled by the Congress Party. The now defunct Praja Socialist Party set up the Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS). Some splinter left groups formed the United Trade Union Congress (UTUC). During this period, two new major central trade union organisations came up. One of them was the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), formed in 1955, linked with the Jana Sangh/Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS), now controlled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. The other organisation, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), formed in 1970, was linked with the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Outside the ambit of all these organisations, but in many cases in close liaison with them were formed organisations of employees of the banking and insurance industries and of government employees. In 1970s, even the Akali Party in Punjab created its own trade union organisation, the Punjab Mazdoor Dal (PMD). The criss-cross pattern of the trade union movement in India today includes a number of other organisations which came into existence as a result of splits based on factional or minor ideological disputes. These include the Hind Mazdoor Panchayat (HMP), the All India Red Trade Union Congress (AIRTUC), the National Labour Organisation (NLO) and the National Federation of Indian Trade Unions. Some of these organisations wield a little local influence in some States, while others exist more or less in name only.

It is thus obvious that the trade union movement in India has not merely confined itself to the immediate economic aims of its membership. It is plausibly maintained by Kennedy

8. op. cit. (n.4, chap.1, supra)
Crouch, Johri, Raman and many other scholars that the policies of the trade union leaders in India have been largely conditioned by the association of various trade unions with different political parties which are committed to diverse ideologies. Over the years, there have been many strands of thought, different goals and, accordingly, contending sets of union leaders. There have been leaders who conceived their purpose as the regulation of the factor market; leaders who broadened their aim to include the goal of national independence; and leaders for whom the purpose of unionism was conterminous with a radical political movement aiming at a peaceful or revolutionary transformation of the social order. Between these extremes, most union leaders have frequently taken intermediate positions at different times.

There is another dimension along which the emergence of the trade union movement in India may be studied. Since it took place in the context of curtailed civil liberties and a colonial economy characterised by artificial obstacles to the growth of industry, it developed certain special characteristics. These were reinforced by the availability of unskilled labour in plenty on the one hand, and a pressure on the skilled labour market on the other. Extremely low standards of wages also contributed to a pattern of growth and development divergent from that of the classical metropolitan countries, such as that of the Great Britain.

9. op. cit. (n.2, chap. 1, supra).
Another area on which one may concentrate one's attention, in the light of the above considerations, is the operational style of the trade union leadership and its structural and behavioural determinants. Specifically, one may consider the possibility that industrial action is mainly spontaneous, and that the leadership is by and large responsive to those whom it seeks to lead (or is even led by them). An alternative possibility is that the leadership at the middle level is capable of strongly influencing the rank and file members who follow its initiative. Still another alternative may be the politically or ideologically motivated style determined by affiliation with particular party led organisations. A much greater probability, of course, is that the leadership frames its operational style on a combination of all these factors. The present research is an attempt to understand the characteristics and the role of the leadership of the trade unions in one part of India, Punjab, in the context of the considerations outlined above.

120 STATUS OF RESEARCH SO FAR AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Little systematic work has been done and published so far on the subject of trade union leadership in India. Studies of trade union movement in India have so far been concerned either with the legal and economic aspects of the subject, or with the historical development and growth of the movement. Most of them deal at the macro-level and reach the general conclusion that labour movement is as yet weak, is influenced by political parties, is organisationally underdeveloped, and relies heavily on government intervention and labour courts, rather than on its own bargaining strength, to obtain better wages and working
conditions (see, for example, Giri and Subramanian). There is no publication that specifically deals with the trade union movement in Punjab, though there is one published study by Jaspal Singh on the role of trade union leadership.

Four different approaches emerge from the published studies on the Indian trade union movement. These are: the historical approach, the labour-management-state triangle approach, the operational research approach, and the approach focussing on the role of the trade union leadership. The historical approach has been followed by Punekar, Mukerjee, Ornati, A.S. Mathur and J.S. Mathur, Dufty, J.S.Mathur, Vaid, Karnik, Jha.

Sharma, Bevri, Sen, and a few others. All of them have attempted to study trade unions as an inevitable concomitant of industrialisation, and the focus is on the early political movement in India. Their main conclusion is that the trade union movement in India, as in some other underdeveloped countries, was born as an adjunct of the nationalist political movement. After independence, the movement got further politicised since no non-political leadership could ensure the achievement of the economic demands of the organised working class. Some of these authors hold that the political involvement of trade unions in India has meant the initiation, control and exploitation of the labour movement by political parties, and that the role of the outsiders has proved crucial in this respect in so far as the provision of leadership, cadre and finance is concerned.

