

**TRADE UNION POLITICS OF STEEL WORKERS :
A STUDY OF ROURKELA STEEL PLANT**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

JALADA KUMAR TRIPATHY

**CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA
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Centre for Political Studies
School of Social Sciences
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Mehrauli Road,
NEW DELHI-110067.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled
TRADE UNION POLITICS OF STEEL WORKERS; A
STUDY OF BOURKELA STEEL PLANT submitted
by Mr. JALADA KUMAR SRIPATHY in partial
fulfilment for the award of MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY DEGREE has not been previous-
ly submitted for any other degree of this
or any other University. To the best
of our knowledge this is a bona-fide work.

We recommend this dissertation be placed
before the examiners for evaluation.

Kiran Saxena

Dr. (Mrs) KIRAN SAXENA
SUPERVISOR



Prof. C P DHAMBHARI
CHAIRMAN



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However, the limitations that this work still embodies entirely belong to me.

NEW DELHI,
Tuesday the 22nd February '83.

Jalad Tripathy
JALADA KUMAR TRIPATHY

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INTRODUCTION

Study of "trade unions"¹ has assumed great significance in recent times with the growth of modern industries and their vital role in the economic, political and social life of a state. The term has received different connotations, in course of time, depending on the varieties of functions it has increasingly taken up during the process of its development. Thus, in modern times, a trade union is not simply "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives";² the purposes of trade unions have become considerably wider.

As the nature and character of trade unions in any country or region is gradually more and more influenced by the dynamic interplay of environmental factors, it is

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1. The Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, defines 'trade union' as any combination, whether temporary or permanent, formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between workmen and employers, or between workmen and workmen, or between employers and employers, or for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business, and includes any federation of two or more Trade Unions. Vide Section 2, Cl. (h) of The Trade Unions Act, 1926 (New Delhi: Government of India Publications, 1978), p.2.
 2. Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, History of Trade Unionism, 1666-1920 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), p.1.

bound to manifest diverse tendencies and varying traits in different situations. Broadly, we find three trends in the three types of societies - Western, Socialist and Developing. The unions in the West are, by and large, characterized by freedom of action and better collective bargaining, although unions seek the help of government and political parties in regulating wages, and hours and conditions of work.³

In this general pattern, we find a striking difference between the European and American trade unions, i.e., while the European Unions have strong political, ideological and religious appeals; the unions in the United States and Canada are based on the principle of 'economic' or 'business' unionism.⁴

In the second pattern as prevalent in socialist countries, the trade unions are seen as organs of the state.⁵

3. S.M. Pandey, As Labour Organises (New Delhi: Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, 1970), p.2.

4. See I.L.O., The Trade Union Situation in the United States (Geneva, 1960); Arthur M. Ross and Paul T. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict (New York, 1960); Adolf Sturmthal, Unity and Diversity in European Labour: An Introduction to Contemporary Labour Movements (Illinois, 1953).

5. See I.L.O., The Trade Union Situation in the USSR (Geneva, 1960); Emily Clark Brown, Soviet Trade Unions and Labour Relations (Cambridge, 1966); Andrei Vorbin, Soviet Trade Unions (London, 1958).

They are more "production-oriented" by participating in the drawing up of plans and helping in the working out of governmental economic policies. Thus, the unions in these countries are only one form of workers' organisation, as party, state agencies, economic organs, cooperatives, etc. They are also considered spokesmen of workers, and are, in one or other way, responsible for the furtherance of the interests of workers.

Apart from these two patterns, the trade unions in developing countries are born out of a different type of social and political forces, which are directed against the imperialist powers.⁶ The economic demands for wages and improvement of working conditions find outlet more through political channels than through economic instruments of collective bargaining. Therefore, the main task before these trade unions, i. e., conditioning the motives, needs, attitudes and aspirations of the workers to exercise powerful impact on the process of social and economic transformation of these countries,⁷ are very likely to be side-

6. See Everett M. Kessalow, ed., National Labour Movements in the Post-War World (New York, 1963); Bruce H. Millen, The Political Role of Labour in Developing Countries (Washington, 1963); William H. Friedland, Unions and Industrial Relations in Underdeveloped Countries (Ithaca, 1963).

7. See "Role of Labour in Economic Development" in Walter Galenson, ed., Labour and Economic Development (Bombay: Indian Society of Labour Economics, 1967).

tracked, as the unions are highly politicised and hence are prone to become instruments of political parties and outside leaders. In this context, Crouch has aptly pointed out that in underdeveloped countries, the close links between political parties and trade unions are as much given factors in the situation as are the workers' poverty and social backwardness.⁸

It is true that, through political forums like political parties, the trade unions find it easier to exert pressure on the government in pushing forward favourable public policy. But the crux of the matter lies in the kind of relationship that exists between the political parties and trade unions and it has remained an important sphere of research for those who are interested in the study of trade union movement in developing societies. Here the main question confronting us is:

Whether the political parties have become ends in themselves rather than acting as means for the trade unions in realizing their (unions') political objectives. In other words, if they have become instruments in the hands of the political parties for the achievement of latter's goals.

8. Harold Crouch, Trade Unions and Politics in India (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966), p.279.

Here, the term 'goals' remains the most important consideration for evaluating the relationship between trade unions and political parties. There are many instances in history where the help of trade unions are sought by political parties to serve greater causes and for achieving social goals. During freedom struggle, the Congress Party was greatly assisted by All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the sole trade union at that time, which was instrumental in steering the industrial workforce against the Imperial Power. Here, the objective is clearly manifested. But confusion persists in those cases where a gap exists between the declared political objectives of the unions and their actual political actions which, in most cases, are guided more by the dictates of their parent political organisations rather than by their declared goals. Following this general logic, we can deduce that the actual functioning of the trade unions are considerably influenced by their parent political parties, which mostly operate at the national level. Conversely, we may say that national politics, in a great way, determines the nature of trade union movement at the regional level. But, this is not always the case. Particularly, in the context of the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant, the case under study, we find

that the politics at the state level has played a vital role. In the troubled-waters of Indian politics, different political forces have sailed in different directions, depending on the interplay of various regional variables. Thus, the strategies of the same political actors⁹ at the state level on various political processes do not correspond exactly to that of the one at national level. Sometimes they take completely separate manifestations. Hence, there is a need for studies at micro level rather than applying the generalizations of the macro studies in specific cases. Keeping this in view, the researcher has made an attempt at studying the trade union movement in the biggest industrial establishment in the state of Orissa, i.e., the Rourkela Steel Plant.

Being one of the industrially most backward states in the country, Orissa has the pride of having the first steel project after independence. With the commissioning of this plant in 1956, the trade union movement in Orissa entered into a new era of industrial democracy and at the same time occupied a significant place in the history of Indian Labour Movement. But unfortunately, trade union

9. Here by political actor we mean political parties.

movement in this state has not attracted enough attention of research scholars. There are only some project reports,¹⁰ one thesis;¹¹ and not even cursory articles dealing with the subject are available. A brief review of literature on this subject will make this problem clear.

To begin with, there are some historical studies mainly dealing with the origin and growth of the movement in India pioneered by N.M. Joshi,¹² one of the early founders of Indian trade union movement,¹³ and followed by Ahmed Mukhtar,¹⁴ D. Chamanlal,¹⁵ S.G. Panandikar,¹⁶

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10. One such report on 'Rourkela Masdoor Sabha' undertaken by the 'Public Enterprises' Centre for Continuing Education' was available to the researcher.
 11. Bobba Suryanarayana Murty, Trade Unionism in Orissa State: A Study of its Growth, Organisation, Structure, Politics and Leadership (1938-1973), Ph.D. Thesis (P.G. Department of Labour and Social Welfare, Berhampur University, Berhampur, Orissa, 1978).
 12. N.M. Joshi, Trade Union Movement in India (Bombay, 1927).
 13. Some writers describe N.M. Joshi as the father of Indian Trade Union Movement. But it is controversial. For details, please see G.K. Sharma, Labour Management in India (Jullundar: Jullundar University Publishers, 1964), pp.56 & 168.
 14. Ahmed Mukhtar, Trade Unionism and Trade Disputes in India (Bombay, 1935). By the same author, Factory Labour in India, and Factory Labour in Punjab; both these works were published from Madras (1929).
 15. D. Chamanlal, Coolies: History of Labour and Capital in India, vols. I & II (Lahore, 1932).
 16. S.G. Panandikar, Industrial Labour in India, (Bombay, 1923).

A.S. Mathur and J.S. Mathur,¹⁷ V.B. Karnik,¹⁸ V.V. Giri,¹⁹ Sukomal Sen,²⁰ and S.A. Dange,²¹ who has stressed specifically the role of communists in the working class movement by presenting a coherent interpretation of the movement in terms of compulsions imposed by the developing economy and the democratic polity.²² These studies would have served a more useful purpose had they brought forth a more incisive analysis of factors leading to the success or failures of the movement at different points of time.

There has been other studies of trade union movement confined to particular establishments by research scholars

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17. A.S. Mathur and J.S. Mathur, Trade Union Movement in India (Allahabad: Chaitnya Publishing House, 1957).
 18. V.B. Karnik, Trade Unions: A Survey and Strikes in India (Both published by Manaktala & Sons, Bombay, in 1966 and 1969, respectively).
 19. V.V. Giri, Labour Problems in Indian Industries (Bombay: Asian Publishing House, 1962).
 20. Sukomal Sen, Working Class of India: History of Emergence and Movement, 1930-1970 (Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1977).
 21. S.A. Dange, Indian Trade Union Movement, A Communist Party of India Publication (Bombay, 1952).
 22. C.P. Thakur, "Trade Unions and Social Science Research in India", Indian Journal of Industrial Relations (Delhi, July 1976), p.9.

like R.C. Sharma²³ in Post and Telegraph Department; K.V. Sivayya²⁴ and M.V. Bogaert²⁵ in Indian Ports; N.N. Sinha²⁶ in coal mining industry; K.V. Sivayya²⁷ in Sugar industries; C.P. Thakur and Fred C. Munson²⁸ in Printing industries; and M.D. Morris,²⁹ V.B. Singh,³⁰ S.M. Pandey,³¹ W.A. Dawson³²

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23. R.C. Sharma, Trade Unionism and Collective Bargaining in the Indian Posts and Telegraph Department, Thesis, Patna University, 1965.
 24. K.V. Sivayya, Industrial Relations in Ship Building Industry, & Industrial Relations in Visakhapatnam Port (Both published by Andhra University Press, Waltair, in 1967 and 1968, respectively).
 25. M.V.B. Bogaert, Trade Unionism in Indian Ports: A Case Study of Calcutta and Bombay (New Delhi: Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1970).
 26. N.N. Sinha, The history and working of Trade Unions in the Coal Mining Industry, Thesis, Patna University, 1966.
 27. K.V. Sivayya, Industrial Relations in Selected Units of the Sugar Industry of Andhra Pradesh (Waltair: Andhra University Press, 1971).
 28. C.P. Thakur and Fred C. Munson, Industrial Relations in Printing Industry in India (New Delhi: Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, (SRCIR&HR), 1969).
 29. M.D. Morris, The Emergence of Industrial Labour Force in India: A Study of Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1917 (California: University of California Press, 1965).
 30. V.B. Singh, Climate for Industrial Relations: A Study of Kanpur Cotton Textile Industry (Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1967).
 31. S.M. Pandey, As Labour Organises (New Delhi: Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1970).
 32. W.A. Dawson, Unionism in Western Indian Textile Industry (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1971).

and E.A. Ramaswamy³³ in Cotton Textile Industries. But unfortunately, we do not find much work on the trade union movement in the Steel industries,³⁴ which constitutes the core of India's economic infrastructure. The importance of such studies lies in the fact that, greater influence of trade unions is felt in that sector of the economy, which vitally affects economic growth.³⁵ Absence of any substantial work on the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant is one among the factors, which led the researcher to attempt at filling this gap and, to some extent, making a humble contribution to the understanding of the growth and functioning of trade unions in this key industry. Researcher's personal association with the place has also created additional interest in choosing the topic. Further, the special significance of this topic arises from the strategic importance that trade unions occupy in the present context of the need for increased productivity and production.

33. E.A. Ramaswamy, The Worker and his Union: A Study in South India (Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1977).

34. One such work has been done by Lellan Prasad, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations in the Public Sector with special reference to H.S.L., Thesis, Punjab University, 1968.

35. Crouch, op. cit., p.7.

The present work is the outcome of an empirical study with the principal objective of undertaking a dispassionate enquiry into the genesis and growth of trade unionism in Rourkela Steel Plant. Therefore, the first chapter will provide a description of the broader environment in which the unions operate. The second chapter is to present a profile of the workers by classifying them into different categories on the basis of their skill, nature of employment (i.e., temporary or permanent), and caste (with emphasis on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) in the first part, and socio-economic background of the workers in the second part, as political questions cannot be properly understood in their complexities unless they are analysed in the broader social context. The next chapter seeks to probe into the different forces and factors influencing the unionization of these workers. Thus, in order to provide a systematic understanding of the birth and growth of political role of the trade unions in Rourkela, an attempt shall be made in this chapter to highlight various variables like political affiliation, role in different elections, leadership, etc., operating at individual union level. In the fourth chapter, we will discuss the main function of these trade unions, i.e., their interaction with the management while presenting workers' demands, which, in other words, shapes the industrial relations in the plant. Here, to

begin with, we will discuss the living conditions of the workers and then relate it to the dimensions of their struggle against the management with a brief discussion, in between, on the mode of their operation. The fifth chapter, exclusively, deals with 'union-dynamics' (i.e., 'trade unions and politics', in all their complex inter-relations) in Rourkela by taking into account different issues in the overall context of intra and inter-union relationships. Then we will summarise our observations in the form of an 'overview' of this study in the last chapter.

In this study, we have adopted mainly two methods, viz., case study method and historical method. Case study is a method of exploring and analysing the life of a social unit, be that a person, a family, an institution, cultural group or even entire community.³⁶ In the present enquiry, the unit of study is the individual unions in Rourkela Steel Plant. Case study in this context assumes two forms: the use of available material about the unions and collection of data through interviews and observations through attendance of various meetings. Historical method

36. P.V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1956), p.21.

pertains to the gathering of informations from the past records in the unions, Labour Commissioner's Office, Bureau of Statistics and Economics, Census Reports and official files in Rourkela Steel Plant. But as these informations were found to be inadequate for analysing various events in the history of trade union movement in Rourkela, the researcher has to depend largely upon the informations gathered by prolonged interviews, both formal and informal, and in most cases a combination of both, with different people related to the topic. The samples of persons covered, included:

- a) Members of the Unions;
- b) General Council (G.C.) Members;
- c) Office-bearers and Executive Committee (E.C.) members;
- d) Non-members consisting of:
 - i) Non-unionized workers in the plant,
 - ii) Prominent local persons/leaders, and
 - iii) Political leaders of the state related to the trade union movement in Rourkela;
- e) Personnel and line managers; and
- f) Top-executives in the office of the Deputy Labour Commissioner, Rourkela.

Given the size of the workforce in Rourkela Steel Plant, i.e., around 36,000 workers, 3,000 managers and 5,000-8,000 contract labourers,³⁷ it is very difficult to work out an un-biased sample. As records of the workers are not centrally processed and even the unions had not finalised their membership records³⁸ for the year 1981-82, the researcher himself had to undertake the task of determining the status of membership of a particular worker in a department by directly interacting with him at the shopfloor or sometimes in their quarters on a random basis.

The selection process of persons, in most cases, has been done on the basis of the suggestions of the managers, or other such executives of the concerned departments having a knowledge of almost all workers in their day-to-day interactions and who can pin-point the union activists in their units. The opinion of the general workers in the concerned units were also sought in order

37. No centralized record was available on the exact figure for this category. The lower estimate, i.e., 5,000, is what was provided by the management and the highest, i.e., 8,000, by the unions.

38. Due to the multiplicity of union, the membership records, even if finalised, would not have helped us much, as it is very common to find the name of a worker in the membership records of more than one union.

to confirm the suggestion of the executives and to minimize the bias arising out of such a kind of selection. Though our main emphasis was on the union activists, some ordinary workers were also included in the sample. While all departments were covered, the distribution of workers according to skill/grades, sex, caste (S.C. & S.T.) and status of employment (regular/contract) was also taken into consideration. And a proportion in these regards is maintained to maximum possible extent in the total randomly selected sample of 60 workers.³⁹ The unionwise representation in the sample is largely determined by the relative strength of unions in different departments. Further, all departments have not contributed equally to the total size of the sample. The size of a department, its importance⁴⁰ and, after all, the number of activists working in it have played a role in determining its representation in the sample.

From among the 21 office-bearers interviewed by the researcher, there are 8 General Secretaries representing all the unions included in the study, 2 Presidents, 5 Vice-

39. For detailed break-up, see Annexure No.1.

40. Vital units are significant unions sometimes resort to the strategy of paralysing them.

presidents and 6 Secretaries belonging to different unions selected on the basis of their availability. In addition to these, the interviews of 16 Managers,⁴¹ 5 Labour Officers, and 7 Local leaders have contributed substantially to this study. Excepting a few cases,⁴² where formal-structured questionnaires were used in the interviews; in most cases, the questionnaires have been a combination of both formal and informal schedules, i.e., going beyond the formal questions. The questions were broad-ranged starting from the personal life of the respondent regarding his age, educational qualification, income, etc. to issues like ideological affiliation, role of trade unions in the modern world, their role in politics and nation-building, etc. But the main thrust has been to derive from their responses, the extent of political involvement of trade unions in Rourkela.

The study has involved two visits to the field, i.e., Rourkela, with a total duration of 65 days' stay there. Though, I have taken last five years, i.e., informations

41. For detailed break-up, see Annexure No.2.

42. Only while interviewing some top-personnels in the management and labour office, we have adopted formal-structured questionnaire as they preferred it on the basis of their convenience and inability to find much time for an informal discussion.

from 1977-78 to 1981-82, as the period of study for this work; however, I tried to go beyond this limit in some cases, particularly while identifying a trend in our analysis.

Chapter I

THE ENVIRONMENT

The proper understanding of a trade union movement must take into consideration the environment in which it has born and developed. It cannot be studied in isolation as its nature and character are conditioned, to a great extent, by the external setting in which it is placed. Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to describe this setting of Rourkela Steel Plant as a background to our study of the trade union movement in this establishment. The first part of the chapter is devoted to the description of the geographical and demographic structure of the place which explains the infrastructural adequacy for the establishment of a steel plant in this region and latter the nature of workforce employed in it. The second part provides a brief description of the steel plant which constitutes the epicentre of the movement. In this part, we have discussed the main units and products of the plant alongwith the township, where the workers live, in order to give a complete picture of the environment in which the unions operate.

