

CITU

13TH ALL INDIA CONFERENCE



COMMISSION PROCEEDING REPORTS AND PAPERS

A CITU PUBLICATION

FOREWARD

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FOREWARD

The Thirteenth Conference of CITU held discussions in separate Commissions, on six important topics related to the working class movement in the country. The delegates who participated in these Commissions held thorough and in depth discussions for half a day on these topics. The Papers presented by the Office Bearers of CITU in these Commissions were endorsed by the delegates who further enriched them with their vast and rich experiences. This publication is a compilation of these papers finalised after taking note of the comments and suggestions that emerged in the discussions.

These Papers reflect the policies and stand of the CITU on these issues and underline its future course of action, as outlined in the Thirteenth Conference, in meeting the various challenges. They are intended for further study and discussion at all levels of the CITU organisation.

We believe that the all the affiliate unions and committees of CITU will utilise this as well as the compilation of the other documents adopted by the Thirteenth Conference of CITU, being published separately, to the benefit of the working class movement. We also hope that the organisations friendly to CITU will find this publication useful in fine-tuning their policies and in their day to day activities.

Translating and publishing these documents in local languages will help in reaching the message of the Thirteenth Conference of CITU to wider sections of the workers and trade union activists in the country.

A K PADMANABHAN
President

July 8, 2010



COMMISSION PAPER

on

**REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY
OF THE WORKING CLASS,
NEO-LIBERAL OFFENSIVE
AND THE TRADE UNIONS**

REPORT

The session was attended by 351 delegates. Com Sudha Bhaskar chaired the session and Com Sukomal Sen presented the paper. 36 delegates took part in the deliberation and 48 delegates placed their views in writing. In both the oral and written submissions, many useful suggestions were put forward by the delegates. They also stressed upon the need for carrying on intense interactive discussion on the subject at all tiers of organization. Speakers also urged that the ideological issues must compulsorily be included in all trade union education programmes at all levels and holding trade union classes at different levels of the organization must be an integral part of our regular activities. Taking into account the views and suggestions made by the delegates, the Paper has been redrafted and reproduced below.)

COMMISSION PAPER

Offensive of neo-liberal globalization continues to be formidable and it is pervasive. It is not confined to economic and political spheres or the sphere of labour rights only. The sphere of ideology and culture is as much its target as the other spheres. Ideological offensive provides powerful backing for the attack on economic-political space and on labour rights. To combat neo-liberal globalization therefore it has to be fought on all fronts. We have in this commission paper dealt with some aspects of ideological offensive which particularly concern the labour movement and the trade unions. For this we have first to have a clear understanding of the ideological position of labour movement and the trade unions, which is under attack. Let us elaborate the subject in a compact but understandable way.

Trade Union as a Class Organization

Trade Union is a class organization of the working class. But what is a trade union in the perspective of the revolutionary ideology of the working class?

The main question comes here: What is a class? According to

working class revolutionary theory and social analysis, class is an economic division of the society, an economic category and the character of that division depends upon whether what division owns the means of production or not, because the nature of that production system decides the class character of that division, as an economic category of the society. Accordingly, say in capitalism, society is divided into two antagonistic classes – the capitalists and the working class. This fact is well known to all trade union activists.

But to properly understand the revolutionary ideology, the above well known explanation is not sufficient while working in the trade unions, because trade union activists have to successfully combine idea with organization.

Here we may refer to some old but very relevant records. While preparing for International Workingmen's Congress and forming International Workingmen's Association in 1864 in London by Karl Marx and for the Geneva International meeting in September, 1866, certain instructions were issued by Karl Marx and Engels, the essence of which lay in their definition of trade unions as 'an organized force for superseding the very system of wage-labour and capital rule itself'. This meant no less than revolution, and these words were then part of a statement of purpose of considerable organizations of working class worldwide.

Following this ideological essence, the next question arises about the status of labour in a capitalist society.

In a capitalist society worker is emotionally separated from his labour, from the object of labour, he does not feel his activity as a part of activity of the society. His activity, he feels, is undertaken under compulsion for satisfying his own dire needs, for the purpose of earning means of subsistence. Division of labour contributes to deepening of the process, turns man (the worker) in to a machine tool. Division of labour increases with advance of technology in capitalist society.

In a socialist society division of labour does not emotionally

separate the workers from his labour. Because in that society labour is not subjected to oppression.

Capitalist Relation of Production

What characterizes capitalism is not the exchange of the product of labour of independent producers but the purchase and sale of the workers' capacity to labour and its use in commodity production for profit. Labour power itself becomes a commodity. The commodity labour power has its unique character, it is the source of value when exercised as labour.

The worker is not a slave sold like other commodities, but owns and sells labour power. In a sense the worker is a wage slave, there is little or no control over the labour process or product. But he has the formal freedom to refuse to sell labour power. However the alternative in the limit is starvation.

On the other side, antagonistic to the class of workers are the capitalists who control the workers and the product of labour through their command of the wage payment and ownership of the tools and raw materials or means of production. For the capitalist monopoly of the means of production ties the workers to the wage relation as explained above. If the workers owned or were entitled to use the means of production independently of the wage contract there would be no need to sell labour power rather than the product on the market and therefore no need to submit to capitalist control both during production and outside, in society.

This distinction between labour and labour power made by Marx while developing further the classical labour theory of value reveals the real nature of labour- capitalist relations.

This distinction is the basis of the famous Marxian theory of surplus value which exposes clearly and accurately the nature of capitalist exploitation refuting vulgar economic theory which is developed to conceal it. Not surprisingly therefore this important dysfunction has not been made part of mainstream economies.

Theory of surplus value not only explains the nature of capitalist exploitation of the working class, it also provide clue to intermittent crises of capitalist economy which is inherent in capitalist system, which result in huge unemployment, colossal waste of productive resources bringing immense misery to the life of the workers and all toiling people.

Karl Marx of course did not stop here. This was just the starting point of a full fledged ideology of the working class but to complete it he had to provide answer to the question: In this waste of resources d misery of the people the inexorable destiny of mankind? It is well-known that the Marxian materialist interpretation of history conclusively proved that capitalism like earlier socio-economic formations is a passing phase in history. It will inevitably be replaced by a system which can resolve the contradiction of the capitalist system. It is to be a system based on social ownership of means of production which alone can do away with exploitation from which stems all ailments of capitalist system. And this is Socialism.

Idea of Socialism

For Marx the idea of socialism is not an invention, not just a theoretical deduction. The idea is backed by the developments taking place within the capitalist system itself.

First, he sees capitalism as increasingly socializing life – through the organization of production, the economy more generally, and through state power – but in ways that are fundamentally constrained by the private nature of the market, private property and the imperative of profitability. Competition tends to socialize capitalist production through the increasingly intricate division of labour on the shop floor, and in society as a whole. In addition to this, the increasing role of the state in welfare provision, redistribution and production itself through planning or nationalized industries for example, all anticipate some of the economic and social forms of a future socialism. The same applied to the formation of worker co-operatives and so on, with or without state support. Yet these embryonic forms are inevitably constrained in content, form and even survival by

their confinement within capitalist society, the direct or indirect imperatives of profitability, and the economic and social system that depends upon it. Some forms of socialization – the planning of production system within large-scale firms, if hypothetically divorced from profit, have considerable affinity to socialistic production system different than the provision of health, education and welfare through the state. In this respect, the popular slogan - 'people before profit' expresses in easy and understandable terms some sort of socialistic welfare values within an acceptance of capitalism since profit is allowed as long as it is not privileged. These measures can help to some extent to predict what is the socialist production system.

Second, then, anticipation of socialism derives from the contradictions within capitalism, irrespective of whether these have evolved into embryonic socialist forms. Most notable is the revolutionary role to be played by the working class – with capitalism creating, expanding, strengthening and organizing labour for the purposes of production, but necessarily exploiting the working majority and failing to meet its broader economic and social aspirations. In the telling phrase of the Communist Manifesto, "what the bourgeoisie ... produces above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

This last sentence is of immense historical significance. Even before Karl Marx many thinkers particularly the utopian socialists wrote about socialist social order in which social ownership of means of production and all wealth of the socialists will replace private ownership. But it is now well known that it is Marx who first showed the inevitability of socialism and "it is also Marx who identified the social force that is destined to usher in socialism, the proletariat. Through scientific analysis of the process of social development Marx derived these ideas and so his socialism is known as scientific socialism. He taught the proletariat that it was their historic mission to bring about socialism to emancipate not only the proletariat but all other exploited class from all exploitation. Thus, the proletariat and all exploited people got a complete ideology to rouse them and

spur them into action. Conscious section of the toiling people were guided by this ideology and has some historic achievement, and precisely this ideology which is today under attack by mercenary pen pushers of world capitalism and imperialism

Pernicious Ideological Campaign by the Capitalist Class

It is the organized working class world wide that constitute the hard core of the forces of resistance to the neo-liberal policies and globalization. This is not to under estimate the other sections of the society which may play an important role in the struggle. But as the most organized section in the capitalist system, the working class and for that matter the trade unions have a special role to play in drawing the other sections and in organizing them to become an effective force. It is also to be noted that the working class becomes the first direct victims of all capitalist offensive. Therefore the place of the working class is on the front line of battles. And it is to emasculate the working class movement under trade union that world capitalism and imperialism have launched vigorous ideological offensive to snatch away the revolutionary perspective from the real driving force of the working class movement.

The intellectual representatives of capitalism started their endeavor to refute the socialist ideas even before they acquired a complete shape. Ideological campaign has started again with new vigour after the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union where it was first established. The theme of the orchestrated propaganda they launched and still continue to harp is : socialism has failed, Marxism has been proved wrong, capitalism is the last world in history, there is no alternative. Elaborate theories were developed such as "post modernism" which in its different variations had the common aim of proving that existing social conditions cannot be changed by conscious effort which implies that capitalism will perpetuate. One cannot forget how Fukuyamas' "End of History" was hyped up by imperialist sponsored media and academia.

Besides they are disseminating pernicious ideologies to create permanent division and conflict among workers and the

people at large. Notable is the idea of the so called "clash of civilizations". On another front the attack takes the form of cultivation of consumerism by the media, print and more so the electronic media. It gives rise to egoistic pursuit of self interest and apathy towards trade unions among young workers, new entrants in the labour market. In a class society, this aspect of selfishness was already there, but at the height of capitalism in the form of neo-liberal globalization, this selfishness, individualism, careerism, egoistic attitude and aloofness from the problems of others have also reached a formidable height.

Apart from direct attack on trade union rights, and effort to prevent development of trade union in modern plants owned by multinational companies and even indigenous big business a body of literature has come up and is growing daily to preach futility of trade union movement, its irrelevance in the present condition.

Structural change of the working class and related ideological problems

For the last one or two decades we are witnessing rapid structural changes of the working class including that of India.

Neo-liberal regime of Capitalism has resulted in shrinking of the number of the workers in organized sector of industries and rapid increase of the workers in the informal sector of the economy. Even in organized sector, alongside the regular workers, there are huge number of contract labours, casual, daily-rated and part-time workers with no security of jobs or any semblance of social securities. There also side by side exist higher paid workers and low paid workers.

Among these categories of workers, task of the trade unions has become very difficult – organizationally and more so ideologically. This is very apparent to any serious trade union worker.

The category of workers who are in the informal sector economy, either they are employed by very small owners or mostly they are self employed, earning a very low rate of income. They are spread all over the country and are not available under the

same roof or in a concentrated spot. They are separated in different self employed jobs. To organize them is very difficult job and to conduct any ideological work among them is more difficult and tortuous. As they are separated from each other and they have to be grouped or united together for unionization and for ideological education and training. This is a world wide phenomenon including India, where their number is enormous and much exceed that of the workers in organized sector.

While taking the task of ideological – political education of these categories of workers, trade unions will have to undertake a serious task and accomplish it with greatest of tenacity and skill. These workers can also be easy victims of alien ideology and can some time be used by the bourgeoisie and other reactionary forces.

This is a critical ideological task facing the CITU at the present juncture and we will have to accomplish with utmost tenacity.

Changing Situation

It is true that the people, the working class in particular, are attracted to socialism not out of full theoretical conviction. Achievements of the Soviet Union were the most potent factor behind the popularity of the idea of socialism. It is only natural, the faith in socialism will be a little bit shaken with the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and East European Countries. The imperialist forces sought to utilize this situation to sow seeds of doubt in the minds of the people about the possibility and practicability of socialism.

The situation has already begun to change. The financial and economic crisis that has engulfed the capitalist world has once again brought to the fore the importance and soundness of Marx's analysis of capitalism leading to the basic ideas of socialism and its inevitability. It is not for nothing that Marx's major works which were gathering dust on the book store shelves sold like hot cake with the onset of the crisis. Now it is the turn of the advanced section of the working class movement to seize

upon this opportunity to organize vigorous campaign to combat ideologies which world capitalism have been trying to spread among the workers and people at large to cripple the working class and democratic movement.

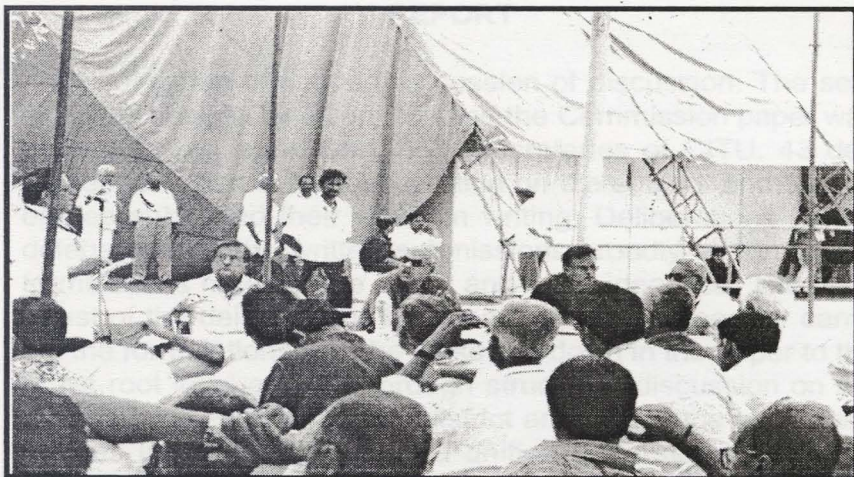
While it is not the place to attempt detailed analysis of the contents of the imperialist campaign or to elaborate our answer to them, the trade union movement and specially CITU needs to take up the task of organizing a ideological counter offensive and to uphold the working class ideology now under attack in right earnest.

In Specific Indian Condition

In Indian condition, problems are manifold besides the general issues of a Capitalist society. India being a multinational, multi-ethnic, multi-religion based society, along with the most vicious form of caste system, this have multiplied the problems of Indian trade union movement.

Further, the recent spurt of separatist ethnic politics, the rise of extremism in the name of 'Maoists', the worst type of killer and destructive outfits, -- all these together stand as formidable obstacles on the way of revolutionary trade union movement and democratic movement as well. Most of these problems are specific to Indian conditions and without addressing them, ideologically and organizationally, the Indian trade union movement cannot unify the working class on the basis of a revolutionary ideology aimed at replacing barbaric capitalist society with an exploitation free socialist society.

However, the urgent need is one of arming and equipping the trade union activists with the finest and most humane ideology of Marxian socialism. But socialism cannot be achieved instantaneously as soon as we proclaim the need for socialism. It is a historic process and needs a prolonged, patient and tortuous struggle and that has to be kept in mind. But as a historical necessity, there is no doubt of socialism being a reality in the course of these relentless struggles.



ing the working class movement and also for elevating the level
of consciousness with a class orientation.

COMMISSION PAPER
on
COMMISSION PAPER

**UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS
AND OUR APPROACH**

The Commission believes that the unity of the working class is a necessary condition for the success of the struggle against exploitation and oppression. It is committed to deal on the experience of the united movement and its evolution through various phases and evolve appropriate laws and tactics to broaden as well as consolidate the unity further in the light of lessons and experience of the past and evaluation thereof and also in the context of current developments in the politico-economic scenario.

The Constitution of CITU noted as its aims and objective, inter alia, as under:

"The CITU believes that the exploitation of the working class can be ended only by socialising all means of production, distribution and exchange and establishing a Socialist State. Holding fast the ideals of socialism, the CITU stands for the complete emancipation of the society from all exploitation."

REPORT

355 delegates attended this session of discussion. The session was chaired by Jibon Roy and the Commission paper was presented by Tapan Sen, both Secretaries of CITU. 43 delegates took part in the deliberation on the subject and 36 delegates submitted their views in writing. Deliberations by the delegates and the written submissions broadly endorsed the formulations made in the paper and tasks identified. The main thrust of the deliberations had been the urgent need for carrying the formulations and the tasks laid down in the paper to the grass-root level activists through structured discussion on the Commission Paper at state, district and workplace level committees in order to build up a unified understanding on the urgency to build up unity at the grass root level on issues facing the working class movement and also for elevating the level of consciousness with a class orientation.

COMMISSION PAPER

CITU's 13th Conference is taking place in the 40th year of its foundation. It has emerged from its foundation conference with the slogan of "unity and struggle" and pursued the same vigorously during last four decades. This paper is intended to deal on the experience of the united movement and its evolution through various phases and evolve appropriate tasks and tactics to broaden as well as consolidate the unity further in the light of lessons and experience of the past and evaluation thereof and also in the context of current developments in the politico-economic scenario.

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"It firmly adheres to the position that no social transformation can be brought about without class struggles and shall constantly repel attempts to take the working class along the path of class collaboration..."

On this premise, the Report on Organisation adopted by the CITU Working Committee meeting held at Bhubaneswar on 4-6 June 1993, popularly known as the Bhubaneswar document, noted in its opening paragraphs:

"Since the emergence of CITU in the trade union scene of India twenty three years ago, it has played an important role in building a united movement on common issues facing the working class....The CITU consistently upheld the principle of class struggle and socialism and fought against ideologies inimical to these lofty ideals. Even at times, it was alone in taking certain positions, but it never gave up the struggles to protect the class interest of the workers."

CITU's approach on unity of the working class must base itself on the basic premises defined in its Constitution as mentioned above and the organisational approach formulated in the Bhubaneswar document based on such understanding. The Policy paper on "United Struggles and Organisational Consolidation of Working Class Movement" discussed by CITU General Council and finally adopted by the Working Committee of CITU in December 2002 noted in clear terms:

"This experience underlines the fact that for achieving broader unity for action, it is always essential to pursue the line of united struggle and to insist firmly on "unity for struggle only". Unity, without a vision of struggle, is futile and has no meaning. By compromising on struggle, such unity cannot be achieved."

CITU's approach on unity of the working class is thus founded on these basic aspects:

- Unity for struggles
- Struggles to defend the rights and livelihood of the working

class and the people and such struggles are essentially directed against the exploitative and repressive policies of the ruling class

- In the process of such struggles and broadening unity of the class, conscious effort has to be made to transform the trade union consciousness for unity into political consciousness with a class oriented understanding on the issues and the policies of the ruling class

- Independent campaign at the grass-root level is crucial in developing conditions for unity from below in drawing together different organisations in the joint platform for struggle and independent grass-root level campaign for implementation of the joint programmes of action is also crucial for unifying the class and heighten their consciousness and understanding.

PRESENT CONTEXT

In the present politico-economic scenario, the task of unifying the entire working class in the struggle against the ongoing project of the ruling class has assumed immense significance. The project of the ruling class, being actively abated by the imperialist forces, is to marginalise and crush any radical opposition to neoliberalism and pro-imperialist policies. In the post Lok Sabha elections situation, the ruling combination led by Congress has become more desperate to push through the neoliberal policies of total deregulation hitherto hurdled by the Left and the working class movement during the UPA-I regime. On the other hand, the same desperation is also being demonstrated in the hot pursuit of the project of building a wide-ranging strategic alliance with the US imperialist power by the UPA-II regime much to the detriment of national interests, self reliance and sovereignty. To put it more comprehensively, what is being witnessed is a more aggressive follow-up of the overall neoliberal politico-economic policy architecture the US administration seeks to put India in, with the Indian rulers playing an obliging role. Particularly after the outbreak of the global economic crisis inflicting a severe recession on their economy and financial system, it has become all the more urgent for the

US imperialist power to make the ruling combine in India to capitulate to the US design faster and more comprehensively.