A variant of this view, mainly expressed by Millen, Karnik and Crouch is that unions and their leaders in underdeveloped countries concern themselves with the larger political issues because many of the problems that affect labour can only be solved by the government. In taking a stand on labour issues, the union leaders find themselves aligned with such politicians as may take a similar stand. Karnik attempts to show

26. op. cit.
29. op. cit.
that trade unions all over the world and at all times have been intimately involved in politics. He observes that trade unions in India can neither perform their primary economic function nor discharge their broader crucial responsibilities without taking interest in the happenings in the wider fields of politics.

The second major view, that of Ghosh\(^{30}\) and Johri\(^{31}\), has been focussed on the triangular relationship between the labour, the management and the state. In the industrialised Western countries, particularly in the UK and the USA, the evolution of unions occurred mainly in the context of bilateral relationship between workers and employers and was generally aided by the government policy. In India the maturing process of unions had been simultaneously aided and obstructed by government policy. According to Ghosh, the relationship between the state and the unions is one of limited mutual reliance. Johri maintains that the government adopted the extra-ordinary course of using statutory regulations in a manner that generally restricted the scope of collective bargaining.

The third major approach is that of the dynamics of trade unions in specific contexts. Studies by Pandey\(^{32,33}\), Munson\(^{34}\),

31. op. cit.
Mast and Bogaert, who adopt this approach, deal with the development and special problems of unions in railways, printing and textile industries and among port workers. Pandey traces the genesis of inter-union rivalry and its impact on the trade union movement in the cotton textile industry of Kanpur. His hypothesis is that the movement which develops in an environment of frequent splits and persistent disunity is most likely to crystallise into rival unionism. He concludes that, while inter-union rivalry has aided in the spread of the trade union movement quantitatively in terms of the number of unions and their membership, it has weakened it qualitatively in terms of organisational and structural deficiencies. The second study by Pandey finds that the divergences in the outlook and tactics of the rival factions in a trade union movement reflect internal and external power politics. In the event of actual conflict, the militants get more popular support than the moderates because they are more vocal in expressing the workers' dissatisfaction, channelling their grievances and magnifying them. Munson's work relates to the printers' unions in Delhi, particularly the three largest ones. Union strength is analysed through leaders' reports of members' commitment to the union, organising tactics and union finances. He finds no evidence to suggest that political affiliation of leaders means political domination of the union. Mast traces the genesis and evolution of unionism in the Indian railway industry. Bogaert finds that unionism among dock workers is bewilderingly

36. op. cit.
diverse even at the grass-roots level. This diversity has led to dispersal of forces and to their consequent weakening.

The fourth approach, followed by A.S.Mathur37, Mathur and Raman38, Vald39, Munson and Nanda40, Mohan Das41, Punekar and Madhuri42, Sheth and Jain43 and Jaspal Singh44,45,46, is that of focussing on the role of the trade union leadership in different regions of the country. A.S.Mathur carried out a general survey of the social background, motivation, political orientation, attitudes and work schedules of 298 trade union leaders from 57 unions in seven north Indian cities. Mathur and Raman interviewed 30 trade union leaders in Agra. They suggest

39. K.N.Vald, "Growth and Practice of Unionism - an Area Study", Delhi School of Social Work, Delhi University, Delhi, 1962.
44. op. cit. (n.14, chap. 1, supra).
that outsiders in the leadership of the unions are better educated, have higher incomes, and have strong leftist inclinations. Vaid studied the role of 27 leaders of textile unions and 35 leaders of banking unions in Delhi. He classifies leaders as the 'big name' leaders, the rank and file leaders and the professional leaders. Munson and Nanda studied the influence of the legislative framework on labour leaders and their unions in three large cities. Mohan Das made an analysis of the conflict experienced by union leaders between their loyalties to trade unions and their kith and kin. Punekar and Madhuri's study, originally designed as a survey covering the whole of India, was finally confined to the States of Maharashtra and Gujarat because of a low response from elsewhere. They based their conclusions on a sample of 360 leaders from 176 union organisations. They reject the hypothesis that most of the ills of the movement are due to outside leadership. Sheth and Jain's study, based on interviews with 258 workers and 25 leaders in a large textile mill in northern India, suggests that the role of a worker leader in the union may be incompatible with his role in the factory as well as his role in social groups outside the factory. Whenever workers with high skills and education are reluctant to take up leadership positions, leaders are likely to be drawn from social groups with a relatively lower status. Jaspal Singh's studies are based on interviews with 300 leaders of 134 trade unions in Punjab in 1967. One of his major conclusions is about the symbiotic relationship of trade unions with political parties. A number of other conclusions in his studies are referred to in the latter part of the present work.
A list of books and articles in periodicals and journals, which were available to the researcher, is given in the Appendix.