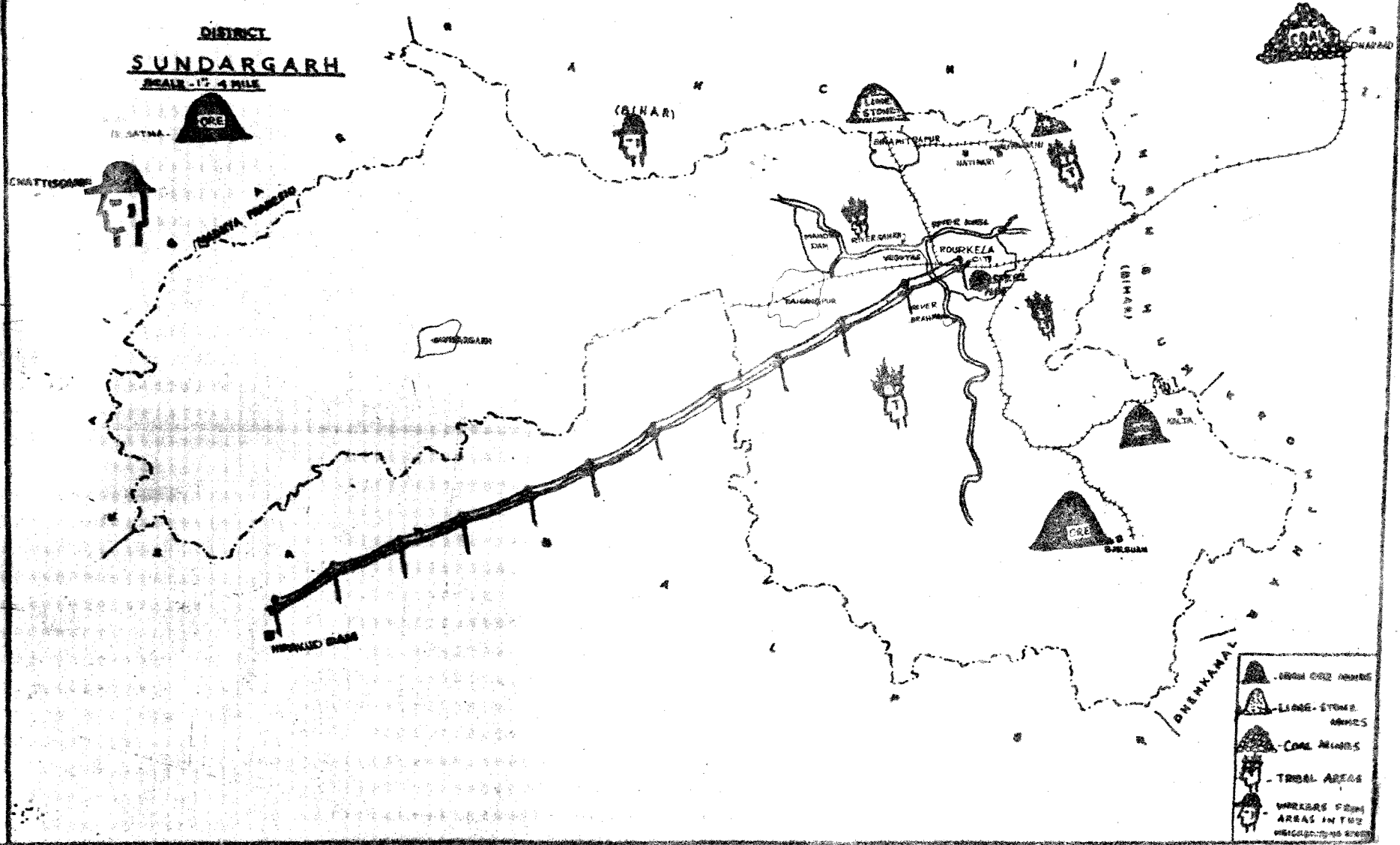
The people of Orissa, and more specifically of western Orissa, where Rourkela Steel Plant is situated,

remained under feudal rule. Therefore, its economy has remained predominantly agrarian. In spite of heavy deposits of minerals like iron-ore, manganese, coal, bauxite, etc., alongwith tremendous potentialities for hydro-electric power generation, industries could not develop here till Independence.

Rourkela, which was chosen as site for the first steel project of Independent India, was, 30 years ago, a conglomeration of 32 tiny tribal villages. As a part of the Sundargarh District, it is situated in 20°12' North and 84°53' East, with geo-physical boundaries¹ in the north, the River Koel and the border of Bihar; in the west, the River Brahmani; in the south, the sub-division of Bonai; and in the east, the district of Singhbhum. Its locational importance, from religious point of view, stems from the pilgrim spot of 'Vedvyas', situated on the point of origin of the River Brahmani from the 'Triveni Sangam' (confluence) of Koel, Senkh and Saraswati² Rivers. The great 'Puranic' character, Maharehi Vyas Dev, is said to have composed the 'Vedas' at this spot.

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1. For all the places described in this context, see the map given on the next page.
 2. The stream is invisible. It is said to have fountained from below the ground at the point of confluence.

DISTRICT
SUNDARGARH
SCALE - 1" = 4 MILES



- High Ore Areas
- Lime-Stone Areas
- Coal Areas
- Tribal Areas
- AREAS FROM WHICH WRECKERS FORM

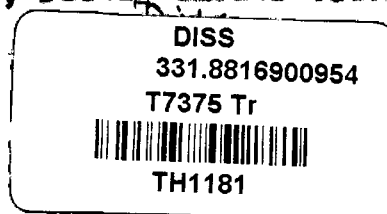
The geological antiquity of this place is immense. Important rock types of Gangpur series are represented by mica-schists, quartzites, phyllites, which are overlain by the rocks of iron-ore series. Rock formations of Gandwana Age are exposed to the west of the River Ib. Thus, considering the heavy deposits of iron-ore in Barsua-Kalta-Tensa range, manganese and bauxite near Barbil, limestone at Biramitrapur and Purnapani, and availability of hydro-electric power from Hirakud Dam, the government and the Germany Firm could rightly choose Rourkela for the commissioning of such a massive industrial establishment on the bank of River Brahmani.

In addition to the steel plant complex, fertilizer unit, and the discussed captive mines, both iron-ore and limestone. In Orissa, the plant manages two more limestone mines in Madhya Pradesh. It also gets supply of iron-ore from Madhya Pradesh and coal from Bihar. Apart from the normal source of water from River Brahmani, water supply throughout the year and during the drought period is ensured by the construction of the Mandira Dam across the River Sankh at a distance of 35 kms, upstream from the intake point. This Dam is also maintained by the plant. For supply of power, Rourkela Steel Plant has

its own captive power plant. To meet any further requirements, it draws power from the State Electricity Board's grid.

Coming to the demographic structure of this place, we find that more than 70 percent of Sundargarh district is covered by forest. People of various tribal races are dependent on forestry, agriculture, domestic poultry, dairy and piggery. Unlike 'adivasis' (tribals) of Koraput, Boudh and Phulbani districts of Orissa, the tribals here are adapted to settled cultivation. Aborigines have their own dialects synchronized with the sect to which they belong. There are about 36 dialects, viz., mundari, kurukh/oraon, sadri, kisan, hindi, laria, kharla, bhumij, Ho, kui, koe, Oriya, etc. Construction of the plant and Mandira Dam disturbed their peaceful life and the erstwhile Hindustan Steel Limited acquired, for this purpose, 32 and 31 villages and removed 2465 and 941 families respectively.³ Migration in the district was low upto 1951, but thereafter steadily rose, as a result of which the percentage of rural population in the district

3. Raj Kishore Samantrai, "Social Integration in the Rourkela Region", A paper presented in the Seminar on Integrated Development in Steel Region, held on 27-28 June 1981, at Asian Workers' Development Institute (AWDI), Bastia Smruti Sadan, Rourkela, p.2.



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declined faster. In 1951, the rural population of the state was 95.93 percent, but in Sundargarh district it was 97.21 percent. In 1971, while the state's rural population was marginally reduced to 91.59 percent, Sundargarh's was 76.75 percent.⁴ Induction of outsiders with the establishment of the plant definitely created a cultural upholstery which, however affluent, was regarded alien to the aboriginals.

There is no doubt about the fact that the remote tribal district of Sundargarh underwent a sea-change with the growth of Rourkela as a leading urban center in the State. Now it is the biggest city in Orissa. Apart from the vast area it occupies, population-wise⁵ it provides a strength of 309,239, as against 269,064 and 219,419 for Cuttack and Bhubaneswar respectively.⁶

Rourkela has a heterogenous population with the co-existence of people from diverse regions, religions, and

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4. For detailed population break-up of the district, see Annexure No.3.
 5. The population of Rourkela and Old Rourkela taken together. If population of Jalda is added, then it will be increased to 321,326.
 6. Census Report, 1981.

languages and thus has a mixed-culture. It is a very fast growing metropolis - the one of its kind in the State. The well-planned city⁷ is divided into two townships. One is Civil Township, otherwise known as old Rourkela, having State and Central government establishments, private and trade clusters, or precisely, other-than-plant establishments. Other one, the steel township, which extends to an area of 47.38 square kms, is completely owned by the plant. The steel township is more than two times populous than that of the civil township.⁸ A ring road runs around both the townships and the steel township has been divided into 21 sectors planned on both sides of this road. All the sectors are well-planned with children's parks, health centres, community centres, cooperatives and shopping centres. As in London, there is a Bank Street in Rourkela which connects its biggest market complex, i.e., Ispat Market, to the General Medical Institute, i.e., Ispat General Hospital. Rourkela has the biggest and best park of the State named after our present prime minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi. The plant and the civil township are on the one side of a mountain

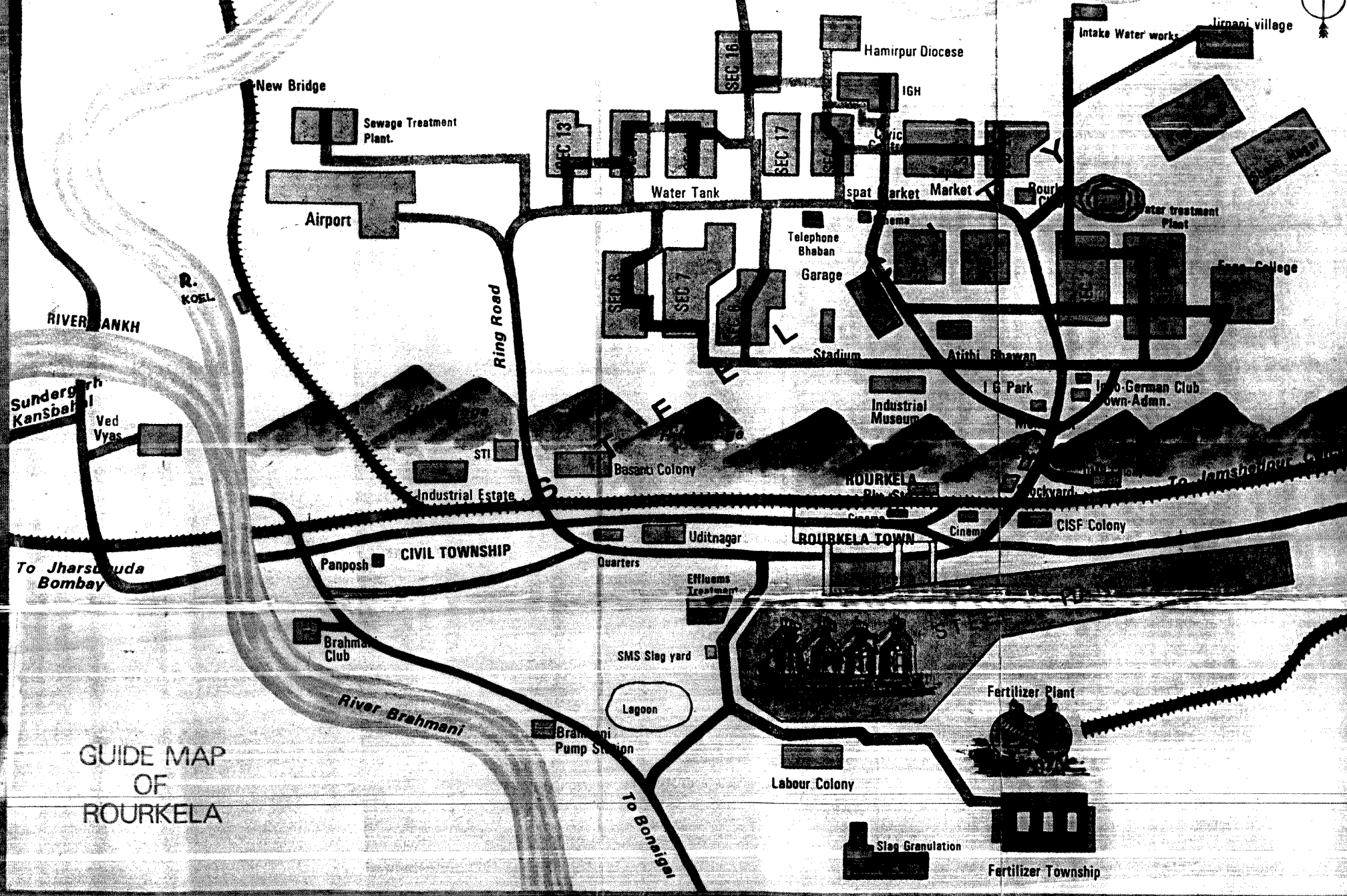
7. See the map on the next page.

8. For a comparative population strength of both the townships, see Annexure No.4.

To Birmittapur
Ranchi



River Koel



Sundergarh
Kansbahal
Ved Vyas

To Jharsuda
Bombay

R.
KOEL

RIVER BANKH

New Bridge

Sewage Treatment
Plant.

Airport

Ring Road

Water Tank

Hamirpur Diocese

IGH

Intake Water works

Jimani village

SEC 13

SEC 16

SEC 17

SEC 8

SEC 7

Telephone
Bhaban
Garage

Market Market

Market

Water treatment
Plant

Engineering College

Stadium

Arathi Bhawan

I G Park

Indo-German Club
Town-Admn.

STI

Basanti Colony

Industrial
Museum

ROURKELA

Rockyard

To Jamshedpur

Industrial Estate

Uditnagar

ROURKELA TOWN

CISF Colony

To Jharsuda
Bombay

Panposh CIVIL TOWNSHIP

Quarters

Effluents
Treatment

Brahma
Club

SMS Slag yard

Lagoon

Brahmani
Pump Station

Fertilizer Plant

Labour Colony

Slag Granulation

Fertilizer Township

GUIDE MAP
OF
ROURKELA

To Bonai

range, while the steel townships is situated on the other side of it, so as to be saved from the pollution created by the plant. With these informations about the general environment, let us go on to discuss the immediate environment, i.e., the Steel Plant, its units, products and overall organisation, without which a description of the environment will be incomplete and meaningless.

Rourkela Steel Plant

The growth of Rourkela from unknown sleepy tribal villages to one of the most modern citadels of steel technology has been a history of trials and adulations interspersed with moments of stress and periods of success and glory having all the ingredients of a complete human drama.⁹

It all started in 1948, just a year after Independence, when the Government of India appointed three consultants to survey and study problems connected with setting up of a modern steel plant. This was followed by the decision of the government in 1953 to locate a steel plant with an initial capacity of half a million tonne of ingot steel.

9. Rourkela Today, A Rourkela Steel Plant Publication, 1980, p.1.

When the attempts to secure foreign participation in setting up of a steel plant in the public sector did not give any concrete results, M/s Fried Krupp, Essen and M/s Demag AG, Disburg, West Germany, world-known leaders of iron and steel technology, came forward and showed their interest. As a result of this, an agreement was signed on 15 August 1953, between the Government of India and M/s Fried Krupp and M/s Demag AG to extend collaboration in this field.

The combine M/s Indien Geminschaft, Krupp Demag Gmbtt, who were the consultants as well as engineers-in-charge at site, finally, submitted their project report for construction of a steel plant at Rourkela¹⁰ in January 1955 with an initial capacity of half a million tonne of ingot steel. Meanwhile, because of the need felt for increasing the capacity of the steel industry in the public sector, the decision was taken to increase the capacity of Rourkela to 1.0 million tonne of ingots, while the project was still on the drawing board and the revised project was submitted in January 1956. The

10. In the selection of Rourkela as the site for the steel plant, the persistent endeavour and efforts of the then ~~Congress~~ Minister of Orissa, Sri Biju Patnaik, are acclaimed by many in Orissa. Among some heard-about-stories in this regard, one is that, Sri Patnaik had killed a snake with a walking stick,
(Cont'd on next page)

finalisation of Third Five Year Plan gave a fillip to Rourkela, in that the capacity was decided to be increased to 1.8 million tonnes of ingot steel.¹¹ The Central Engineering and Design Bureau (CEDB), now MECON, submitted its project report in April 1961, which was approved by the government by the end of 1961. As far as design and technical consultancy were concerned, Rourkela was truly the first 'swadeshi' plant in the country with complete designing and engineering done by Indian Engineers for the first time in India.¹²

Rourkela Steel Plant has all the features of a flat-product-producing steel plant like higher per capita investment, reduced yield of marketable steel from ingot steel and a plethora of varied processes in sophisticated units, before the marketable steel comes out of the steel plant, on the one side, and the specific problems of production, maintenance planning and quality control, on the other; to enable the various mills to produce varied

(Cont'd)

which was about to fall on a member of the visiting German group in an inspection Bonglow, while on their tour to visit the site; Thus, he is said to have impressed them about the bravery and courage of Oriyas. Let us not take it too far so as to undermine the infra-structural excellence of this place.

11. For the annual rated capacities of other steel plants, see Annexure No.5.
12. Rourkela Today, op. cit., p.1.

sizes and qualities in tune with the requirements.

The steel plant could be described as the technological innovator among the public sector plants¹³ with the adoption of the latest technologies like LD (Linz Donawitz) process¹⁴ of steel making at a time when the process was yet to receive acceptance even by advanced steel producers in the world. Rourkela has also the unique distinction of being the only steel plant in the country which has a large Nitrogenous Fertilizer Unit attached to it.

The main units of the steel plant complex are as follows:¹⁵ Coke Ovens, Blast Furnaces, Sintering Plant, Steel Melting Shop (SMS), Blooming and Slabbing Mill, Plate Mill, Hot Strip Mill, Cold Rolling Mill, Tandem Mill, Reversing Mill, Electrolytic Tinning Line, Spiral Weld Pipe Plant, Slag Granulation Plant, Galvanising Lines, Electric Steel Sheet, Fertilizer Plant, Silicon

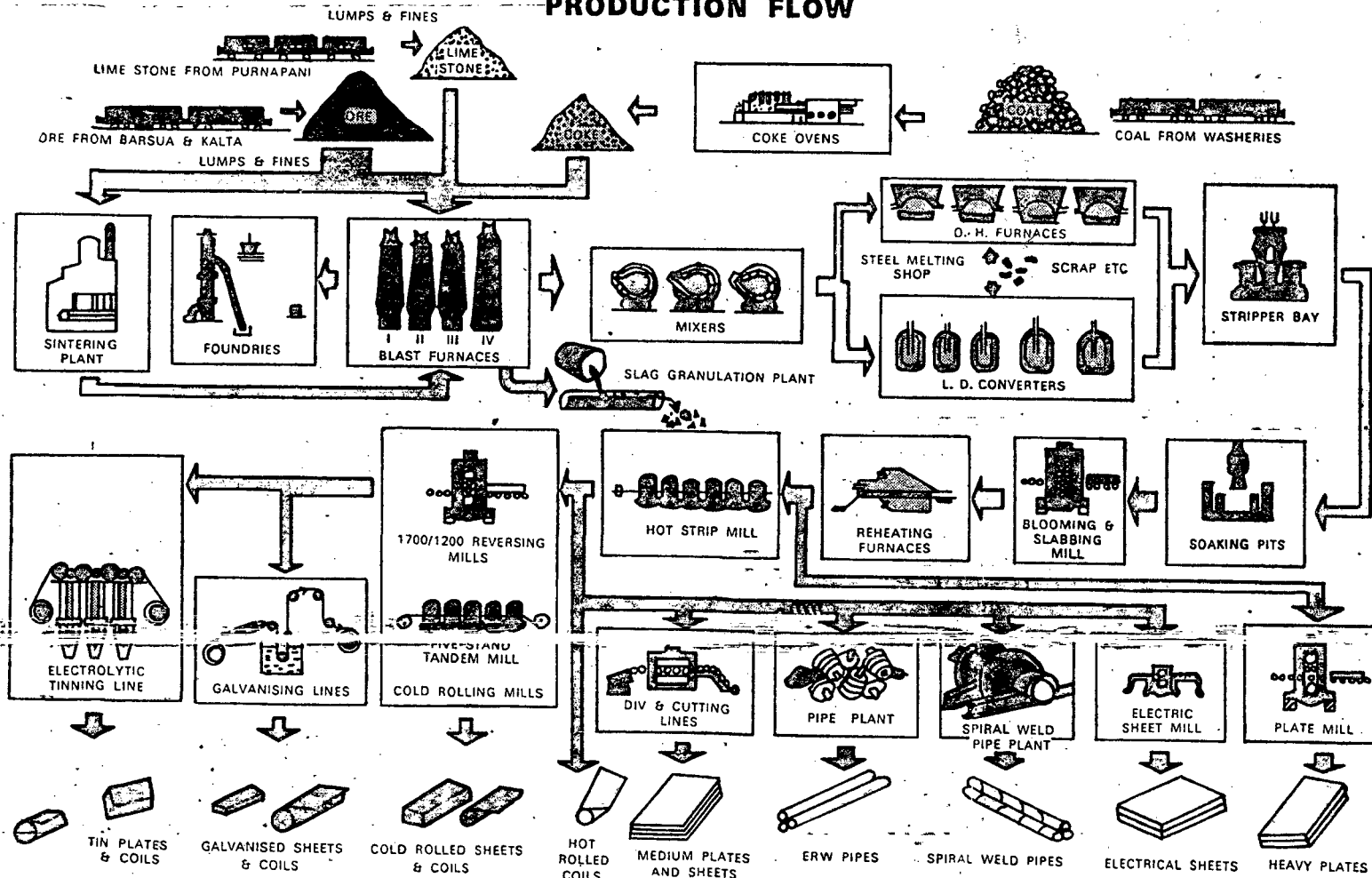
13. Ibid., p.30.