The Left forces in the country are the only opposition to such pro-imperialist and anti-national design of the ruling class and the working class movement is the lifeline and manifestation of such opposition. It is but natural that the ruling polity will leave no stone unturned to take the advantage of the set-back of the Left in the last Lok Sabha elections and consequent weakening of such opposition at the political level and rush their anti-national design faster both at the political and economic policy front and thereby pushing the politico-economic line up of the country in a more rightward direction. It signals a grave danger for country's self-reliance, sovereignty and the democratic set up. Onslaught on the working class and toiling people is a natural corollary to such a probability as it is the only class standing in consistent opposition to neoliberal policies.

The post elections scenario in the country is thus the witness to the hell bent effort of the forces of right reaction to engineer grievous all round attack on the Left through administration, media and all the agencies of capitalist order. The attack is concentrated more on its strongest bastion, West Bengal which is taking both the routes of malicious campaign through media network and also physical and murderous attack on the Left organisations through gang-up of right-reaction-ultra Left combine.

The Left forces are always the champion of the rights of the working class besides remaining consistently in stout opposition to all right reactionary and imperialist designs. In the event of weakening and marginalisation of Left, the axe is going to fall on the rights of the working class in the first round itself followed by attack on the institutions and other set-up of the democratic political system. Thus, it is now the biggest challenge before the working class movement to cover up the weakening of the Left inside Parliament to mount stouter opposition to imperialist designs and neoliberal order through massive mobilisation of the toiling people outside against every anti-

people move in the economic and political front – a challenge it can only afford to ignore at its peril.

Weakening of the opposition inside Parliament has to be more than compensated by bigger countrywide militant mobilisation by the working class against neoliberalism of every hue. And to discharge this historic task and meet the forthcoming challenges, working class movement must widen its platform of unity in the widest possible term – a unity built up on the foundation of a deeper understanding of the gravity of the threat to democracy, self-reliance, sovereignty and all hues of progressive values and the task of mounting a determined peoples' resistance to the same. Unity of the working class is thus required to be widened and heightened in all its dimensions.

TWO DIMENSIONS

The task of unifying the working class has got at least two dimensions. In the situation of multiplicity of trade unions as prevalent in our country, unifying various trade union centres with different political leanings in the platform of struggles on common issues facing the working class is one of the dimensions. Another dimension is one of unifying the working class in the scenario of heterogeneity in the working conditions and employment relations among the working people in a particular workplace, in the industry and in the economy in the struggle against exploitative system.

United struggle of the trade unions of different affiliations in a situation of multiplicity of trade unions and also bringing together the organisations of workers and employees of various sectors and segments of industry and services in the joint platform of struggles advances the cause of unifying the working class in general on common issues facing the class and related policy directions to a great extent.

But that alone is not enough in forging the unification of the working class and make it a formidable force to lead the struggle for systemic transformation unless the issue of heterogeneity among the working people in the workplace, in the industry and in the economy, sometimes apparently and illusory

rily demonstrating 'conflict of interest' is not addressed appropriately and overcome and on a priority basis by the working class movement with a revolutionary ideal. This aspect of the task of unifying the class has assumed much greater relevance in the present times as the heterogeneity in the profile of the workforce has increased alarmingly and this is being created and utilised as an instrument by the employers' class to reign on the workplaces to intensify the exploitation.

EXPERIENCE OF UNITED ACTION OF TRADE UNIONS IN RETROSPECT

Exercise for the unity of the working class movement has gone a long way in setting the tune of working class intervention both on policy and workplace-related issues since the inception of CITU.

The CITU emerged from its foundation conference with the slogan "Towards Unity and Struggle" and emphasised the urgent need of building unity of the working class in the struggle against exploitation and for defending the trade union and democratic rights of the workers and the people.

Immediately after the foundation of CITU, the ruling classes made hectic efforts to isolate the CITU within the trade union movement itself. The INTUC, AITUC and HMS joined hands to form the National Council of Trade Unions (NCTU) in 1971, with the blessings of the Govt. of India and its the-then Labour Minister, R. K. Khadilkar.

The CITU took initiative to bring all other trade unions and industrial federations to form a common platform - the United Council of Trade Unions (UCTU) - to defend the working class. The UCTU launched united countrywide struggles on various issues facing the working class and later against the emergency rule. In the process, the pro-Govt. NCTU formation became defunct and finally disintegrated.

Since then, the exercise for unity and united actions of the working class had gone through various phases, with the platform of united struggle getting widened in every successive

phase. The Industrial Relations Bill 1978 brought forth by the Morarji Desai Govt had witnessed countrywide united resistance by all the central trade unions, including the AITUC, INTUC and BMS, on a wider platform of unity.

The INTUC deserted the united movement after the Congress came back to power at the Centre in 1980. The National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions (NCC) was formed from a massive all India convention at Mumbai in June 1981, which comprised all the Central Trade Unions except the INTUC, besides numerous major industrial federations. It succeeded in repulsing a number of attacks on the rights of the workers till late eighties. Notable was the historic countrywide general strike on 19th January 1982, at the call of the NCC. This was the first powerful nationwide industrial action of the working class in the annals of the Indian Trade Union movement.

During this period formation of Committee of Public Sector Trade Unions (CPSTU) as the united platform of the workers of central public sector undertakings occupying strategic position in the industrial economy of the country is another important development. CITU's independent campaign against the then central govt's conspiratorial move to denigrate public sector had been the crucial factor in creating conditions for formation of CPSTU. Besides the public sector unions affiliated to all major central trade unions except INTUC, most of the independent unions in the PSUs particularly at Bangalore, Hyderabad and other places in the country joined CPSTU making it the biggest ever united platform of public sector workers in the country. Intervention of CPSTU could succeed in making the Govt retreat several times from its anti-worker guidelines in the matter of wages and service conditions of the workers and also in the matter of anti-PSU policies including disinvestment/privatisation moves. BMS disassociated itself from CPSTU in late eighties owing to political reasons. But recently BMS has expressed its readiness to join CPSTU and CPSTU is going to take a favourable decision in this regard.

After the onset of the neoliberal policy regime in 1991 demonstrating a quantum rightward shift moving away from self reli-

ant development to imperialist driven neo-liberal globalisation, the united movement of trade unions entered an altogether new phase. Except INTUC and BMS, all other trade unions joined in the countrywide strike action on 29th November 1991. CITU played the pioneering role in bringing round all other trade unions for this joint strike action against the neoliberal policies at its introduction stage itself. This paved the way for the formation of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. Except INTUC and BMS, all the Central Trade Unions joined the Sponsoring Committee along with other major independent all India federations of the employees in Central and State Govt.s, defence, pharmaceuticals, fertilisers, bank, insurance and other industries, representing an overwhelming majority of the employees of those sectors. This was a further widening of the united platform of struggle. The Sponsoring Committee is still continuing to work as the platform of struggle against neoliberal imperialist globalisation which led till its formation 12 countrywide successful general strikes till date. And every successive general strike, witnessed wider participation of workers including many INTUC and BMS affiliates in the strike action across all the segments of the industry and services compared to the previous ones.

Another important feature needs to be noted. Although the INTUC and BMS leadership stayed away from the joint platform of anti-globalisation struggle, during the intervening period the joint campaign by the Sponsoring Committee against the LPG policies and its fall out on the workers and the people could create many such situations where INTUC and BMS leadership had to join with the Sponsoring Committee constituents in jointly raising their voice of opposition to various aspects of the neoliberal policies. For the first time in the post-liberalisation regime, the central leadership of INTUC and BMS were compelled to join the agitation against the LPG policies, with a call for countrywide joint demonstrations on 24th July 2001. In 2003 also INTUC and BMS joined the common platform to jointly oppose the judicial pronouncement against right to strike.

Again on 14th September 2009, in the INTUC and BMS leadership joined other Central Trade Unions and Federations in

holding a national convention to oppose the Govt policies on price-rise, disinvestment, labour law violations, job-losses due to recession, unorganised sector workers' social security rights etc followed by joint observance of countrywide protest day on 28th October 2009, dharna before Parliament on 16th December 2009 and countrywide satyagraha and court arrest on 5th March 2010. All the programmes have drawn participation huge section of common workers throughout the country.

The activities of the joint platform for anti-globalisation struggle had also its impact on other organisations of the people to come out in protest against the anti-people neoliberal policy regime. At Sponsoring Committee's initiative National Platform of Mass Organisation was formed comprising mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth, women etc at a massively attended all India Convention in New Delhi in 1993. The NPMO did play an important role in activating all the mass organisations, covering all segments of society, in unleashing campaign and agitation throughout the nineties. In 2000 onwards NPMO could not be kept active on the all India plane owing to non-response and negative approach of the some of the TU constituents in the joint front, but in several states, at the initiative of CITU, NPMO has still been playing an important role in supplementing the trade union initiatives in the struggle against neoliberal policies.

The initiative of uniting the trade unions of various affiliations in the struggle on national plane was also supplemented by numerous unity initiatives at the sectoral and industry level and the intervening period has witnessed numerous industry-level joint actions many of which demonstrated all in unity of trade unions at industry/workplace levels. The financial sector, the banks and insurance in particular, telecom, coal, Jute and at times Port & Dock are the examples of such sectoral initiatives for all in unity on common demands of the workers. Notable is the successive strike actions or initiative for strike in the banks, insurance and telecom where both employees and officers organisations joined together in widening the platform for unity that too in the struggle against privatisation and deregulation moves by the Govt.

Experience of Joint Struggles Summarized

The four-decades long exercise of united trade union movement throws up certain concrete experiences.

During the period immediately following emergence of CITU, the trade unions were sharply divided with the major sections of trade union centres striving to isolate CITU. Unity was not there at the top. But our efforts for rousing the workers in the struggle against the policies of the ruling classes and attack on their rights and livelihood could draw the major sections of the trade union movement, away from the clutches of class collaborationist pro-Govt. approach inside the trade union movement, despite occasional vacillations.

In the subsequent period also, firm assertion of the line of united trade union action against the policies led to widening of the united platform and such assertion could be demonstrated by rousing the workers from below at the workplace level to create the compulsion for unity at the top layers of leadership of different trade unions.

The anti-liberalisation struggle also could take-off only after a sustained campaign among the workers from early 1991 by the CITU exposing the real face of the policy of liberalisation itself. In all the subsequent phases, continuity of CITU's independent initiative to campaign on the issues of concern along with the effort to involve other unions in joint struggle could materialise joint movement. and again it is the independent initiative of CITU for implementation of joint programmes had always remained crucial in involving mass of the workers in those united actions. Success or failure of the joint struggles in various states and industries was always determined by the extent of independent campaign CITU could launch to carry the message of joint struggle to the grass root level.

The strength of independent campaign on issues of concern could well be understood from our experience of struggle on the anti-worker Employees Pension Scheme. CITU was practically alone in opposing the Employees Pension Scheme 1995

and all other major Central Trade Unions had supported the Govt in that matter. CITU was successful in carrying the independent campaign to such a height in 1996 that the call for countrywide strike on that issue was widely participated by the mass of the workers irrespective of affiliations. Many industry level unions affiliated to those very central trade unions also joined, thus manifesting a near total unity in action at the grass root level.

Unity at the top not reflected in matching mobilisation below

Here we must admit that despite considerable widening of the trade union unity in the struggle against the offensive of the ruling class, the unity effort could yet cover only a section of the workforce and still a large section of the working class, particularly in a the private organised sector and unorganised sector, and in some public sector units as well remained outside the ambit of struggle. The joint trade union action, despite getting widened substantially during last four decades, is yet to develop a determined, consolidated and comprehensive resistance against the neoliberal policy regime. The issue-based united struggle has still remained a defensive one against the fall out of the anti-worker and anti-people policies while the demand of the situation is an offensive struggle to reverse the policy regime.

It should also be noted that, in the case of joint trade union struggle with most of the trade union centres coming together, and even in case of all in unity of trade unions, the same was not fully reflected in the unity and matching mobilisation at the ground level. Even if we take the recent programmes of countrywide agitation in the month of October, December 2009 and March 2010, sponsored jointly by all the central trade unions in the country for review, we find that the mobilisation in these programmes is not commensurate with the phenomenon of all in unity of trade unions. One of the reasons may be that the all the constituents of the joint platform might not have exerted fully and did not exert at all in mobilising for the joint programme. But that cannot be the only reason.

The united movement of the trade unions in the seventies till mid eighties that could create a wave of struggles were primarily focussed more on immediate issues of rights and livelihood of the working class and policy issues were comparatively in the background. From mid-eighties onwards, with the much aggressive dilution of economic and industrial policy towards neoliberal direction and with aggressive ideological offensive of the ruling class in favour of the neoliberal policies, the canvas of struggle has undergone a change which must not be lost sight of. And with the phenomenon of collapse of socialism in Soviet Union and East Europe, situation became more hostile and complicated. Joint trade union initiatives since mid-eighties and particularly in the nineties onward, were basically focussed against the impact of the neoliberal policies of the ruling class where many of the constituents of joint struggle were not ideologically inclined to fight neoliberalism as a policy. In such a complicated situation CITU's pioneering effort could finally rally most of the trade union centres except INTUC and BMS in the struggle against the fall out of the neoliberal policies.

Thus the phase of anti-globalisation struggles in the nineties onward could no doubt create noticeable impact in widening platform of united struggle and act in slowing down the pace of neoliberal reforms to some extent but at the same time could not yet ensure the reciprocal mobilisation at the grass root level required for heightening the struggle to the offensive stage for reversal of the policies altogether.

Anti-globalisation struggle had been altogether a new phase in the annals of joint trade union movement and it was basically a struggle against the policies of the ruling class. To carry the struggle in this phase to a militant height and bigger mobilisation needs a higher level of consciousness among the workers. In fact, the need of the hour is to transcend the present stage of united struggle to a wider platform of class unity with higher level of consciousness and commitment to resist and reverse the present policy regime. And that task of developing higher consciousness among the ranks and leadership is basically an ideological task to be discharged by CITU only. We

lacked in effectively discharging this task owing to our own ideological organisational disorientation which got reflected in our weakness not only in unifying the class but also in countering the offensive of the employers class in keeping a large section non-unionised, and dividing the workers in the workplaces under various pretexts. Such disorientation can hardly be overcome if we fail to effectively link our movemental and organisational initiative with the perspective of socialism enshrined in our Constitution.

Unity at Ground Level

United action of the trade unions could cover only those sections of workers who are unionised. In the private organised sector, particularly those emerged after 1991, the trade union could not yet be formed in large number of units, particularly in those owned by MNCs and neo- big industrial houses and any effort for formation of trade unions there is being bitterly resisted by the employers through brutal and repressive means in collaboration with labour department and law & order authority. In some of those private sector units bitter struggles are going on against the barbarous onslaught by the employers-Govt combine just for formation of trade union as in the case of Hyundai and MRF in Tamilnadu, Richo, Speedomax, Omax, Honda etc in Haryana and the like. Most of these units are modern capital intensive units in the manufacturing sector occupying crucial position in the industrial economy and wield huge influence in the corridors of power. Forming trade unions and sustaining them in the yet- nonunionised segment of private organised sector is a prerequisite to bring them in the fold of joint trade union action and this is a crucial requirement to widen the unity of the working class, strengthen the joint trade union movement and building effective resistance against the capitalist onslaught.

Moreover in the midst of severely repressive regime perpetrated by the employers-Govt combine on the workers and specially directed against formation of unions in many workplaces, solidarity movement against repression on the unions and workers by other unions in and around, both regionally

and on all India plane depending on the scale of repression creates ground for widening and cementing of the unity of the workers irrespective of affiliations. Recent experience of Gurgaon, Haryana, where more than a lakh workers in the industrial units in that place staged total strike against repression and killing of a workers in Richo factory there may cited as an example.

On the other hand although a sizable section of the unorganised sector workers could be organised in trade unions and rallied in the joint struggles of trade unions, a vast segment of them is yet to be organised in unions. In view of the size of the unorganised sector workforce increasing every day along with gradual shrinkage of the organised sector employment under the neoliberal regime, expanding trade unions faster among the unorganised sector workers is also an important task for strengthening the joint trade union action effectively.

Another aspect of the united movement of trade unions of different affiliations needs to be noted. Even on the campaign for general strike at the call of Sponsoring Committee, the unions affiliated to the constituents of sponsoring committee are rarely seen to act jointly in the enterprise level. Often, our unions complain that unions affiliated to constituent organizations of the joint platform do not take interests in campaigning for joint countrywide action. This is no doubt a weakness of united programmes of action, impacting on the effectiveness of the joint actions. But at the same time, such apathy of other unions to campaign for joint actions also provides us an opportunity to launch independent campaign on the programmes of united action among the followers/members of other unions and expand our reach among the workers beyond our membership base.

But in this aspect our unions are lacking seriously in availing such opportunity owing to the basic defect/shortcomings in our methodology and approach of campaign, which severely limits our campaign within the usual and immediate surroundings not even covering our own membership, not to speak of reaching the members of other unions and non-unionised workers.

Even on enterprise level issues, experience of unity among the trade unions is not very encouraging. Only when the particular industry is in crisis owing to sickness, various unions irrespective of affiliations are seen to come together to fight or work for revival but such phenomenon is mostly witnessed in public sector units. Otherwise inter union rivalry and antagonism, in a scenario of multiplicity of trade unions, generally dominates over the urge for unity at the enterprise level. The concern for class unity must make our unions demarcate themselves in such a scenario of rivalry and antagonism.

We have to expose the anti-worker and anti-struggle approach of other reformist unions through developing correct and unified understanding among the mass of the workers on the correct class oriented approach on the issues facing them and rallying the workers in that direction instead of making repulsive and even sometimes abusive comments on other unions. This will keep the movement in track and at the same time create compulsion for other unions to rally round the idea of united struggle. The recent experience of coal workers' movement is an example of successful exercise of such strategy of demarcation and unity adopted by CITU. Or in the recent strike of 30-31st October 2009 in public sector steel plants organised by CITU, independent campaign by CITU on the just demands of the workers in the face of pro-management stance by other unions could successfully draw the overwhelming majority of the followings of other unions into strike action thus reflecting almost complete unity of the class at the grass-root level.

We must note that the unity of the class, we are talking about, is not just the unity of the leadership of different trade unions at the top while at the bottom their affiliates are falling apart. Unity is not for unity's sake but for united action with a class approach. Condition for such unity has to be built up from below through independent campaign reaching the entire workforce. And through this process only we can advance towards our goal of developing 'one union in one industry' to achieve total unity at the workplace level.

To discharge this onerous task, the organization must be armed

with the ideological understanding on the role of the working class at all levels and its linkage with the organizational practices of a revolutionary trade union armed with the determination and class outlook to involve the entire class with our initiative. Such determination stems from the correct understanding of real import the democratic practices of a revolutionary trade union aimed at reaching the entire workforce to develop unified understanding on the issues before them. Any initiative without such effort to reach the mass of the workers is destined to reduce itself to personalisation of organisation and severely hurdle the unity of the class. Our experience reveals that we severely lack such understanding in the collective sense, so far as the prioritization of issues and organizational practices are concerned.

Confederation of Trade Unions

Unity of trade unions, joint struggles and issues involved should also be looked into and analysed in the context of CITU's declared objective of building a Confederation of Trade Unions to further consolidate the unity of the working class achieved through united movement of trade unions. In view of the multiplicity of trade unions, which is on the increase in the background of fragmentation of the political spectrum, confederation could have effectively addressed the problem of weakening of bargaining strength of the trade unions both at workplace level and at national level. But still there are differences between the trade unions on this issue and some of the trade unions seek to counterpose the demand for merger to scuttle the proposal for confederation. Thus confederation may not be achievable in the near future. But the goal is crucial for consolidation of unity developed through joint struggle. The continuing exercise for united action of trade unions on common issues and strengthening unification of the mass of the workers on the issues facing the working class and the direction of struggle in different phases may pave the way for the same in the days to come.