**BROAD OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The present study was designed to ascertain, on a sample basis, the prevailing social and political alignments of the trade union leadership in Punjab, its perception of its own role and that of others, the nature and extent of its militancy, its point of view on problems relating to the working class in general and the trade union movement in particular, and its style of functioning. It was also considered desirable to correlate these with such factors as age, religion, caste, rural/urban background, educational level and other data on the personal backgrounds of the respondents. Though the collected data was analysed on a statistical basis, the technique of the study was in many ways an amalgamation of the statistical sampling and case study methods. The survey also aimed at a study of the role of the State-level leadership of the union organisations in relation to their affiliates and its views on certain social, economic and political issues of national importance. At the stage of formulation of the design of the study, the following hypotheses, tentative possible conclusions and questions were kept in view and were statistically evaluated at the stage of the analysis of the data:

1. (a) Our major hypothesis is that the trade union movement in India, which has developed under the umbrella of different political parties, is linked with its respective parent political organisations. The leadership tends to be strongly influenced by its political linkages both in formulating union policies and in viewing its own role. However, at the plant level, some degree
of local autonomy may be exercised by the leadership, sometimes even at variance with the policies of the parent organisations.

(b) A linkage with a left party tends to increase the level of militancy among the leadership.

(c) The general style of functioning of the trade union leadership belonging to a particular political party can be affected by the fact of the party being in or out of power at the State level.

2. (a) The second hypothesis is related to the question of the effect of rural background on the role of the leadership. It is hypothesised that in Punjab, where industrialisation is yet at a comparatively low level, the rural linkage of some of the leaders may influence their militancy and their role perception. To the extent that relative economic security (resulting from a rural linkage in this particular case) produces variations in the pattern of leadership, such variations may be linked statistically with the previous backgrounds of the various respondents.

(b) A correlation may be presumed between social background of the leaders and their role perception. It is considered possible that leaders who have a relatively affluent background tend to adopt a more aggressive attitude.

(c) It is hypothesised that leaders from outside the State who have now settled more or less temporarily in Punjab tend to be less militant than the indigenous leaders.

The following subsidiary hypotheses have also been tested for their validity:
3. Role perception and militancy are correlated with age, level of education, property ownership, rural/urban linkage, State of origin, marital status, one's subjective identification with a particular class, and vary according to whether one works as a full-time or a part-time leader.

4. The attitudes of the trade union leadership in Punjab do not bear a significant correlation with religious and caste factors.

5. (a) The State-level leadership, by virtue of its long experience in the movement, tends to be more radical than its local counterpart.

(b) The promotion of local-level leadership to the State level is facilitated if one is better educated.

140 SCOPE OF THE PRESENT ENQUIRY

The scope of the present enquiry is limited geographically to the present State boundaries of Punjab.47 The area of the State of Punjab is 50,376 square kilometres48 and its total population is 13.55 million.49

47. Before the partition of India, Punjab comprised the entire territory from the River Indus to the River Yamuna, bounded by Jammu and Kashmir to the north, and Sind and Rajputana to the south, excepting some princely States (Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Kapurthala and the Shivalik Hill States). In 1947, Punjab was divided into Punjab (India) and Punjab (Pakistan). In the fifties, the princely States were merged into Punjab (India). After the 1966 division on a linguistic basis, the present Punjab now consists of the 12 districts of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Jullundur, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepore, Faridkot, Ludhiana, Bopar, Patiala, Sangrur, and Bathinda.