14. The LD process can produce steel within 45 minutes.

15. For the functions and products of different units, see the production flow chart on the next page.

ROURKELA STEEL PLANT

PRODUCTION FLOW



Steel Project.¹⁶

The production in the plant has been steadily going up in the last few years and reached the highest during 1977-78.¹⁷ The financial results accrued from production, as reflected in the total accumulated profit for the steel plant complex since inception, records a figure of Rupees 159.00 crores.¹⁸ Its contribution to nation's exchequer, since inception, amounts to Rupees 1308.00 crores.¹⁹ In addition, Rourkela has also earned a foreign exchange of about Rupees 32.66 crores so far,²⁰ by exporting sophisticated flat-rolled products to countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Mombasa, Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Soviet Union.

Now, coming to the organisational structure of Rourkela Steel Plant, which is important for an understanding of the intricate complexities in the intra and

-
16. For the end uses and main purchaser of the products of Rourkela Steel Plant, see Annexure No.6.
 17. For the production trend over the years, see Annexure No.7.
 18. Rourkela Today, op. cit., p.19.
 19. Ibid., p.7.
 20. Ibid., p.19.

inter-personnel relations in the plant; first of all, we will briefly discuss the historical evolution of this organisation.

As we know, three steel plants at Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela were set up during second plan period. The first two were set up directly by the government, whereas, Hindusthan Steel Limited (HSL) was formed as a public sector undertaking to set up Rourkela Steel Plant. Later, in 1957, HSL took over the other two plants also. "Then sometime in 1972, it was recognized that it was necessary to bring about a major institutional and structural change in the organisation, principally of the public sector steel industry and other associated input industries, in order to plan, promote and organise an integrated, efficient and accelerated development of these industries... (because of)... Government having become increasingly a substantial shareholder in large scale industrial concerns in these industries".²¹

21. White Paper on Steel Industry, presented to Parliament in May 1976 in Pursuance of Recommendation of Estimates Committee, 5th Lok Sabha (20th Report), Government of India, Ministry of Steel and Mines, New Delhi, p.7.

In pursuance with this assessment, the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) was incorporated on 24 January 1973. In addition to HSL, six more steel and associated input industries constituted this body. From 1 May 1975, SAIL became a public limited company in terms of amended section 43-A of the Companies Act. Finally, in 1978, it became an integrated company/Government corporation.

At the top of the organisational hierarchy in SAIL, there is a Board of Directors appointed by the Government of India to look into the overall management of the company as far as the general policy decisions are concerned. The board is headed by a chairman and its strength and composition change from time to time. Usually the board includes mainly four specialized directors to deal with technical, personnel, commercial and financial matters of the organisation. Further, the Secretary to the Government of India, Finance (Expenditure) and Secretary, Planning Commission, are also appointed as directors in the board.²²

The Board of Directors take broader policy decisions and the units function within the set framework. As far as financial matters are concerned, the units' power is

22. For the composition of recent Board of Directors, see Annexure No.8.

very limited, while units enjoy greater autonomy in administrative matters. Kumarmangalam finds a parallel between the Indian and British public sector undertakings by comparing their power over financial matters, particularly in the context of greater governmental control over them by departmental scrutiny.²³ Though, SAIL has undergone a series of organisational changes, as already discussed, the trend is towards Kumarmangalam's findings, i.e., increasing governmental control over this sector.

Administratively, the recruitments to posts carrying less than basic Rupees 500 per month, are done by the plant authorities through the local employment exchange. Recruitments to all class I posts, graduate engineers and executive trainees are centrally conducted by SAIL on all-India basis.

This is broadly the division of powers between the central body and the units. The units are not entirely subordinate to the central body. Speaking about the relationship between the units and the SAIL Board, the

23. S. Mohan Kumarmangalam, New Model for Governmental Administration of Industry (Delhi: A Mainstream Publication, 1973), p.14.

then steel minister, Sri Chandrajit Yadav, pointed out that "... the individual companies would not suffer from interference but would have effective cooperation and assistance given from the central organisation such as SAIL."²⁴ But while asked on this issue, some top managers in Rourkela Steel Plant suggested minimum governmental control so as to check political interference in the central body, which ultimately hampers the autonomy of the units. This relationship also, to some extent, depends on the kind of people at the top positions in the unit, central body and the ministry as a strong managing director can be powerful in relation to a weak minister and a weak board. There can be different power equations depending on this factor.

Now coming to the organisational structure of the management in Rourkela Steel Plant, we find ^{the} Managing Director at the top and Chief Superintendent (Technical) next to him followed by general managers of different departments forming the third layer.²⁵ In each department the General manager is followed by deputy and assistant

24. Charanjit Yadav, "SAIL - An Effective Coordinator", SAIL News, vol.2, No.7, June 5, 1975, p.8.

25. For the top managerial hierarchy, see the chart given in Annexure No.9.

general managers, superintendents, managers (both deputy and assistant), supervisors, and chargemen, down to the helpers.²⁶

In the following chapter we will discuss in detail about the people employed in all these positions. As our main focus of attention will be the non-executives, i.e., from supervisors to helpers, who form the cadres for trade union movement; in the next chapter, we will specifically highlight some statistical informations regarding their strength, compositional structure and categorisation on the basis of different considerations, which will provide a clear picture of the workforce and against this backdrop we can analyse trade unionism in Rourkela.

26. For the departmental hierarchy, see the chart given in Annexure No. 10.

Chapter II

A PROFILE OF THE STEELMEN*

Diversity is the other name for India. A broad-range covering primitive societies with primordial mode of production to the most advanced centres of civilization, on the one hand, and the coexistence of diverse castes, classes, languages and religions, on the other, constitute this unique country. Rourkela is an 'India in nutshell', in this regard. Starting from the tribals, the most primitive community in the world to the advanced population in the city representing various classes, castes, creeds and cultures, the place has an all-India character. Nay, rather it goes beyond it, with the people from countries like Iran, Nigeria, Korea and Germany (F.R.G.), who come here as either trainees or technical experts. Thus, as expected of a big industrial establishment, Rourkela workforce has a universal character. In this chapter, we will make an attempt at categorising these workers on various grounds so as to provide a profile of the steelmen.

I could not provide a classification of all the workers on the basis of their caste, language, religion,

* By 'steelmen' I mean workers of the Steel Plant.

sex, age, etc., as no processed data were available in these regards.¹ Given the scope of the present work, it would have been a not-so-useful exercise for the researcher to classify about 36,000 workers on the aforesaid grounds, with the help of insufficient scattered data. Further, it is a general agreement among the workers, trade unionists, management, government officials and local people that these issues do not play any significant role in the trade union movement here. Whenever the researcher has felt the relevance of such issues in specific contexts, his analysis has been guided by the general impression based on the informations given by people belonging to the above categories, and in all cases, they have not differed to a controversial extent. Therefore, in this chapter, we will classify the workers on the basis of available informations.

To begin with the overall manpower position, the biggest industrial sector of the State has a total strength

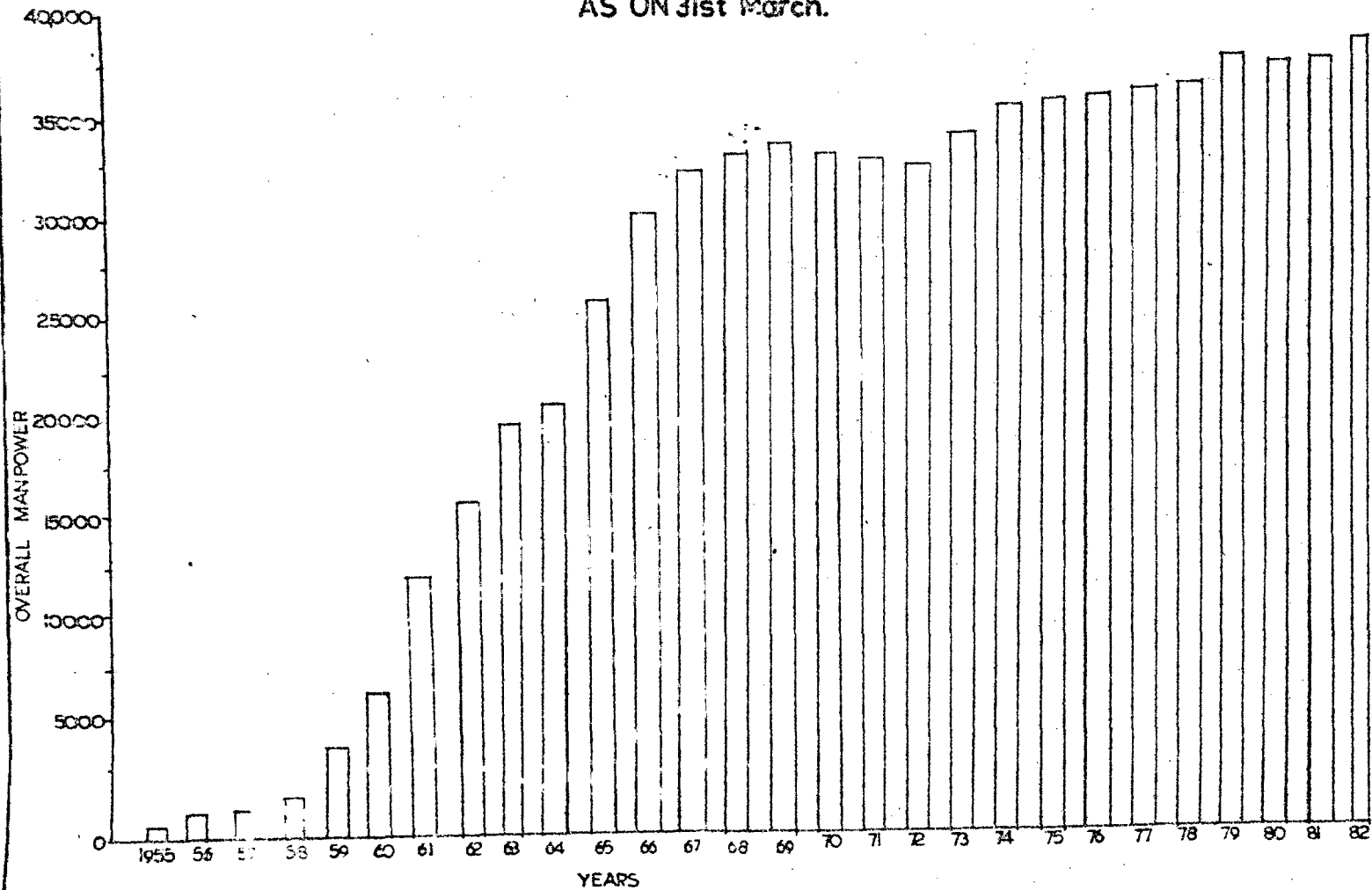
1. Eventhough a classification of the entire work-force of Rourkela on the basis of age, region, caste, sex, etc. could not be given due to lack of data, a similar classification of the sample (i.e., 60 workers) has been given in the second part of this chapter while analysing their socio-economic background.

as on 31 March 1982,² of 39,105 employees with 2,840 executives and 36,265 non-executives.³ Apart from this general classification, the total workforce of the plant can be broadly categorised into different groups on the basis of their belonging to the bigger units like works, General Administration, Township, Construction, Ore Mines & Quarries (O.M.Q.) and Fertilizer plant. We will try to provide the group-wise relative strength of workers in all classifications.⁴ Thus, this will provide the basic units for the horizontal classification of the workforce in Rourkela.

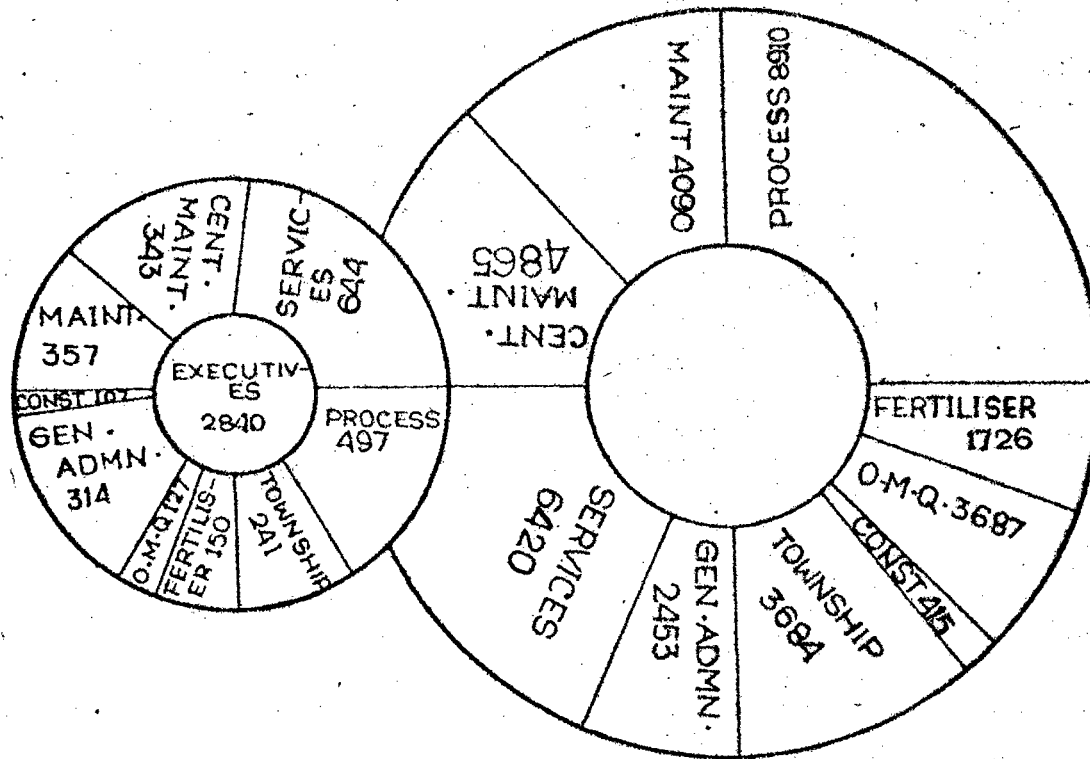
The overall manpower of the plant is constituted of three categories of employees, i.e., regular, temporary and casual, on the basis of their terms of appointment by the plant. While regular category refers to the permanent employees, there is shuttle difference between the later two categories. Whereas, the temporary workers are recruited for lower category of jobs like gardeners, messengers, etc.

-
2. For overall manpower trend of the plant since inception, see the graph on the next page and statistical table in Annexure No.11.
 3. Annual Statistics 1981-82, A Rourkela Steel Plant Publication, Quoted from a figure (also given on the next page of this paper) before the contents of the book.
 4. For the group-wise classification of the overall manpower (both executives and non-executives), see the figure on the next page.

**OVERALL MANPOWER TREND
(REGULAR & TEMPORARY PLUS CASUAL)
AS ON 31st March.**



MAN POWER



POSITION ON 31st MARCH 1982

on daily-wage basis, the casual workers are appointed to meet some casual requirements, in most cases as extra hands, in any particular unit(s). Eventhough, the former category of workers are recruited on temporary basis, they are likely to be regularised depending on their seniority in their jobs. But the casual workers are appointed for temporary period only. These two categories, particularly the latter one, cause fluctuations in the overall manpower position in the plant over the years.⁵ The groupwise strength of Temporary and Casual employees since 1977 is given below, though we have given data for the years 1970 and 1977 as reference points:

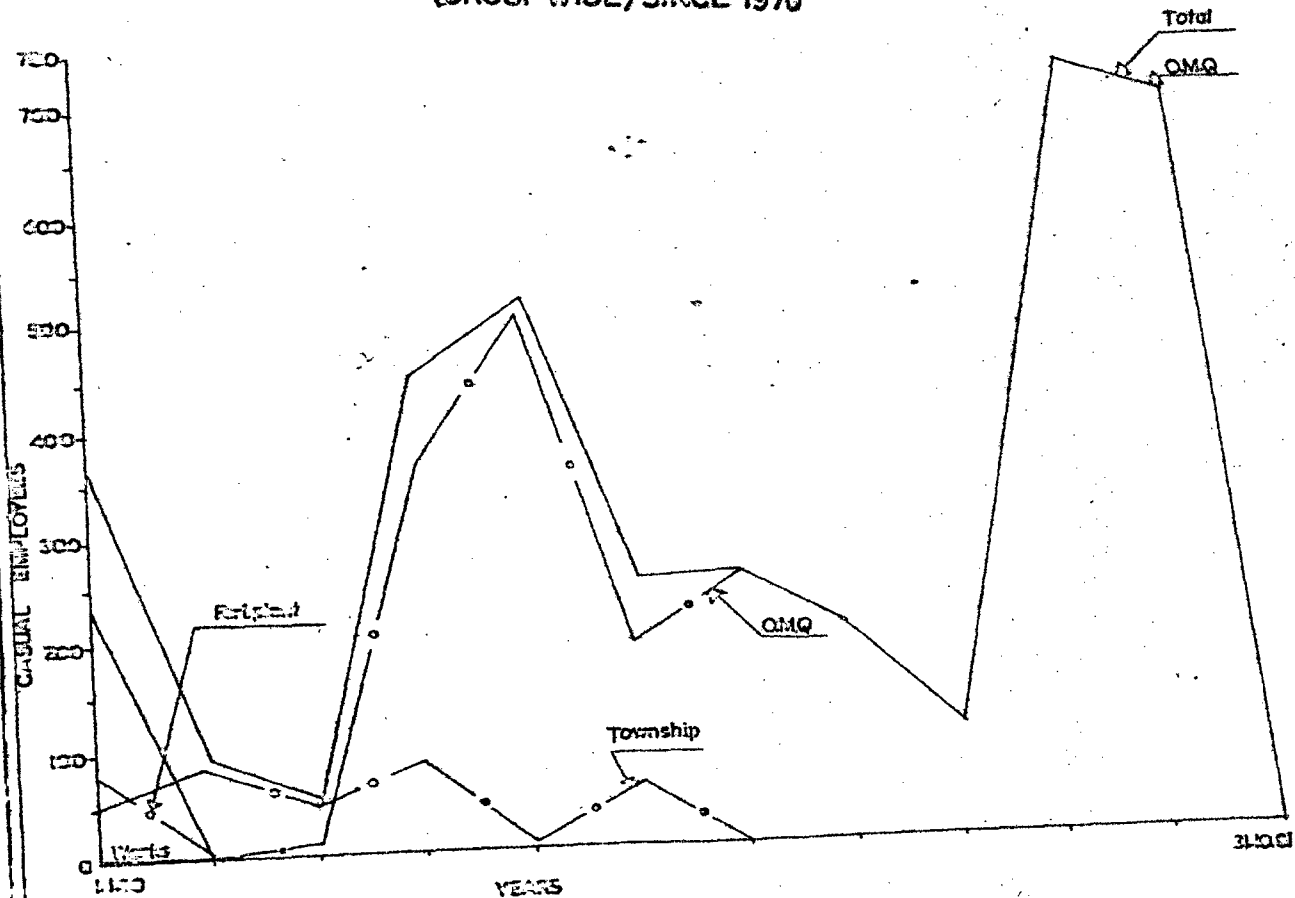
TABLE NO. 1

Position as on	Works		Gen. Admn.	Township		Const.		O.M.Q.		Fert. Plant	Total			
	T	C		T	C	T	C	T	C		T	C		
1.1.70	30	1	11	-	133	53	662	-	1013	227	-	83	1849	364
1.1.75	-	-	-	-	-	61	-	-	1048	190	-	-	1048	251
1.1.77	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	498	199	-	-	500	199
1.1.78	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	508	105	-	-	509	105
1.1.79	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	573	715	-	-	573	715
1.1.80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	582	696	-	-	582	696
1.1.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	714	-	-	-	714	-
31.10.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	584	-	-	-	584	-

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Personnel Department, Hourkela Steel Plant.