THE OTHER DIMENSIONS

The other aspect, and an equally important aspect too, is the

task of unifying the class overcoming the extreme heterogeneity of working conditions within the class in both the workplace and in the economy as a whole which need to be addressed both at the workplace/industry level as well as at the macro level. We must note such heterogeneity is being cultivated in the production system by the ruling class to divide the working class and utilise the same as an instrument of earning super-profit.

The proliferation of the unorganised sector in a big way has created a situation where the ruling class has been counterposing the vast unorganised sector workforce against the organised sector movement in order to suppress both. The huge army of rightless and protectionless unorganised sector workforce is the creation of the ruling class in order to intensify exploitation and multiply profit for the capitalist class. And they are utilising this phenomenon against the organised trade union movement and also making a plea for dismantling the existing labour laws as they do not supposedly cover the unorganised sector workers representing 94 per cent of country's workforce. Organising the unorganised sector workers and rallying them in the mainstream movement of the working class is the most important task before us in order to develop a tangible unity of the entire class for effective action. CITU is already seized with the task. The details of our approach toward organising the unorganised sector workers is being discussed in a separate commission.

Regular vis-à-vis Contract/Outsourced/Indirect Workers

The most crucial aspect is the issue of addressing issue of heterogeneity in conditions of work being created every day at workplace/industry level, while pursuing our task for intensifying the unity of the class. Owing to rampant contractorisation, casualisation and outsourcing, the composition of the employment is undergoing a drastic change within most of the organised sector workplaces, both in the manufacturing and service sector. A situation has been so created that in the same premise two sets of workers are doing almost same jobs with two sets of service conditions where one set-the contract or

outsourced workers are not even getting not even one tenth of the wages of the regular workers doing the same job. Even in public sector units share of contract workers in total employment has already touched fifty per cent mark on the average, while in private sector units in the organised sector, overwhelming majority of the workforce is under various contractors.

This is destined to happen under neoliberal regime driven by the dominance of international finance capital. In fact the neoliberal regime promoted much greater concentration of wealth, productive capacity and capital under the control of big corporate and big-business lobby, both domestic and foreign. And their operational method has undergone a change towards decentralisation and indirectification of employment relations and within the confine and control of organised sector employers, a vast section of workforce has developed with the conditions of unorganised sector employment resulting in sharp decline in the labour cost thereby phenomenal increase in surplus-value extraction.

Our unions in the organised sector could not yet gauge the implication of this compositional change in the employment profile in the organised sector creating a kind of dichotomy where two different sets of workers are working in the same industry/unit/premise with two different sets of working conditions, one lagging far behind the other. We failed to organise the contract/casual/outsourced workers within the confine of the organised sector movement and mainstream their movement together with the movement of the regular workers in the organised sector. As a result, during the intervening period, there is a visible decline in our organisational strength in the organised sector, both in public sector and also in private sector among the regular workers as well. In most of the places, regular workers' movement demonstrated reluctance to take up the demands of the contract workers with due seriousness and in many places the employers play successfully posing the issue as a kind of 'conflict of interest' among the two sets of workers in order to keep the entire workforce divided and unfortunately many unions fall an easy prey to such divisive tactics of the ruling class. Our failure to organise the contract

workers in most of the places, our failure to make the union of regular workers' unions in any establishment to take initiative in organising the contract workers and fight for their basic demands resulted in fast decline in our membership and erosion of striking power in the organised sector which is a matter of serious concern. Such a negative phenomenon is also affecting the quality of the intervening capacity of the working class movement against policy issues at political level too.

How can we even conceive of effectively uniting the class without defeating such divisive game of the employers and the ruling class in the organised sector establishments occupying all the strategic sectors of the economy? In electricity, petroleum, transport, port & dock, steel, coal, mining –almost in all the sensitive sectors of the economy, such dichotomy and heterogeneity is prevailing within the workforce and this is increasing every day and this must be addressed with topmost priority. Contract workers and all kinds indirect workers in the organised sector must be organised and this job has to be undertaken by the regular workers' movement in the concerned sector and we have to work much more seriously for gradually integrating the contract workers with the regular workers' movement if we are to sustain the movement and organisation in the organised sector.

CITU in its successive conferences and committee meetings during last one decade or so, has been pressing for this initiative. But we could advance very little in organising the contract workers within the framework of organised sector movement. This is due to disjoint between our ideology and practice resulting in remaining a permanent victim of selfish-economism. We must seriously analyse the reason for such failure in order to make a breakthrough in this regard. The reasons lie in the character and quality of functioning of the unions in most the organised sector workplaces barring few exceptions. And such state of functioning reflects the status of class orientation and understanding among the leadership on CITU's vision about the role of working class and its aim of transforming the society as laid down in its Constitution and also reiterated in the introductory paragraphs of this paper. How can the working class

movement rally the democratic people in the struggle "to replace the present bourgeois-landlord regime" without unifying itself ?

Our neglect or failure in unifying the class in the face of heterogeneity and discriminatory conditions created by the employers' class by way of indirectification of the employment relations in the workplace reveals entrapment of a section of the organised sector workers' movement in the conspiratorial game of the capitalists to keep the class divided. And such entrapment takes place owing to the lack of understanding on the true spirit of democratic functioning of the class organisation, thereby throwing the functioning of the organisation in the captivity of personalisation and economism in stead of collectivity in the class sense of term.

The virtual blindness of such personalised leadership of the union keeps them captive to a kind of selfish pursuit of immediate, extremely short term illusory gain of a very small section of regular workers completely unmindful of the phenomenon of a vast section of irregular and indirect workers surrounding and gradually taking over their jobs endangering their relevance altogether.

Such failure reflects a process of deideologisation, rather ideological degeneration of a large section of the leadership of the organised sector unions, their inaction to organise the contract workers and integrate them with regular workers' movement is leading to erosion of the intervening capacity of the working class movement against the onslaught of the capitalist system. And such degeneration is also leading to emergence of various pernicious trends of corruption, unprincipled compromise with the employers etc within the trade union movement.

We have to overcome such failure by reorienting our organisation and leadership at all level with a class approach through intense ideological exercise at all levels of the organisation about the role of a revolutionary trade union and reorient its functioning to work for building widest unity of the working class in the struggle against exploitation.

FIGHT AGAINST THE DIVISIVE FORCES— COMMUNALISM, CASTEISM AND PAROCHIALISM

Our endeavour for unifying the class must prioritise on building the capacity and consciousness at all levels of the organisation to fight against all kinds of divisive and disruptive forces, the present class divided society is breeding everyday.

The rise of communal and divisive forces in the socio-political scenario since late eighties has posed a serious challenge to our efforts for unifying the working class and the toiling people in general. The communal forces led by RSS-BJP bandwagon has been actively pursuing their communal agenda and they have become more desperate in doing so in the face of their electoral defeat on the one hand and their internal squabbles on the other.

We should view with concern the inroad of this communal ideology within the ranks of the working class and also our weakness in fully combating the same. The trade union movement, along with other mass organisations, had on occasions taken up campaign against communalism; but that remains thoroughly insufficient, both in terms of mobilisation, regularity and consistency. This weakness has to be overcome, with conscious independent initiative at all levels of the organisation, to expose the communal-disruptive forces and defend the unity of the class.

The menace of casteism also is of serious concern. Problems arising out of casteism have also posed a severe challenge to the working class unity, weakening the trade union movement. This is a problem inherited from the old feudal socio-economic order. It perpetuated the caste system and the social oppression associated with it. That is why, even today worst form of caste repression exists side by side with the so called modernity infused by the capitalist way of development. However, since late eighties, there had been a greater assertion by the down-trodden sections and oppressed castes. This assertion is also getting reflected in the socio-political arena. This is a positive development and its democratic content needs to be

nurtured and integrated with the mainstream struggle against the exploitative regime.

Interested quarters, guided by 'vote-bank politics', are making hectic efforts to confine this growing assertion, against social oppression and injustice, within the narrow confines of the respective caste, to channelise the same towards caste based polarisation. This is to keep the downtrodden sections detached from the common democratic struggle against the very root of this oppression and injustice. This also is having its reflections in the trade union movement in a big way, particularly in the areas where the democratic movement is very weak. The task before the working class movement is to make conscious and consistent efforts to channelise the growing assertion among the oppressed castes towards class-consciousness. This makes it incumbent on the trade union movement to take up the cause of social justice and lead the struggle against social oppression on a priority basis.

The policy paper of CITU adopted in its tenth Conference noted the task in clear terms. It says, "While exposing the casteist ideology and along with it, the futility of caste based compartmentalization, the working class movement must also with all seriousness, throw its weight against all social oppression and atrocities and all discriminatory practices against downtrodden masses, from its class platform....In order to draw the oppressed masses on to the platform of class struggle, unshackling them from various caste based formations, the class-platform needs to establish its credibility as true champions of these oppressed people."

In the background of severe economic crisis, parochial forces are also raising their heads in most ugly manner as reflected in different parts of the country in different manners. The attack on the examinees and candidates for interview from Bihar in Maharashtra and Assam, on the Bengali speaking migrant workers in Maharashtra and Rajasthan and recent violent outbreak of so called Marathi chauvinist forces in different part of Maharashtra are some of manifestations which also acted in casting a disruptive impact on the unity of the people and must

be construed as a big challenge before the working class movement.

In this context, intensification of the working class struggles and militant mobilisation of the class against the pursuit of the agenda of imperialism in the economic policy front has to be taken up much more seriously. At the same time we have to take conscious initiative to combat and expose all the forces of disruption—communalism, casteism and parochialism both organisationally and ideologically. Both these struggles must be carried on simultaneously, aiming at broadening the unity of class in the field of struggle. The unification of the class and defeat of the disruptive forces can be best achieved through sharpening of the class struggle only. Fight against the communal and other disruptive forces must be construed as an organic part of the working class struggle.

CONCLUSION

The current developments in the political and economic arena featuring a substantive right wing shift in the balance of forces warrants a determined and vigorous initiative for united resistance by the working class movement. Unity of the working class developed through joint struggles of trade unions needs to be widened and heightened to commensurate with the challenges unfolded by the changed situation.

The four decades long experience of united struggle reveals that unity at the leadership level of various trade unions is not enough to unleash the required force to meet the present challenges unless that is accompanied by matching unity and mobilisation at the grass root level workers and that must cover the vast multitude of the workforce yet uncovered by the reach of united movement. Also required is a higher level of consciousness in the movement to make the struggle an offensive one directed towards a determined resistance to and reversal of the imperialist driven neoliberal policies both at the economic and political front.

CITU has to take the pioneering initiative in developing such

unity and consciousness in the movement. And for such uphill task, what is required is to prepare ourselves organisationally and ideologically at all levels. Our organisation has to be reoriented at all level to be able to unleash vigorous all round initiative up to lowest shop-floor tier of our organisation to take up the task of inculcating higher consciousness and developing unified understanding on the issues facing the working class and the society, its linkage with neoliberal capitalist order and the urgency to heighten the struggle for resistance.

Without democratisation of our functioning in its true spirit at all levels of organisation consciously fighting back influence of bureaucratism and master-slave relationship in trade union and without involving the working class in the leadership of the movement in a much wider scale such all round initiative cannot be unleashed. We must take concrete step to overcome such shortcomings.

We have to overcome also the revealing disjoint between the trade union work and CITU's ideological perspective defined by its constitution as reflected in our failure to build wider class unity at the grass root level in the struggles and effectively counter the divisive ploy of the employers at the workplace through creating discriminatory working condition. We have to learn to link effectively our day to day trade union work with the broader issues of the people create ground for rallying the people around the united movement of the working class.

Deepening ideological moorings of the class through intensive ideological work among the mass of the worker is crucial for unifying the class in the forthcoming struggles. Equally crucial is the consistent ideological campaign against all divisive forces, forces of communalism and parochialism to sustain the unity of the class and the people and to widen it further.



COMMISSION PAPER
on

CHALLENGES IN ORGANISING UNORGANISED WORKERS

REPORT

463 delegates from 21 states participated in the Commission on 'Challenges in Organising the Unorganised Workers' chaired by Com Shyamal Chakraborty, Vice President of CITU. Hemalata, Secretary, CITU introduced the report in brief. 60 delegates expressed their desire to speak but however, the number had to be confined to 39 due to time constraints; the other delegates extended their cooperation by willingly withdrawing their names; 15 delegates gave their suggestions in writing. All the delegates who spoke as well as those who gave their views in writing supported the formulations made in the Paper; many explained their experiences in support of the formulations. Several delegates emphasised the need to pay more attention to organising the unorganised sector workers and for planned work.

COMMISSION PAPER

In its 'Aims and Objectives', the constitution of CITU states 'The CITU believes that the exploitation of the working class can be ended only by socialising all means of production, distribution and exchange and establishing a Socialist State'. The CITU also believes that this can be achieved only through struggles led by the working class which is united and conscious of its historic role in ending exploitation.

Hence, organising and uniting the working class - be it in the organised sector or the unorganised sector - and making it conscious of its role is an important task for the CITU.

During the last two decades, under the regime of the World Bank dictated policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, there has been a phenomenal increase in the proportion of the unorganised workers - the workers in the unorganised sector as well as the workers with informal work relations in the organised sector who are not covered by different labour legislations, as defined by the government in its Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act. It is estimated that if the number of workers in an establishment to be covered by

the EPF and ESI Acts is brought down from 20 to 10, the proportion of unorganised workers would come down from more than 93% at present, to below 80%. But the government refuses to ensure the application of labour laws to the vast sections of the workers. In stead, the government itself is employing lakhs of workers on the basis of contract, casual, temporary, fixed term, consolidated pay etc systems, denying them the benefits of regular workers. In several public sector undertakings the contract workers outnumber the regular workers. In many state and central government departments, lakhs of workers are employed on contract basis, even in jobs of perennial nature.

As per the NSSO survey in 2004 – 05, there are 43.3 crores workers in the unorganised sector out of which 16.4 crores are non agricultural workers employed in construction, manufacturing, trade and transport, communication and services, including home based workers.

The vastness of the sector, the huge number of workers employed and its contribution to the economy makes it very important to organise the workers in the unorganised sector in order to unite the working class and launch militant struggles that can create an impact on the government policies.

The profiles of the unorganised sector workers vary very widely as do the industries/ trades/ sectors in which they are employed. While millions of low skilled, manual workers are employed in the unorganised sector, under the process of liberalisation, highly skilled and educated workers are being employed in the organised sector under informal employment relations as contract workers, apprentices, trainees etc. These so called 'knowledge workers' are relatively better paid than the ordinary unskilled workers in the unorganised sector but they are also highly exploited, as they do not have any job security or social security benefits and the employers reap huge profits from their services.

In the private organised sector, contract workers comprise an overwhelming majority of the workforce.

The agrarian crisis and decreasing employment opportunities in agriculture are forcing large sections of rural work force into non agricultural work and also into migrating to the urban areas in search of work. A large number of rural workers migrate to the cities and even to other states to work in the unorganised sector as construction labour, brick kiln workers, rickshaw and auto drivers etc. It is estimated that migration involves millions of workers in the country. The migrant workers, particularly women, are highly exploited because of their vulnerable conditions. It is difficult to organise the migrant workers and often the employers seek to rouse the local people against the migrant workers, whenever they go on struggles. This phenomenon of migration must be studied in depth to understand the reasons, its impact and the methods to be adopted to organise the migrant workers. The local cadres organising the migrant workers should try to understand their culture, language etc.

Organising the workers, whether in the organised sector or unorganised sector, has become very difficult in the era of imperialist globalisation. With the fall of Soviet Union and set back to socialism in East European countries, increasing aggression of imperialism and the growing loyalty of the ruling classes in our country to the imperialist dictated policies, the attacks on the rights of the workers, including on their right to organise, have increased. Employers are increasingly becoming intolerant even to the formation of unions.

The lack of job security, the long working hours, the scattered work places, lack of awareness about organisation, lack of identifiable employers, masked employer employee relationships, self employed nature of work, etc add to the difficulties in organising the unorganised sector workers. This is the serious challenge that confronts us in our efforts to organise them. The unorganised sector workers are often victimised even for forming unions, a phenomenon, which is being increasingly witnessed even in the organised private sector. Our cadres must be trained and equipped to deal with such situations. However, our experience at the national level as well as in several states indicates that with conscious and continuous efforts and proper planning it is possible to overcome the diffi-

culties and bring the unorganised sector workers into the fold of the trade union movement.

The efforts of CITU during the last around 20 years have led to some advance among this section of workers. At present, around 60% of the membership of CITU is from the unorganised sector workers. Almost the entire increase of 27.81% in CITU membership in 2008, over its membership in 2005, is from the unorganised sector.

But compared to the vastness of the sector and the total number of workers employed, our presence among the workers in the unorganised sector continues to be insignificant. Out of nearly 16.4 crore workers in the non agricultural unorganised sector, the membership of CITU is only around 30 – 35 lakhs. Again that membership is concentrated mainly in beedi, private transport, construction, plantation, anganwadi employees and a few other occupations. Even in some of the sectors/industries where we are relatively strong, vast majority of the workers remain outside our organisational fold.

At the national level, we have formed some all India federations like the All India Beedi Workers' Federation, the Construction Workers' Federation of India, the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, All India Fishers and Fisheries Workers' Federation etc, which have been functioning for some time. There has been definite progress in our efforts in organising these sections of workers after the formation of some of these federations. Yet compared to the vast numbers of workers in these sectors, we continue to be a nominal force; in many states we have yet to mark our presence.

For example, the membership of our All India Beedi Workers' Federation is only around 3 lakhs while the total number of beedi workers in the country is more than 50 lakhs; in many states like Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, etc where large number of beedi workers are concentrated, our presence is nominal; even in states where we are strong, our membership is less than 15% of the total workers. The membership of our Construction Workers' Federation of India

is around 9.75 lakhs out of the total 2.6 crore workers employed in the construction sector. Some state committees like in Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra etc have made efforts to register the construction workers in the welfare fund and also into the union which helped in increasing the membership of the union. But we have not made such planned efforts in most of the states. Though our presence among the anganwadi employees is comparatively better with around 4 lakhs members out of the total around 20 lakhs employees, still, in many states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan etc, where around half of the total anganwadi employees in the country are employed, we have only a nominal presence.

There are more than 75 lakhs fishers and fisheries workers in the country. Various measures taken by the government to facilitate establishment of industries and commercial enterprises in the coastal areas in the name of development, are leading to the displacement and loss of livelihood of the fishers, particularly in the coastal areas. But, we have been able to organise a very small section of the fishers in the country. In most of the states, including those with long coasts, we have not even started our efforts to organise them.

Among some sections of unorganised sector workers like the brick kiln workers, we have led several struggles on their demands and achieved some benefits also as in Haryana, Punjab etc, but, still vast sections of the workers in these sectors too continue to be outside the purview of our organisation. Developing a coordinated movement of brick kiln workers in the northern states, where there is lot of inter state migration, may be helpful in increasing their bargaining power and strengthening the organisations.

We have strong organisations of the loading and unloading workers in Kerala and some pockets in other states, but here too, in many states, we have not made any progress. In the urban economy, we have not been able to organise the workers in the unorganised segment of the manufacturing sector to any significant extent.

Our presence among the home based workers is negligible. Though we have conducted a survey, probably one of the most extensive surveys, among home based workers covering more than 3,000 workers in 10 states, our state committees even in these states have not thought of utilising the contacts obtained through the survey to organise the home based workers.

The All India Coordination Committee for the Unorganised Sector Workers has taken some initiative to advance our movement among the unorganised sector workers. However, more attention needs to be paid to its functioning by the CITU centre. It is necessary to ensure proper attendance in the meetings, plan activities and regularly monitor the implementation of the decisions at the Central level. There is no doubt that several of our state committees are taking more interest in the work among unorganised sector workers. Militant movements including state level strikes on the common demands of the unorganised sector workers were organised by the CITU state committees in several states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, etc.

Lakhs of unorganised sector workers including large number of women participated in these struggles facing police repression in many states. In addition, in many states campaigns and struggles were launched on the demands of workers in different segments of the unorganised sector like brick kiln, handloom, power loom, glass bangles, carpet, agarbatti, beedi, rice mills, head load workers, contract workers, construction workers, stone quarry workers etc, and also among the unorganised workers in the organised sector like the anganwadi employees, ASHAs, Mid Day Meal workers, contract municipal workers, etc. In some states, like in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana etc coordinated movements were launched by different sections of the unorganised sector workers.

