

Trade Union-A Strong force in Industrial Relation

Trade Unionism had made its headway owing to growth of industrialization and capitalism. The Indian trade union movement is now over fifty years old. It has passed through several stages in its career. Periods of frustration and bitter struggle have alternated with occasions of recognition, consolidation, and achievements.

This research article mainly focuses on the roles and objectives of Trade Union in India. Researchers have included present working conditions, identifying the needs of Trade Unions, social responsibilities, working methodology of Trade Unions, significance of Trade Unions and role of Trade Unions in collective bargaining because Trade Unions had made a great impact on social, political and economic life.

The objective for which formation of trade union takes place in the recognition of law is to spread industrial peace with aim to provide social, economical justice to people at large but this function can only be performed if the members of the trade unions are provided with civil liberty and democratic rights by the society they live in. at the end of research article Researchers have mentioned the problems being faced by Trade Unions in India and suggestions for the success of Trade Unions.

Trade unions are a major component of the system of modern industrial relations in any nation, each having their own set of objectives or goals to achieve according to their constitution and each having its own strategy to reach those goals.[1]Union of workers plays an important role in industrial system. Annually statistics on Trade Unions are collected by Ministry of Labour, Government of India's Labour Bureau. Right to form Trade Union is a fundamental right under Article 19 (1) (c) of the Indian Constitution.

After the First World War there was a need for the coordination among individual unions which leads towards the trade union movement in India.[3]Gradually this movement becomes an essential part of industrial progress in India.[4] Apart from economic, social and political are dimensions of Trade Unions in India.

The Webbs defined a trade union as a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives.

Historically, union representation and collective bargaining have been the keys to the growth of a stable working population in developed economies, and have made it possible for workers to gain a more equitable share of the wealth that they create; they are also able to improve working conditions and help workers gain job security.

(2) Objectives and Need of Trade Union

Wages and salaries-Wages and salaries and the most important subjects of Trade Unions. In the organized industry, wages and benefits are determined through processes such as collective bargaining, wage boards, conciliation, and adjudication. Working of all these processes deserves systematic inquiry. Union power and objective facts hopefully influence the wage scene through these forums.

Working conditions-Another major objective of the Trade Unions is to insure the safety of workers. While working every worker must be provided with basic facilities like. Drinking water, minimum working hours, paid holidays, social security, safety equipments, lights and others.

Personnel policies-Any personal policy of the employer with respect to promotion, transfer and training may be challenge by Trade Unions if arbitrary.

Discipline-Trade Unions also protect the workers from arbitrary discipline action taken by management against any worker. No worker should be victimized by management in the form of arbitrary transfer or suspension.

Welfare-The main objective of the Trade Union is to work for the welfare of the workers. This includes welfare of the family members or children of the worker.

Employee and Employer Relations-for an industrial peace there must be harmony between employer and employee. But due to superior power of the management sometimes conflict arises in this situation Trade Union represent the whole group of workers and continue negotiations with management.

Negotiating Machinery-Trade Unions may also put proposals before management, as this policy is based on the principle of Give and Take Trade Unions protect the interest of workers through collective bargaining.

Safeguarding Organisational Health and the Interest of the Industry-Trade Unions also help in achieving employee satisfaction. Trade unions also help in better industrial relation by creating procedure to resolve the industrial dispute.

Alone workers feel weak. Trade Union provides him a platform to join others to achieve social objectives.

(3) Functions of Trade Unions in India

Collective Bargaining-Honble Supreme Court of India has defined Collective bargaining as the technique by which dispute as to conditions of employment is resolved amicably by agreement rather than coercion in this process negotiations and discussions take place between employer and employee in respect to working conditions. Refusing to bargain collectively is an illegal trade practice. Collective bargaining helps to resolve the issues of workers. Collective Bargaining is the foundation of the movement and it is in the interest of labour that statutory recognition has been accorded to Trade Union and their capacity to represent workmen.

Trade Unions protect the worker from wages hike, provides job security through peaceful measures.

Trade Unions also help in providing financial and non-financial aid to the workers during lock out or strike or in medical need.

It has also to be borne in mind while making an agreement that the interest of the workers who are not the members of Trade Union are also protected and the workers who are not members of the Trade Union are also protected and the workers are not discriminated.