5. For position of temporary and Casual employees (groupwise) since 1970, see the graph on the next page.

POSITION OF TEMPORARY AND CASUAL EMPLOYEES
(GROUPWISE) SINCE 1970



It is evident from this table that the strength of temporary and casual workers has substantially decreased in last ten years. But from this observation, it does not logically follow that temporary workers do not have a substantial strength in the plant. Because, apart from these categories, another class of labourers work in the plant, i.e., the contract labourers, who are not directly recruited by the plant. This category has a strength of 5,000-8,000* workers in the plant.

These workers are employed by the industry through contractors for some contract works/projects and thus, they are known as contract labourers. The contractor concerned is the real employer of these workers, while the industry acts as the principal employer. Matters relating to wages, use of safety appliances, come under management's general supervision and the terms and conditions of service, housing, medical facilities, bonus, overtime and compensation for accidents, etc. are largely left to the contractors' discretion. In case of dispute between the contractors and trade unions on above issues, the management intervenes and remains a party to the agreements.

* As we have already mentioned the lowest figure is given by the management and the highest by the unions.

During field study, the researcher has interviewed some contract labourers and has come across their living and working conditions. The bulk of these labourers are drawn from local tribals and adjacent areas of Ranchi (Bihar) and Chatisgarh (Madhya Pradesh). The contractors are mainly from Northern India, specifically Punjab and Delhi, followed by Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, etc. There are some middlemen, prominently from Chatisgarh, who provide cheap labour to the contractors and get commission from both the parties. Generally, at this time, there is no substantial fresh induction to this category of workers, unless some huge projects like expansion of plant units, or construction of new one(s), are undertaken. There is a gentleman's agreement between the trade unions and the contractors that if any change in the contract or contractor(s) take place after the completion of contract, the fresh ones will employ the same labourers. But the fresh contractor will employ labourers according to his requirements. If he needs more, he can go for fresh recruitment, but in the other case, the rest are generally accommodated elsewhere in the plant. There are very few cases of large scale retronchment of these workers, where some contractors preferred to recruit either people from their native places, or fresh local tribals in place of

the existing workforce employed by their predecessors. The first option gave rise to a serious problem on the question of preference for local people in matters of employment in the Steel Plant. Though no trade union directly hit upon this point, which might project its parochial attitude; they (unions) pressed upon the second option demanding that, while enough manpower was available inside the plant, there was no need for fresh recruitment of workers.

It is natural that no contractor will like unionism to meddle in his arbitrary way of dealing with workers, as he wants to exploit them for maximizing his benefits. It is because the continuing contract labourers become either members or sympathisers of different trade unions, while approaching them with their grievances, the contractors always look for fresh recruits, for whom coming in contact with the unions takes time. In this case, even though contractors possess the sole right of recruitment of workers for their work, "the management will impress upon the incoming contractors to employ the workers of the respective outgoing contractors, subject to the requirement of the job".⁶ But this is no remedy for the workers!

6. Agreement No.308, Cl.8, A Document of the Rourkela Steel Plant, Published on 29 April 1982, p.1.

distress, as this directive lacks force and thus, leaves the terms and condition of services of these workers to the whims and fancies of the contractors.

Apart from this misery, the workers are bound to do any sort of work as desired by the contractors. Their working condition is very miserable. With a short break, they are made to work under all circumstances (i.e., climatic conditions, etc.) and even overtime without any extra payment. They are hardly given safety appliances by the contractors, while doing hazardous jobs, and therefore they very often meet with accidents. Their exploitation does not end here. Even there are cases of irregular payment of wages to the contract workers, who also do not get bonus for their work.

The living condition of these workers is still more miserable. Most of them do not have a proper shelter to live in. They make some huts, called as 'jhumries', in unhealthy places. They have even built their 'busties' (i.e., a cluster of 'jhumries') inside the plant. The most interesting feature of this life style^{is} that one comes across different cultural, religious and social ceremonies celebrated by these workers inside the plant. Marriages take place and birth of a child is celebrated, who can

hardly dream of coming out of the dirty plant and the dark 'busti' to see the real light of life! (Who knows that steelman, melting iron-ore in his hot sweat, may raise the torch to guide his bloods for a better life!!)

Thus, we see that, working in the same plant, doing same kind of job in worse working and living conditions, the contract labourers are placed in a very miserable status in comparison to the direct employees of the plant belonging to similar category.⁷ These contract labourers constitute the lowest tier in the social hierarchy of Rourkela city. They are very significant from the point of view of our research as in this field many issues are left unsettled, which produce perennial conflict situations in the industrial climate of Rourkela Steel Plant. These issues, thus, provide the hot bed for trade unionism in the plant.

After, the memorandum of agreements reached between the trade unions and government in the forum of National Joint Consultative Committee (NJCC) for the Steel Industry, which virtually settles all the basic problems of the

7. For a comparative statement of benefits received by contract labourers and plant employees, see Appendix No. 12.

workers employed in this sector, the unions only face casual cases. Therefore, the contract labour, remaining out of the purview of this committee, provides a challenge to the trade unions for providing themselves. Day by day, there is a growing competition among the trade unions to extend their base among these workers by increasingly taking up their issues and fighting for them. Next to the recognised union, which continues to command a substantial following in this class of labourers, the Communist-led unions are pushing themselves into this area with a strong commitment to lift the living conditions of this exploited class. This class, interestingly, is gaining out of such a competition among the unions and, in most cases, acting opportunistically, by shifting from one to another in either joining or sympathising the one which is benefitting it with some temporary concessions.

During the course of interview with these labourers, the researcher has come across a very interesting phenomenon, which explains their weakness to a great extent and for this very reason the unions face difficulty in mobilising this class for their just rights. This phenomenon is the 'lack of consciousness', what Lenin calls 'Trade Union

Consciousness',⁸ among the workers. This was reflected in the fact that the contract labourers, particularly the local tribals, who constitute a majority in this class, are not aware of the extent to which they are being exploited by the contractors. The reason is primarily, a large disparity in the living standards in their community between those who work in the steel plant and others who still live on traditional tribal means of livelihood such as forestry, poultry, piggery, etc. Generally, if one member in a family works in the plant, he also manages to get cheap labour for his employer from his own family. So, when one or more members of the same family earn by working in the plant, their income is far more than those in their community, who are deprived of or, to some extent, unwilling to work in a factory. It is not surprising at all to find some tribals, particularly in the interior areas, who are scared of machines, electricity, automobiles, etc. A visit of few tribal villages reveals a clear-cut distinction between the steel plant workers and others.

8. By 'trade union consciousness', Lenin meant an awareness of the workers' trade union rights and he has distinguished it from 'socialist-consciousness', i.e., the revolutionary consciousness of the socialist ideology, which according to him, is 'only to be brought to them (the workers) from without'. See Collected Works by Lenin, edited by the Lenin Institute, vol.IV, Book II, p.114.

The former leads a comparatively affluent life with better houses - in some cases 'pukka' (cemented) ones, with curtains, chairs, radios ; bicycles (a few of them have motorbykes also), etc. They take better food and sometimes, particularly on pay-days and other good occasions, they go for foreign wines, instead of taking usual local-products (one of them is called as 'handia').

This comparative better living standard of these tribal plant workers gives them a false pride of being rich and civilized, and unfortunately it has deprived them of the consciousness that they can be more rich and modern if they can unitedly fight against their exploitation by the contractors. Basically, being content with their present status, with lesser wants and still lesser ambitions, the fact which has roots in their history, they are now unable to identify themselves with the upper stratas in the city. Therefore, while comparing themselves with others in their own community, this class (i.e., the tribal workers in the plant) is quite satisfied with its living standard. Thanks to the Communist-led trade unions, particularly UTUC (L.S.) and CITU affiliated ones, who are undertaking regular study circles to educate these workers in making them conscious about their rights.

Within this relatively better-up group in the tribal communities around Rourkela city, there is another sub-group constituted of the permanent workers in the steel plant, with whom these tribal contract labourers have started comparing themselves. These permanent workers constitute the top strata in the tribal hierarchy, and thus, they create a feeling of deprivation among the contract labourers, who are gradually generating new wants and higher ambitions. While brooding over the cause of such a disparity, they are comparing the employers and in the process gaining consciousness of being exploited by the contractors.

This sub-group, i.e., the tribals recruited directly by the plant, constitutes the lowest category of unskilled labourers in the plant. They are recruited as per a standing order of the management obliging the plant to recruit at least one able person per family displaced during the construction of steel plant and Mandira Dam, certified to that effect by the Additional District Magistrate of Rourkela. The order is very ambiguous and leaves enough room for manipulation of its provisions to accommodate others, as a result of which the rate of integration of Scheduled Castes and specifically Scheduled Tribals, who mainly belong to this deprived category, to

the steel industry is not very satisfactory. The following table⁹ shows the yearwise recruitment of SCs and STs (non-executives) to the plant since 1977.

TABLE NO. 2

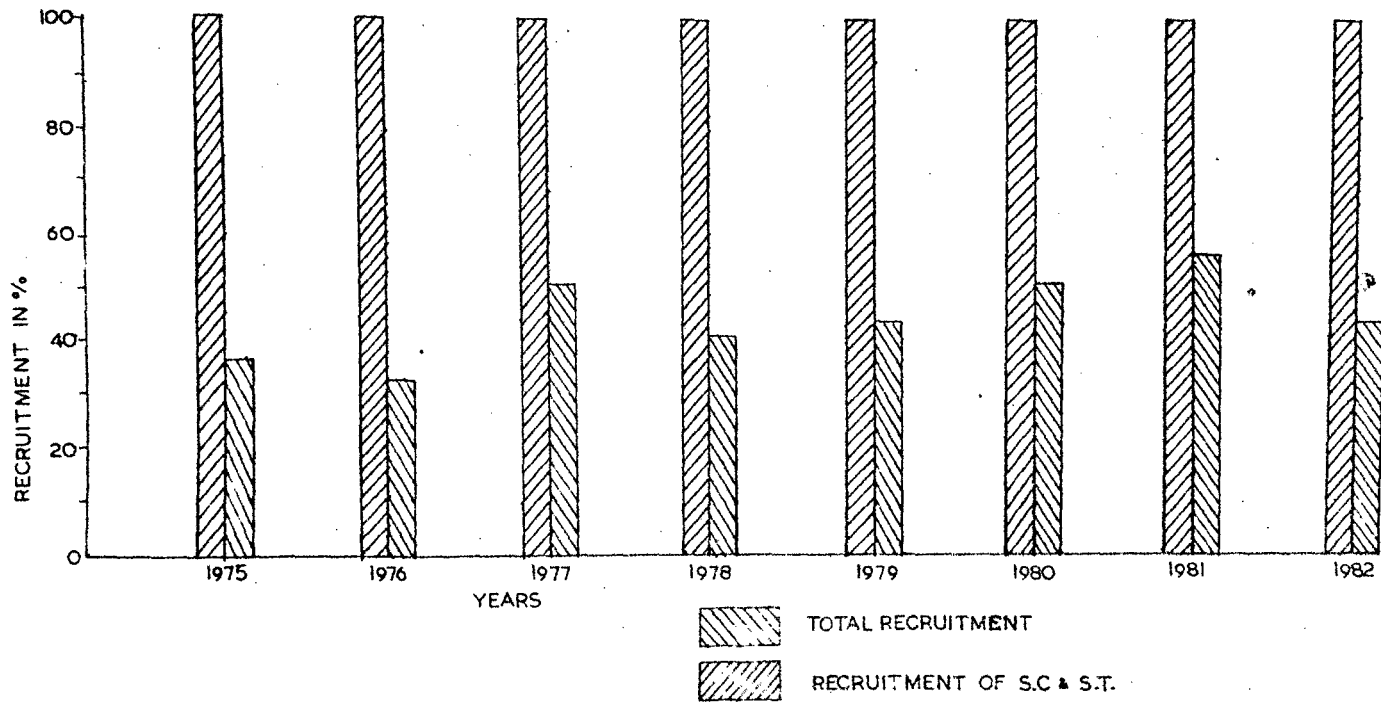
Year	Total Recruitment	Recruitment of SC	Percentage	Recruitment of ST	Percentage
1977	1,134	119	10.6	452	39.91
1978	977	120	12.3	276	28.25
1979	714	110	15.36	203	28.35
1980	1,150	241	20.95	344	29.91
1981	568	163	28.69	151	26.58
1982	595	99	16.63	157	26.38

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

The above table shows a fluctuating and overall slow rate of increase in the recruitment of SCs and STs to the plant. If we take into account their position in 1971, i.e., 7.42 percent for SCs and 10.09 percent for STs, there is an overall increase of 10 percent in last ten years, i.e., by 1981. This rate of increase is far from being satisfactory

9. For the trend of recruitment of SCs and STs to the plant (1977-82), see the graph on the next page.

RECRUITMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTE AND
SCHEDULED TRIBES
NON - EXECUTIVES
1975-1982



as by now they have only filled up 27.47 percent out of 38 percent of posts (15 percent for SCs and 23 percent for STs) reserved for them. This shows an increase of 0.13 percent over the previous year, i.e., 1981. There is provision for 10 percent of relaxation for these workers in qualifying marks in the matters of promotion to higher posts. But the representation of SCs and STs is very poor in highly skilled and supervisory categories. The following table¹⁰ provides the total strength of these workers in different posts in relation to the overall manpower strength of the plant as on 1 January 1982.

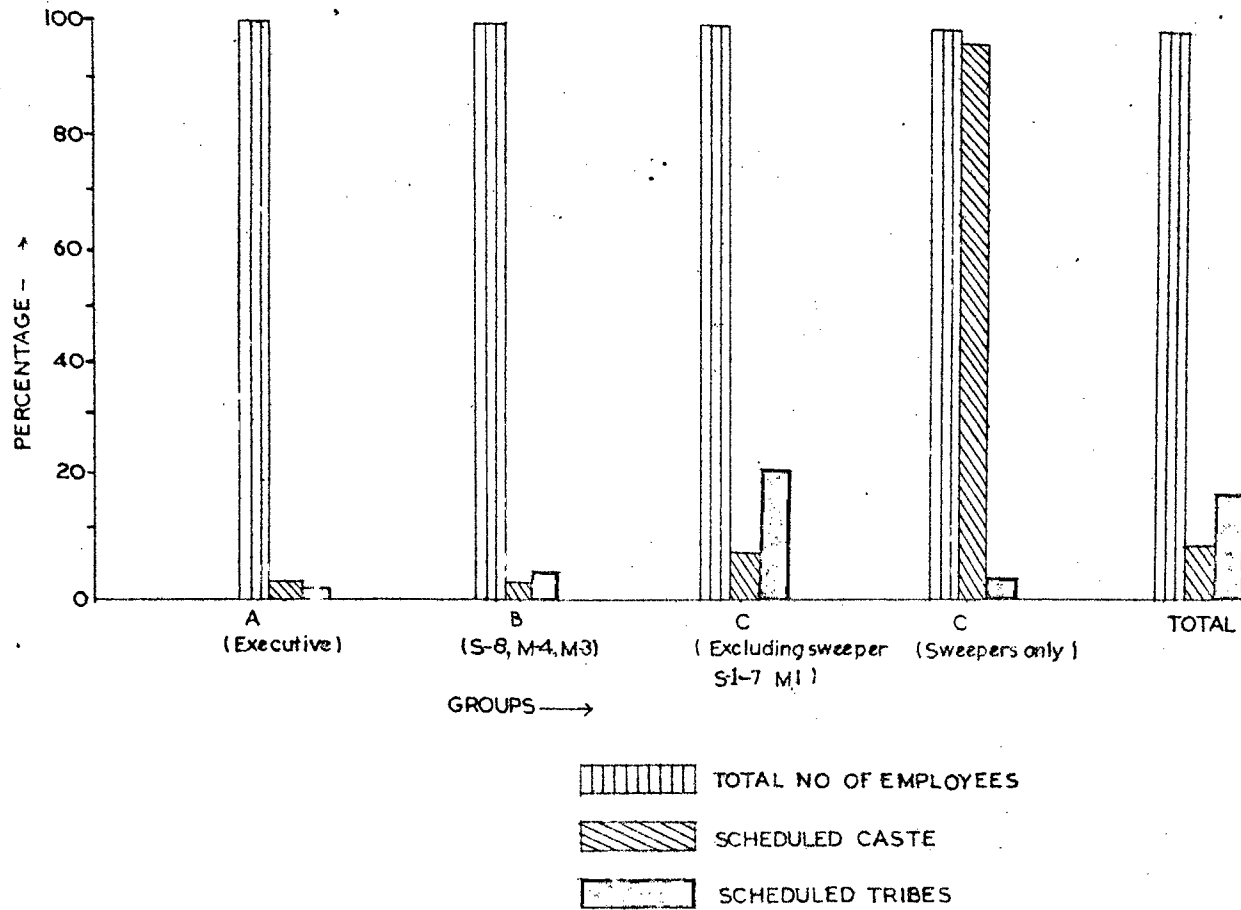
TABLE NO. 3

Group	Total No. of Employees	No. of SCs	Percentage	No. of STs	Percentage
A (Executives)	2,675	45	1.58	27	1.00
B (Skilled, Semi-Skilled)	2,768	31	1.11	70	2.52
C (Excluding Sweepers)	32,147	2,253	7.00	7,119	22.14
C (Sweepers)	1,078	1,046	97.03	32	2.97

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

10. These figures are graphically mentioned in the next page.

**TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AND
NUMBER OF SCHEDULED CASTE & SCHEDULED TRIBES
AMONGST THEM
as on 1.1.82**



The above table substantiates our earlier observation that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have filled up the lowest category of jobs, i.e., 100 percent in the sweepers category, with negligible representation in the executives, i.e., 1.58 percent of the total employees. This provides a very gloomy picture of the tribal integration to the steel region.