These experiences indicate that wherever planned joint state wide campaigns on the common demands of the unorganised sector workers in different trades/ industries were conducted, there was very good response from the workers who partici-

pated in large numbers in the campaigns and struggles. This has helped in the expansion of the influence of CITU and considerable increase in its membership among vast sections of the unorganised sector workers. But, in most of the states, our interventions are confined to responding to the spontaneous struggles of the workers in different industries without any planned efforts. There also appears to be certain slackness in our activities in many states, particularly at the lower levels, after getting initial successes, in a few areas. Our CITU committees become satisfied with the performance and become complacent. Our long term objective of uniting the working class to intensify the struggle and bring about a reversal in the anti worker policies of the government, leave aside ending exploitation, is also totally forgotten.

Keeping in view our experiences gathered through our work during the last around two decades, we have to develop effective strategies to expand CITU among the unorganised sector workers, without losing sight of our long term objectives. Our unions among regular workers should take the initiative to organise the contract and casual workers in the organised sector. Several concrete decisions have already been taken in this regard. A few of these need to be emphasised.

*** State level campaigns**

Extensive state level joint campaigns on the common demands of the unorganised sector workers, e.g. minimum wages, coverage and implementation of labour laws, social security benefits etc help in attracting large number of unorganised sector workers from different segments towards the CITU; they also help in drawing the attention of the common people to the plight of the unorganised sector workers and putting pressure on the government to take the necessary measures to improve their conditions.

*** Study concrete conditions of the unorganised sector workers**

The conditions of the workers in the different industries in the

unorganised sector are only broadly common in the sense that they do not have any legal protection and whatever little rights they have are not implemented. There are vast differences in the nature of the various industries in the unorganised sector, the working conditions of the workers and their demands. For example, the problems and the demands of the beedi workers are not the same as of those working in small hotels and restaurants or those working in the small automobile repair shops; those of the construction workers are not the same as those of the rickshaw pullers or auto rickshaw drivers. The problems of contract, casual workers etc in the organised sector are entirely different.

Hence, forming an omnibus union for the unorganised workers from different segments/ trades/ industries will not serve the purpose of developing strong movements and organising them. It is necessary to form separate trade/ industry wise unions, formulate specific and concrete demands for each segment and organise them on that basis.

*** Prioritisation**

Another important task is prioritisation. Keeping in view the limited resources, human as well as financial, at the disposal of our CITU state committees, it is necessary to prioritise the sections/ categories to organise. The state committees should study the conditions of the workers in the different industries/ trades and assess the prospect of organising them while deciding priorities and planning activities in the unorganised sector.

Priorities can be decided on the basis of the following criteria –

* Workers who have a large state wide presence and whose organised struggles can put pressure on the government e.g. gram Sevaks/ chowkidars, contract workers in government departments, anganwadi employees, ASHAs, Midday meal workers, community health workers etc. It is also observed that organising anganwadi employees, ASHAs, Mid day meal workers, Panchayat workers, village chowkidars etc has helped in

taking CITU up to the village level

* Workers who can create a visible impact through their organised struggles e.g. those engaged in different types of transport like public or private passenger transport, goods transport etc; those in market yards like mandi workers, head load workers etc; municipal workers/ panchayat workers etc

* Workers engaged in manufacturing and services who can create an impact on the economy e.g. contract workers in the modern industries, garment workers, home based workers engaged in manufacturing, auto industry, IT and ITES, etc

After deciding priorities efforts should be made to develop sectoral campaigns and struggles, involving the largest possible number of workers in that particular sector. Our progress should be periodically reviewed.

* **Adopting different strategies**

As the conditions of workers/ employees in different trades/ industries/ sectors in the informal sector vary, the same strategies or methods may not be useful for all the trades/ sectors. Different methods have to be evolved for different trades/ sectors, depending upon the concrete conditions in each trade/ sector.

It may also be necessary to create confidence among the workers in the strength of unity and the organisation by taking up non work place issues including their residential area problems like house sites, sanitation, ration cards, health and education of the children, literacy programmes etc. Some intermediate forms of organisation like self help groups/ savings groups etc can be developed.

Considering the fact that women and workers belonging to the backward communities, who face not only economic exploitation but also social oppression, constitute a large section of unorganised sector workers, our unions have also to address social issues like caste and gender oppression. Experience in

several states indicates that in the initial stages the unorganised sector workers responded with greater enthusiasm when social issues and residential problems were taken up. This has helped in mobilising them on work place issues and organising them into trade unions later.

Street vendors, hawkers, rickshaw and auto drivers and a large number of self employed, where there is no visible employer and employee relationship also form a large part of the unorganised sector workers. While organising them, their specific demands like welfare fund, protection from harassment by anti social elements, police etc also should be prominently addressed.

*** Go to the workers**

The habit of functioning only from the union office, wherever it exists, should be discarded and our comrades should go to the workers – be it work places, or their residential areas, according to the situation – and try to be part of their lives. By proper intervention in their day to day problems – both at the work place and the residential areas, and by being a part of their social and cultural lives, we should create the confidence that they can approach the union and get the necessary help, whatever the problem, whenever required.

*** Cadres**

Organising the unorganised sector workers needs large number of cadres, not only because the sector is very vast but also because they are scattered and face a lot of problems. One of the problems encountered by us in organising the unorganised sector workers is the shortage of cadres. Utilising this weakness many NGOs working among the unorganised sector workers are trying to divert the movement away from trade unions. The government and the ruling classes also help such NGOs. Because of the nature and the extent of work involved, it is necessary to allot some full time cadres to organise the unorganised sector workers, at least in the initial stages. Efforts should be made to consolidate the already existing unions

in the sector, develop cadres from them who can then help in organising other sections of the unorganised sector workers. Attention should be paid to allot suitable cadres who can freely mingle with the workers after studying the specific character of each trade/ industry/ sector. The demands of the workers/ employees in that particular trade/ industry/ sector should be properly framed and campaigns and agitation methods should be evolved taking into consideration the aspirations, consciousness and the level of preparedness of the workers. Continuous efforts have to be made from the beginning to raise the consciousness of the workers.

It is essential that the cadres who are given the responsibility of organising the workers in a specific segment/ trade should develop an in depth understanding of the working and living conditions of the workers in that particular segment.

It should also be the responsibility of these cadres not only to organise but also to identify the activists among the workers and develop them to leading positions in the unions.

*** Cadre development**

While it is necessary to allot full timers in the initial stage, it is also essential to train and develop cadres including women cadres from among the unorganised sector workers to enable them to take up leadership positions in the unions. Cadre development from unorganised sector should be taken as a priority task. It is true that large number of the unorganised sector workers are illiterate and unaware of the various legal and statutory benefits available to them but if proper efforts are made, as in some states like Haryana, AP etc, it is not very difficult to find capable cadre from the unorganised sector and train them to take up leading positions in the unions. Besides, with the increase in the number of unorganised workers within the organised sector, many educated workers can be found, particularly among some sections like the anganwadi employees, ASHAs etc, whose services can be effectively utilised for the organisation. Regular trade union classes and education programmes should be organised for the activists and they

should be promoted. Particular attention should be paid to train, develop and promote women cadres. Formation of women's sub committees, within the unions in sectors with large number of women workers, and making these sub committees functional will help in the development of women cadres.

* As it is generally difficult for the unorganised sector workers' unions, at least in the initial stages, to pay for even the minimum requirements of the full time cadres, the concerned CITU committees have to take the responsibility of ensuring that the allowances and other expenses of the full time cadres are provided till the unions become self sufficient.

* The CITU cadres from the organised sector unions also have to take initiative to organise the contract and casual workers in their industries or areas. At present, however, there are very few instances of such initiative. In some states, cadres are recruited from other mass organisations like the youth or students' organisations.

*** Need to raise consciousness**

The CITU committees have also to make continuous efforts to raise the consciousness of the activists of these unions, so that they can effectively implement the CITU's policies and programmes among their members. A large number of our members who strongly support CITU and actively participate in all our struggles, even facing repression and victimisation are often under the influence of the communal and casteist forces at their residential areas or villages. Our unions must make efforts to raise their consciousness and make them aware of the need to fight the government's anti people policies in all spheres and also wean them from the influence of these divisive forces. Separate trade union classes should be organised for the unorganised sector and the syllabus should include social issues like caste, gender etc in addition to the regular subjects.

Construction workers, head load workers, anganwadi employees, ASHAs, Mid Day Meal workers, Panchayat workers, vil-

lage chowkidars etc are found in almost all the villages, even in states which are industrially not developed. Most of these workers come from agricultural worker or poor peasant families and have close links with them. Organising them and developing their political consciousness will enable us to influence these vast sections of the working class, the agricultural workers and the poor peasants spread throughout the country. It will be possible to form a nucleus for spreading CITU policies and implementing our programmes at the village level.

Our consistent campaign and activities, along with the other unions as well, in construction sector has resulted in the passing of the Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996 and initiation of certain welfare schemes in a few States. In Kerala, we have been able to secure constitution of welfare boards for several categories of unorganised sector workers. In West Bengal, the Left Front Government there had instituted a separate Provident Fund Scheme for the Unorganised Sector workers. In Tamil Nadu also, we had succeeded in pressurising the state government to set up welfare boards for different categories of unorganised sector workers and movements had been launched for making them functional.

The anganwadi workers and helpers have, through their persistent struggles, gained some benefits including increases in the remuneration from the central and several state governments, and other benefits.

But most of these benefits obtained through our relentless struggles, including the Beedi Workers' Welfare Fund Act, the Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act etc, the state level welfare funds in several states, the benefits for the anganwadi employees and other sections etc, are not properly implemented. The government is totally unconcerned about ensuring their effective implementation. The CITU has to take more initiatives to bring pressure on the government to remove the shortcomings in these Acts and welfare measures and also for the effective implementation of the existing benefits. Details of these benefits should be made available to all the CITU cadres working among unorganised sector workers through CITU jour-

nals etc.

According to the available information, no worker has been registered under the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act in 19 states/ UTs; registration in all the other states except Kerala and Tamil Nadu has been poor. Collection of cess is also very poor in most of the states, except in Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. The money collected is also not being spent. Except in Kerala, in all the other states, the expenditure incurred is insignificant. We must make efforts to ensure the proper implementation of this Act by bringing pressure on the state governments for the formulation of rules, collection of cess and its effective spending in providing welfare benefits to the construction workers.

Again, as a result of the continuous campaigns and struggles by the trade unions in which we have played an important role, The UPA government, though after much dilly dallying, has enacted the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act.

The UWSS Act has serious shortcomings and has been correctly described by us as a fraud on the unorganised workers. It does not have funds to provide any welfare benefit to the unorganised workers; it does not specify any time frame for its coverage of all unorganised workers in the country; it does not provide statutory guarantee of even minimum social security benefits. In stead of providing comprehensive social security coverage for the unorganised workers, only some existing schemes have been made applicable to the unorganised workers under the Act.

Out of these, four are meant for specific occupations like handloom weavers, handicrafts artisans, master crafts persons and fishers; six schemes - Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension scheme, National Family Benefit scheme, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Janshree Bima Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana cover the general unorganised workers. Most of these schemes cover only the BPL category and have several shortcomings and limitations as a result of

which more than 90% of the unorganised sector workers would not be covered by these schemes. However, the government is trying to create illusions among the unorganised workers about the Act. We must help the unorganised sector workers recognise the misleading campaign of the government and make them realise its apathetic attitude, through their own experience.

This can be done only by serious and sincere efforts by our unions to ensure that the benefits to the unorganised sector workers, that are included under the different Acts/ schemes, are actually implemented. We must take up a wide campaign among the unorganised sector workers on the existing schemes, make efforts to enrol them as beneficiaries and provide all assistance and help in getting the benefits. While enrolling the unorganised sector workers who fall under the BPL category as beneficiaries, we must also campaign on our specific demands like the removal of the BPL criterion, the constitution of the national fund under the Act by levying cess from the corporate sector so that minimum floor level social security benefits like pension, health care and maternity benefit, accident relief etc can be guaranteed and a specific time frame for extending the Act to all the unorganised sector workers in the country.

Concrete study of the present state of their implementation and the experiences of the unorganised workers at the local level, in stead of general and vague allegations, will help us in approaching the workers in these sectors and mobilise them for effective implementation of these benefits. This will also help us in making the unorganised sector workers themselves understand the shortcomings in these schemes and mobilise them for the struggle for a better Act as well as for alternative pro worker policies. We must make efforts to utilise this campaign to increase our influence among the sections of the unorganised sector workers whom we have prioritised for organising and strengthen our organisation.

At present CITU representatives are functioning in several welfare and advisory boards constituted by the central as well as state governments for the unorganised sector workers like

the National Social Security Board, contract labour advisory board, construction workers' welfare board etc. Providing these comrades with concrete information about the conditions at the ground level will help in their effective interventions in these boards. Regular interaction among these comrades is also necessary to ensure better and coordinated approach. An effective mechanism for regular interaction of our representatives in all these different boards needs to be formulated. The capitalist system whose failures have been once again glaringly exposed by the recent global economic crisis, is seeking to protect its profits by imposing further burdens on the people and increasing the attacks on the working class.

We have to squarely meet this challenge – organisationally, politically and ideologically. We have to organise the millions of unorganised sector workers, the contract, casual workers etc in the organised sector and bring them into the vortex of militant movements and strike actions, along with the workers in the organised sector. This will enable the trade union movement to acquire a mass character and help in changing the correlation of the forces in favour of the working class and the common people. The task is no doubt enormous but we can accomplish it provided we reorient our activities among the unorganised sector workers and work in a planned and manner.

We must take up the following tasks

1. Regular monitoring of the work among unorganised sector workers from the CITU Centre.
2. Constitution of the sub committee for unorganised workers within the state committee of CITU in all states, to monitor work at the state level.
3. Identify the segments/ areas for organisation as a priority; allot suitable cadre for the job; review the work at least once in a year in the state committee of CITU.
4. The unions of unorganised sector workers in specific trades/

segments/ sectors must make serious efforts to ensure that whatever benefits are available at present through the welfare schemes including under the UWSS Act, even though limited to BPL category, are effectively implemented and reach all the eligible workers. These efforts should be utilised for expansion of the organisation also.

5. A central workshop should be organised on the different welfare schemes available to the unorganised sector workers; this should be followed by state and district level workshops to create awareness about these among our cadres and activists; a booklet should be published on these benefits; they should also be popularised through CITU journals.

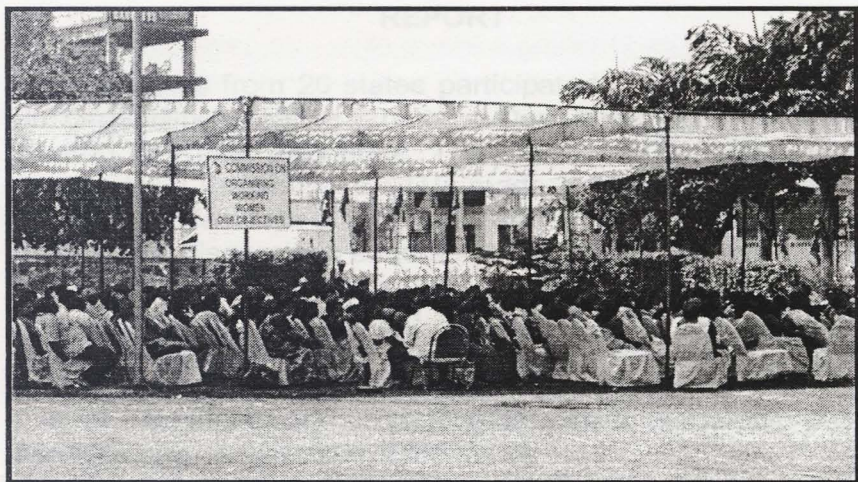
6. Wide campaign on the UWSS Act highlighting our specific demands of National Fund by levying cess on the corporate sector, removal of BPL criterion, statutory guarantee for minimum social security and specific time frame to extend the Act to all unorganised sector workers etc.

7. Efforts should be made for the effective implementation of the Building and Other Construction Workers' Act by ensuring registration of workers, bringing pressure on the state governments for formulation of rules, collection of cess and its effective spending etc.

8. Efforts should be made to develop a strong all India movement of unorganised sector workers on identified major common demands.

9. Organise state level trade union classes for activists among the unorganised sector workers regularly at least once in a year; special efforts should be made to include women activists in the classes.

10. Conscious efforts to be made by the state committees of CITU to ensure workers, including women workers, active in the unorganised sector workers' unions, are promoted to leadership positions



COMMISSION PAPER

COMMISSION PAPER on

ORGANISING WORKING WOMEN OUR OBJECTIVES

The governments in all the capitalist countries connive with the business and corporate interests in punishing the workers for the crisis created by the capitalist system.

In this situation, what is required is united resistance by the working class not only to the present attacks on their jobs, working and living conditions, but also offensive struggles to dismantle the failed system. Strong campaigns and struggles have to be unleashed that expose the nature of the capitalist system and make the working class conscious of its role in bringing about a society free from all exploitation, as per the vision of the CITU, enshrined in its constitution.

The CITU has taken upon itself the task of giving the entire

REPORT

318 delegates from 20 states participated in the Commission on 'Organising Working Women – Our Objectives', which was chaired by Kanai Bannerjee, Treasurer of CITU. Mercy Kutti Amma, Vice President of CITU made a brief presentation of the Paper to facilitate discussion. All the delegates who participated in the discussions endorsed the points made in the Commission Paper and narrated their own experiences in support. Many delegates highlighted the necessity to increase the awareness of CITU leadership at the state, district and union level and sensitise them to gender issues in trade unions. The task of developing and promoting women to leadership position was emphasised also emphasised

COMMISSION PAPER

Attacks on the working class have enormously increased in the era of globalisation and liberalisation. The employers have further intensified their attacks on the working class in the name of global recession. The capitalist system, whose failure in solving the basic problems confounding humanity, has once again been glaringly exposed by the recent global economic crisis, intends to overcome it by shifting the burdens on to the workers.

The governments in all the capitalist countries connive with the business and corporate interests in punishing the workers for the crisis created by the capitalist system.

In this situation, what is required is united resistance by the working class not only to the present attacks on their jobs, working and living conditions, but also offensive struggles to dismantle the failed system. Strong campaigns and struggles have to be unleashed that expose the failure of the capitalist system and make the working class conscious of its role in bringing about a society free from all exploitation, as per the vision of the CITU, enshrined in its constitution.

The CITU has taken upon itself the task of uniting the entire

working class to fulfil this objective. However, uniting the entire working class and making it aware of its role cannot be accomplished as long as a large section of the working class – working women, who comprise around one third of the working class - is outside the purview of the trade union movement or remains aloof of trade union activities.

It is with this perspective that the CITU has taken up the task of organising working women and ensuring that they discharge their due rôle in the trade union movement, as a priority task. CITU firmly believes that trade union unity will remain partial or incomplete and that the trade union movement would be deprived of its full striking power as long as the vast sections of working women are left outside the mainstream trade union movement. Thus, the task of organising working women is, for the CITU, a class task, a priority task aimed at strengthening the general trade union movement itself.

It is now more than three decades since we have formed the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women to help in accomplishing this task. We have tried to pursue and monitor the efforts by discussing it regularly in all our conferences and meetings of the general council and working committee.

But very few state committees of CITU have planned their work among working women with this perspective. The number of state committees of CITU that have taken up this task as a priority task can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

No doubt there is some progress in our work among working women. Women's membership, their participation in the activities of CITU and to a lesser extent in its decision making bodies have definitely improved though not in a uniform manner all over the country. The coordination committees of working women at the national level and in states, wherever they have been constituted, have helped in identifying the sectors with large number of women workers and in organising them. The initiative of CITU in organising the anganwadi workers and helpers at the national level and to pay special attention to organise the unorganised sector workers have contributed to this ad-

vance. In states and unions where conscious efforts are being made, working women activists in more numbers are today discharging responsibilities as committee members and office bearers.