49. ibid.
was as follows:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>1.66 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labourers</td>
<td>0.79 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in household industries</td>
<td>0.12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers in other industries</td>
<td>1.34 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.91 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership of registered trade unions (1973)</td>
<td>0.20 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership of registered trade unions (1979)</td>
<td>0.28 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the advent of the green revolution in the sixties, Punjab has made great strides in agriculture, particularly in the cultivation of wheat. Though the area of Punjab is only 1.6 per cent of the area of entire India, it contributes 8.2 per cent of the total foodgrains production. Other major crops are cotton and sugarcane. Industrially the State is not adequately advanced, but a number of industries, mostly at a small or medium scale, have sprung up during the last 30 years. These manufacture textiles, fertilisers, engineering goods, sports goods, hosiery products, agricultural implements, electronic goods, etc. The first trade union in Punjab, the Punjab Press Association, was formed in 1919. In 1979, there were 982 registered trade unions. At the time of

50. *ibid.*
53. See references 48-50 *supra.*
the present Survey, the number of such unions was 617. The figures given above show that about one-sixth of the working force in the organized sector of the economy constitutes the membership of registered trade unions.

**METHODOLOGICAL NOTES**

Most, though not all, local trade unions in India are affiliated to larger apex organisations. With some exceptions, unions of the government employees are not allowed to affiliate themselves to any organisation which has within its fold non-government employees. Unions of employees of banks and insurance companies have established a number of separate all-India organisations.

According to the revised membership norm of 0.8 million members for an apex trade union organisation to be entitled to the official status of a central trade union organisation, there are five such organisations (INTUC, AITUC, BMS, HMS, CITU). The total membership claimed by all the apex trade union organisations in India (each with a membership of more than 100,000) was about 7.43 million at the end of 1978, of which the five central trade union organisations claimed 6.23 million members. INTUC was the largest (2.39 million), followed by AITUC (1.31 million). Between 1968 and 1978, the newly formed BMS (0.86 million) elbowed HMS (0.85 million) out of the third place. Another newly formed organisation, CITU had 0.82 million members. Smaller apex organisations with a total membership of 1.20 million were: United Trade Union Congress, National Federation of Indian Trade Unions, United Trade Union Congress (Lenin Sarani), National
The numerical strength of the various trade union organisations in Punjab in 1973 is shown in Table 1.1. INTUC claimed 35 per cent of this strength, BMS 32 per cent, AITUC 12 per cent, CITU 2 per cent, and HMS less than 1 per cent. The remaining 18 per cent was shared by unattached unions or unions affiliated to other organisations.\(^5^4\)

### Type/Size of Population as a Substrate of the Sample

The background material for the present study was collected in 1975. Under the Trade Unions Act, 1926, every registered trade union is required to furnish an annual return for the previous calendar year, along with an audited statement of income and expenditure, to the Registrar of Trade Unions by a prescribed date which is, however, seldom adhered to. As many returns for the year 1974 had not reached the Registrar's office till late 1975, the set of returns for the year 1973 constitutes the basis for the present study. This set, too, did not list all the 586 workers' unions which were reported to be in existence during that year. Only 404 of them had, by then, submitted their returns. This set of 404 unions was assumed to be the prevailing 'population' for

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54. The latest available figures (1979) show that BMS is now the largest affiliating trade union organisation in Punjab. Figures of the respective claimed membership (and number of unions affiliated) are: BMS 86,752 (141), INTUC 69,709 (69), AITUC 24,817 (42), CITU 17,319 (30), HMS 4,662 (13), PMD 1,104 (4), HMP Nil (Nil), Others/Independent 74,937 (171). However, there has been no verification of claimed figures for many years. (Report on the Working of the Trade Unions Act, 1926, for the Year 1979), op. cit.
the purposes of the study.

152 Sampling Procedure

In order to obtain a two-way stratified random sample, these unions were classified on the basis of the following variables:

(a) The size of the union (according to the following norms):
   - Small union: less than 200
   - Medium sized union: 201 to 1,999
   - Large union: 2,000 and above.

(b) Affiliation of the union to a central organisation (as in Table 1.1, but regrouped as explained below).

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the trade union organisation</th>
<th>Number of affiliated unions</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTUC</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>70,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>63,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITU</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMG</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others/Independent</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>37,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All organisations</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>2,02,803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the basis of their affiliation, the unions were classified into four categories. The first three categories comprised unions affiliated to INTUC, BMS, and AITUC; all other unions were clubbed together to form the fourth category designated as 'Others'. Although BMS and CITU are nationally recognised trade union organisations, the number of unions affiliated to them in Punjab was considered too small to merit their forming independent categories.