However, the general secretary of the recognised union seems to be satisfied with this trend, as he remarks:

"The government policy on reservation for recruitment/promotion of SC/ST candidates has been implemented in the steel plant with success and there has been no untoward incident on this account".¹¹

But the management's view on this should also be mentioned here so as to expose their attitude towards the SCs and STs. Some managers, representing the management in a seminar, are of the opinion that "Reservation of jobs for SC/ST should be abolished as it leads to dilution of skill and competence in industry".¹² Though, it is a fact that they (SC/ST) lack higher qualifications and proficiency which

11. R.K. Samantray, op. cit., p.9.

12. A Report on the Proceedings of Union-Management Interaction Seminar (28-31 July, 1980), Research Division, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant, Rourkela, p.14.

explains their poor strength in the higher category of jobs; the management should take up the responsibility of the socio-economic development of this class as its special role, because of the plant being situated in a tribal region.¹³

The plant has taken some steps towards this end. To enhance the representation of scheduled communities in the executive cadre, a special pre-employment/training scheme is under implementation. A special Cell has also been constituted to deal with the matters pertaining to the scheduled communities. The Cell is headed by an executive belonging to Scheduled Tribes. For the proper assessment of problems of the tribals and implementation of government's programmes for their development, the Government of Orissa has also opened an office at Rourkela in charge of a class I officer, belonging to the Indian Administrative Services cadre.

As our main task in this chapter is to provide a multi-dimensional picture of the workforce, specifically of the non-executives, who constitute the rank and file of

13. Here, it should be mentioned that SC/ST representation in Rourkela Steel Plant is the highest, both in number and percentage, among all public sector steel plants. For details, see Annexure No.13.

the trade union movement in Rourkela, let us see their relative group-wise strength vis-a-vis the executives, in the following table.¹⁴

TABLE NO. 4

Sl. No.	Groups	Men in Position			Percentage
		Executives	Non-Executive	Total	
1.	Works	1,722	24,094	25,816	67.95
2.	General Admn.	377	2,431	2,808	7.39
3.	Construction	90	429	519	1.36
4.	O.M.Q.	119	2,773	2,829	7.61
5.	Township	242	3,866	4,108	10.81
6.	Fertilizer Plant	150	1,699	1,849	4.61
Total		2,700	35,292	37,992	

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

As it is evident from this table, the non-executives command a substantial position in the 'works' group, i.e. 67.95 percent of the total manpower strength in that group. Thus, this group has a pre-eminent status as the main

14. A detailed group-wise position of these two categories of workers has already been given earlier in this chapter.

ground of trade union activities, though other groups are also significant from specific point of view. In the general context, as a manager aptly puts it, "when 'works' sneezes, the whole plant shivers".

As already mentioned, this group-wise classification only provides a horizontal categorization of the workers, which serves a limited purpose in getting an insight into their real positions in the plant that explains their involvement in the trade union movement. In order to find out the positional strength of the workers, which is based on their occupation and which ultimately decides their economic status, we will make an attempt at classifying the workers in a vertical order, i.e., placing them in a hierarchical order. As this classification is based on the occupation of the workers, we will, first of all, broadly categorise them under three heads, viz., High-Skilled, Skilled and Un-Skilled on the basis of their skill-wise qualifications. High-skilled category consists of mainly supervisors, while skilled category is constituted of various trade posts like fitters, welders, operators, etc., and the helpers, sweepers, etc. belong to unskilled category.

The non-executives of all the public sector industries have been categorised into 9 ranks in the works grades, on

the basis of their skill or technical knowledge and ministerial (clerical) employees into 4 ranks on the basis of their posts according to their educational qualifications, seniority, etc. The code numbers of the first category is from S1 to S9¹⁵ and for latter, i.e., ministerial employees, M1 to M4. The messengers come under M1 rank, while M4 rank refers to the top clerical posts like office superintendents, etc. The following table shows the categorisation of these grades under the three broad categories as discussed earlier.

TABLE NO. 5

Categories	Code Nos. in Works Grades/ Ministerial Grades
High-Skilled	S6, S7, S8, S9
Skilled	S3, S4, S5
Unskilled	S1, S2
Ministerial	M1, M2, M3, M4

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

15. For all practical purposes, the range is from S1 to S8 as S9 is not a rank but a higher scale given to get rid of stagnation in S8 rank.

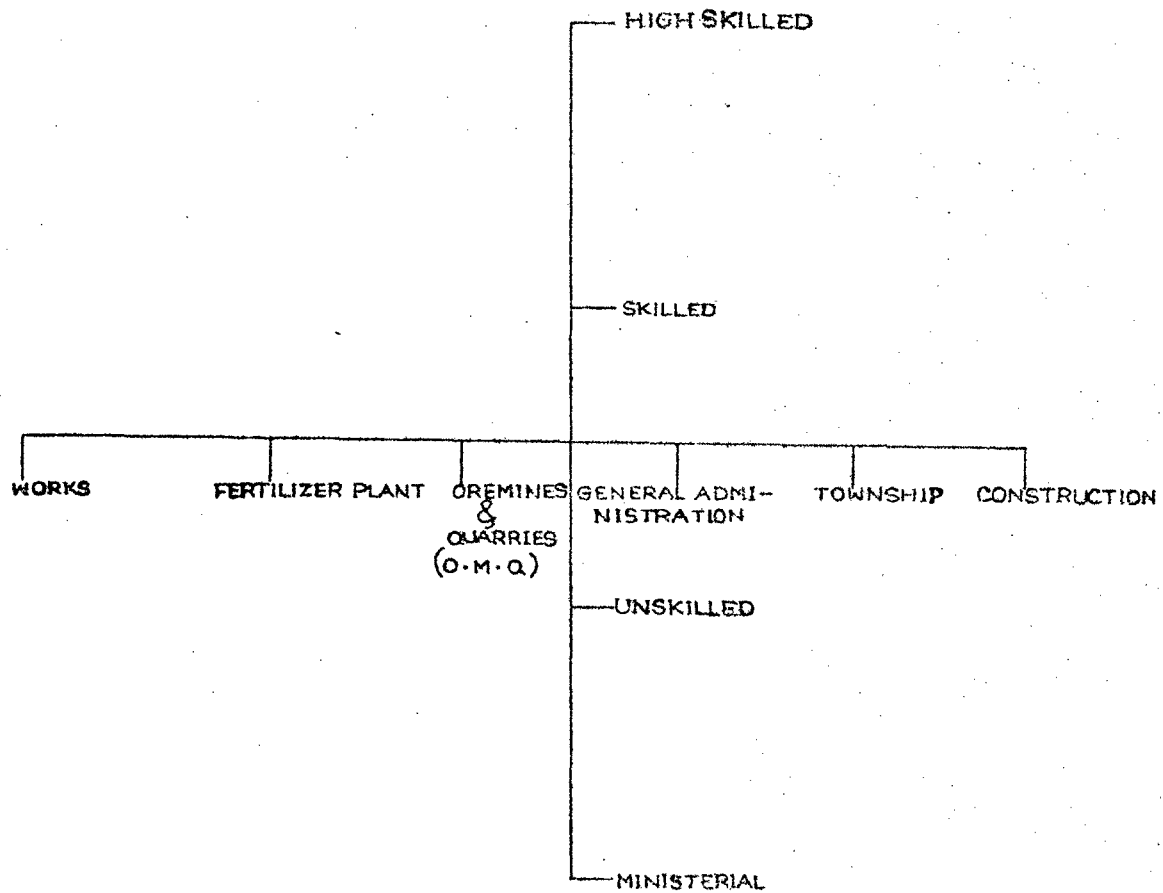
As these ranks are directly related to their respective basic scales of pay as agreed upon in the National Joint Consultative Committee (NJCC) for steel Industry, this classification will be very clear subsequently, while we will be discussing the wages of these workers in the context of their living conditions. Now, our purpose will be to classify the workers into these categories^{so} as to understand their relative position. Further, it will be more meaningful if we combine this vertical categorisation with the horizontal (group-wise) classification, which will, at the same time, give us a clear picture of both group-wise and category-wise relative position of the workers.¹⁶ The following table will provide us such an analysis.

TABLE NO.6

Group	Category (Works Grades)			Ministerial	Total
	High-Skilled	Skilled	Un-Skilled		
Works	5,760	11,279	6,399	891	24,269
Fertilizer Plant	414	615	510	187	1,726
O.M.Q.	350	986	2,084	268	3,688
General Admn.	125	302	701	1,341	2,469
Township	358	746	1,421	1,155	3,680
Construction	185	116	32	83	416
Total	7,192	14,044	11,087	3,925	36,248

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1981-82.

16. See the figure of the Table No.6 on the next page.



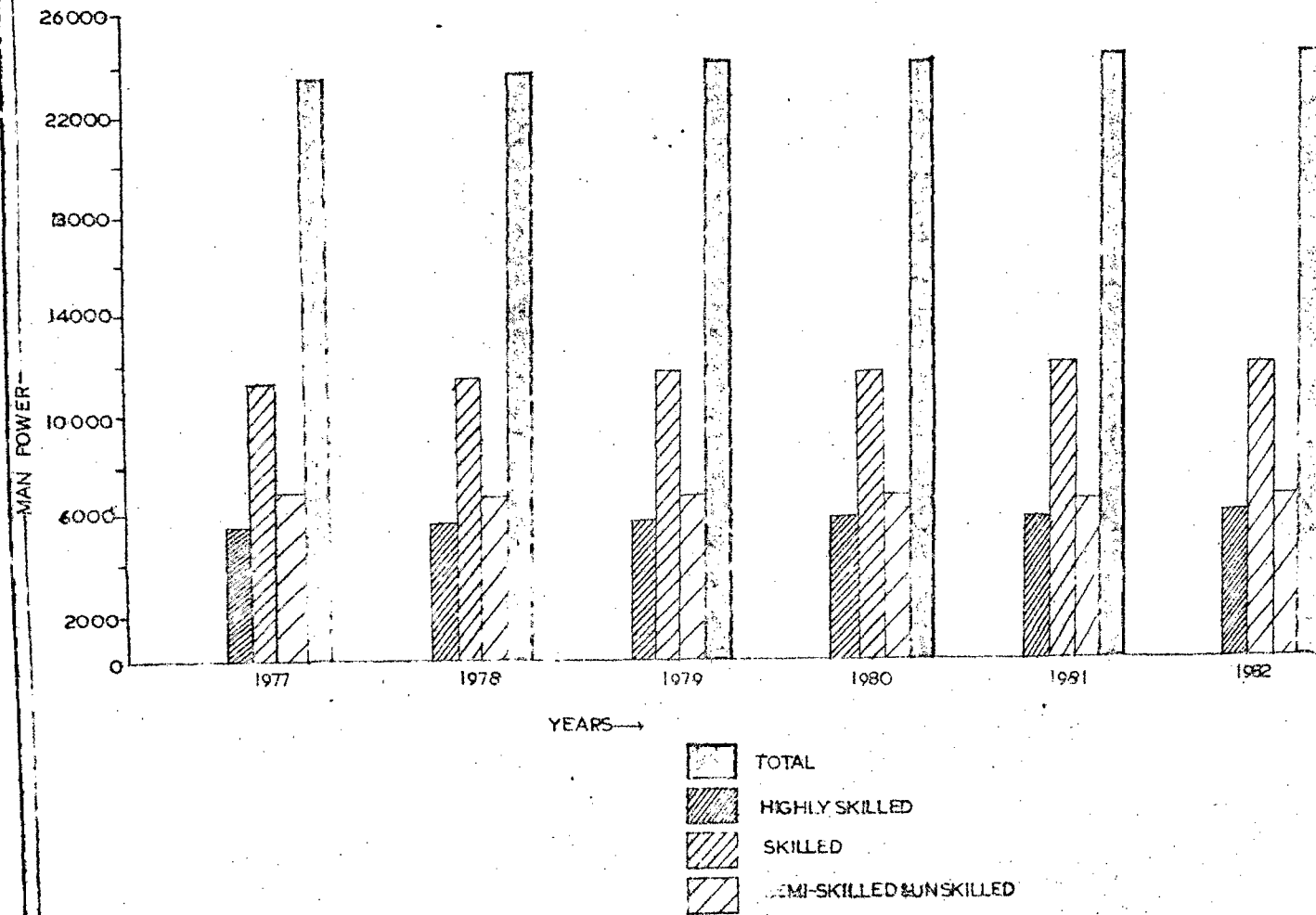
THE MINISTERIAL CATEGORY DOES NOT COME NEXT TO THE UN-SKILLED CATEGORY IN THE HIERARCHY. IT CONSTITUTES SEPARATE HIERARCHY.

The ~~table~~ table confirms our earlier observation regarding the pre-eminent position of the works group, where skilled category of workers constitute the majority in the total workforce of the group.¹⁷ Thus, the middle category, being numerically the largest, constitutes the backbone of the total workers, and thus, plays^a significant role in the trade union movement in this plant. Very interestingly, this phenomenon, in a way, corroborates to the emphasis given on the role of 'middle class' in the socialist revolution, found in Marxist theory, particularly in the classical Marxist writings of Marx, Lenin, etc.¹⁸ But, here, it should be mentioned that mere strength of the workers is meaningless unless they possess the consciousness of belonging to a 'class' which is deep-rooted in their socio-economic base.

Therefore, a brief study of the socio-economic background of the workers is necessary in order to present a complete profile of the workers. As we could not get the data about all the workers in this regard, we will

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17. For a category-wise manpower in Works group, 1977-82 (Non-executives), see the graph on the next page.
18. This comparison should not be taken too far so as to equate this Skilled category with the middle class in the society eventhough they might belong to lower-middle class. This is just to emphasize the role of the middle-category of workers in trade union movement.

CATEGORY-WISE MANPOWER IN WORKS (Non executives)



present here a sort of representative picture on the basis of our interview with randomly selected 60 workers. The main variables taken into consideration in depicting the socio-economic background of the workers are discussed as follows.

As we have already mentioned that Rourkela Steel Plant is situated in a predominantly tribal and under-developed setting, it is very much important to understand the character of workers from their place of domicile. Out of the 60 workers interviewed, 12 (i.e., 20%) were from local tribal areas, while rest 48 were migrant labourers from the following places:

TABLE NO.7

Sl. No.	States	No. of Workers	Percentage of the total sample
1.	Orissa	16	33.33
2.	Bihar	14	29.16
3.	M.P.	13	27.08
4.	Andhra Pradesh	3	6.25
5.	West Bengal	2	4.16

	Total	48	99.98

The above statistics provide a picture of the constitution of the working class here, which is mainly drawn from neighbouring areas led by the coastal areas of Orissa. But the character of the social basis can best be understood in terms of the workers' place of living, i.e., urban or rural. Out of the 60 respondents, 49 (i.e., 81.16%) have directly migrated from rural areas, while rest 11 had urban linkages. The nature of this sample can be properly depicted if we take into account their previous occupations prior to joining Rourkela Steel Plant. The following table reflects the relative strength of different categories of jobs as taken up by these workers as their primary occupation.

TABLE NO.8

Sl. Categories of No. Occupation	No. of Workers	Percentage
1. Forestry	9	15
2. Cultivation (as Owner-cum-Workers)	16	26.66
3. Agricultural Labourers	15	25
4. Trade Occupations like Blacksmith, etc.	3	5
5. Construction Workers, (Rural-based)	7	11.66
6. Factory Workers	6	10
7. Cattle-grazing, Piggery, etc.	4	6.66
Total	60	99.98

As evident from this table the majority of the workers, i.e., 54 (90%), have rural background and further, it is only 10 percent of the total sample that workers have some sort of urban base with their previous experience in some factories. This further shows a higher rate of migration from rural areas to Rourkela. This might be a factor, as Oscar A. Oranti feels, that whatever the reasons for leaving their state/villages; Indian workers are not interested in factory work; they resist adjustment to the type of life which goes with industrial labour.¹⁹ In spite of their better living standards, they have failed to delink themselves from their native base which has resulted in their inadequate involvement in unionism^{and} making the movement weak. The extent of ^{their} link with their native places is evident in the following table.

TABLE NO. 9

Sl. No.	No. of Workers	Purpose of Visits	No. of Visit in a year
1.	16	To see their families	7
2.	12	To see their parents	4
3.	9	In connection with land	6
4.	5	To attend social functions	2

Total	42	(6 workers from the sample have not yet visited their native places)	

19. Oscar A. Oranti, Jobs and Workers in India (New York: Ithaca, 1955), p.46.

It should be noted here ^{that} these are not totally independent categories. For example, in the first category if one visits village to see his family, simultaneously his purpose can be either to see his parents, look after his land or to attend social functions or the combination of all. These latter categories are shown only in the cases where the workers have their families at their place of work, i.e., Rourkela. Another trend is discerned from the observations of the rural-link of the workers is that frequency of visits by Oriya workers (mainly from coastal areas) is more than the workers from neighbouring Chattegarh and Ranchi areas, which is due to the reason that the former have families and landed property in their villages while the latter are mainly drawn from agricultural labourers, construction workers (at rural areas like digging canals, making roads, etc.), etc.

The above findings clearly established the predominantly rural character of the workers with agricultural background, which is a common phenomenon in all industries of our country.

Apart from this base, we shall have to take into consideration the level of their education, which, in

addition to the former factor, conditions the attitudes and consciousness of the workers. The following table provides a picture of the literacy rate among these workers.

TABLE NO.10

Sl. No.	Level of Education	No. of Workers	Percentage
1.	No Schooling	17	28.33
2.	Primary Education	21	35
3.	Matriculation	12	20
4.	Technical Specialization (STI/Apprentice Training, etc.)	6	10
5.	Intermediate	3	5
6.	Graduate and above	1	1.66
Total		60	99.99

This table provides a very grim picture of the level of education of these workers, where a large chunk of them, i.e., 28.33 percent, are illiterate. This phenomenon can be explained in terms of the dominant strength of tribals in the lower grades of occupation (as shown earlier), who are totally illiterate. (All the 14 tribals interviewed

by the researcher were found to be illiterate.)

These informations provide a basic understanding of the social background of the working class in Rourkela. In addition to this, we have also found that majority of these workers (i.e., 46.66%) belong to the age group between 25-35 years followed by 35 percent belonging to the group between 18-25 years. This reflects the younger character of the respondents who constitute 82 percent of the total sample.

Apart from this, excluding the 14 tribals and 8 workers belonging to Scheduled Castes, who combinedly constitute 36 percent of the total sample, majority of respondents belonging to general category (45%) were found to have hailed from middle castes like Vaishyas and Kshatriyas. Our sample has also included 4 women workers who constitute 6.6 percent of the sample.

Even if our sample does not have the mathematical exactness, it provides a sort of overall general character of the social basis of the working class in the plant.

Coming to the economic basis of the workers, we find that 78.33 percent (i.e., 47 out of 60) of them completely depend on their wage earning for their

livelihood, while the rest get some occasional assistance from their native places in terms of rice and other agricultural products which, they say, help them to a very marginal extent. While we will be discussing the economic conditions of the workers in greater detail in Chapter IV of this paper, here we can assess their general economic condition by categorising the workers of our sample into different pay ranges as given below:

TABLE NO. 11

Basic Pay Range	No. of Workers	percentage
350-450	18	30
450-550	29	48.33
550 and above	13	21.66

Total	60	99.99

This table quite evidently reflects the economic condition of these workers, 78 percent of whom get a basic pay less than Rs. 550 per month. But the true economic condition of the workers can be assessed only when we relate these earnings with their number of dependents. The following table shows the number of earning persons and number of dependents in case of the families of these

60 workers:

TABLE NO. 12

No. of Dependents	No. of Families	Percentage	No. of Family having more than one earning member	Percentage
Less than 2	9	15	-	-
2 - 4	21	35	3	5
4 - 6	16	26.66	2	3.33
6 & above	14	23.33	-	-

Total	60	99.99	5	

From the above table it is clear that majority of the workers (35%) have 2 to 4 dependents followed by 26.66 percent of workers having 4 to 6 dependents. As regards the number of earning members we have found that in these two categories there are 3 and 2 families respectively (i.e., 8% of the total sample) where two members of the family are employed in the plant. It is interesting to note that all these five cases happen to be from category of tribal workers.