The membership of women in CITU has been gradually growing over the years. Women constituted 12,77,880 out of the total 50,97,533 members of CITU in 2008, i.e. 25.06% of its membership, up from 22.52% in 2005. While the CITU membership in 2008 increased by 27.81% over its membership in 2005, women membership increased by 42.27%. In some states like Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka women membership constitutes around 60% of CITU membership. In Maharashtra, Assam and Bihar, women's membership is more than 40%; in Orissa, more than 30%; and in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura and Uttarakhand, it is close to 30%. However, considering the fact that, around 60% of the CITU membership comes from the unorganised sector, where women workers are concentrated in large numbers, there is a vast scope of further increasing women membership in CITU.

The participation of women in the activities of CITU has also increased. Today, in many states, working women comprise around half of the mobilisation of the CITU at the state and district levels, on the occasion of its struggles, campaigns and conferences. Women workers like the anganwadi employees, ASHAs, etc in many states are launching militant struggles on their own demands, as well as participating in the struggles called for by the CITU. They are in the forefront in facing police repression and are also subjected to victimisation by the employers.

But, this participation of women in CITU activities is not reflected in the number of women in the conferences and decision making bodies of CITU, though there is some improvement. Since the 8th conference of CITU in Patna, conscious efforts are being made to ensure that at least a certain percentage of delegates in the CITU all India conferences are women. But till now, we have not been able to implement this limited objective.

In several states, there is resistance to elect women as delegates to conferences. Large numbers of working women are active in union work at the ground level; they enrol members, mobilise the workers for the rallies and campaigns of the unions and CITU. But, when it comes to electing delegates to state or national conferences, they are ignored. Their family problems, their difficulty in leaving their homes and children, their work place problems etc are all cited as reasons for not electing women as delegates. This situation is not confined only to states where women's membership is more or less confined to a few sectors; it exists in greater extent in some states where CITU's membership is mostly from the traditional sectors where women constitute a large proportion of the workforce and our membership.

The reluctance in electing women as delegates is continued in the resistance to elect women into the committees and as office bearers. In several states, particularly in some states where the CITU is relatively strong, women's presence in the committees and as office bearers, at the state and district levels, is only nominal. Even where capable and active women cadres are available, their perceived inability to attend meetings, travel long distances etc are given as excuses to justify their exclusion.

What is the reason for such reluctance by our state committees and industrial federations to effectively plan the work among working women, develop women cadres and promote them to leadership positions?

There might be several reasons. Some of the major weaknesses have been identified and sharply pointed out in several of our conferences and documents. Unless serious and conscious efforts are made to overcome them, the advance of our work among working women will continue to be tardy; not only that, it will also jeopardise whatever advances we have made till now.

Criticising the CITU committees for ignoring the issue or making only 'some cosmetic changes', in his address to the sixth

conference of CITU in Bombay, Com BTR, the founder president of CITU pointed out that it was 'nothing but underestimation of women and their work'. The CITU Document on Organisation popularly known as the 'Bhubaneswar Document' noted the 'utter callousness on the part of the leaders, unions and various committees' that just 'put up with criticism without making serious improvements in our approach towards working women'.

This approach towards working women is part of the prevalent social attitude towards women. The Commission paper adopted by the tenth conference of CITU, 'Working Women, A Class Perspective', observed 'In our social set up, the rights of women are generally ignored or belittled. Participation of women in all spheres of social, political and economic activity, on equal footing with the men, is not considered a relevant issue at all.... It is widely assumed that women are destined to play only a subordinate role to men...Such inverted norms, opinions, values and attitudes, which have contributed to hamper the development of women, have an all pervasive and profound influence on men and also on women. Even the few feeble attempts on the part of women, somewhere or other, to unshackle them and break into hitherto male domains are fiercely resisted' The Commission paper also acknowledged that 'We in the CITU have not been able to 'BREAK OUT' from this syndrome prevalent in our society'.

This attitude of underestimating the abilities of women is one of the main reasons for the lack of any conscious efforts on the part of our state committees to advance CITU among working women and to train and promote women to the leading bodies of unions and CITU. This is manifest in different manners in different states. In many states, no effort is made to constitute the coordination committees of working women at the state and district levels and women's sub committees within the unions; no effort is made to train and develop working women who are active in their unions like the anganwadi employees, ASHAs etc to lead their own unions as well as play more active role in the CITU; in stead, even if a few are included as office bearers or working committee members, they

are expected to simply follow the directions of the CITU leaders, and not to take any initiative on their own.

In some other states, it is manifested as strong resistance, on the part of a section of the male leadership, to elect women as delegates to the union and CITU conferences, at least as per their proportion in the membership and duly represented in the decision making bodies. This is evident even in states where the coordination committees of working women and women's sub committees within unions have been formed and have been effectively functioning with the initiative of the women comrades.

Another reflection of the same attitude is the lack of any initiative on the part of the union and CITU leadership to ensure the attendance of women members to the meetings, be it of the coordination committees of working women or of the CITU, at different levels. Even today, many women members find it difficult to attend the meetings because of the lack of financial resources. While at the time of constitution of the coordination committees, some state committees of CITU do evince interest in the inclusion of more women representatives from their states, the same eagerness is not shown in ensuring their attendance in the meetings.

In stead of the concerned CITU committee as a whole being considered responsible for the advance of our work among working women, often the individual women members are blamed for the lack of advance in our work among working women.

We must remember what Lenin said about such attitude 'They do not realise that developing and leading such a mass movement is an important part of all (our) activity, as much as half of all (our) work. Their occasional recognition of the need and value of a purposeful, strong and numerous women's movement is but platonic lip service rather than a steady concern and task'. Even when women are elected as delegates to the conferences or to the decision making bodies, often they are not given an opportunity to express their views. Some women do feel hesitant and nervous in the initial stages to place their

views in the meetings and conferences. In stead of encouraging them, this is seen as vindication of the false notion of their ineptitude. Even holding conventions of working women are seen by some committees as rituals to satisfy the higher committees; the occasion is utilised to gather some women workers and deliver lectures to them rather than to hear them, understand their problems and identify the women activists so as to train and develop them. Many unions and committees of CITU do not have this concept at all.

As more women are coming forward to work in our unions and many as full timers also, it is important on the part of the male leadership to be sensitive to the problems they face as women while working in the unions. CITU committees at all levels have to take the necessary measures to ensure that working women activists can work freely without being subjected to harassment including sexual harassment while working in the unions.

The domestic responsibilities of women in the present society must also be kept in mind and the male comrades, union activists and members must be sensitised to share the domestic responsibilities to enable women to play their role in their unions. As Engels has remarked in his famous book 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', '...to emancipate woman and make her the equal of man is and remains an impossibility so long as the woman is shut out from social productive labour and restricted to private domestic labour. The emancipation of woman will only be possible when woman can take part in production on a large, social scale and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time...'

At the same time women activists of CITU also have to make more efforts to shed their hesitation, assert themselves and come forward to take up more responsibilities within the trade unions. They, like all other trade union activists, must also make efforts to up grade their knowledge and skills to lead trade unions.

While the attitude of underestimating women's abilities is the major reason for the slow progress of our work among working

women, there are a few other reasons as well, for the state committees of CITU not taking the required initiative. However, these are not entirely unrelated to the above mentioned attitude.

The Commission paper on working women adopted by the 10th Conference of CITU noted that 'even after two decades of functioning of the AICCCWW, questions are raised as to the status, role and nature of functions' of the coordination committees of working women. Again, the need to develop a 'common understanding on the objectives, composition and functioning' of the coordination committees of working women was felt by the 12th Conference. These questions have been addressed in several meetings and in the conferences of CITU, making it clear that the ccww are not separate organisations but sub committees of the concerned CITU committees with the specific objective of advancing CITU among working women. But still many state committees of CITU have not constituted the state ccww; no efforts are made to ensure effective functioning of the ccww even in some states where they have been constituted.

The CITU committees have to seriously ponder the reasons for the reluctance for planned work among working women by forming the coordination committees and guiding their functioning.

After the 12th conference, the CITU secretariat discussed the issue in detail following which the CITU working committee adopted a note in its meeting in January 2009 in Mumbai.

The working committee resolved that the occasion of completion of 30 years of the formation of AICCCWW should be utilised to review the work among working women in all states; but very few state committees of CITU have taken up this task.

There is a tendency to consider that the job of the CITU state committees is over once the ccww is constituted; thereafter the entire job becomes the sole responsibility of the ccww. The issue is never discussed in the meetings of the office bearers or state committees of CITU. It should be realised that given the perspective and objectives of the CITU in organising work-

ing women, it is the responsibility of the CITU committees to identify the different industries/ jobs where women work in large numbers and organise them and to ensure that women are developed and promoted to leadership positions. The coordination committees of working women are constituted to actively help and assist the CITU committees in this task.

Similarly, the specific problems of working women and their demands have to be treated and addressed as the demands of the concerned union; campaigns and struggles should be launched on these by mobilising not only the women members, but also the entire union membership. There are very few instances of the union taking up specific problems of women workers even today, though there is some improvement. Leaving these issues to be addressed only by the ccww gives the wrong impression that women's issues should be taken up by women alone and that ccww are organisations created for this purpose.

In stead of leading to the unions taking up working women's issues as union issues, this practice encourages the unions to continue with ignoring the specific problems of working women, leading to further alienation of the women employees from the union.

It may be necessary to reiterate the functions of the ccww, which are broadly:

- * To help the CITU to formulate its stand on various government policies related to working women
 - * Study the employment of women in various industries and their problems; determine priorities and suggest steps to organise them, to the concerned committees of CITU;
 - * To assist in organising working women in the sectors as decided by the CITU committees
 - * Make periodic reviews of the functioning of the unions among working women; of the subcommittees of the union; of the progress in enrolment of women members in the union; of promotion of women cadres to positions of leadership etc
-

* Discuss the problems of education and training women cadres and submit suggestions to the concerned CITU committees and pursue taking decisions and their execution

* Make efforts to develop coordinated movement on the specific issues of working women by involving the women's sub committees in different industries, including those in the non CITU affiliated fraternal trade unions

* Make efforts to take the policies and programmes of CITU to broader sections of working women through the CITU journals and other literature etc

The ccww should be guided by the CITU committees to work directly among working women on behalf of the CITU. The approach of CITU to united actions should be implemented by the ccww in their work among working women belonging to other unions. Effective functioning of ccww should mean that women membership of CITU increases and more women are promoted to union and CITU leadership, in addition to achieving their specific demands.

Problems

There are of course some problems faced by the CITU committees, like financial difficulties and cadre shortages, which impact all work of CITU, but the work among working women becomes the first casualty.

While making conscious efforts to overcome these difficulties, it is necessary for the CITU state committees to prioritise the sectors for organising. But gender cannot and should not be the excuse to avoid taking up our work among a section of workers as a priority. When asked about the work among working women, the oft heard response of some CITU leaders, particularly from the weaker states, is 'We have no resources to carry out the work of CITU (meaning among the male workers).

Where do we find money and cadre to organise women'. This method of deciding priorities is not correct.

Experience of such states like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh etc clearly show that if conscious and planned efforts are made, financial difficulties can be overcome; once financial problems are overcome, deploying cadres becomes less difficult.

Prioritisation, to organise the workers, male or female, in the organised or unorganised sectors, should be on the basis of the long term objectives of the CITU – of uniting the working class and raising its consciousness to enable it discharge its role in ending all exploitation. Keeping this objective in mind priorities have to be decided depending on the concrete situation in the state - industrial scenario, the availability of cadres and their abilities etc.

At the same time, it is to be kept in mind that organising the workers in the sectors that have state wide presence and are related to the government, like the anganwadi employees, ASHAs, Mid Day Meal workers, teachers in the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan etc (where large number are women) will help in putting pressure on the government and achieving some benefits which in turn will give confidence to the workers. Similarly, women workers in the manufactured sector, like garments, beedi etc, including the home based workers should be given priority in organising.

With conscious efforts, the union activists among the anganwadi workers, most of who are educated and develop organisational abilities as part of their work, can be a source for recruiting cadres not only for their own unions, but for the CITU as well. In Andhra Pradesh, anganwadi workers have been elected as president or general secretary in around 200 mandal committees, the lowest tier of CITU committees in the state. They play an active role in implementing CITU calls at this level, mobilising the other members of CITU. In Karnataka, the anganwadi workers played an important role in the recently held struggle on the demands of the unorganised sector workers. These women workers have demonstrated beyond any doubt that if made conscious and provided the necessary training, women cadres can and do overcome all their domestic problems to play an active role in the trade union movement. The ASHAs, work-

ing in the National Rural Health Mission, who are already being organised by the CITU in several states, also have the potential to be developed as CITU cadres.

In this regard the commendable contribution of the women employees belonging to the fraternal organisations of CITU in insurance, banking, state and central government employees, BSNL etc to the CITU's work among working women in several states need to be noted. In several states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka etc these women employees have contributed to the functioning of the ccwws. In some states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, they have been helping in organising the women workers in construction, tailoring, food processing, khadi, etc, the anganwadi employees, ASHAs, mid day meal workers, small savings collectors etc, under the banner of CITU. In Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, some of them have been elected to the state and district committees of CITU. The services of women activists of these middle class organisations, who are willing to spare their time and energies for the CITU, can and should be utilised to organise working women. Obviously, they will work for the CITU and the ccww on their individual capacity as supporters of CITU and not as representatives of their respective organisations.

The experience in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka show that allotment of a full time functionary for the work among working women greatly helps in our advance in this field. While the state and district committees of CITU provide the allowances of the women full timers in Andhra Pradesh, the Tamil Nadu state committee has raised fund specifically for this purpose from the unions in the organised sector. Other state committees of CITU may make the necessary arrangements as per the specific conditions in their states.

Earlier, when asked about the formation of the ccwws, several state leaders of CITU used to reply that they 'do not have working women', probably meaning that there were very few women members of CITU, that they were not working in areas with large numbers of working women or that they did not have women cadres to work among working women. But, that situa-

tion has considerably changed now. In most of the states, including the relatively weaker ones, we have unions of anganwadi employees, ASHAs, mid day meal workers etc. The nucleus for forming ccww and the potential cadres to function them exist in almost all the states today. What is required is conscious effort on the part of the CITU state committees to form the ccwws and plan the work.

Experience in states like Tamil Nadu indicate that organising campaigns and movements on the common demands of working women in different sectors, be it the organised or the unorganised sector, like minimum wages, equal wages, maternity benefit, crèches, sexual harassment etc would help in advancing our movement among working women. Such campaigns help us to approach working women in different sectors and attract them towards the CITU.

The incessant price rise without any corresponding increase in wages, the deteriorating working and living conditions, the attacks on the existing trade union rights pose a serious challenge to the working class today including the working women. The situation calls for gathering all our strength and launching a counter attack against the discredited capitalist system. Our experience indicates that wherever the CITU has taken the initiative to address their problems, working women have responded magnificently.

What is required is overcoming the attitude of underestimating women's abilities – by men and also by women themselves – and developing the correct perspective of our objective of organising working women among all the CITU cadres with due urgency.

Annexure

% women in leadership of CITU in different states

Sl no	State	% in OB	% in WC	Sl no	State	% in OB	% in WC
1	AP	15.38	31.25	13	Kerala	6.66	5.33
2	Assam	11.11	20.83	14	MP	5.55	11.94
3	Bihar	-	-	15	Maharashtra	19.35	27.02
4	Chattisgarh	15.38	11.42	16	Orissa	8	11.53
5	Delhi	0	8.10	17	Punjab	-	-
6	Gujarat	-	-	18	Rajasthan	-	-
7	Haryana	10.52	12.24	19	Tamil Nadu	14.28	14.50
8	HP	17.64	28	20	Tripura	9.09	10.25
9	J&K	0	7.40	21	UP	-	-
10	Jharkhand	3.03	12.94	22	Uttarakhand	18.18	28.12
11	Karnataka	21.21	28.73	23	WB	6.66	9.09

Women elected to the decision making bodies in the 13th Conference of CITU -

Office Bearers – 20% (including a woman treasurer)

Working Committee – 9.37%

General Council – 10.65%



COMMISSION PAPER
on

**SAFETY, HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENT**

It is time for the Trade unions to take a leading role to integrate workers through a systematic approach involving them into a struggle for ensuring sustainable advance in the areas of occupational health and safety, pollution free environment for workers. Along with the rest of the world it has to involve itself engaging the working class in India into a struggle to strengthen the base for promoting forms of decent work and the well-being for workers and communities. The trade union movement, while rousing the working class for a pollution free environment, has to carry forward vigorous campaign against the role of advanced capitalist countries and its contribution in global warming up which has assumed a great danger for the sustenance of earth itself. In its struggle for decent work it has to take caution that the developed countries do not exploit the working class for exporting their own pollution to developing countries like India, and make the working class a play for de-industrialization. Hence, the right for pollution free environment

REPORT

The session was attended by 296 delegates. The session was chaired by com Kashmir Singh Thakur. The Paper was presented by Com Dipankar Mukherjee. 30 delegates took part in the deliberation. 20 delegates submitted their views in writing. Both the oral and written submissions reflected the experience of various industries in the matter of health and safety in workplaces which stand neglected by the management/employers in most of the places. Speakers also spoke about the low level of awareness among the workers in the matter and lack of initiative among the unions also in regularly taking up and monitoring health and safety issues at workplace. Speakers also dealt on the environmental issues as well and stressed upon the need for more initiative for educating the workers on our approach on the issue. Taking into account the views expressed and suggestions made, the paper has been modified and re-drafted and produced below.

COMMISSION PAPER

Introduction

It is time for the Trade unions to take a leading role to integrate workers through a systematic approach involving them into a struggle for ensuring sustainable advance in the areas of occupational health and safety, pollution free environment for workers. Along with the rest of the world it has to involve itself engaging the working class in India into a struggle to strengthen the base for promoting forms of decent Work and the well-being for workers and communities. The trade union movement, while rousing the working class for a pollution free environment, has to carry forward vigorous campaign against the role of advanced capitalist countries and its contribution in global warming up which has assumed a great danger for the sustenance of earth itself. In its struggle for decent work it has to take caution that the developed countries do not exploit the working class for exporting their own pollution to developing countries like India and make the working class a ploy for de-industrialization. Hence, the struggle for pollution free envi-

ronment in the working condition, occupational health and decent work has assumed a political struggle with international significance. As per estimate every year more than 2 million people die from occupational accidents or work-related diseases. By conservative estimates, there are 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million cases of occupational disease [ILO 2009]. Deaths and injuries take a particularly heavy toll in developing nations, where large numbers of people are engaged in hazardous activities such as agriculture, construction, logging, fishing and mining. Throughout the world, the poorest and least protected – often women, children and migrants – are among the most affected.[ILO -2009].

A healthy work environment is a primary need in an industry both for the persons at work and the people residing near the industry. It is the responsibility of the employer to provide such a hygienic work environment. Safety in the industry is everybody's business and all levels of employees are responsible for safety. But the employer/management has got the basic responsibility as they plan, co-ordinate and control the overall activities to produce goods or services.

Industrial Hygiene and Occupational Health Awareness : Industrial hygiene may be defined as scientific and technological approach for recognition, evaluation and control of work environment factors which adversely affect health, safety and efficiency of the person exposed therein. Generally the human beings fall ill due to attack of various kinds of germs and viruses. But there is yet another disease which is directly related to the occupation. It is therefore essential to unearth the reasons of the 'occupational disease' through in depth study and analysis of the occupation itself.

It is generally said that every occupation has its own hazards which if not properly taken care of, occupational diseases are sure to emerge and the natural victims are the concerned workmen. According to available statistics of WHO about 6..8 crore to 15.7 crore industrial workers fall victim of occupational diseases every year in the world out of which about 10% become permanently disabled and about 1 % i.e. about 6 lakh to 15

lakh people die every year due to occupational diseases. It can therefore be well understood why there must be enormous awareness campaign amongst the industrial workers about this particular aspect of occupational hazards. If we are desirous to know the basic root of the occupational disease, we are to understand the work or occupation related environment too. Considering a duty of eight hours in a day and taking 300 working days in a year, an industrial worker generally remains engaged in his job for more than 1 lakh hours in his life time. If now the work environment in which he has to remain is not physiologically acceptable to him then serious adverse effects are sure to emerge.