(4) Social Responsibilities of Trade Unions

Social responsibility is an obligation recognized over an individual, group of individual, Institution so that they can be accountable and answerable to people for their civic duties, here accountability refers to the objective of the act or decision which should be welfare of the society for attaining the balance between growth and welfare. If the outcome of the result of an action or decision is causing harm to public then an individual or group of individual cannot be said to be socially responsible. The goal of the labor legislation somehow rests with the emergence of industrial peace, where protection of innocent employee is an essential condition and this is the reason which motivated the formation of trade unions and its recognition by the law.

The function of collective bargaining acts as process of negotiation between employer and employee so that either consensus or difference in the opinion can be pointed out to settle the major dispute but the need of social responsibility generates from the fact that Trade union exists in representative capacity as it represents the labors therefore accountability and responsibility of Trade union generates towards the labours. There should be warranted social responsibility from the trade union because there is direct impact of decisions of trade union of labours this role of organization is developed by virtue of societal norms, ethical values and concept of social contract. Responsibilities can be summarized with regards to function of trade union and employer employee relationship.

Education and awareness amongst labours so that a traditional or conventional way indulging into grave agitation can get the shape of cooperation and understanding. The development of the society should not be obstructed by virtue of unnecessary strikes and grave agitation, sometimes the consensus reached between employer and employee is favorable to them but may be unjust to innocent customer that innocent customer is supposed to be protected by trade union.

Their acts and deliberation with employer should be in the manner so that consensus becomes the part of economic growth and development for that purpose cooperation is required, Trade unions are supposed not be influenced by the caste division system for the interest of its workmen and to maintain the integrity of the nation. Goals should be achieved by not overlooking the interest of community at large.

Rural and urban population comprises of unorganized labour which should be made organized by trade union to uplift them and to get them above poverty line. To promote the planned schemes

and ideas for savings so that capital formation increases .New equipments should be supported by virtue of awareness programmes about its use.

(5) Significance of the Trade Unions establishment

Trade unions fills the void which was obstructing the attainment of industrial peace and social justice any decision arrived by virtue of deliberation with employer through trade union should be followed strictly by the labours which forms the part of that trade union as it improves the working condition, wages they get and other matters related to employment as the trade unions helps the labors in their bad days like the personal accidents or at the time of retrenchment or lockouts . There are many welfare measures are taken for supporting the workmen example of which is legal assistance, housing schemes and education to children of workers so these functions of trade union makes its existence significant for social justice.

Trade unions perform substantial roles in increasing the wages of the workers. This role may not be observed by direct method but indirectly wages can be increased by the actions of Trade unions like assurance can be there from the trade union regarding the payment of marginal productivity level which can be done by increasing bargaining capacity and power. Trade union can stop supply of labours in the specific trade which may have consequence of increased wage.

(6) Growth and Origin of Trade Union in India

The first factories Act was passed in the year 1881 by virtue of recommendation of Bombay factory recommendation in the year 1885. The workers of the Bombay textile industry demanded that the working hour should be reduced, weekly holidays and compensation in case of injuries suffered by the workmen. Bombay mills hand association is first union established for workers by N.lokhande in the year 1890.

Several Labour movements started after the outbreak of worldwar one. The miserable social and economic condition of the people at that time triggered the labour movement. Formation of ILO (international labour organization) leads to formation of trade unions .Ahmadabad labor textile association was formed under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi principle of non violence.

AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress)
All India trade union congress is formed in the year 1920 for the purpose of selecting the delegates for ILO, first meeting of AITUC was held in Bombay under the president ship of Lala Lajpat Rai in the year 1920 AIRF (All India Railways man Federation) was formed in 1922 , all the union consisting and compromising of railway workmen were made part of it and affiliated to it. AITUC witnessed the split because some members were in support of the war and other were not in support of the war, later group is separated as an organization under the leadership of congress leaders resulted in the formation of Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) .Socialists also got themselves separated from the AITUC which resulted in the formation of Hind Mazdoor sabha in the year 1948. Therefore the splits and detachment can be observed resulting in

creation of separate trade unions.

There were three kinds of unions on the basis of structure it consists of-

Industrial union

Craft union

General union

Crafts union consists and comprises of earning of wage from the single occupation, it includes all the workmen working for single craft even of different industries. An Industrial union is formed by virtue of actions of industry not because of similar crafts or works, General union consists the workmen of various crafts and industries. In India formation of trade union takes place mainly because of industrial decisions reason of which can be reduced importance of craftsmen after industrialization and availability of large unskilled labour.