All these informations provide a general picture of the socio-economic base of the working class which in

addition to the classifications made in the first part of this chapter provides an overall profile of the steelmen at Rourkela. We can sum up our entire discussion with the following observations:

1. The location of the plant in the tribal belt has given significance to the phenomenon of 'tribal workers' who are either contract labourers or lower grade employees of the plant.
2. The rate of integration of these tribal workers to the steel region has been very marginal as seen from their strength in different categories of jobs in the plant .
3. The middle categories of workers, i.e., skilled and unskilled groups, in the 'works' unit constitute the majority of the workforce.
4. The workforce in Rourkela is largely migrant in character. This migration has been mainly from rural areas and agricultural background. Thus, the working class of this plant has a strong rural social basis which is again seen from their link with their native places.
5. The workers are not educated even to a moderate level.
6. Majority of them belong to a comparatively younger age-group.

7. The income of the majority of the workers vary from Rs. 350 - Rs. 550 with average 2-6 dependents.

With this understanding of the profile of workers in Rourkela Steel Plant, let us proceed on to the next chapter to discuss as to how these workers were unionized, which will enable us to get an insight into the dynamics of trade union movement. Keeping in view the main objective of this work, i.e. (the interplay of) politics and trade union movement in Rourkela, we will begin the next chapter with an introduction on the brief history of the movement at the period of its inception, then we will discuss the political objectives of all the unions and after this we will describe all the individual unions in the context of their formation, ideological affiliation, role in the movement and leadership. We will sum up our observations as an organisational analysis of these unions at the end of the chapter. This format will give us a systematic understanding of how these workers were organised by different persons and under the umbrella of various organisational and ideological orientations.

Chapter III

TRADE UNIONS IN ROURKELA STEEL PLANT

In this chapter, for the informations regarding the early history of trade union movement in Rourkela, we have to rely mainly on the interviews of the veteran trade union leaders, some senior executives in the management and some old local people having some interest in this field, as very inadequate written materials are available on this subject.¹ The source of informations for the latter part, i. e., the individual unions and their organisational structure, has been the official files of the unions in addition to deep-length interviews of the office-bearers and members of respective unions.

As discussed earlier, the construction works of the plant started in the year 1956. Big firms of international reputation like SIEMENS, C. Otto and Company, H. Camon, Modern India and D. Uttam Singh Dugal, were engaged in the construction of the plant. At the same time, Rourkela attracted people from all over the country with their special technical expertises. Most of the skilled workers

1. Only one incomplete article by Sri Jagdish Nag on "The History of Rourkela Mazdoor Sabha" (mimeo) was available, which contained some informations about the early history of trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant.

were from outside Orissa, excepting people engaged in pipe fitting works and civil construction works. The machinists and fitters from Bengal and Punjab, electrical workers from Bihar, welders from Madras, Kerala and Gujarat, and riggers from Uttar Pradesh filled the skilled category of workers, while the unskilled labourers were mostly drawn from Orissa and neighbouring underdeveloped areas of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar like Bilaspur, Chatisgarh and Ranchi districts. From Orissa, apart from the local tribals, people from neighbouring districts of Mayurbhanj, Boudh Phulbani, Sambalpur, and coastal areas of Ganjam and Cuttack districts, came here in search of their livelihood.

The skilled workers were paid not-so-badly depending on the nature of their jobs. But the unskilled labourers were given a daily wage of 12 annas in the initial period.² Further, they were not paid regularly. In addition to this, they were put to work in very inhuman working conditions; there was no service security, no extra wage for overtime, no compensation for accidents and no regular holidays. Their living condition was more miserable. The skilled workers were given accommodation in sheds or barracks provided by their contractors. The unskilled

2. Jagdish Nag, op. cit., p.2.

workers were leading a very miserable life in their self-made thatched huts without sanitary facilities, that led to malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea, pox and other diseases born out of unhygienic living conditions.³

This situation attracted some humanists, and social workers from different walks of life, adhering to different social philosophies, to come to the rescue of these suffering labourers by organising them for demanding their just rights. The main personalities were Sri Chiranjilal Sharma, Tarken Oram, Kuril, A.P. Das, Dayanath Singh, S.B. Singh and Nityananda Panda. Having leftist leanings, most of them were either activists or sympathisers of one or the other party. At this point of time, the unions were formed under the banners of political parties.

It should be noted here that in this period, the unions were not imposed upon the workers, by these leaders for either their own interests or for the benefit of their parent organisations. It was particularly when the local tribals, being cheated and denied of their wages, approached these leaders, who had also already started taking interest in the problems of these labourers, the first attempt at

3. Ibid., p.5.

unionizing them began. On the insistence of these leaders the wages of these labourers were raised from 12 annas to one rupee and further to one rupee and four annas per day.⁴ The working conditions of these labourers also improved a bit. Another remarkable feature of this phase is that, there was the absence of any significant struggle involving a substantial number of labourers. The demands were settled through discussions between these leaders and employers without involving the general workers in the process. The negotiations were done in a cooperative and cordial atmosphere. There were no instances of overt inter-union rivalry at this stage. But a clear trend for membership drive by the leaders was visible towards the latter part of this phase, which is marked by the mobilization of workers on formal political lines and in tune with political objectives.

It is a fact that trade unions in our country have long been associated with political objectives, ever since the role of AITUC in the freedom struggle. A study of the political objectives from their respective constitutions, confirms Crouch's observation that the Indian trade unions are characterized by division based on political considerations.⁵

4. Ibid., p.5.

5. Harold Crouch, op. cit., p.77.

Let us examine it in the context of all national federations in India.

The objective of AITUC, the pioneer of trade union movement in our country, is to establish a socialist society, to work for the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange and to work unitedly to bring about revolutionary changes in the present political set up. The INTUC, which was founded by the Congress Party in 1947 as a bul-wark against the CPI-led AITUC, strives to establish a society free from hindrances in the way of an all round development of its individual members, which foster the growth of human personality in all its aspects^{and} to progressively eliminate social, political or economic exploitation and inequality, the profit motive in the economic activity and the anti-social concentration of power in any form. The HMS, which was formed by the socialists in 1948, aims at promoting and establishing a democratic socialist society in India. A section of Communists (belonging to SUCI Party) had formed United Trade Union Congress in 1949 with the objective of establishing a socialist society, particularly a workers' and peasants' state in India with the nationalization and socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The political objectives of CITU, the

labour front of CPI(M), which was founded in 1970 as a result of the split in the CPI, are not much different from that of its parent union, i.e., AITUC. The Constitution of BMS, which was formed in 1955 as the labour organisation of erstwhile Jan Sangh, does not provide any distinct long-term political objectives. As it is clear from the above discussion that while there is not much difference in the political objectives of these unions, they are basically divided on party-lines. All the major trade unions in Rourkela are affiliated to these national federations. Let us discuss them chronologically.

The first union to be registered from Rourkela in March 1955, was North Orissa Workers' Union (NOWU) under the leadership of Sri A.P. Das, who was an activist of Ganatantra Parishad.⁶ It was followed by Rourkela Mazdoor Sabha (RMS), affiliated to BMS, which was registered in the end of the same year. Next to be formed was the Rourkela Workers' Union (RWU), affiliated to UTUC(LS), in May 1957 followed by the Rourkela Steel Mazdoor Union (RSMU), affiliated to AITUC, in November 1958 and Hindusthan

6. It was a local political party of ex-princes and zamindars which was later merged with the Swatantra Party formed at the national level.

Steel Workers' Association (HSWA), affiliated to INTUC, in September 1959. The other unions, namely, Ispat Shramik Sangha (ISS), affiliated to the National Front of Indian Trade Unions (NFITU); Ispat Karakhana Karmachari Sangha (IKKS), affiliated to BMS; Rourkela Steel Plant Employees' Association (RSPEA), affiliated to erstwhile HMP; Steel Employees' Trade Union (SETU), affiliated to CITU; were registered in seventies. The following table has systematically put these unions along with their membership strength.

TABLE NO.13

Sl. No.	Name of the Union	Affiliated to	No./Date of Registration	Membership (as on Dec. '81)
1.	North Orissa Workers' Union	Independent	158/28.3.55	597
2.	Rourkela Masdoor Sabha	H.M.S.	169/16.12.55	16,947
3.	Rourkela Workers' Union	UTU(LS)	203/23.5.57	20,335
4.	Rourkela Steel Masdoor Union	AITUC	273/3.11.58	15,229
5.	Hindusthan Steel Workers' Association	INTUC	253/10.9.59	250
6.	Ispat Shramik Sangha	NFITU	667/28.10.70	12,302
7.	Ispat Karakhana Karmachari Sangha	BMS	674/6.1.71	7,500
8.	Steel Employees' Trade Union	CITU	709/1.8.71	1,504
9.	Rourkela Steel Plant Employees Association	Independent	738/9.2.72	6,188

Source: Office of the Registrar of Trade Unions, Orissa, Bhubaneswar, File on the Annual Returns submitted by the trade unions.

From the above table, the column on membership raises serious doubts as their aggregate is more than double of the actual total workers (non-executives) of Rourkela Steel Plant. From this very fact, it is clear that the membership records maintained by the unions are misleading. While asked about it, a labour officer humourously said that "Asking a union about its membership is as foolish as asking a woman regarding her age". Further, he confessed that there is no proper mechanism to check this inflated membership records as given by the unions in their annual returns to the registrar of trade unions. Even periodical verifications do not provide an objective assessment of the relative strength of these unions. The labour officer himself is not satisfied with the method adopted for verification of the unions' membership records.

In such a case, we have to agree with Crouch's observation that it (union-membership) cannot be statistically measured, (He feels that) the real strength of a trade union can be observed in a crisis.⁷ Therefore, in order to ascertain a general idea of the relative strength of the unions, we have analysed different crisis situations, involving particular union(s) and tried to measure the support and involvement of workers in such situations.

7. Harold Crouch, op. cit., p.28.

But this might be also misleading as various other factors also influence workers' involvement in the crisis situations. Therefore, in order to confirm/test our general impression born out of the study of crisis situations, we have taken into account the views of general workers, union leaders, managers, local people and labour officers, regarding the relative strength of the unions. Though, as expected, the views of some members and office-bearers were biased in favour^{of} their respective unions; in most cases we found consensus of opinions. The assessment of the local labour officers was found to be very correct on this issue. With this discussion on membership, let us go on to study the individual unions - their emergence and development, which can explain their role in the trade union movement in this steel plant.

As shown in table no.13, there are 9 registered trade unions in Rourkela, but for our present purpose we will exhaustively discuss only those unions which satisfy the criteria of ^{an} 'active union'.⁸ Out of these nine trade unions

8. The criteria adopted for choosing 'active' trade unions in Rourkela are similar to those suggested by Professor V.D. Kennedy to K.N. Vaid for his study of Growth and Practices of Trade Unionism: An Area Study of Delhi, published in 1962, on the auspices of Delhi School of Social Work. These are mainly:

- 1) It (active union) should be a registered body;
- 2) It should have an office with fixed working hours;

(Cont'd on the next page)

only one fails to confirm to the criteria adopted for choosing active unions. This one is the Ispat Karakhana Karmachari Sangha affiliated to BMS. Apart from its long silence in the trade union movement (i.e., our sixth criterion), the union very much lacks the maintenance of a formal office. After several visits, the researcher could collect a little information about this union from others because of the non-availability of its office-bearers and non-functioning of the union's office. Therefore, we have to discuss this union very briefly, which in a way reflects its negligible significance in the trade union movement here. Leaving aside this union, we will discuss others chronologically, on the basis of available informations and we have presented an exhaustive study of Rourkela Mazdoor Sabha because of its significance as the recognised union of this plant.

1) North Orissa Workers' Union

This was the first union to be registered from Rourkela region. The initiative for the formation of this

(Cont'd)

- 3) It should have staff-paid/unpaid, part-time/full-time;
- 4) It should follow a system of record-keeping; and
- 5) It should carry on Union business. The criterion that it should have handled at least '12' cases a year could not be included as the 'unions' in Rourkela could hardly confirm to this. Therefore, my sixth criterion has set the condition that an active union, in this context, got to be active (i.e., raising demands, mobilising workers, serving notice to the management, etc.) in the field at least in last five years (1977-82).

union was taken by R.B. Mishra, B.H. Patil and A.P. Das, who were all activists of the erstwhile Ganatantra Parishad. Therefore, even if this union does not have a very distinct ideological character, as evident from its constitution in terms of a set of declared goals, for all practical purposes, the union was functioning under the active guidance of Ganatantra Parishad and later the Swatantra Party and is still led by the leaders of this party, which has lost its original identity. Sri R.B. Mishra is the president of the union, who was the labour minister in Ganatantra-Jana Congress coalition ministry in 1967. The general secretary Sri A.P. Das, was also one secretary in this party organisation. Sri Das hails from Cuttack district and he was directed or rather sent by the party to organise workers at Rourkela. He said that this was the first union to be formed and actively led by Ganatantra Parishad in the state. Sri A.P. Das was the key person in the formation and development of this union. He continues as its general secretary till now. While asked about the relationship of his union with the parent party, Sri Das humorously explained, "It is just like the relation between the parents and their children in Western societies, except the fact that, in our case we 'immediately' became bit rich (in membership only) when our parent was in power in

the state for two subsequent times, i.e., from 1967-1971 and 1971-72". In addition to this union in Rourkela, Sri Das also took active initiative in organising the workers at Talcher, Barbil and captive mines of Rourkela Steel plant.

In the formative period, the union has a considerably good following among the steel workers. Apart from its role during the construction of the plant, as already discussed, the union had mobilised the security men of the steel plant in the year 1962 demanding better service conditions, etc. Though, it was not a prolonged strike, the management conceded the demands as they were long due. But gradually it lost its base among the workers in the plant, because of various reasons. Some people point out instances of corruption by some of its leaders who were involved in contract works. On this ground some leaders and activists also left the union alleging a section of leadership for exploiting the name of the union for their personal interest. The founder-general secretary of another union, i.e., Rourkela Steel Plant Employees' Association, was also a secretary of the union under discussion, who left the union after, what he says, being "disillusioned" by the character of its top leadership. In such a situation the union stood defaced before the

workers. But the general secretary, Sri Das, explains that his inability to stay at Rourkela permanently, as he also had to look after his unions in mines and after all his bad health, taken combinedly are responsible for the 'inactiveness' of the union. In addition to the fact that its general secretary is too old (now 63), feeble and sick, which prevent him to actively lead his union, the main factor responsible for the downfall of the union, as it follows logically, is that in the absence of a sound organisational base, the union, all the time, worked as a person-centered union marked by the dominance of Sri A.P. Das. However, though the union exists only in a formal sense in Rourkela, it has a substantial following in some captive mines of Rourkela Steel Plant, particularly in Kalta mines where it is the most popular union among the mines' workers.

11) Rourkela Mazdoor Sabha

Though this union was second to be registered, it had entered the field of trade union movement in Rourkela simultaneously with the above-discussed one. It is affiliated to HMS at national level. It is also affiliated to the Central Steel and Engineering Committee (CSEC)⁹ and its

9. CSEC is a federation on the national level of HMS affiliated unions in Engineering and Steel Industry.

counterpart, i.e., International Metal Workers' Federation, at international level. An yearly affiliation fee of 20 paise and 10 paise per member is paid to HMS and CSEC respectively. Apart from being a trade union at Rourkela Steel Plant and some of its captive mines, HMS has also horizontal linkages with a number of unions in the surrounding industries. The special significance of this union from the point of view of this study, arises from its being the recognised union of the plant. Therefore, we will analyse exhaustively the birth and growth of this union and more particularly the leaders associated in this process with their ideological orientations.

The initiation for the formation of this union was taken by the local socialist leaders like Chiranjilal Sharma, T. Oram, Harachand Chandel and Thakur M.P. Singh, most of whom were quite active in the Prajamandal movement¹⁰ in the surrounding areas. During the construction of the plant, these leaders were mobilising the displaced local people (due to the construction of the plant and Mandira Dam) for their proper rehabilitation and compensation. At this phase they had formed a committee named as "Rourkela

10. Prajamandal Movement refers to Congress instigated peasants' agitation against princes' atrocities in mid-40's.

Development Committee", which was competed by a "Steel Site Federation" organised by the Congress Party.¹¹

Shortly after this, these socialist leaders organised the construction workers to form "Rourkela Mandoor Sabha" in 1955. In this primary stage, the office-bearers of the union were Sri Dayanath Singh, Sukhnath Kamal, T. Oram, C. Sharma and Pandit D.S. Dube.¹²

Though these people are responsible for the initial formation of the union, ■■■ the credit as the real founder of the union goes to Sri Dhuleswar Bastia, a Praja Socialist Party (PSP) worker, who joined the fray in 1956. With a veteran trade union career, he laid the real foundation of the union and strengthened it with the assistance of Sri Jagdish Nag who joined him in 1959 and Sri Raj Kishore Semantray, who was occasionally guiding the union and later, after the death Sri Bastia, became its general secretary. Since its inception till today, the union has received cooperation and guidance of Sri Surendra Nath Dwivedi, the veteran socialist leader of national prominence, who continues to be its president since its inception.

11. Bidyadhar Barik, Se Thile Vidrohī (A book written in Oriya, meaning 'A Rebel'), A Biography of Dhuleswar Bastia, published by RMS (Rourkela, 1975), p.40.

12. Ibid., p.42.

A brief discussion of the career and political convictions of these leaders is useful as they constitute an integral part of the trade union movement in Orissa and Rourkela in particular.

To begin with, Sri Dhuleswer Bastia, who was born in a lower middle-class family in the coastal district of Cuttack, showed distinct signs of his leadership qualities and concern for the poor ever since his school days. As a protest against British Imperialism, he changed his British-conferred hereditary title 'Basentray' to 'Bastia', which literally means an inhabitant of 'basti' or village.¹³ This reflects his love for the 'basti-dwellers', who are workers in most cases. In his college career he joined student Congress and became one among few Congress socialist activists. In the freedom struggle he was arrested while burning a Union Jack.¹⁴ Now coming to his role in state-politics, we find that as a founding father of Socialist Party in the state, young Bastia entered the electoral game by contesting in 1951 general elections from Falcher constituency, where at that time he was active in trade union movement in the coal mines; but he was

13. Ibid., p.5.

14. Ibid., p.9.

defeated. After this debacle, he concentrated on trade union activities in order to create a strong-base for his union among the mine workers. He was also actively leading the HMS-affiliated unions at Rajgangpur Cement Factory owned by Dalmias and Brajrajnagar Paper Mills of Birlea, both near Rourkela.