There are differences between the occupational and general diseases. Occupational diseases vary from industry to industry. For example, a worker required to work with lead is a victim of lead - related disease but the person engaged in dusty process is attacked by dust related disease. Skin diseases due to work in chemicals and allied industries, deafness because of high decibel sound in big factories, Pneumiosis in textile factories etc are a few examples of industry related occupational hazards. Trade unions have to create awareness among workers on the specific hazards in particular industries and apprise them of precautionary and remedial measures. Occupational disease is factually a chronic disease and the workers do not fall ill all of sudden.

Generally these diseases cannot be cured by administration of medicines or surgery. The specialities of occupational diseases are that if the worker's physiological acceptance level is poor, the disease can make him permanently disabled or even cause death.

Environment and the workers

There are generally four types of environmental stress, which may be hazardous to the exposed persons.

a) Physical such as exposure to heat, illumination, noise, mechanical and vibration etc.:- Continuous work in these types of

unabated working environment may cause varieties of occupational diseases to the workers, e.g., Heat Stroke, Heat cramps because of salt loss due to excessive sweating, Nystagmus or early cataract from lesser light and noise induced hearing loss leading to complete deafness from sound pollution. More over, heavy physical workload and poor posture called ergonomically poor working conditions cause spondylitis, fatigue, giddiness and dizziness.

b) Exposure to chemicals, dust, fumes, mist gases and vapour substances :-

i) The activities in various chemical factories in the world are continuing with the use of more than 63,000 varieties of chemicals and due to unabated exposure of these chemicals, the workers fall victim to various occupational diseases. The peculiarity of the diseases varies from mere skin disease to malfunctioning and in some cases, failure of various organs. In chemical industries, there are hazards of varieties of gases such as Carbon Mono Oxide (CO), Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) , Hydro Cyanic Acid(HCN) Carbon Disulphide (CS₂), Ammonia (NH₃), Chlorine (Cl₂), Hydrogen Sulphide (H₂S), Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) etc. Naturally if sufficient preventive measures are not taken and for even a very small negligence, the workers may become exposed to toxic gas environment causing serious occupational diseases.

ii) There are hazards of a number of dust particles which causes 'dust disease of lungs or Pneumoconiosis' and Occupational Asthma. The workers fall victim of these diseases due to continuous exposure to coal, silica or asbestos dust released unabated in the working place. Environmental Hazard and safety in mines in this context is revealing. Increasing international demands for raw materials from developed countries, as coupled with intense competition and rush for capital formation in private, have caused low cost intensive mining in India. This has been taking place both through induction of new type of earth movers and also introduction of huge manual workers. In coal mining not alone the system of electro-magnetic guided continuous miners have been introduced but

also dumpers to a capacity as high as 240 tons are introduced. These changes have not been backed up with adequate environmental protection devices and infrastructure. Contractor workers are engaged in millions in the mining but with no adequate safety protection. Inadequacy in the maintenance of machineries has also turned into a handicap against reversing the fatality rates. Changes in the feature of mine accidents and fatalities would reveal the aspects. In view of the fact that the Coal production is still mostly regulated by Coal India Ltd under government control the rate of fatalities has declined, though 24% of such fatal accidents contractor workers are involved. But the picture of mining other than coal has been just reversed. Unreported fatalities have substantially increased all through the recent period. This is obviously the reflection of increase in private mining and deployment of contractor workers.

iii) In addition there are industries dealing with various metallurgical ingredients like Lead, Chromium, Nickel, Cadmium, Aluminum, Manganese, Mercury, Tin, Ferrous etc. Exposure to the fumes of these metals causes peculiar reaction in the human body. These fumes may cause metal fumes fever, can effect the respiratory system, cause damage of the Central Nervous System or even cancer to various organs.

c) Biological Factors such as micro-organism, spore enzymes etc.:- In many occupations, such as amongst health workers, fisher folks etc. workers are exposed to disease causing pathogens. Blood borne diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B are now major occupational hazards for healthcare workers.

• Radiation hazards :- Workers engaged in atomic energy like installations including nuclear power stations are often exposed to radiation hazards. X-Ray technicians are also sometimes victim of such exposure. Continuous exposure to radiations may cause cancer like fatal disease.

Hygienic Issues:

• **New generation industrial waste:-** The new generation industrial waste like plastic waste and electro micro waster are

causing health hazard especially in cities. Another reason for concern is the radiation pollution of high elevated telephone / mobile towers.

- **Plantations:-** To save plantation crops such as Tea/Cardamom/Rubber insecticides and pesticides are sprayed. The health of workers got affected due to inhalation of these pesticides and insecticides and many cases of diseases even cancer is also traced among the workers. Since the workers generally get very low wages and ESI facility is also not extended to them, they have to spend enormous amount for the treatment of their ailment.

- **Health:-** Larger number of women and children coming to towns to work in building construction works. Since they are carrying heavy weights cases of abortions are frequently taking place. Intaking of I food having low nutritive value, under weight and lack of minerals among mothers led to birth of under developed children which further led to severe health problems both among women and their children. Work places do not provide adequate facilities of toilets, lavatories and drinking water. This led to many health related problems especially among women workers.

Social Accountability SA8000 Standard:

SA8000 is based on the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and various International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. SA8000 covers the following areas of accountability vis-à-vis safety and health.

- **Workplace safety and health:** Provide a safe and healthy work environment; take steps to prevent injuries; regular health and safety worker training; system to detect threats to health and safety; access to bathrooms and potable water.

- **Freedom of Association and Right to Collective Bargaining:** Respect the right to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively.

- Working hours: Comply with the applicable law but, in any event, no more than 48 hours per week with at least one day off for every seven day period; voluntary overtime paid at a premium rate and not to exceed 12 hours per week on a regular basis; overtime may be mandatory if part of a collective bargaining agreement. Trade unions should insist on the above guidelines to be followed as a part of safety audit in all industries specially the small scale industry.

Prevention Of hazards and promotion of cleaner Production: In spite of all the hazards, there is no reason to feel helpless. Almost all the occupational diseases are preventable which means the trade union movement has to work with all sincerity and vigor for effective implementation of all available knowledge, intellect and technology for near complete eradication of the causes of occupational diseases.

Through various scientific technologies it is now possible to know the nature and extent of risks involved in industry specific environments and thus it is quite possible to take preventive measures so that the exposed worker is fully protected from the hazard. But the unwillingness of employers to implement the specific measures is the greatest hindrance and who other than the trade union movement can compel them to eradicate the causes leading to occupational diseases.

International Conventions and Legislations :

In the year 1923 ILO adopted the Convention on Freedom of Association which had accordingly been fortified by an another Convention on the same subject in the year 1948. These two conventions have been followed by the adoption of number of Conventions and Recommendations on Industrial health, safety and occupational diseases. Number of such conventions have been fourteen in total. Government of India unfortunately, though have participated and voted in Geneva while accepting these conventions, till now have ratified only nine out of them for converting them into legislation. The most disturbing has been the non ratification of Convention No. 155 and Convention No. 176 which two constitute the basis of all other Con-

ventions and Recommendations. In a recent meeting the Government of India mooted an idea that if the trade unions agree for part ratification they may consider the ratification of 155 which the CITU has flatly disagreed.

In this context it may be noted that the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and general workers and trade unions from different countries including those in India have taken initiative to organize workers in support of ratification of Convention No. 176. During 28 - 30th October a Convention was organized in Delhi jointly by Federations affiliated to INTUC and CITU over the issue which was attended and addressed by representatives from other Indian Federations, ILO representative and International Federation of Energy, Mine and General Workers. The Convention has taken an elaborate programme to highlight the issue of ratification as a major demand for the workers.

Legislations only on paper :

Laws have existed in India to protect workers from occupational hazards for quite a long period. Chapters III, IV, IVA & V of the Factories Act 1948 clarify the provisions of health, safety, participation in safety and welfare. In addition, there are several laws for different sectors such as Mines Act, 1952; Plantation Labour Act, 1951; Explosives Act, 1884; Petroleum Act, 1934; Insecticide Act, 1968; Indian Boilers Act, 1923; Indian Electricity Act, 1910; Dangerous Machines (Regulation) Act, 1983; Indian Atomic Energy Act, 1962; Radiological Protection rules, 1971 and Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemicals Rules, 1989. Dock workers Act 1986 and Building & other Construction Workers Act 1996. Workers affected can claim compensation through the Workmen's Compensation Act and get treatment through Employees' State Insurance Act.

The Ministry of Labour only provides statistics for four industries. There are in fact only four Central Acts that refer to the safety of employees - the Factories Act, 1948, for factories and workshops; the Mines Act, 1952, for mines and, in theory,

stone mines or quarries; the Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986, for ports; and the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, for the construction industry.

In modern times, production is carried on in large factories in mass scale where thousands of workers work together. Occurrence of accidents in industrial establishment is a common phenomenon. It has been revealed that 98% of accidents caused due to human failure most of which take place basically due to mechanical hazards caused by unshielded machinery, unsafe structures in the workplace and dangerous tools. Mass education is required and it is possible when Trade Unions are involved.

The Factories Act only applies to premises using power and employing more than 10 persons or employing more than 20 persons and using no power. A very large number of workshops, therefore, are not covered by the Act, which is enforced by the States. Many premises that should register themselves under the Factories Act do not do so. Trade unions have to pressurise the state governments to bring as many units as possible under the umbrella of the factories act so that the basic facilities will be provided to the workers. On May 31, 1999, for example, 48 persons were killed in an explosion in an Old Delhi godown, which had no licence to store chemicals. Many of those killed were not working in the godown; they just happened to be nearby. A decade later in 1.5.2009, in a similar accident more than 30 workers were killed in Lakhani Shoes Factory, Faridabad, handling hazardous chemicals. In construction sector inspite of legislation, 41 workers were killed in BALCO, Korba after collapse of chimney which was under construction and more than twenty were killed in Kota, Rajasthan because of collapse of bridge under construction. Actual figures of casualties will never be known as the dead were buried under the debris.

The obligations of Occupiers under the environmental Acts are also not being implemented efficiently like monitoring of gaseous fumes under the Air Act – 1981, monitoring of effluents

under the Water Act – 1974 and EPA – 1986 especially in small scale units in India. Under the manufacture storage and import of hazardous Chemical rules under the Environment Protection Act [EPA] taken adequate steps to - (i) prevent such major accidents and to limit their consequences to persons and the environment; and to (ii) provide to The persons working on the site with the information, training and equipment including antidotes necessary to ensure their safety. In many industries especially the small scale units in India, the management does not train the workers properly and the necessary antidotes are not available in the workplace.

Even on registered premises, conditions can at best be described as appalling. As per reports only one in four of the workers of slate pencil factories in Sultanpura, Madhya Pradesh, survived working there. Working in sheds, they slice slate to make pencils. This creates silica dust, which causes silicosis. There are a number of factors that can be applied to estimate the number of urban workers of workshops and other workplaces not covered by the Factories Act, who are killed at work. These are: the huge size of the small-scale sector; the fact that small-scale workplaces have a higher accident rate than large workplaces; and the problem of under-reporting and non-reporting is glaring.

Taking all these factors into account, as per a conservative estimate of the number of workers killed in factories and workshops, including premises that are covered by and excluded from the purview of the Factories Act, Sterling Smith, an expert in Labour health observed in an article about a decade back, in the year 2001 "Work kills an Indian every five minutes, the equivalent of a Bhopal every month." By Bhopal, he meant Bhopal Gas tragedy which killed more than 3500 people 25 years back. Today's figure will be much higher under the present "jungle-law" prevailing in the labour scenario in the country.

Collapse in the inspectorate system and safety audit

Since the break of neo-liberalisation and mushrooming of private industries, the inspection system has been grossly deni-

grated by the successive governments. Loosening of inspection has ultimately led to total absence of Safety Audit of any kind in the country. Till recently there was not system for such auditing even in Indian Railways. Often accidents are not reported and contractor workers are the immediate victims. In case of mine, inspection takes place only when accident takes place. Despite recurrence of accidents, it is hardly seen that errant officials are taken to justice in India.

Role of Trade Union

Thus, while a legal structure exists in our country, it is largely ineffective. It is a general practice amongst the employers to deliberately flout the Acts & Rules and overlook the provisions. It is trade unions only who can force the establishment to formulate and implement industry specific safety and health policy. All the available studies world wide confirm that existence of dialogue between workers and management within a workplace boosts health and safety.

Where trade union is fully recognised and there is a workplace health and safety committee, the serious accident rates are halved in relation to workplaces where unions are not recognised and have a say in safety related matter. Enforcement of the legislation through different statutory authorities is the primary responsibility of the Government. After the 'reform raj' was ushered in 1991, government at the centre and the states are abdicating their responsibilities by virtually eliminating the state enforcement machinery under the pressure of the employers in the name of boosting investment.

The labour laws as a whole, including safety and health related ones are being rampantly violated. Right to form trade unions is being denied with the tacit backing of the government. These fundamental issues have been taken up by CITU and other trade unions as major challenge to the working class and this becomes a part and parcel of trade union movement to ensure safe and healthy environment in workplace. For example : An estimate of 2005 reveals that though the production cost of iron ore is hardly Rs.350/- a ton, the selling price is

Rs. 2150/- per ton and the sell prices of sponge iron or pig iron manufactured with this iron ore are Rs.12,000/- and Rs.16,000/- to Rs.18,000/- per ton respectively. Thus the extent of profit in these industries can be well imagined and with a small share of this profit the industrial environment can be totally changed. That is why it is essential for the trade union movement to create awareness amongst the workers and public opinion to impress upon the employers to take necessary measures to eradicate occupational and environmental hazards.

The trade unions must not confine themselves only to wage rise. Demand of safe working environment, bring to the notice of statutory bodies the violations made by the industries. Trade Union has to take the responsibility of guiding the members on matters of safety and influence them to adhere to safe practices.

It can therefore be safely construed and concluded that unless the concerned workers are properly educated on environment, safety and occupational health care, it is difficult to get success in this massive task. The Government today is content to allow profits to take precedence over safety. A major task before the trade union movement today is to emphasise on the need for much greater attention to occupational health awareness, environment and industrial safety.

Action Plan:

The concept of decent work has been brought by ILO for practising in course of daily work. In a country like India where people are still in a condition of abject poverty, humanism is yet to find its footings and feudalism still pervades the attitude of owners management, the concept of decent work will not come unless trade unions take up the issue of decent work as an united approach in the entire trade union movement. Once the matter of decent work comes in the fore the matter of safety is automatically integrated.

There has to be a determined effort that SAFETY issue is institutionalized within the organizational structure. For this pur-

pose CITU along with other unions should formulate an action plan based on the following:

- Government has to be pressurized to ratify ILO convention 155 and 176 on safety.
- All accidents are not reported by the employers. Hence the accident data is underestimated.
- Punishment for violating safety rules is negligible and hence it fails to act as a deterrent.
- Workers safety inspectors should be elected by workers. They should be properly trained and their observation should be implemented by the management.
- Formation of shop level and plant level joint safety committees whose decisions should be strictly implemented.
- Statutory identification of occupational diseases for every industry should be undertaken and full rehabilitations of a workers should be ensured.
- Workers should be guaranteed right to refuse to work if the working conditions refuse to work if the working conditions involved hazard without lost of wages.
- When chemicals are used in establishment workers should be informed about the risk involved and proper protection from hazard to be ensured.
- As a result of globalization, the employees have been cutting costs on health and safety of workers and government is behaving as a silent spectator which has deteriorated health and safety conditions. This has to be resisted.



COMMISSION PAPER
on
**NEWS MEDIA
AND WORKING CLASS**

narrated their experience with news media and made concrete suggestions pertaining to various aspects of news media and working class movement. The Commission's report on the particular subject for the Commission has been highly appreciated by the participants in general. Highly appreciative comments have been received on the written notes submitted by the participants. The comments are as follows: "Excellent and very informative and educational to understand the world of news media and giving serious insights into the world of media. It is analytical and educative"; "I feel it is very informative and educative"; "The Commission paper is very educative. I appreciate the Central Committee for selecting the subject for the Commission".

The perspective and the current picture on the subject drawn in the paper and the formulation made have been broadly endorsed by the comrades in the commission session. Of course, some suggestions for incorporation of various points have been made in one or two notes. However, it is amusing to note that due to absence of minute reading of the paper the comrades concerned have missed to note that the points suggested by them for incorporation have already been duly dealt with in the background paper. For example, suggestion for incorporation of the issue of 'paid news' and 'money power in elections' has been dealt with in the paper under the caption 'Media Ethics at

REPORT

The Commission was attended by more than 330 delegates. The session was chaired by Comrade A.K.Padmanabhan, President, CITU and Comrade Swadesh Dev Roye, Secretary, CITU was the Rapporteur. The other Secretariat members who also attended the commission exercise were Comrades M.M. Lawrance, Kali Ghosh, G.L.Bajaj and S.Veeraiah. The opening remarks of the Chairman and introduction of the background paper by the rapporteur were made through very brief speech and thrust was given for more intervention from the floor. While 35 comrades spoke, another 26 comrades gave written notes.

In course of participation in the deliberations the comrades narrated their experience with news media and made concrete suggestions pertaining to various aspects of news media and working class movement. However, the selection of the particular subject for discussion in the Commission has been appreciated by the participants in general. Highly appreciative comments have been incorporated in some of the written notes submitted by the comrades. Some such comments are as follows: "Excellent and educative paper for our comrades to understand the issue"; "The Commission paper is good giving serious insights into the world of media. It is analytical and educative"; "I feel it is very informative and educative"; "The Commission paper is very educative. I appreciate the Central Committee for selecting the subject for the Commission".

The perspective and the current picture on the subject drawn in the paper and the formulation made have been broadly endorsed by the comrades in the commission session. Of course, some suggestions for incorporation of certain points have been made in one or two notes. However, it is amusing to note that due to absence of minute reading of the paper the comrades concerned have missed to note that the points suggested by them for incorporation have already been duly dealt with in the background paper. For example, suggestion for incorporation of the issue of 'paid news' and 'money power in elections' has been dealt with in the paper under the caption 'Media Ethics at Rock Bottom', then the issue of attack on Left politics and LF

Governments and the episode of Nandigram and Singur have been discussed in the paper under the caption 'Bashing of Left Politics by Media', then the question of very exploitative service condition of news media employees has been discussed in details under the caption 'Pathetic Plight of Journalists in India'.

However, in course of the deliberations, the Comrades along with sharing their experience with the participants, have come forward with concrete suggestions for operative steps. The main points are appended below:

- * The need for relentless campaign against corporate captivated media exposing their class hostility.
- * We should maintain close liaison with the trade unions of the news paper employees and also take steps to organise the print and electronic media employees
- * The website of CITU should carry wide-ranging matters and should be updated constantly. Arrangement should be made to ascertain the rate of accessing our website by viewers within the country and abroad. Further, the site should be interlinked with the websites of our friendly Industrial Federations in the country.
- * Establishment of our own 'Central News Agency' has been suggested and the need for enhanced efficiency of "INN" has been stressed.
- * While many delegates have suggested that CITU should consider launching a national TV channel, opinion also figured that we should seriously think on the matter before initiating such move.
- * Improvement in the quality of our journals in terms of contents and get-up has been suggested by many. Regular meetings of the editors of the organs of CITU brought out the state committees. Suggestion has also been made to increase number of pages, switch over from monthly to fortnightly and ulti-

mately weekly and Special issues in observance of various historical occasions. Some comrades have linked these steps with their observation disapproving suggestion of launching our own TV channel.

* The need for strict statutory regulation of the media to arrest abuse of so-called 'Freedom of Press' has been suggested by a participant in the Commission.

In the background paper under the caption 'Focal Points for Deliberations' we have identified six points and each of the points have been elaborated separately. Now the steps suggested by the comrades in course of their contribution are, by and large, complementary with the operative part of the background paper. Therefore, the points in the operative part of the paper combined with the suggestions emerged from the deliberations of the commission session should be taken together to draw follow-up steps based on the outcome of the commission exercise.