The sample was obtained by the technique of a random starting point and a specified interval determined by the number of respondents to be interviewed from each particular combination of size and affiliation. The number of unions in the population pertaining to each of these combinations is shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Classification of Unions on the Basis of Size/Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of union</th>
<th>INTUC</th>
<th>AITUC</th>
<th>BMS</th>
<th>'Others'</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 200</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 1,999</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 and above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Size of the Sample

From every one of the 12 cells shown in Table 1.2, two unions were selected. However, there were only two unions each in two of these cells. In both these cases the sample comprised the entire population. Seven respondents were further selected from each union in the sample. These were (i) the president, (ii) the secretary, (iii) the treasurer, and (iv) four members of the executive body of the union selected in a random manner. Thus the sample was designed to include a total of 168 local-level respondents. In addition, 27 State-level leaders, 9 each from the State-level organisations of INTUC, AITUC and BMS, were also selected. The latter were the president, the secretary, the treasurer and six members from the executive body of each of the three State-level organisations. In all cases, the names of the respondents to be interviewed were drawn from the lists maintained at the respective union offices.

As mentioned earlier, the sample was drawn on the basis of the data relating to the year 1973, made available in 1975. During the intervening period, some unions had changed their affiliation. (1) A municipal employees' union had delinked itself from BMS and had become independent. (2) The Beas Project Employees' Union, which was an independent union in 1973, dissolved itself. Out of a total of 25 office-bearers, 23 joined the Beas Project Workers' Union affiliated to INTUC. The former union was substituted by the latter in the sample, as the leadership had remained essentially unchanged. (3) A hosiery union, listed as independent in the official records for the
year 1973, was found during the Survey to be an AITUC union, and was treated as such. Due to these changes, the number of unions in different categories was affected. The final position was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTUC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AITUC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Others'</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method of Conducting the Inquiry

The background information about the unions has been obtained from records available with the Labour Commissioner, Punjab. The detailed data about the background of respondents and their attitudes has been collected through personal interviews. The use of a mailed questionnaire as a data gathering instrument has not been relied upon for various reasons. Some of the worker leaders are illiterate, and a majority of them (except those of the white collar unions) do not have a high level of education. Response to a mailed questionnaire involves writing down detailed answers which would have entailed difficulties of interpretation. Moreover, mailed questionnaires normally draw a response only from the most enthusiastic among the respondents. In this respect, the present study has followed Eby's who observed in this context that "in order to study the labor movement, we must go to it for it will not come to us".

Out of a total of 168 local-loyal respondents in the original sample, it was possible to interview 163 (96 per cent) respondents. In one AITUC union, the depleted strength of the executive committee (including the president, the secretary and the treasurer) was four after four others had had their services terminated after an industrial dispute. This reduced the number of available respondents by three. In another AITUC union, one of the respondents had resigned his job and was not available. In an unattached ('Other') union, the president did not respond to repeated requests for an interview. The final position in regard to the number of respondents was hence as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INTUC</th>
<th>AITUC</th>
<th>RMS</th>
<th>'Others'</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other members</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>163</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As mentioned earlier, 27 State-level leaders, nine each from INTUC, AITUC and RMS, formed a part of the sample. All of them were available for interviewing.

Three sets of schedules (reproduced in the Appendix) were used to collect information. The first of these contained questions to be asked of all the respondents, local as well as
State-level. The second schedule was designed to elicit information from the State-level leaders only. The third schedule was employed to collect background information about the unions.

The information sought in the first schedule included data on age, religion, caste, marital status, rural/urban linkage, academic qualifications, State of origin, mother-tongue and knowledge of other languages, job history and socio-economic background; political and trade union activities; affiliation with political parties, pressure groups and voluntary agencies; nature of participation in the movement; difficulties faced in the union work; attitudes towards various issues of importance in industrial relations; political philosophy and commitment to certain goals; perception of others' attitudes, e.g., of workers, employers, organs of state power, political parties and the general public; and perception of their own role.

The second schedule for State-level leaders was designed to assess their perspective on social, political and economic issues of national significance and to elicit their views on the impact of political changes in the State on the trade union movement. Information was also obtained on the nature of the relationship between the State-level organisations and their affiliates.

The third schedule sought factual background information about the affiliation status of unions, their membership, details of income and expenditure, process of decision-making, relationship with the employers, number and type of publications, number of cases referred for conciliation and adjudication, and details
of agitations and strikes launched during the last five years. This information was necessary in order to assess the role of the leadership in its due context, since "the qualities, characteristics and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of a situation in which he is to function as a leader."