It was in the year 1956, when Bastia actively entered the trade union movement in Rourkela by taking up the general secretaryship of Rourkela Mazdoor Sangh (RMS). His decade's career in Rourkela was very eventful. In April 1957, he declared a strike against H. Gamon, a leading construction firm in Rourkela Steel Plant, demanding more wages and better service conditions for its employees and during the agitation he was arrested along with some other leaders. In 1960, RMS, under his able leadership, championed the cause of LD process workers and served a strike notice to the management demanding an appropriate scale of pay commensurate with their skill and dexterity. The union sources reveal that this was the first time that such a demand was raised in the public sector steel industry. The management approached the Government of India for advice. Apprehending a possible strike, the Chief Labour Commissioner (central) intervened and in the course of negotiations with RMS, it was decided that job evaluations

would be conducted afresh by the National Productivity Council (NPC) of Bombay. The scales were revised; thus, it was a grand achievement for the union. For the first time, even an unskilled female hand engaged for floor cleaning job became entitled to get Rs.40-Rs.60 scale, which was hitherto applicable only to semi-skilled workers. Bastia's dynamism, no doubt, was a significant factor for such a success for the union and the workers of the plant. Bastia had also organised the historic cycle-march from Rourkela to Bhubaneswar, i.e., over 500 kms, to put forward workers' demands to the State Government in 1963. The next year, he had mobilised the employees of Transport Department of the Plant demanding bonus, as a result of which the management had suspended some agitators. Bastia fought the case and won it in the Labour Tribunal, then in the High Court and finally in the Supreme Court. The success of the five thousand workers' struggle against the big firms like SIEMENS, Bridge and Roof Company, and Mackenji, under the leadership of Sri Bastia in 1965 had shaken the political corridors at Bhubaneswar and Delhi¹⁵ and it created a tremendous impact of RMS upon the working class community of Rourkela.

15. Ibid., p.48.

But unfortunately the workers in general and RMS in particular were deprived of his guidance due to his untimely death in April 1966. In this year, he was invited by the Soviet Government to attend the historic 'May Day' celebrations. Everything was set for his journey except a health certificate. On 27 April, while coming back from Sundargarh, the district headquarter, to Rourkela on a motorbyke after getting the signature of the District Magistrate on the certificate, he met with a road accident and expired on the spot.

His contributions to the trade union movement of Orissa in general and Rourkela in particular are far reaching. From the union's point of view, everybody acknowledges the cumulated results of his able leadership, as discussed chronologically, which, to a great extent, increased its (the union's) popularity^{and} as a result of which it was recognised by the plant and its succeeding general secretary, with his political dynamism, got elected to the state legislature in the next year, i.e., in 1967. He is the person who had strengthened the base of RMS, on which the subsequent leadership has built the fortress.

To discuss very briefly about the private life of this great leader, his wife, Smt. Renubala Devi, was a

school teacher and also a social worker. She was the headmistress of an Upper Primary School at Talcher, where they were married. Bastia was leading a very simple life, rather the life of a poorman. One writer has remarked, "He was as poor as a Martin Luther King, as subtle and humane as a Gopabandhu Das".¹⁶ He is one among those trade union leaders, who are above controversies and loved and respected by all in the state irrespective of their organisational affiliations. The Asian Workers' Development Institute (AWDI)¹⁷ has been built at Rourkela in the memory of this leader.

Sri Dhuleswar Bastia, while strengthening the base of RMS was very actively assisted by another veteran trade

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16. Rabi Kanungo, "Acquire oh Hero! The Domain of My Heart", Ispat Shramik, Special Issue, May 1, 1980, A publication of RMS, Rourkela, p.11. (Sri Gopabandhu Das was a renowned social worker of Orissa, who had sacrificed his ailing only son to help the flood-affected people in Orissa.)
17. This institute (AWDI) is managed by Bastia Memorial Trust on the contribution of workers and outside non-political organisations like I.L.O. The institute has organised, to its credit, many work shops, seminars, literary discussion, etc. on various workers' problems like wages, social integration, etc., inviting labour leaders, academicians and delegates from outside. One limitation of this institute is that it has failed to attract other unions in Rourkela and non-RMS affiliated leading organisations in the state. From the formation, management and participation in the Institute's affairs, it seems to be an, out and out, RMS-affair.

unionist, Sri Jagdish Nag, who is the present vice-president of the union. Sri Nag joined socialist party in the year 1946 and was active in the Steel Plant at Jamshedpur (TISCO). He came to Rourkela in 1959. He was the right hand of Bastia and under latter's guidance he has led many agitations. His sincerity and deep concern for workers' problems have earned him a good name. He is very popular among the workers as a firing orator, who can arouse workers' emotions to the tune of his speech. He can speak 7 languages, including some tribal ones. He is a bachelor and stays in the union office. He receives an amount of Rs.900 per month from the union towards some financial compensation for his work.

The leadership vacuum created by the death of Sri Bastia in 1966 was filled up by a prominent trade union leader from coastal area - Sri Raj Kishore Semantrai. He was also one of the founder-leaders of the Socialist Party in Orissa, and had the base of his trade union career in Cuttack district, particularly in the Textile Mills and Kalinga Tubes Factory (one time owned by Sri Biju Patnaik) at Choudwar, where his unions were recognised by both the managements. While at Choudwar, he was also taking active part by guiding or leading different workers' agitations, particularly whenever Sri Bastia was put behind the bars. Thus, he was quite actively acquainted with the trade union

movement in Rourkela before he took over as the General Secretary of RMS in 1966. As a continuation of the tradition created by Bastia, in the same year, Sri Samantrai, as the leader of the joint front of RMS and some other trade unions, led the workers in the historic bonus issue. He was made a 'hero' out of the movement and this popularity helped him in getting elected to the Assembly from Rourkela constituency in 1967. This was a 'historic' struggle from various points of view. Firstly, it was for the first time in Rourkela that such a joint front of the trade unions was formed. Secondly, it was also the last joint-front as other unions felt that, eventhough, the success of the movement was contributed by all of them, RMS, with its General Secretary as the chairman of the joint front, 'exploited' the situation in its favour and earned popularity at their cost, which resulted in its claiming for recognition and getting it.¹⁸ From workers' point of view, it was a historic movement as they got their long standing demand for bonus. And for RMS this movement acted as a catalyst in earning popularity and, after all, recognition for the union. Whatever it might be, the able leadership and political dynamism of Sri Samantrai, contributed to a

18. It should be mentioned here that, INTUC-affiliated Hindusthan Steel Workers' Association was the first recognised union of the plant from 1964 to 1967.

considerable extent for the overall success of the movement in general and for his union and himself in particular. He alongwith Sri Nag consolidated the position of the union on the strong foundation laid by Sri Bastia. He stays, alongwith his family, in a company quarters at Rourkela and gets a sum of Rs.1200 from the union as a sort of financial assistance for their private life, etc.¹⁹ He is also entitled to use a vehicle provided by the plant for his conveyance, while discharging his functions as general secretary of the recognised union.

The president of the union has been Sri Surendra Nath Dwivedi, a leader of national stature, who has particularly distinguished himself as a veteran parliamentarian of the Nehruvian Era. As the pioneer of socialist movement in the state, he has remained the father of all socialist-led trade unions here. He stays at state capital and occasionally comes to Rourkela to guide the union in crisis situations and also to discharge his functions as its ceremonial head.

19. Both the leaders preferred to call it 'other than salary', as they do not feel like being employed in any job. The money that they get from the union is more of a sort of 'financial assistance', than a fixed salary as it can also be less if the union faces any financial crisis. But they do not mind, if it is called 'salary' also.

All these leaders are honorary members of the union, or in other words, outsiders belonging to the erstwhile Praja Socialist Party. As reflected in the above discussion, these three leaders (excluding Sri Dwivedi who was not very actively participating in the day-to-day affairs of the union) have shaped the entire course of history of the union by formulating policies and different strategies to maintain its prominence in the trade union movement in Rourkela.

As regards the ideological orientation of the union, a parallel may be drawn with that of the socialist movement in our country. But we should not take this proposition too far so as to search for those three lines of thinking of Ashok Mehta, Joy Prakash and Rammanohar Lohia, among the leaders and members of the union. While, we find the leadership adhering to JP's line of thinking, the ideas of the members varied from one extreme to another. Though 80 percent of the ordinary members do not have the knowledge of what 'ideology' exactly means, while asked about their preference for different social systems, as explained by the researcher in details, very interestingly, out of 10 respondents, one (a 52 year old, lone scheduled tribe worker) outrightly rejected the options and favoured a British rule which, he feels, is the best among all. From

the rest of respondents, two favoured free economy; three for socialistic pattern of economy; three for Indian model being quite satisfied with the present system and one replied in 'do not know' manner.

These responses, in addition to the lack of political education of the ordinary members, reflects the heterogeneity in the ideas of the members of this union. But this is not the sole case with RMS. Hundreds of unions fall in this category as they do not emphasise on the political education of their members. Therefore, in such a case, we cannot take into account the members' ideas to determine the ideological character of a particular union. In addition to the factors like, its affiliation, linkages with political organisations, etc., who have to make a thorough study of the nature of its leadership and their ideological orientations, while identifying the union to a particular social-philosophy. As regards, the union under study, there exists a difference among its leaders, though of degree^{and} not of kind, the phenomenon which is very common in all political organisations and more so in the Socialist Party.

Regarding Bastia's line of thinking we can quote the vice-President of the union, Sri Nag, who writes,

"Dhuleswar Bastia was one amongst such enthused youngmen, who came with all determinations for attainment of a structural change in the socio-economic order, which only could ensure equality and social justice with equitable distribution of the national wealth".²⁰

Reflecting his own convictions, Sri Nag goes forward to appeal,

"...all those comrades closer to us (RMS), who are prepared to travel with a common goal respecting the basic principles of life and values for self-sacrifice for a common good with determination for a change of this class, caste-ridden capitalist order to a class-less society".²¹

From among these two extracts reflecting the minds of Sri Bastia and Sri Nag, respectively, while the former sounds very radical exactly like that of a young J.P., the latter proposes the strategy of a joint front of like-minded unionists to fight capitalist order. From the language of the statement and the sense therefrom he seems to be appealing the Communist-led unions to join hands with RMS for the achievement of the common objective. But no union in Kourkela is that close to RMS for forming a joint front against what they call, their immediate 'enemy', i. e. management.

20. Jagdish Nag, "A Remembrance", Ispat Shramik, op. cit., p.3.

21. Ibid., p.4.

Now, regarding Sri Samantrai, the present general secretary of the union, we can quote his own words; while speaking for the union, he asserts that it "genuinely believes in three fundamental principles, i.e., free trade unionism, democracy and secularism, asserting to socialism".²²

In the above quotation, we have stressed the term 'free trade unionism', as this is very relevant in the context of our present discussion on the political involvement of the trade unions in general and their relation with political parties in particular. A portion of the manifesto of Hind Mazdoor Sabha also emphasises on this aspect, which reads as follows:

"The objective of HMS is to strengthen trade union movement free from control of employees, governments, political parties, individuals, or any other external authority, to serve the interests of the workers..."²³

Thus, when so much of emphasis is given on "free unionism", it is necessary on our part to know the opinion of the top leaders of this union, on the question of what they really mean by it, particularly in the context of union-party relationship. While asked about this, Sri Neg

22. R.K. Samantrai, "Social Integration in the Rourkela Region", op. cit., p.7.

23. Manifesto of Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

replied that the trade unions, apart from linking themselves with any political party, should develop their own political organisations through which they can achieve their political objectives. It seems, he is apprehensive of (or rather convinced that) the political parties, to whatever extent 'anti-labour' they might be, who see in these trade unions a perfect means to get workers' support in elections. But this idea was not accepted by Sri Samantrai, the general secretary of the union and an ex-MLA from Rourkela. He feels that the unions should concentrate on their specific problems and it is difficult or rather undesirable for the workers to develop their own parties, by which they might overlook the immediate issues confronting them by indulging in politics. It is evident that he favours workers' indirect participation in politics through their parent political parties. His idea of relation between unions and political parties, in the context of 'free unionism' is marked by 'cooperation' rather than dominance of latter over the former.

In this context, it is very relevant to discuss, in brief, the relationship between the political party - Praja Socialist Party, and the national trade union organisation - Hind Mazdoor Sabha, vis-a-vis RMS, which, to a great extent, reflects its ideological orientation.

The links between the party and the union were largely ideological and not political or organisational.²⁴ This has allowed for a broader amount of democratic functioning in the union. This is also reflected in the relationship between the national and local organisations.

Yet, if one were to go by the school of thought that the basic purpose of trade unions is to advance the general interest of the working-class in combating capitalism and not merely to represent the sectional economic interests of particular groups,²⁵ then one would have to say that RMS

24. (a) In the first conference of HMS at Calcutta, itself it was enumerated that "the free trade union movement should never allow any political party to exploit or utilize it for any purpose. It should not be a trailer to the party. Even if any party goes to power with which its organisers have relations, as a free trade union it is required to remain like a watch dog towards the interest of working class". Jagdish Nag (Vice-President, RMS) in a statement to the 17th Annual Conference of RMS.

(b) In spite of merger of PSP in Congress, the RMS did not merge with INTUC, the trade union wing affiliated to Congress.

(c) Many leaders and activists of RMS even before merger had different political loyalties which exist even now.

25. See Raison D'Être of Trade Unionism in Tom Clarke and Lourie Clements (ed.), Trade Unions Under Capitalism (Fontana, 1977), p.11.

has until now played the second role. Because RMS has not yet -

- a) made concentrated efforts to educate its members on political, social and cultural issues, although the union or its members with the support of the union were involved in organising,
 - (i) A youth and cultural organisation, and
 - (ii) Night school to educate workers to enable them to pass matric examinations;
- b) tried to organise the rural workers; and
- c) made any attempts to demand a greater say in the management of economy, particularly in respect of the pricing and distribution of the products of the plant.

The failure of RMS to impress upon these issues has well-exposed the gap between the radical ideological postures of its leaders and the practical achievement of the union.

iii) Rourkela Workers' Union

Communist movement in Rourkela region was pioneered by the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI). Though there was no formal party organisation, there were local

tribal revolutionaries, who had raised their voices against the exploitation of local landlords and they later joined this party. Prominent among them was Sri Samuel Toppo, who took a leading role in mobilising the displaced tribals for demanding just compensation for them. Interestingly, this tribal leader, living in a remote place untouched by the light of civilization, had a clear understanding of Marx's ideas and he was greatly influenced by them. Sri Toppo alongwith Tapas Dutta, the then Secretary of SUCI and the present president of the union, had led a massive demonstration during Nehru's visit to Rourkela in the year 1957. These two leaders were the main initiators for the formation of the union. Other party (SUCI) activists who helped them in this process were P. Chand, Prakash Mishra and Ashwani Jena, who was the secretary of the Orissa Unit of the party. This was the first union to be formed at Rourkela, eventhough it was registered in May 1957 with the name - Rourkela Workers' Union. It was affiliated to UTUC (LS) the same year.

During the construction period, the union had mobilised 7,000 workers against Gamon Company demanding wages and overtime in 1957. In the year 1962, the union got a boost with the joining of B.B. Jena, who was a party stalwart in the Orissa unit of SUCI. In the same year, under his

militant leadership, the union had called for a strike in the Fertilizer Plant demanding the revision of the wage structure and separate unit status for the plant. The management considered some of the demands of the agitators after a prolonged struggle. In 1967, the union had also actively participated in the Bonus Movement, which has been discussed earlier. At several points of time, the union has also mobilised contract labourers on the issues of wage, bonus, adequate payment for overtime, medical and other facilities, etc. But the most memorable event in the history of the union is the strike declared by it in 'Prabhat Iron Foundaries', an ancillary industry of Rourkela Steel Plant. The union had raised its voice against low wages, bad service conditions and victimisation of workers. This strike had attracted the attention of the whole state as during the course of the struggle, the agitators faced police firing - a very rare phenomenon in the trade union movement in Orissa. Thus, this incident got lot of publicity for the union. The outcome of the strike is not that encouraging. Two employees dismissed in this incident by the proprietor of this foundary are now working as full-timers in the union.

A critical analysis of the union's career reveals that it has not been able to exert significant impact on

the general workers. The cause seems to be the cynical fear-ridden attitude of the workers towards the communists, particularly those who resort to direct action or demonstrate a militant posture.

As regards the leadership of the union, we find that all the early leaders were mostly drawn from the party. Prominent among them was Sri B.B. Jena, who had a career in public life since his college days. He had contested all the elections to State Assembly during his career at Rourkela, but lost in all cases. After his death in 1980, there was a leadership vacuum in the union which was filled up by Sri S.K. Kabi, who is a worker in the steel plant. Sri Kabi, who does not have a previous trade union career, was attracted towards the union by its ideology and joined as a member in the union. His sincerity and hard work have prized him such a position in the union. The leaders have been stressing on workers' education as the primary and vital responsibility of this union. This is reflected in the responses of the eight members interviewed by the researcher out of which six (including two scheduled tribes) could very clearly explain the political objectives and ideology to which they adhere. Three out of these six ordinary members could discuss about theories of class contradiction and dictatorship of the proletariat. Though,

the responses of the rest two were vague, they were not outside the broader framework of union's objectives. The efforts of the leaders cannot be denied in this respect.

But some people²⁶ attribute the union's none-too-satisfactory membership and organisation to the lack of drive and imagination on the part of its leaders. The union, in fact, has failed to create competent leaders who can give purposeful direction to union activities, sometimes taking very disorganised anarchic form. Further, it has failed to gain confidence of general workers due to its method of direct action, particularly its taking recourse to violent means (though they are in line with its professed objectives) which sometimes run counter to the interest of the workers whose welfare the union seeks to promote. Moreover, the union had to face stiff competition from rival unions having better leadership, organisational competence and tangible achievements to their credit.

In spite of all these, the role of the union in educating its members and its special attention for the tribals need to be set as an example for others.

26. Bobba Suryanarayana Murty, op. cit., p.238.

iv) Rourkela Steel Mazdoor Union

Though this union was registered in 1958 by this name, it had already entered the scene in the early phase of the construction of the plant. The workers were organised under the banner of Communist Party of India and subsequently a union was formed bearing the name - Rourkela Steel Mining and Mazdoor Union, which was changed to the present name just by deleting the word 'mining' from it before registration. The union was affiliated to AITUC in 1960. The union was formed under the active initiative of Sri S.A. Dange and Communist leaders of Orissa like Sri Nityananda Panda, D.C. Mohanty, Ajit Ray and Bibek Mohanty. The Secretaries of the Central unit of AITUC like Sri Naresh Dutta, K.G. Srivastava and Chatish Lumba had also rendered their valuable help and guidance for the effective organisation and functioning of the union.

In the initial period, the union was quite active in the trade union movement and thus commanded a good following in some major units of the plant, viz., SMS, Blast Furnace and Traffic. In the year 1959, the union had very successfully led the Muster Roll workers to a struggle, as a result of which their wage was increased from Rs.2.75 to Rs.3.50 per day. In 1966, it had also made its contribution for

the success of the historic Bonus Movement. Of late, the three days strike beginning on 27 July 1981, demanding manning and upgradation, was also a success for the union. But the entire seventies has been a period of non-achievement for the union which experienced a very interesting phenomenon during this period, i.e., a large section of the union enmass joined the INTUC-affiliated Hindusthan Steel Workers' Association. Before we proceed to analyse the issue proper, we should, first of all, discuss the different factors leading to such situation in 1973.

To begin with, differences between the vice-president of the union, Sri D.C. Mohanty, and general secretary, Sri N.N. Panda, existed for a quite long period, which had often taken very bitter forms resulting in intra-union rivalry. Though, according to a section in the union, the differences were said to be personal in nature, some others take it to ideological level by linking them to the difference in lines of thinking in the party on the issue of its attitude towards Indian National Congress. While on the one hand, D.C. Mohanty belonged to the group in the party having cynical attitude towards Congress, Sri Panda, on the other hand, was one among those who believed in extending overall support for the progressive measures of the Congress Party.

Further, in the early 60's, there was a move by a section of communists to infiltrate into the Congress Party to exert pressure or influence the policies of the government from inside the ruling party, which might be termed as 'progressivisation' of Congress for the attainment of socialism in India in a relatively quicker time. Keeping this in view, top communist leaders like Mrs. Nandini Satpathy, Mohan Kumarmangalam and Chandrajit Yedav joined Congress in 1962.