COMMISSION PAPER

In The German Ideology', Marx and Engles wrote, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production ..."

INTRODUCTION

Media is defined as all those medium of communications which reach masses of people and further enabling communication between people. "From this definition we can outline the main types of mass media: newspapers, television, radio and cinema, amusement parks ... and the latest addition of internet which is reaching an increasingly mass audience."

However, in the present paper we shall focus on the news me-

dia i.e., newspaper and television. Of course it is necessary to note that a concept of 'new news' said to have come into being which "works via email, text-messaging, multimedia story-telling, web-logging, consumer magazines, 'popular' music and host of other media yet to be invented"

Of late the trade union movement and for that matter major left politics is given little bit of space in the media. And with this development a wrong impression has gripped a section the leadership of left and democratic movement including amongst the trade union leadership construing that media has changed characteristically. In fact in the current dispensation illusion about media has spread amongst different sections of the rank and file of our movement. Such erroneous understanding emanates from lack of clear understanding about the ownership profile and class character of the media and the role media plays in the class divided capitalist society.

In our pursuit for 'TV News Channel Bite' we must not turn blind eye to the stark reality that the coverage extended to the working class matters by media is not with any honesty of purpose but with the evil intention to paint a negative picture about the struggles of working class and creating bitterness amongst the general public against the left and progressive trade union movement.

NEGATIVE COVERAGE OF TRADE UNION STRUGGLES

Whenever any news of strike is reported by media, it focuses on how the members of the public have been put into distress due to the strike or the loss of production or financial loss to exchequer and of the kind. But it never reports about the reason for which the strike is launched. It does not say anything about high-handedness of employers against the employees by refusing to sit for negotiations or arriving at a reasonable settlement on the issues involved in the strike. Media has nothing to say about the vindictive steps by management and governments to terrorise the striking employees.

Employment and livelihood are, unfortunately, not the stuff on which headlines (in news media) are made, unless it cannot be

ignored – as on 30 September 07, the day after the nation-wide one-day general strike called by a number of trade unions backed by the Left parties.

On such occasions coverage is hardly objective. The front page headlines in sections of English press that day reflected varying degrees of disapproval: “Left strike hits all” (The Times of India), “Strike cripples industry, banking (Deccan Herald), “Strike hits industry, trade (Vijay Times). The New Indian Express was a little more even-handed, “A day lost in shutdown” was placed below the banner headline. “Bandh makes a point but bleeds the nation.” The Hindu was matter-of-fact: “General strike hits normal life.: The Asian Age chose to ignore the strike, except for a page-2 report on the Bharatiya Janata Party criticism of the Left parties support for it and in the Bangalore supplement, a round-up of the ‘mixed response’ to the bandh in the city.

If the striking workers of the Honda Motorcycles and Scooters company in Gurgaon received sympathetic coverage, it was almost entirely thanks to the brutal violence unleashed on them and members of their families by the police.” (Online: India Together)

PRO-CAPITAL BIAS OF MEDIA

With ownership of media with large corporations, it is indeed effectively controlled by the capitalist class. It is, therefore, obvious that pro-capital bias has been always in full play in media in capitalist society. Capitalist class uses the media to impose its values and ideas on society. Media is designed and developed to conform to the political and commercial requirements of the media owners and the owning class. Every day, the media tells us that capitalism is the only realistic choice, that government must reduce services for the poor in order to cut taxes on the rich, that workers must be denied rights so that the economy can grow.

However it is important to note that, media play the pro-capital role under pro-people mask. In the bourgeois democracy me-

dia is called the 'neutral watchdog of democracy.' In order to achieve accolade of people in general, media also masquerade as anti-establishment. However in the final analysis, capitalist media, to the toiling people, is glittering in form and poisonous in content.

All through the days of neo-liberal economic onslaught the media has been in service of the capitalist class in its campaign that finance capital driven imperialist globalization has no alternative. On the other hand all opposition to the policy of liberalization, globalization and privatization by the working class has not only been denied honest coverage by the media, on the contrary it has been active in creating hostility among the people in general against the working class for opposing the disastrous policies.

CORPORATE CAPTIVE MEDIA

Corporate control of the media and culture industry has been fuelling the rise of consumer culture. This is what has been termed as "media-corporation-consumption nexus. Pro-capital media is also considered as a significant vehicle of legitimising unjust production relations under capitalist production system.

With the domination of monopoly capital under neo-liberal globalization the media industry also has been coming under the clutch of monopoly business. Since the mid-1980s, the 50 biggest media corporations in USA have been merged into around nine or ten monopoly entities. These firms dominate the US media system. An observation on US media system is interesting to note, "The media system is, in short, an anti-democratic force. But that should not surprise us. The media system in the United States does not exist to serve democracy; it exists to generate maximum profit to the small number of very large firms and billionaire investors." (FAIR)

In Britain five big media companies dominantly control the media industry. The concentration of ownership in the mass media can be traced from the fact that these companies control 71% of daily newspaper circulation and 74% electronic media.

The company with the largest share is News International which is controlled by Rupert Murdoch. In the year 1989 Murdoch had a 35% share of total circulation, owning top selling newspapers. And same is the picture in other leading capitalist countries.

Some of the monopoly companies in media business in world are Time Warner, Walt Disney, Viacom, News Corporation, Sony, TCI/AT&T and General Electric, USA, News International, England, Bertelsmann, Germany, Vivendi Universal, France. Among the media moguls are Michael Eisner, USA, Rupert Murdoch, Australian-American and Silvio Berlusconi, the 'famous' Prime Minister of Italy. Interestingly one of the world's media mogul, Berlusconi owns the holding company Fininvest which has controlling stakes in film production, publishing and television networks. He owns the three largest TV channels in Italy. In fact over 95 per cent TV media in the country he exercises his authority.

NEWS MEDIA OWNERSHIP PICTURE IN INDIA

It is very important to look at the ownership picture of Indian media. Some of the major players who are prominently present in the News Papers and/or TV News Channels (all or any one of English, Hindi and Regional Languages) in India can be seen at **Annexure I** and **Annexure II**

The electronic media in our country has been witnessing concentration of business in limited media companies. Take for example, the Sun TV owned by the Moran Family of Chennai. It has channels in all the south Indian languages. Moreover in cable network in Tamilnadu it has established monopoly business.

At the same time foreign media MNCs have also entered into the media market in the country. While the Star channel of News Corporation owned by international media mogul Rupert Murdoch has been doing big business in India, it has also acquired equity in the Malayalam channel Asianet TV. Other MNCs who have infiltrated into the media industry in our country are

Viacom, CNN, Sony, Turner, NBC, Universal etc.

As is the case all over the world so also in India print media owners have entered into electronic media also. The table at **Annexure III** shows the current picture in the country in this regard:

Now on scrutiny of the ownership profile it will be clearly noticed that dominant share of Indian media (News Papers and TV News Channels) are mainly under control of the big business houses of the country. Again profile of the media ownership in our country clearly exposes the main reason behind the pro-capital and anti-labour role of the media. The authority of ownership and dangerous dependence on advertisement revenue leave no scope for media to speak anything which will go against the interest of capital and in favour of labour. The owner of media is able to control the views of their print or electronic media because it is they who appoint the editor, who in turn appoints the various heads of departments.

So far as the Government own media, particularly radio and electronic news channels are concerned, these are used as an instrument of the government of the day in the country concerned. And so is the experience in our country. No body can deny the fact that the Doordarshan TV news channel in our country provides almost exclusive coverage to Government at the centre and the ruling party at any given time and the state Governments run by the same party. Moreover, the huge advertisement budget of the government is a powerful tool to restraint the media.

The domination of the media by monopoly houses and the ever growing chain of news media in the country have come under criticism from time to time. In 1954 the First Press Commission very mildly spoke against monopoly capital control over media through their observation that, "power of the holder of a monopoly to influence his public in any way he chooses should be regulated and restrained" However with passage of time the situation deteriorated and in his report to the Second Press Commission in 1982 well known journalist Pran Chopra strongly

advocated that it was essential 'to delink the press from the monopoly houses.' In the book titled 'India's Monopoly Press: a Mirror of Distortion published by Indian Federation of Working Journalists has voiced their serious concern against, "the vested interests of the monopoly houses which own the biggest newspapers with the biggest circulations."

NO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Journalists under neo-liberalism have been stripped off even the minimum freedom of expression expected under the ethics of journalism even in bourgeois democratic rule. Journalists today have no or near no right to express freely compared to the situation prior to the advent of neo-liberalism. Journalistic professionalism has been given a goodbye. It has been converted to conform to the neo-liberal political and commercial requirements of the media owners in particular and the capitalist class in general. Corporate and rightists bias has taken the centre stage in journalism.

Journalism today has become the victim of commercial and government encroachment obliged to serve for the interests of the owners who have the politics of the owning class. They (journalists) hardly have autonomy to decide what is and is not news and how it should be covered. According to an observation, "journalists have much less power and that they are largely the unwitting pawns of forces that make them the agents of the status quo." (Monthly Review, volume 55) Again, according to the Australian journalist John Pilger, known as a follower of Noam Chomsky, "most journalists have become either puppets of tough proprietor like Rupert Murdoch or lazy and largely passive victims of public relations experts." (Ian Hargreaves).

Murder of journalists has been increasing day by day. And it does not require a war for journalists to die. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, the murders take place in reprisal for reporting on sensitive topics including official crimes and corruption. The table at Annexure IV gives some country-wise cases of murder of journalists.

PATHETIC PLIGHT OF JOURNALISTS IN INDIA

There has been a mushroom growth of journalists in India. According to sources like Report of Press Commissions, Press in India, annual report of Registrar of Newspapers, in 1950s the number of fulltime reporters were estimated 2000. The number grew to 4,700 journalists receiving either wages or retainer in early 1960s and went up to about 13,000 in 1990s. Of course these figures pertain to 320 larger newspapers. However, according to a contemporary estimate, "to embrace the 700 dailies that reported to the Registrar about other matters but not employees ... in the 1990s India had about 25,000 journalists on wages or retainers. This excluded thousands more stringers (who are not employees of the newspaper but who send stories to newspaper from their localities get piece rate payment only for the report which is published in the newspaper) and occasional contributors."

However it is very important to note that the plight of journalists is extremely vulnerable. In the media controlled by the ruling class and business tycoons, journalist themselves are always in firing line and are victims to crude exploitation. Shockingly not only recruitment of journalists on regular basis has been stopped, contractual system of employment has been imposed on journalists who have been working for many years on regular basis under threat of retrenchment. Regarding the poor service conditions of journalists, a study report has noted that, "it did not make sense to give away too much about employment conditions because wage boards and trade unions might use it."

The trade union movement of journalists and non-journalist suffer from onslaught of media barons and vested interest. All-India Newspaper Employees' Federation and Indian Federation of Working Journalists founded in 1950 are the two old unions of journalists and two more formed subsequently are National Union of Journalists founded in 1972 and the Indian Journalists Union founded in 1990. Of course there are Provincial trade unions also. It is to be noted that the electronic media reporters have no trade union right. Thus the multiplic-

ity of trade unions is in play in the media industry also.

Now there is no Right to Collective Bargaining for journalists. Under the provision of Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Services) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1955 Government has been appointing Wage Boards for journalist and non-journalist. So far six Wage Boards has been notified by the Government, the details of which are given at Annexure V. Shockingly recommendations of the Wage Boards has never been effectively implemented by the newspaper barons. Thus journalists are victims of rampant contractualisation of employment and severe exploitative wage packages and without freedom of expression and rights to collective bargaining.

Media workers are not spared of the onslaught of the current economic crisis. "Many corporate-owned media houses have sacked hundreds of journalists and non-journalists staff since late 2008. Hundreds of other journalists have suffered wage cuts. Of course, the 'right to know' of readers and viewers does not extend to this information. Why scare the poor lambs? And how can you tell that the truth about the once-again booming economy? It might lead audiences to ask that dull, boring question: 'If things are so good, why are you axing so many people'... Hundreds of sacked and ruined staff have little freedom to speak of. Even the professional communicators within media cannot tell their audiences their own story. Cannot tell them they were laid off, let alone tell them why." (Sainath, The Hindu 18.02.2010)

GRIP OF ADVERTISEMENT REVENUE IN INDIAN MEDIA

"Advertisers' choices influence media prosperity and survival." (Noam Chomsky). However, it is very important to understand that market under the current phase of neo-liberal globalization is deeply dependent on advertising. Economic marginalization of people has become a constant phenomenon and stagnation of economy and consequent cut throat competition has become regular feature of capitalist market. In the situation advertising has become an instrument to push prod-

ucts and services. Market driven liberalisation under imperialist globalization, advertising has become increasingly essential for advanced capitalism to accelerate the circulation of goods, differentiate essentially similar products and create brands and raise barriers to entry to the market or marginalise competitors with smaller advertising budgets. Of course on top of all media is utilized in creating debt-based hyper consumerism, particularly amongst the middle class.

It has been argued that "there is a strong link between the growth of advertising expenditure, media corporate convergence, the consolidation and convergence of advertising companies and pressure on government to liberalise the broadcast media." Studies have revealed that privatization of electronic media has abnormally pushed up the advertising space in TV programmes. Immediately following the invasion of electronic media by the private sector, time on account 'commercial break' had gone up from 18 minutes per day to 12 minutes per hour. Governments of different countries were obliged to do away with regulation on space for commercial breaks in TV programmes. Of course the current scenario is far worst.

With mind-boggling developments in communication and information technology media business has undergone a huge shift from labour intensive to capital intensive. The feature of the changed situation has been articulated thus: "There was a working class public sphere fostered by the early nineteenth-century print media. At that time radical papers could cover their production costs by the cover price alone once they achieved a certain circulation figure. However, with the rising cost of new technology, raw materials and distribution, the media industry became more reliant on advertising."

It is this feature which has brought media all the more under the evil influence of advertising industry. The preferences of advertisers to spend their money on media advertisement with a more socially mixed readership that focused the affluent middle class has made media reliant on the likes and dislikes of the advertisers. Taking advantage of the dangerous dependence of media on advertisement revenue advertisers have

been shaping the media content in order to meet their commercial requirement. Media are compelled to conform to the commercial interest of the business class, including extending support to class exploitation and malicious propagation against the working class particularly denouncing the struggles of the working class both on national cause and economic issues. In the meantime the Indian media buying industry has been currently valued at Rs.22,000 crore.

Vice President of India Hamid Ansari's address to the M.C. Varghese memorial lecture this year can be summarized thus: Winds of economic liberalization brought with them the elements of the market economy that have changed the DNA of our media organizations, Today's media has been converted into large business entities. A scrutiny of the ownership of media industry in the country will clearly reveal that it has become the branch of big business houses with pursuit of profit. Commercial success of media has become a function of advertising revenue rather than subscription and circulation figures. Higher circulation does not aim broader readership but attracting bigger advertisement pie. The advertisers have thus replaced recipients of media products. Today a media enterprise is seen as a necessary subsidiary for a growing business enterprise, a political party and even individuals seeking to leverage public influence for private gain. No space is given in media for the concerns of the marginalized, the dispossessed and the vulnerable.

In order to augment the advertisement revenue, TV channels have started heavily depending on cinema in India. From sheer telecasting a film, there has been a sudden surge in demand for television rights of latest releases from Bollywood. The rating of the TV channels is measured in terms of TRP (Television Rating Points) and GRP (Gross Rating Points). TRP indicate the percentage of viewers watching a programme at a given time. GRP are the total of TRPs over a period of time. Now according to survey reports, there have been many points jump of TRP and GRP of the channels during the television screening of latest release of Bollywood films. This in turn increases the advertisement market of the respective channels.

The ad rates of some films fetched upto Rs.2.00 lakhs for ten seconds.

In India investment in all kinds of media has gone up stupendously. Between 1981 and 1989, it rose by five times. Between 1990 and 1996 it quintupled again. According to a study in absolute terms the amount spent for advertisement 1981 was Rs.320 crore and in 1996 it went up to Rs.4,200 crore. It goes without saying that the figures has been increasing by leaps and bounds.

MEDIA ETHICS AT ROCK BOTTOM

Under the neo-liberal dispensation commercial compulsion has pushed the media beyond the barest ethical decorum. Under the influence of the doctrine of 'market economy' media has become more and more a means of making money and machinery for making propaganda for the powerful classes (of course money power). Money power has killed the moral of media.

The 2009 elections have brought down the morale of media to its lowest ebb. It has been aptly titled 'Money Media Nexus in Elections 2009. Yet another elucidated expression was "opinion rigging in media is worse than ballot rigging in polling booths". The both ways traffic was narrated thus, "In some cases it was politicians bribing the media while in some other it was the media demanding bribe."

As per report in The Hindu "news papers across the state of Andhra Pradesh netted Rs.350 crore to Rs.400 crore through editorial coverage sold to candidates during the 2009 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections." Now the situation is not one of blaming one or the other individual journalist for adopting corrupt practice as told by one journalist, "In the days when this was about petty corruption of individual journalists, we had a choice: to be or not to be corrupt. Now when this is an organized industry run by our employers (media owner), what choice do we have?"

So organized was the entire rot that marketing departments of media houses made PowerPoint presentations to the 'war rooms' of the resourcefully powerful beneficiary political parties about the entire scheme/package quoting prices. The operation module contained, "putting in place dedicated teams each day comprising political or city reporters and correspondents, sub-editors, area advertisement managers and area sales managers, to do the needful. Fifteen days' general coverage is priced at Rs.20 lakh, while seven days of exclusive coverage is pegged at Rs.25 lakh. Along with this, specially prepared four-page supplements in colour, exclusive interviews, positive views of the voters, positive editorials, 'only positive coverage' and 'no negative publicity of opposition candidates or party and extra copies of the newspaper on payment basis, were on offer." (The Hindu 19.11.09). With the TV channels, it was 'live' coverage, a 'special focus,' or even a team of the channel tracking you for hours in a day.

The influencing factor behind the shivering situation has been ascribed to the hyper-profit motive under market driven economic doctrine which has engulfed the media industry as well. The other integrally related development is the ever growing phenomenon of corporate and money power in parliamentary politics.

According to data compiled by 'National Election Watch', of the 288 MLAs in Maharashtra 184 were crorepatis. Between the 2004 and 2009 elections, there was a 70 percent increase in the number of crorepati candidates. On the other hand an average MP was worth Rs.5.1 crore, a Union Cabinet Minister Rs.7.6 crore and the combined declared wealth of 543 MPs was in excess of Rs.2,800 crore. The shining stars in the darkest sky!

Bankruptcy in the conduct of media to compete with rivals in attracting advertisers has been moving to its lowest ebb. With economic crisis advertising spending faces down turn exposing media to revenue crunch. Such reality has got expression from the media world itself in the statement, "I am not unmindful of the difficult times the media industry is going through.

The market is too crowded, the advertising cake is too small, the economy is too sluggish. We are all furiously engaged in finding new and innovative ways to augment our dwindling revenues.” (Vinod Mehta, Outlook)

DIVERSIONARY TACTICS OF MEDIA

Deliberate digression from real issue and creating dramatic sensation in society has been alarmingly increasing in media. The way the TV channels dealt with the unfortunate case of Arushi murder, Ruchika episode or for that matter the terrorist attack in Mumbai in November 2008 are instances in point.

Moreover sex and violence has been continuously occupying ever growing space in media resulting in pollution of the social environment and generating sense of perversion in people's mind. Today the way social crimes related to sex and violence is increasing in the society, let alone playing positive role to prevent such development, the media's role has been amounting to act of provocation. To capitalist media ('the fourth pillar of parliamentary democracy') shamefully sex has always been a commercial object. Ian Hargreaves in his book 'Journalism' wrote, "Rupert Murdoch told staff that he wanted the Sun (newspaper) to focus upon 'sex, sport and contests'. One of its trade marks would be the 'page three girl – a daily photograph of a naked woman." The moot point is that media diverts youth towards sex and violence to detract them from the actual cause of their sufferings in capitalist system.

Crimes and violence against the working class and trade union movement perpetrated by the capitalist class through administration and hired anti-socials has been noted elsewhere in this paper.