The four major organization serving as union for workmen are INTUC, AITUC, HMS, UTUC
INTUC

The formation is lead by congress leaders, all the unions affiliated to INTUC should go for arbitration for the dispute once all other remedies are exhausted.

HMS (HIND MAZDOOR SABHA)
It was formed by those who neither became part of AITUC, INTUC in Calcutta in the year 1951 following the socialist principle.

UTUC (United Trade Union Congress)
It was formed in the year 1949 and mainly operated in west Bengal and Kerala. Apart from these four trade unions there are other trade unions working in various industries not affiliated to any central organization. Indian trade unions have now recognized by law and given legal status and becomes the permanent attribute industrial society influencing policy making and decision of employers by virtue of negotiation over interests between workman and employer.

Structure of Unions
The term 'structure of unions' alludes to the premise on which unions are structured or organized (i.e. whether they are arranged on the basis of regional or craft or industrial) and to the model whereby the plant unions are linked to regional level or national level federations or unions. These two aspects of the unions will be examined separately.

Trade unions are classified into three categories:

Craft union

Industrial unions

General unions

A craft union can be defined as an association of wage earners engaged in a single occupation. It

may cover all workers engaged in a particular craft irrespective of the industries in which they are employed. Thus, electrician or mechanics though working in different industries may form a union of their own.

For example, The International Wood Carvers Association and the Indian Pilots Guild. Industrial Unions are organized on the basis of industry, for example, if the workers of a cotton textile factory decide to form a union of workers of different crafts, the union will be called an industrial union. General unions are not so popular in India and it covers workers employed in different industries and crafts. In India, even though trade unions are largely organized by industry, craft unions are also emerging here and there. The predominance of industrial unions can be partly due to the conditions not favoring the growth of craft and general unions and partly due to environmental support to industrial unions.

The specific reasons may be listed below:

With the advent of industrialization in India, the importance of Indian craftsmen reduced, thus bypassing the merchant craftsmen stage of capitalism, technological development went straight from agriculture to factory stage. As a result, craftsmen reduced significantly. The reduced importance of craftsmen coupled with large population of unskilled workers led to the growth of industrial unions.

Another factor behind growth of industrial unions can be higher wages of skilled workers. During the early days of union growth, the skilled workers used to enjoy higher rates of wages due to their relative scarcity. They, therefore, took no interest in unionism. This lack of interest on their part plus the predominance of unskilled workers favored union growth on industrial rather than craft lines.

Industrial unions also flourished because of the influence of outsiders. As trade union was a movement started by outsiders, they were interested in labor class as a whole and not just a section of it. Industrial unions bring more workers within its fold than craft unions, as a result outsiders gave more attention to the formation of industrial unions.

(7) Structure of Tradition

The pattern in structure of unions in India is linked to their relationship between national level, regional level, local level and plant level unions. Their relationship is explained below:

Local Level: A local level federation is at the second level in the structure from below. The local trade union federation holds together the plant level unions at the local level in a particular craft and industry. These federations might be affiliated to some regional level or national level federation or may be independent.

Regional Level: It is the organization consisting of all the constituent unions in a particular state or region. Their importance cannot be exaggerated beyond a particular state or region as conditions, customs, practices, style of living differ in every state or region. These regional federations may have members of two kinds:

(1) the plant level unions affiliating themselves to these directly, and
(2) the local federations. In the second scenario, plant level unions become the member of regional unions through the local federations.

National Level: These are the national level bodies to which plant level unions, local unions or regional level unions may get affiliated. These are the apex bodies at the top of the structure and act as coordinating bodies.

(8) Problem faced by Trade Unions in India

The condition of trade unions in India is not very sound and this is mainly because of the fact that trade unions suffer from many problems. A brief account of them is given below:

(A) Uneven Growth: Trade union activities are concentrated in large scale industries and that too in regard of manual labor only and mainly in bigger industrial centre, there are hardly any trade union activities in small scale enterprises, domestic and agricultural labour. The degree of unionism varies a lot from industry to industry, thus touching only a portion of the working class in India.

