

Name: – Dr. KUMUD

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Types of trade union

Craft Unions, Industrial Unions, Labour Unions, General Unions, Blue-Collar Workers' Unions and a Few Others

Trade unions all over the world have a great variety and differ from each other in more than one way.

They may be classified into the following types:

1. Craft Unions:

The membership of such unions is drawn from among workers employed in a particular craft or trade or allied crafts or trades or occupations irrespective of the organisation or the industry they belong to. Such employees are craft conscious and usually professionals or non-manual employees. The Ahmedabad Weavers' Union is an example that can be cited in this regard.

2. Industrial Unions:

In industrial unions, membership is open to all types of workers engaged in any one industry or a group of industries or service, that is, on industry-wise basis, for example, Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh, Mumbai.

3. Labour Unions:

In these unions, membership is open to all workers irrespective of their occupation, skill or industry, the philosophy being that all workers have common status and a common need for mutual help. Labour unions refer to both craft and industrial unions.

4. General Unions:

General unions believe in the solidarity of the working class. Hence, their membership is open to workers of different skills and trades engaged in different industries.

5. Blue-Collar Workers' Unions:

Blue-collar workers' unions constitute of employees usually performing operative jobs. They usually operate machines in the production and allied departments. Blue-collar workers constitute the bulk of membership of trade unions in the organised sector.

6. White-Collar Workers' Unions:

Such unions usually comprise office staff or who work off the shop floor and perform desk jobs or provide service over the counter or any such other job. White-collar category includes executives, managers, professionals, administrators, supervisors, clerks and the like. We come across such unions in banks, service sector, insurance companies, BPOs, software organisations, Central and state government offices, and so on. Their members being educated and matured are aware of the capacity to pay off their organisations and, therefore, are more reasonable while they prepare their charter of demands.