Now we must carefully draw a distinction in the diametrically different position the media adopts in covering cool blooded murder of a worker even at work place at the instance of management or in the hands of police and murder under influence of alcoholic drink in any dancing bar. Definitely every case of murder is shocking and unfortunate and must be condemned.

But media go silent in case of the former and go dramatically vocal in case of latter. Covering crimes in high society carry commercial value for media (because it brings more TRPs to TV channels) but covering crimes against poor people comes in conflict with the class character of media.

Another technique media adopt to divert people's attention from actual cause of any social issue is 'hide the root and highlight the branch'. Take for example few recent incidences. "Every issue is now reduced to a fight between individuals, heroic, villainous or just fun figures" (Sainath) Political question related to relations between India-Pakistan behind auction of cricket players for IPL league was converted into fight between Shah Rukh Khan and Bal Thackeray by media. The most burning issue of spiral rise in prices is less important to media than the junk news of face-off between Prime Minister and Union Agriculture Minister.

MEDIA UNDER NEO-LIBERALISM

In the era of neo-liberal 'market economy' the world of media also witnessed wide-ranging shift from state to private capital domination. The doctrine of globalization, liberalization and privatization, obviously, embraced the media right across the world with a paradigmatic shift, providing wide open avenues for extensive entry of private capital particularly in electronic media. The result was that whatever little public orientation the media used to display was replaced by commercial consideration directed towards 'consumer culture'.

With the process of media globalization since 1989, the central feature has been larger cross border flows of media outputs, growth of media trans-national conglomerates, centralization of media control, spread and intensification of commercialization. It has been observed that so called, "consumer sovereignty was exalted, broadcasting was re-evaluated primarily as an industry, a commodity out of which money could be made and the key question for policy became how to ensure 'competitiveness' devoid of ethics and moral and promotion of vulgar culture (sex and violence) in the media industry."

Right from the days of introduction (rather imposition) of the neo-liberal economic policies driven by finance capital, media has been demonstrating their pro-capital bias by propagating the 'gospel' of imperialist globalization. TINA (there is no other alternative) 'mantra' had been preached by the media just like a tape-recorded version. Obviously the so-called 'intellectual' pen pushers of the capitalist class gorgeously occupied the print and electronic media. Over last two decades business news dominates the media. Corporate and rightist bias has made a dangerous inroad into the media systems. The affairs of Wall-Street, the pursuit of profitable investments and the joys of capitalism are now presented as the interests of the privileged readership of the society. Journalists are obliged to rely on advocates of free-market economists as resources when covering economics stories.

Of course, the media demonstrating their class hostility denied space to the progressive Left forces, those have been carrying out relentless campaign propagating the inherent ingredients of instability of the neo-liberal policies and consequential sufferings of the people. However, the climax of the situation is that with the collapse of neo-liberal capitalist doctrine commencing from the same country (USA) from where the sermon was issued, the media did not dither in demonstrating solidarity with their class. Although the working class and the progressive Left intellectuals were vindicated, media continued to deny space to the working class.

The Indian experience in this regard is corroborative of the ideological understanding of the class bias character of the media and the imperatives of class struggles. Left led trade union raised their voice against the doctrine of neo-liberalism and fought tooth and nail the policies and steps of the successive Governments pursuing the dictates of the finance capital. Now the media solidly stood by the ruling class in silencing the voice of the working class and demolishing the opposition to anti-people and anti-national policies. Space was deployed by media in terms of pages and hours in hiding truth and distorting facts centering round the struggles of the working class in the country.

None but only the naives can deny the fact that, but for the struggles conducted by the trade union movement opposing privatization of public sector enterprises and stopping opening up of the financial sector to the Foreign Institutional Investors the disastrous impact of the financial meltdown and economic crisis on the Indian economy would have been manifold than the present scale. It is atrocious that the media then discredited and denounced our struggles, supported the Government decisions and now the credit of the fruit of our struggles is attributed to the ruling polity who surrendered to the pressure of the international finance capital and big private business houses in the country.

BASHING OF LEFT POLITICS BY MEDIA

Media today is brazenly biased against left and democratic forces at an unprecedented scale. Class hostility of media against the Left is nakedly demonstrated in the distorted depiction of facts and formulation on the socialist countries of China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea and on the Governments of Latin American countries run by the people oriented progressive pro-leftists political forces.

Apart from the historical existence of socialist Cuba, with the political development in the dominant majority of Latin American countries nervousness and intolerance of the world capitalist class is given expression and extended support by media through all unfair and foul means. "As the anti-capitalist character of the Chavez government revealed, it became starkly clear that democratic opinion was not being reflected in the established private media. Influential newspapers dropped their pretenses of varying "liberal" tendencies, and increasingly appeared to be acting from an agreed playbook ... All privately owned domestic media (not to mention the foreign press!) using their airtime and columns to denigrate Chavez government." Yet another glaring example is the current political development in the state of West Bengal. Media has launched a full scale class war against the Left Front Government of the state. Through motivated distorted coverage media, "very names of Singur and Nandigram have become synonymous with forcible

land acquisition by the state all over India.”

Further, media is playing as shield in protecting the anti-left, anti-people and pro-capital political forces in the state, who also enjoy blessings of imperialism. The media has nothing to say against the barbaric criminal acts perpetrated by the anti-democratic authoritarian political forces. Innocent toiling people are brutally murdered almost every day with the intention to create reign of terror in the state and sense of social insecurity amongst the people. Criminality including killing of people and acts of horrific subversion is carried out by the so called Maoists. Let alone condemning such acts of bloodbath, the media is supporting such acts and passing the bucks on the Left Front Government and on the leading party of the Left Front.

The double talk of the media is thoroughly exposed in the fact that when the working class of the state under the leadership of CITU have been raising their voice for fulfillment of their genuine demands, the media used to project such democratic trade union activities as constraint in the way of economic progress of the state. On the other hand when the Left Front Government took steps for economic reconstruction of the state the same media launched malicious campaign in the pages of news papers and electronic news channels to confuse the people through misinformation and disinformation and make them hostile against the Left Front Government. Such role of media explicitly exposes their capitalist class allegiance.

MEDIA SILENT ABOUT ATROCITIES ON TRADE UNIONS

Trade union organizers have been facing assassinations, abductions, arrests and imprisonments as well as death threats, dismissals, harassment, acts of discrimination and intimidation all over the world. “A US\$ 4 billion union-busting industry exists in the United States to defeat union organizing drives through coercion and intimidation.”

According to a report 115 trade union organizers were murdered, while around 1600 were subjected to violent assaults,

1700 were detained in jail and some 9,000 arrested. Nearly 10,000 workers were sacked from services for trade union activities during the year 2007. The conspicuous silence of news media on such onslaught on trade unions is clear proof of anti-worker character of media.

In India also the working class has been facing such onslaughts in a big scale. Union busting has been organized through victimization and intimidations including dismissal from services by managements. Violence and atrocities including murders have been taking place at the instance of management. But these are not reported in the media. We have been reporting the incidences of attack on our trade unions in our meetings and conference documents.

NEWS MEDIA NETWORK IN INDIA

India has witnessed a giant growth in media both print and electronic. One single factor which has contributed the most in this development is the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR). It is estimated that India is world's second largest print media market. Between 2000 and 2007 the circulation of Indian daily newspapers grew by 66 per cent to exceed 96 million copies a day. Interestingly the increase has occurred in all the thirteen language newspapers in the country. The table at Annexure VI shows the figures for the period.

On the other hand the TV news channels have also undergone tremendous growth. The satellite channels arrived in the country in 1991. Today the number of TV news channels in English, Hindi and the regional languages are more than 100. And many of them are 24 hours news channel. According to calculation based on National Readership Survey 2006, in Hoot, 13th June 2009 there are 12 crore (120 millions) television household in India. To put it differently, "more than half of India's people sleep each night in a place with a television set." (India's Newspaper Revolution - Robin Jeffrey)

The numbers of people who read newspaper, view TV news channel, listen to radio and browse internet, as the case may

be, according to Government estimation are as under:

Newspaper Readers	300 million
TV viewers	400 million
Listening Radio	150 million
Browsing Internet	50 million

FOCAL POINTS FOR DELIBERATIONS

The major developments and our task to constitute the focus of our discussion in the Commission exercise may be as follows:

- 1) Revolution in Communication Technology
- 2) Gigantic reach of media to people at every nook and corner of the country
- 3) Need to expose ideologically the role of media propagating the cause of capitalist system and capitalist ethos of selfishness and consumerism
- 4) Alternate modern media network for the cause of working class
- 5) Revolutionize People to People Contact
- 6) Improvement of quality and increasing circulation of our journals

Information technology has been witnessing revolutionary developments. Different modes of ultra modern communication has been witnessing multitude of growth. Today it is digital era of electronic news media based around the internet and other broadband communications technologies with 'World Wide Web' and again a fusion of economic liberalisation and globalization.

Now utilising this gigantic technological advancement media network has been expanding in leaps and bound and reaching

vast population of our country through various means of medium. We have noted above the number of people covered through various means of media in our country.

The pro-capital media has been propagating the message of capitalism and either no message or distorted message of the working class. Our working class movement cannot remain silent spectator to this onslaught of the pro-capital media.

Advantage of communication technology must not be allowed to continue permanently as the domain of the capitalist class.

Alternative modern media network by working class movement should come in our agenda. This should neither be over estimated nor under estimated nay misunderstood as a utopian adventurous venture. Creating alternative media system is not easy. It needs sustained effort, funding and interest. But it cannot be denied the real solution of the problem lie in ultimate development of people oriented media to counter the anti-people capital controlled media. Such steps are initiated in different parts of the world and some of the Latin American attempts should serve as models to us.

Even in our intra organizational activities adoption of modern technology based communication system cannot brook apathy and further delay. Networking of organizational data and information sharing, propaganda materials campaign, various organizational communications at national, states and industrial federations' level should be seriously considered. Already in the public sector industries PSU-wise satellite based networking and the networking at different units of PSUs are in operation and at places trade unions are availing the facility for trade purpose, of course in a very limited scale. Such steps will effectively equip and update our leadership to sharpen the edge of our communication and campaign and enhance organizational capabilities.

However, in a class divided capitalist society with ownership of all means of production with the capitalist class and capitalist production relations in operation, in the matter of access to the products of STR (scientific and technological revolution)

the working class will continue to suffer from deprivation. This challenge must be met with aggressive intensification of our mass contact campaign to counter the damage inflicted by the media.

Our people to people preaching must be in reiteration to our ideological understanding that the superiority of human resources cannot be superseded by technology. It is certain that if we conduct our man to man campaign with utmost sincerity and efficiency with revolutionary conviction and zeal, it will go long way in countering the capitalist media onslaught.

Through our mass contact we shall have to remove the mask of the media that it is neutral and play the role of so called fourth pillar in bourgeois democracy. The wrong belief among the rank and file workers that whatever is written in the pages of newspaper and told in television are truth and impartial reporting of fact must be eliminated. In short the working class must be disillusioned about role of media. They must be educated about the real face and actual character of media.

Amongst our comrades a mindset has developed that if any of our programme of mass mobilization is covered by media, (particularly by TV news channel) then it is considered to have been a successful one. This is an erroneous understanding and must be eliminated. Success or failure of struggles launched by the working class from time to time must not be judged on the basis of the coverage in media. We should not have any illusion that media will give positive coverage to our activities.

The urgency of our own publications must be fully comprehended in the forgoing understanding. The journals published by CITU centre, State Committees and our Industrial Federations will have to play a major role. In this connection we may recall that we have been dealing with this matter in our documents and discussions in our meetings and conferences.

The importance of our journals and periodicals can be hardly overstated. Apart from publishing educative materials, the paramount necessity is to publish the report of various activities undertaken and struggles conducted by the working class in

the country and abroad to strengthen the enthusiasm of our rank and file.

The CITU centre must play role model in improving the production of the journals and propaganda materials. The contents must be enriched to address our requirement. However, so far as carrying the reports of activities is concerned, it is fully dependent on inputs from all levels of our organization – right from the state committees to the unit committees. However, the task of enhancing the circulation of the journals really depends on the committees, leadership and rank and file workers at all levels.

In conclusion we would like to focus upon the most vital point that working class must be awakened and mobilized behind the ideological understanding that as in the struggle for revolutionary social transformation social super structure has got a role, therefore countering capitalist media must be comprehended in that perspective. At the same time combating the all round offensive by the bourgeois media under neo-liberal order requires battle on all fronts and not merely a trade union issue. It is a political battle in economic, social, cultural fronts. And as vanguard, the working class must prepare to play the lead role. In his write-up, 'Journalism, Democracy and Class Struggle' Robert W McChesney has noted, "capitalist media reform is part of our broader struggles for democracy. It is impossible to conceive of a better world with a media under the ... thumb of the capitalist class."

ANNEXURE - I

NEWSPAPERS OWNERSHIP PICTURE IN INDIA

NAME OF THE NEWSPAPER CHAIN	LANGUAGE	NAME OF THE OWNER
Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd (Times of India etc.)	English, Gujarati, Hindi	Jain Family
Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd (i) Indian Express (North based) (ii) New Indian Express (South)	English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu	Two Goenka families (Divided in 1998 into two entities)
The Statesman Ltd.	English, Bengali	Tata Group
Malayala Manorama Co. Ltd	Malayalam	The MRF family
Hind Samachar Ltd. (Punjab Kesari)	Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu	Chopra family
Hindustan Times Ltd	English, Hindi	Birla family
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.	Bengali, English	Sarkar family
Lok Prakashan Ltd. (Gujarat Samachar)	Gujarati	Shreyans Shah family
Kasturi & Sons Ltd.(The Hindu)	English	Kasturi family
Aaj Prakashan Ltd. (Aaj)	Hindi	S.V.Gupta
Sandesh Ltd. (Sandesh)	Gujarati	Falgunbhai Patel
Mathrubhumi Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd.(Mathrubhumi)	Malayalam	M.P.Veerendrakumar acquires major interest 1998
Ushodaya Publications (Eenadu)	English, Telugu	Ramoji Rao
Jagran Prakashan Ltd.	Hindi	Gupta family
Thanthi Trust	Tamil	B.S.Adityan in the form of a trust
The Printers (Mysore) Ltd. (Deccan Herald, Prajavani)	English, Kannada	K.N.Hari Kumar
Rajasthan Patrika Ltd.	English, Hindi	Kothari family
Amar Ujala Prakashan	Hindi	Agarwal & Maheshwari family
Sakal Papers Ltd.	Marathi	Pawar family
Dinamalar	Tamil	Family of late T.V.Ramasubbaier as a partnership
Kumar Publications Trust(Dinakaran)	Tamil	Now in the hands of Moran Family Group
Bartaman Printers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd.	Bengali	Arun Sinha

ANNEXURE - II

SOME TELEVISION NEWS CHANNELS IN INDIA

NEWS CHANNELS	OWNERSHIP
CNN-IBN	Global Broadcast NewsTurner Broadcasting System, Inc. (a Time Warner company)
NDTV 24x7	NDTV Ltd.
Times Now	Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. Reuters
DD news	State Owned
Headlines Today	India Today Group
NewsX	INX Network
NDTV India	NDTV
Zee News	Essel Group
Aaj Tak	India Today Group
Sahara Samay	Sahara India Parivar
India News	Independent News Service Private Ltd (India TV)
P-7 News	Pearls Broadcasting Corporation Pvt. Ltd.
STAR News	News Corporation
Live India	Broadcast Initiatives Ltd
CNEB	Complete News & Entertainment Broadcast Pvt. Ltd. (CNEB)
News 24	BAG Films & Media Limited
Azad News	TVU Network Corporation
Focus TV	M3 Media Pvt. Ltd.
IBN-7	Network 18
Total TV	Serbia Broadband - Srpske kablovske mreže (SBB).
CNBC-TV18	TV18 (India)
ET Now	Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. Reuters (a Thomson Reuters company)
NDTV Profit	NDTV Ltd.

In addition to the above there are many more regional languages TV news channels, such as, Indiavision, Manorama News, Asianet, Kairali People, Hind TV, TV9, Tara News, PTC News, Mh1 News, New Live, 24 Ghanta, NE TV, IBN Lokmat, Star Ananda, STAR Majha, Punjab Today, Kolkata TV, Zee 24 Taas, New Bangla, ETV News, NTV, TV5 News.

ANNEXURE – III
PRINT MEDIA EXPANDED TO ELECTRONIC MEDIA

SL. NO.	NAME OF THE GROUP	OPERATING BRANCHES OF MEDIA
1.	Times of India	News Paper, Television, Radio
2.	Sun TV	News Paper, Magazine, Television, Cable and DTH
3.	Zee TV	Cable, DTH, Television, Film
4.	India Today	Radio, News Paper, Television, Weekly
5.	Bhaskar	Cable, Television, News Paper
6.	Mid Day	Radio, Television, News Paper
7.	Anada Bazar Patrika	Radio, Television, News Paper

ANNEXURE – IV
SOME COUNTRY-WISE NUMBER OF JOURNALIST MURDERED

NAME OF COUNTRY	NUMBER OF KILLINGS (1995-2004)
Iraq	36
Algeria	33
Columbia	30
Russia	29
Philippines	22
India	16
Sierra Leone	15
Brazil	12
Afghanistan	10
Bangladesh	10
Mexico	9

ANNEXURE – V

The following table gives the details of the constitution of
Wage Boards along other relevant informations

S. No.	Name of the Wage Board	Date of appointment of the Wage Board	Date on which final report was submitted to the Government	Date of acceptance of the recommendations by the Government	Remarks
I.	Wage Board for Working Journalist	02-05-1956	NA	10-05-1957	DMITA WAGE BOARD
II.	(a) Wage Boards for Working Journalists	12-11-1963	17-07-1967	27-10-1967	SHINDE WAGE BOARD
	(b) Wage Boards for Non-journalists News paper Employees	25-02-1964	17-07-1967	18-11-1967	
III.	(a) Wage Board for Working Journalists	11-06-1945	13-08-1980	26-12-1980	Was converted into One-man Tribunal on 9th February 1979
	(b) Wage Board for Non-journalists News paper Employees	06-02-1976	13-08-1980	20-07-1981	
IV.	Wage Boards for Working Journalists and Non-Journalist Newspaper Employees	17-07-1985	30-05-1989	31-08-1989	U.N.Bachavat Wage Board
V.	Wage Boards for Working Journalists and Non-Journalist Newspaper Employees	02-09-1994	25-07-2000	05-12-2000	MANISANA BOARD 15-12-2000
VI.	Wage Boards for Working Journalists and Non-Journalist Newspaper Employees	24-05-2007			NARAYANA KURUP WAGE BOARDS MAJITHA WAGE BOARD W.E.F. 4/3/2009

ANNEXURE – VI
CIRCULATION FIGURES OF NEWSPAPER IN INDIA
(Figures in '000)

LANGUAGE	2000	2001	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2000-7
Assamese	321	332	409	548	414	448	638	99%
Bengali	2,461	2,537	1,822	2,854	2,679	3,046	3,149	28%
English	7,851	8,512	10,000	8,978	10,771	12,915	13,257	69%
Gujarati	2,813	3,734	2,374	4,652	4,805	5,307	5,326	89%
Hindi	25,577	23,014	32,287	32,158	33,774	37,643	43,077	68%
Kannada	1,392	1,067	2,397	1,596	1,946	2,032	1,884	35%
Malayala	2,976	2,992	3,192	3,438	3,151	3,193	3,576	20%
Marathi	4,485	4,148	5,292	4,865	5,227	5,897	6,091	36%
Oriya	2,057	2,039	2,839	2,656	2,912	3,215	3,116	51%
Punjabi	1,535	1,354	1,856	1,639	1,546	1,482	1,255	-18%
Tamil	1,740	1,914	2,053	1,912	2,129	2,010	2,734	57%
Telugu	1,682	1,651	3,059	2,730	2,902	3,895	5,728	241%
Urdu	3,614	3,029	4,625	4,664	5,279	6,003	7,083	96%
TOTAL	58,504	56,323	72,205	72,690	77,535	87,086	96,914	66%

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