(B) Low Membership: Even though, the number of trade unions has increased considerably in India but this has been followed by the declining membership per union. The average number of members per union was about 3,500 in 1927-28. It reduced to about 1,400 in 1946-47 and again to as low as a figure of 675 in 1985-86 and 659 in 2000-01. This indicates the emergence of small scale trade unions.

(C) Multiplicity of Unions: Another problem faced by the growth of trade unions is that of multiplicity of unions. There may exist many trade unions in the same establishment. The existence of large number of trade unions can be attributed to the fact that The Trade Unions Act, 1926 permits any association of seven workers to be registered as a union, and confers upon it certain rights. Many a time, it is contended that multiplicity of unions is because of outside leaders, but more pertinent point is that they are able to work because law permits and gives sanctity to the small unions.

(D) Inter Union Rivalry: Unions try to play down each other in a bid to gain greater influence among workers. In the process they do more harm than good to the cause of unionism as a whole. Employers are given an opportunity to play unions against each other. They can refuse to bargain on the contention that there is not true representative union. Besides this, the workers own solidarity is lost. Employers are able to take advantage of in fighting between workers groups.

(E) Weak Financial Position: The financial position is very low as their average yearly income is very low and inadequate. The subscription rates are very low due to multiplicity of unions, unions interested in increasing their membership keep the subscription rates very low resulting inadequacy of funds with the unions. Another important reason for the weak financial position of unions is that large amounts of subscription dues remain unpaid by the workers. The name of constant defaulters continuously appears on the registers on most of the unions. They are neither expelled nor cease to be members ipso facto according to the union rules.

(F) Lack of Public Support: The trade unions frequently resort to strike and protest in order to make their demands meet. As a result, inconvenience is caused to public. This is the public support or sympathy is almost negligible.

(9) Essential conditions for success of Trade Unions

The fact that trade unions play a very important role in the process of economic development deserves no special emphasis but only desire of playing that role is not sufficient. It is pertinent to mention that they must fulfill certain other conditions which may be laid down as under:

The first essential of a trade union is the existence of a progressive labor force in order to man the movement. An educated and capable labor force keeps the leaders devoted and makes their will strong for leading their fellow workers. Lack of proper and adequate level of education general as well as technical or vocational, proper commitment to the job, diverse composition of the labor force divided by difference of language, custom, caste and creed and widespread poverty owing to low level of wages render the working class incapable of manning the trade union movement effectively and purposefully.

Another essential factor of a successful and sound trade union is a sound leadership and methodological organization. In order to gain success in its objects, a trade union should have its foundation laid on solid grounds.

A clear enunciation of the objectives is a third fundamental feature for survival and sound functioning of trade union. Trade unions with complexity in objects are looked down upon with suspicion.

Another point which must be adhered to is that trade unions must make sure to have a coherent and well-conceived policy regarding their structure. Haphazard growth of trade unions may give rise to problems in jurisdiction, sphere of activity, etc. A trade union should be regarded as a business organization as it also requires careful planning.

Sound internal organization is also a matter of vital importance This, in turn, requires that besides sound business administration, the financial resources of the union should also be adequate. Thus, the factors that make a trade union strong and healthy are unflinching adherence to the unions constitution and rules, regular payment of dues, fully representative character and cooperation with other unions

Conclusion

Unfair labour practice and practice of not involving employees in any kind of decision making resulted in formation of trade union in India and its recognition by court of law, The notion of social justice and industrial peace can only be achieved by the mutual cooperation of employers

and employee and that is why trade unions play their major roles in achieving the industrial peace and serving overall justice to employee.

There are various contexts in which employee should be exempted from the arbitrary decisions of employers like wages, bonus, working hour, holidays, this exemption can only be achieved by virtue of negotiation named as collective bargaining where interest of both parties are given priorities in any kind of dispute, origin of trade union clarifies the struggle behind the formation of trade unions in India, further the continuous division in the trade union at national level led to the less implementation of objective they frame before formation, one of the cause can also be traced in the form of legislation in this regard, now a days there are only two essentials which have be satisfied in order to establish a trade union that is substantial number of workers and matter of dispute have substantial nexus with workers but the representation is not the only task which is to be done, for the purpose of negotiation and complete management the skill of bargaining is required which commonly lacks in the common workers of the industry as they lacks in education and awareness.