157 Analytical Procedure and Variables of the Study

The set of variables in terms of which the analysis has been conducted was determined by and large by considerations pertinent to the social milieu of post-independence India, and particularly the setting in Punjab. Factors which are generally considered to have a direct bearing upon the attitudes and role perception of a union leader were treated as independent variables. The following description relates to some of the variables which were studied:

Affiliation: The specific characteristics of the trade union movement in India appear to be greatly conditioned by the association of unions with political parties committed to different ideologies. During the present Survey, it was considered worthwhile to investigate the way in which such affiliations affect the militancy of the leadership as also the varying perceptions of its role.

Union size: Prima facie, a union with a larger membership may be expected to have a better bargaining strength and staying power. Another point of interest can be the possibility of less personalised relationships between the employers and the employees
in larger establishments, resulting in less counter-pressure from the management but delayed responses, smaller accessibility to top management for redressal of grievances, and many other factors which are apt to show in the style of functioning of the union leaders. For this reason, union size was assumed to be a major variable and, along with affiliation status, was used in the design of the stratified random sample (cf. section 151 supra).

Rural/urban linkage: In Punjab, where industrialisation began late, rural linkages may assume a major significance. Persons, who have a few acres of land as an insurance against starvation, may feel economically more secure than their urban counterparts whose only means of earning a living is to secure and retain a job. This circumstance is likely to affect their role perception and militancy. In the present sample of local-level leaders, 113 (69 per cent) had a rural background, 48 (29 per cent) an urban background, and two respondents reported that they had a mixed background. Among the State-level leaders, 15 had an urban background, 9 had a rural background, and 3 had a mixed background.

Union category: Out of 24 unions in the sample, 13 were located in the private sector, 7 in the public sector (government or municipal or university employees), and 3 in the banking industry. One union was that of self-employed rickshaw workers. The unions in the public sector and the private sector comprise two different types of categories, for the workers in the former enjoy a greater security of service and are, presumably, less exposed to victimisation and arbitrary management practices. Banking employees,
though technically in the nationalised public sector, were placed in the present study in a separate category of their own. For certain historical reasons these white collar workers, who initially regarded trade union activity with its agitational approach to be a weapon to be used only by the industrial proletariat, have turned to unionisation and adoption of militant techniques. During analysis of the data, the solitary self-employed workers' union in the sample was arbitrarily assigned to the private sector category in order to avoid forming a fourth category containing only one union. This assignment cannot, of course, be defended conceptually. The following list shows the type of unions in various categories:

White collar unions : 3 banking unions.

Public sector unions : 2 unions of transport workers; 1 of dam workers; 3 of clerical and menial employees of local bodies; 1 of menial employees of a university.

Private sector unions : 3 plant unions (1 each) in a distillery, a resin factory and a biscuit factory; 5 industry-wise textile unions; 5 industry-wise unions (1 each) in steel, sports, motor body building, bicycle and printing press industries; 1 union of self-employed rickshaw drivers.

State of origin : 27 per cent respondents, all Hindus, among the local-level leadership were immigrants from Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Bihar. Among the BMS respondents, 66 per cent belonged to States other than Punjab. Among the 27 State-level respondents, there were 3 immigrants. It may be mentioned that
a large number of workers in some industries in Punjab, e.g., textile, hosiery, sports, etc., are immigrants from the neighbouring States of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and even from more distant States like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Most of them do not bring their wives and children to Punjab and visit their families in their native States at more or less regular intervals. In view of their different styles of life and different early attitude-forming environments, one of the variables examined during data analysis pertained to the State of origin of the respondents.

**Mother-tongue**: Generally, the mother-tongue of a person is correlated with his State of origin. Among the State-level respondents, 23 reported Punjabi as their mother-tongue. Among the local-level respondents, 121 (74 per cent) were Punjabi-speaking, while 42 (26 per cent) reported a non-Punjabi language as their mother-tongue; 37 of these were immigrants. Among the BMS respondents, 69 per cent recorded a non-Punjabi language as their mother-tongue. Since a high proportion among the BMS leadership was that of immigrants, the State of origin and mother-tongue assumed a collinear relationship. (It may be mentioned that, by and large, there is no major communication gap between those who speak Punjabi and those who speak Hindi, at least in urban areas of Punjab. The immigrant leaders have a working knowledge of Punjabi which enables them to communicate with their Punjabi employers and co-workers. The Punjabis, as such, find no difficulty in understanding Hindi except its Sanskritised literary version.)
Whole-time and part-time leaders: Vaid\textsuperscript{57} has categorised trade union leaders as 'big name' leaders (whose relations with actual union work are more or less casual), rank and file leaders (unpaid leaders who work for their unions during their spare time) and professional leaders (who devote their whole time and full attention to trade union work). In the present sample, there were no big name leaders in the sense of the term used by Vaid. Almost all State-level respondents and a much smaller fraction of local-level respondents were found to be professional leaders. The majority of local-level respondents was that of part-time rank and file leaders.

Age: The age distribution of the respondents was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Local-level</th>
<th>State-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34 years</td>
<td>72 (44% per cent)</td>
<td>3 (11 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 years</td>
<td>78 (48 per cent)</td>
<td>20 (74 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 years or above</td>
<td>13 (8 per cent)</td>
<td>4 (15 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 18-34 years category corresponded roughly to the post-independence generation, the 35-54 years category corresponded to persons who started their working life in the post-independence era, while the last category was presumably of persons who joined the work force during the British domination of India.

Religion: Punjab has two major religious communities, the Sikhs and the Hindus. The Sikhs constitute 60.2 per cent and Hindus 37.6 per cent of the total population.\textsuperscript{58} Among the

\textsuperscript{57} op. cit. (n.39, chap. 1, supra).
\textsuperscript{58} Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1980, op. cit.
local-level respondents in the sample, 70 per cent were Hindus and 28 per cent Sikhs. The remaining 2 per cent disclaimed any belief in religion. Among the State-level respondents, there were 59 per cent Hindus and 15 per cent Sikhs. As many as 26 per cent among them asserted that they did not believe in religion. Thus the number of the Hindu leaders in the sample was disproportionate to their population in Punjab. Traditionally, the Sikhs work primarily in the agricultural sector and the industrial proletariat comprises mainly Hindus. This fact is reflected in a larger preponderance of Hindus in the sample. Moreover, the presence of 44 immigrant respondents, all of whom were Hindus, tilted the balance in favour of a Hindu majority in the sample.

**Caste:** The caste constitution of the respondents was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local-level</th>
<th>State-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduled castes</td>
<td>26 (16 per cent)</td>
<td>1 (4 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans and small</td>
<td>12 ( 7 per cent)</td>
<td>1 (4 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculturists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading and Intermediate</td>
<td>19 (12 per cent)</td>
<td>2 (7 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>castes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant agriculturist</td>
<td>100 (61 per cent)</td>
<td>15 (56 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and upper castes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Do not believe in caste)</td>
<td>6 ( 4 per cent)</td>
<td>8 (30 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This division into different types of castes is somewhat arbitrary and does not correspond to categorisation made by some other workers. During analysis of data, Scheduled castes, artisans, and small agriculturists were treated as belonging to the lower castes, and trading and intermediate castes,
dominant agriculturists and upper castes were clubbed as the higher castes. This functional classification is further discussed in detail in section 212.2 infra.

**Educational level**: The distribution of respondents according to their educational levels was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local-level</th>
<th>State-level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>19 (12 per cent)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto matriculation</td>
<td>111 (68 per cent)</td>
<td>11 (41 per cent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-matriculation</td>
<td>33 (20 per cent)</td>
<td>16 (59 per cent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Marital status**: Among the local-level respondents, 23 (14 per cent) were unmarried; among the 27 State-level respondents, only 2 were unmarried. There were no women in the sample.

**Property-ownership**: Among the local-level respondents, 33 per cent owned property in land and 60 per cent owned houses. Property-ownership among the State-level respondents exhibited a similar pattern.

**Identification with class**: The respondents were asked to assign themselves to any class on a subjective basis. While theoretically it may be possible to assign a person to a specific class in the Marxist sense, the present inquiry did not make such an attempt. Among the local-level respondents, 101 (62 per cent) identified themselves with the working class, 8 (5 per cent) were non-committal, while the rest identified themselves with
the middle and the lower-middle classes. Among the State-level respondents, 13 (48 per cent) identified themselves with the working class and the rest with the middle and the lower-middle classes. Fuller details are given in section 411 infra.