But this move by these CPI leaders had a very belated impact upon the likeminded union leaders at Rourkela. After a decade they decided to join HSWA(INTUC). But in another way, their move had synchronised with the taking over of the chief ministership of the state by Smt. Nandini Satpathy on 14 June 1972. Though Sri Panda, the pioneer of this move, is no more with us to explain this situation, nor any other leader is able to depict the real inside-story, still then it is very clear. That is, Smt. Satpathy's position in the state provided a moral boost to these people while leaving RSMU(AITUC), with the hope of getting her patronage in strengthening their hold over HSWA(INTUC).

The union under Sri Mohanty was reduced to almost a non-entity, after the defection of Sri panda, who was quite popular among the cadres of the union, to HSWA(INTUC)

where all the important posts were said to have been captured by these new entrants.²⁷ There was constant infighting among this group and the INTUC leadership as the former had forcibly entered the union and tried to take the actual control of it by replacing the earlier office bearers. As a result, at a time two sets of office-bearers were functioning. To solve this crisis, G.M. Stephen visited Rourkela in 1976, but his visit could not yield any result. Afterwards both the parties reached consensus on their own.

During their stay in INTUC, these former AITUC leaders were busy in organising workers in nearby small industries like Indian Dolomite Ltd. (IDL), where it is the recognised union now, Automobiles, ■■■ Press, etc., under AITUC banner. In 1976, they resumed their struggle in the plant by organising the contract labourers through forming a new union which is named as Rourkela Steel Thikader Mazdoor Union (RSTMU). The union is still functioning with a membership of 743, under the guidance of AITUC leadership. From the above discussion, it becomes

27. Official INTUC records show that the leader of this group Sri N.N. Panda was given the post of joint secretaryship, while rest of the top posts were held by the earlier INTUC leadership.

very clear that they had failed to identify themselves properly with INTUC, as a result of which they had remained a distinct group with separate forums of actions under the name of AITUC, which were indicative of their return to the parent organisation.

The political developments during emergency and period following that made this group to realise their fault. The downfall of the left forces in the Congress Party, in consequence to the emergence of Sanjay Gandhi. Phenomenon in Indian politics and the resignation of Smt. Satpathy from chief ministership led these leaders to attempt at returning to their original fold and finally, in 1979, they were able to join their parent organisation.

But during the period 1977-79, i.e., from the post-emergency period till their joining AITUC-affiliated RSMU, this group had to face lots of criticism from all corners and they were branded as 'opportunists'. During this phase, they were placed in such a position that both INTUC and AITUC affiliates were hostile to them. Their popularity had gone down. The ordinary members supporting these leaders were disillusioned by their leaders' activities. As this group was not that active in the steel plant during this period and further, as the leadership was quite busy in setting its terms with their counterpart in INTUC, they

had lost contact with the ranks. In the meantime, Sri N.N. Panda, the leader of this group, expired with a heavy heart in 1978 and the leadership fell in the hands of his brother, Sri B.C. Panda. The first task of the new leader was to take his followers into confidence and after prolonged negotiations they came back to AITUC in 1979. Very interestingly, Sri D.C. Mohanty, the leader of the group that had stayed in the parent union, was unseated in union elections held in the subsequent year, i.e., 1980. This shows the strength and popularity of the group that had once left AITUC.

Now, the post of General Secretary has been abolished and Nareah Dutta continues as the president of the union. Sri B.C. Panda, is the secretary of the union, who is an employee in the steel plant. He was greatly influenced by his elder brother late N.N. Panda, who had a brilliant trade union career. Sri N.N. Panda had also contested in the elections to State Assembly in 1967 and 1971, but lost in both. While asked about the impact of the split in the CPI with the formation of All India Communist Party (AICP) by Dange, on his unions, Sri Panda replied that private group-sittings of the pro-Dange faction are taking place. According to him, in the mines areas, the pro-Dange group is quite strong and they have dominated

the unions there. However, he does not foresee any danger to the unity of the union in the near future, rather he is very optimistic towards the unity between the two parties, i.e., CPI and AICP.

This union could not make a substantial headway in the trade union movement mainly because of the intra-union rivalry and the experiment with INTUC. While all the leaders agree to this, three out of eight ordinary members (interviewed) do not have a clear understanding of this happening and the same ~~member~~ could not explain the aim of their union and expressed their loyalty to the leadership, who can 'help them in need', as one among them put it. On the other hand, the other five respondents expressed a clear understanding of their union's objectives and stressed on the fact that now it should boost up its image before the workers.

True to the expectations of its members, the union is reviving its earlier image and success in the discussed 'three days' strike in July 1981, has earned popularity for the union.

v) Hindustan Steel Workers' Association

This union was registered in the year 1959 as an affiliate of INTUC. The initiative for the formation of

this union was taken by trade union leaders like S.L. Passey, V.P. Soed, Michael John, who had distinguished themselves in other big industrial establishments. For more than a decade the leadership of the union had remained in the hands of these leaders, who were either from the central headquarters or from other INTUC-affiliated unions.

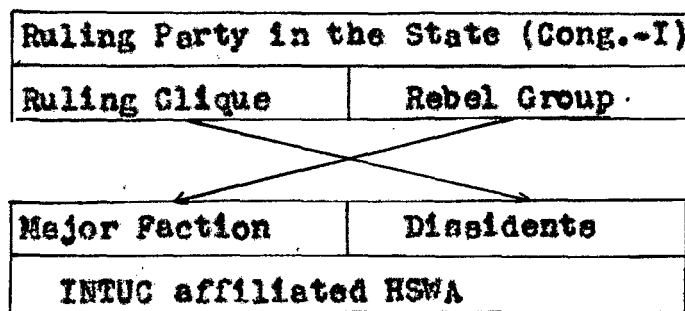
In the early period, the union had a good hold over the workers in some vital units of the plant like coke ovens, security, and traffic. Eventhough, it does not have a very eventful agitational career, the two months' 'go-slow', called by the union in 1963 demanding wage revision and promotion had caused 74 lakhs loss²⁸ for the plant as it was called without giving notice to the management. In spite of this it was recognised by the plant in the next year, which continued till 1967, when RMS got recognition. The failure of the union to retain recognition and to play any significant role in the trade union movement in Rourkela, can be explained in terms of a critical understanding of the various internal developments in the course of its history.

28. From file in Industrial Relations Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

The unique character of this union is that it has always proceeded under serious stress and strains generated from within its leadership. It has remained a hot-bed of infighting; thus, providing an ideal example of acute crisis of intra-union rivalry. This crisis reached its height in 1971, just after the union's elections to the office-bearers were over. Some defeated members challenged the validity of elections on the ground of what they considered it a 'fake' election. They formed a parallel body which resulted in fight between two sections. But shortly afterwards, they reached a compromise by accommodating some leaders of the rival group in the union executive. But still some leaders, one being the present general secretary of the union, Sri B.K. Panda, were left, who wanted to take forcible control over the union in a public meeting organised by INTUC. As tensions prevailed, police intervened and section 144 of IPC was promulgated there. This group led by Sri B.K. Panda, was successful in getting the actual control of the union after this incident and he became the general secretary of the union subsequently.

But this incident proved to be fatal for the union as far as its relation with Congress Party, its parent political organisation, is concerned, because Sri Panda was not keeping in good terms with the party bosses in

the state. Particularly, with the coming of the present Congress (I) Government in the State in 1980, due to many political as well as personal factors, the ruling clique of the party and the leadership of the union have hostile attitude towards each other. Very interestingly, the infighting between the two factions, ruling and rebel groups, in the state unit of the party has accentuated the intra-union rivalry in the union by dividing it into two factions on similar lines. Further, the major faction, led by Sri Panda, is supporting the rebel group in the party, while the dissidents of the union are getting patronage of the ruling clique. The following figure puts it clearly.



Thus, this factional equations have resulted in a 'checkmate' situation where the union has failed to make any headway. The rivalry between these two parallel bodies has reached such a stage that any reapproachment is impossible till the differences among the factions in

the state unit of the party are patched up. This situation has weakened the union to such an extent that it has virtually become a sick representative of the workers.

Regarding the present leadership of the union, we find that the general secretary of the major faction of the union, Sri B.K. Panda, had a career in trade unionism since his entrance to this field during the construction of Hirakud Dam, in the neighbouring district of Sambalpur. He was quite a popular leader in that area. Later he came to Sundargarh as a secretary of the Congress Party unit at the district level. Then, as discussed earlier, he actively participated in the trade union movement in Rourkela since 1971. He has a chequered trade union career as he was in AITUC for sometime at Hirakud and then joined Congress Party, in mid-sixties. But he was never given 'encouraging treatment' by the Congress, as he alleges. He has contested all the elections to the state assembly independently against the Congress candidates and has lost in all. The leader of the other faction is Sri C.S. Mohapatra, an employee of the plant, who was not so prominent as a leader in the union prior to its division. The differences among these two leaders, as evident from the above discussion, was born out of their relationship with the party leaders, thus personal or to some extent

organisational, far from having any ideological implications. This infighting is so entrenched that all the 8 respondents (6 from the major faction and 2 from the other) discussed state politics while asked about the ideological orientations and objectives of their union.

vi) Ispat Shramik Sangha

Taking into consideration the various strategies adopted by different political groups in our country to mobilise people by appealing to their traditional sentiments rooted in caste, cult, language and culture, it is not surprising to find trade unions founded on the basis of these primordial social issues and established clinches. In Rourkela, a group of people led by S.M. Sinha, P. Kundu, A Patro, and R.M. Patnaik, formed a union called Ispat Shramik Sangha, constituting mainly tribals, Christians and non-Oriyas. The union was affiliated to National Federation of Independent Trade Unions (NFITU). The Jharkhand Party has strong patronage for the union as evident from the union's involvement in different elections by its formal support for the Party candidates.

Though the union was registered in October 1970, since late sixties it has actively led and in many cases intervened in the spontaneous struggle of the workers,

particularly on the issues like proper implementation of reservation policies, and better deal in wages and other benefits for the contract labourers. Though not initiating many struggles, it was very successfully attracting the attention of the workers by intervening in most cases, in existing agitations through new appeals, or which can be well-described as, by resorting to populism. The union became very popular in a very short time, as a result of which in the 1970 works Committee Elections, the only election involving all workers of the plant, it won 6 out of 10 seats while the recognised union got only 4 seats. This is the only union to have upset the dominant position of RMS, in this election since it started in 1966.

Today the union has some hold among the tribal workers. But the union has lost its prominence due to various reasons; leadership crisis being one among them. Some of its leaders were accused of forgery and other cases of moral degradation.²⁹ Further, one of its office-bearers was also promoted to executive rank, which led to his leaving the union. From this discussion the character of its leadership is well-exposed, who lacks sound moral

29. It is alleged that a leader of this union was involved in the case of manhandling a tribal woman.

character and is guided by personal financial-gains, which is very much unbecoming a trade unionist.

Apart from this, the most vital factor responsible for the downfall of the union is its 'appeal' to the workers. Appeal on the basis of caste, language or religion has its own limitations. They outlive their utility in a short-time when the workers realize the actual intention of those who resort to that and the real basis on which they should be mobilised. In this context, the general secretary of the recognised union writes:

"A systematic survey of trade unions, their activities and existence in Rourkela would reveal that in the past any union coming up and pursue its activities under the guise of a particular caste, religion, linguistic group or craft had never taken roots. They were not accepted by the people of Rourkela and withered away quicker than they derived eminence".³⁰

On this issue of 'parochial appeal', we can judge some members' reaction to it from the responses of the four ordinary members chosen as sample from this union. While three³¹ of them expressed that this is the only union which can protect their interest, the other one replied in 'do not

30. R.K. Samantrai, op. cit., p.7.

31. Among these three there was a tribal, a tribal-Christian and a worker belonging to Ranchi area.

know' manner. Two among these three respondents replied in negative while asked whether they feel that they are discriminated against oriyas, upper castes or Hindus, etc., although all three of them admit that they had joined the union along with their friends under the impression that this is a 'special organisation' to look to the interest of workers belonging to their caste region and religion.

From these responses it is clear that in its 'blind' drive for membership, the union has resorted to 'populism' and 'opportunism' by not hesitating to hit at these divisive sentiments of general workers, which disillusion them and weaken the movement in the long run.

vii) Ispat Karakhana Karmachari Sangha

Though we have categorised this as an inactive union, we will mention very briefly, whatever is known about it, from the responses of 3 of its members interviewed by the researcher, just for the sake of having some knowledge about it. But unfortunately two of them do not have any idea regarding the union excepting the name of some leaders. The other one could give some scanty informations regarding the role of the union in some struggles in long past, which are very inadequate to be put here. He replied that they visit union office only during the elections to office-

bearers' posts in the union. Unfortunately, no trade union leader, manager nor labour officer could provide any concrete information about the union in the absence of the leaders of the union and the non-functioning of its office during the visits of the researcher. In addition to this, the union has not raised a single issue during last five years³² as evident from the official records of the management.

Only it is known that the union was formed in mid-1970 with the initiative of a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS) cadet, Sri K.N. Nigam along with some other like-minded people. The union was registered in January 1971 and was formally affiliated to BMS simultaneously.

viii) Steel Employees' Trade Union

This union, as an affiliate of CITU, the central workers' front of the CPI(M), took a formal separate shape in as late as 1971, because even though the split in the CPI occurred in 1964, the division of its central trade union organisation in party-lines took place in 1970 only. But there was a clear polarisation in the

32. For that matter the union does not have any significant achievement in its entire career in the plant.

union along with the developments in the party, marked even before 1964. This polarisation distinctly crystallised during the strike in traffic department in the year 1970. The group, which formed this union in the next year, was posing a separate posture in the course of the movement. This section led by Sri K.T. Rao, K.C. Mohanty, S. Mudali, S. Dasgupta, U.P. Mukherjee and Bimal Roy, left AITUC and formed this union with the help and guidance of Sri Sivaji Patnaik, the president of the state unit of CITU, who is also the president of the union. Presently, under the effective leadership of S. Mudali, the vice-president and N.K. Mohanty, the general secretary, the union has made a substantial headway in the workers' struggle in the plant.

Sri Mohanty is an employee in the steel plant, who has risen up to this position in the union from a member, by dint of his diligence, dedication and dutifulness. Sri Mudali, the vice-president, virtually, looks into the day-to-day affairs of the union almost as an wholotimer, as the general secretary is an employee in the plant. He is a local advocate, having a brilliant career in public life. In his student career he was the general secretary of his college union and also state office-secretary of All India Students' Federation (AISF). In 1963, he became a member in the union and in the next year he was in the

Executive Council. He continued in this post till the split and simultaneous formation of the CITU-affiliated Steel Employees' Trade Union (SETU) in 1971. He is one among the founder-leaders of this union. He had also unsuccessfully contested an assembly election. He admits that at the time of division a large chunk of worker-members remained with the present union, i.e. AITUC-affiliated RSMU. The union leadership explains their relative success in terms of their hardwork in the one hand and the disastrous 'Mohammad-Bin-Tughlakian' experiment of AITUC on the other, which caused enough damage to latter's image. Thus, in spite of its late entrance to the mainstream of workers' struggle in the plant, it is agreed by all (the unions including recognised union, RMS, and AITUC, management and labour officers) that it commands a position next to the recognised union.

The union's career in the movement has been quite eventful. It has a substantial hold over the contract labourers. In 1973, the union had led these workers demanding same wages for same or similar nature of jobs and regularisation of their service. This is a memorable event in the history of the union as in this strike three CITU leaders were detained under MISA, which was executed here for the first time in the state. The union had to

fight this issue single handedly as this movement had not received support from other unions. Thus, it paved the way for the management to suppress the struggle with the help of state's repressive apparatus by terrorising the agitators. Finally, the strike was withdrawn.

Apart from dealing with these day-to-day problems of the workers, the union has also undertaken the task of educating its workers by conducting regular study circles and other programmes. This was confirmed by the responses of 8 ordinary members of the union interviewed by the researcher. Out of these eight respondents five had a clear understanding of the long-term objectives of their union, while other three could not provide a convincing impression upon the researcher. However, the union is rapidly extending its base among the workers and gaining increasing support of the youngsters, who are entering the plant in recent times.³³

ix) Rourkela Steel Plant Employees' Association

This is the last union to be registered from Rourkela yet. The main personality behind the formation of this

33. This fact was also confirmed by all possible sources as mentioned earlier.

union is Sri B.K. Mohanty, who was a ministerial employee (clerical) in the plant. While asked about the factors for its formation, Sri Mohanty replied that, being ministerial employees, some of them felt that they were neglected as far as trade union activities involving the issues of the plant's workers are concerned. It is a fact that the movement was earlier concentrated on the workers of the plant and these clerical staff were hardly involved in the process. Therefore, they formed this union in 1972 comprising of the ministerial employees, which would provide a forum for the articulation of their demands. It is a unique union in the sense that its membership was confined to a particular category of workers. Thus, it is one among very few of its kind in the country. Further, it is the only union in Rourkela, which was initiated and formed completely by the employees of the plant with no outsiders in it, in its earlier period.³⁴

Though the union was formed in a spontaneous effort of the ministerial employees, the top leaders, having coherent and distinct ideological orientation, had given

34. Recently there are 4 honorary members including its president Sri G.N. Pradhan, a socialist leader in the state, and the general secretary himself who had resigned from his job while contesting in the assembly elections.

this spontaneity a proper shape. The leadership of this union adheres to the principles of socialism propounded by Rammanohar Lohia. Therefore, in the process of its formation and strengthening its base, the union has received cooperation and guidance from George Fernandes, the veteran trade union leader of national prominence and Rabi Ray, who is a big socialist leader in the state and was also in the union cabinet along with Sri Fernandes, during Janata Rule. The general secretary of the union, Sri Mohanty, was very active in his early college days as a young socialist leader by participating in various movements in the state. He also has previous experience in trade unionism, while working in North Orissa workers' Union for sometime. But he left it due to what he says "the ideological and moral bankruptcy of its leadership". The leaders of this union have ideological differences with that of the recognised union, RMS, whose leadership, as discussed earlier, adheres to JP's philosophy of socialism. Again, these leaders still identify themselves with the socialists following Lohia's line of thinking, wherever (in which party) they are. After the historic victory of Janata Party in 1977 General Elections with the socialists (belonging to this group) in it, Sri B.K. Mohanty contested assembly elections from Rourkela and won it though he had lost in 1971. He is the second trade unionist (first being Sri Samantrai,

the general secretary of RMS, who got elected in 1967 elections) to represent Rourkela in the State Assembly.

This phase (i.e., the phase of Janata Rule in the state) is very significant for the union as it consolidated its position with the influx of a massive number of workers and further it became prominent in the movement by mobilising the workers in SMS demanding the removal of stagnation in service, house or house-rent allowance, and incentive to all. The strike continued for a week resulting in hunger strike and subsequent gherao of the authorities. But the strike was withdrawn without much benefit from the management. The union alleges the Janata government at state level to have intervened in the matter and tried to sabotage the movement. It should be mentioned here that the top leadership of the union was not in good terms with the leaders in the Janata Government in the state. Therefore, the union could not achieve any substantial gains for the workers in general and the union in particular, in spite of its general secretary being an MLA of the ruling party at that time.

Regarding its members, we find that the union had spread to the plant units from confining itself to the ministerial staff, after two years of its formation. Now,

excepting contract labourers, the union's membership is comprised of workers belonging to all categories. But unfortunately, the union has not taken any steps to educate its members, which is reflected in the responses of 6 out of total sample of 8 ordinary members, who do not possess any knowledge of the objectives of their union. On the other hand, one from the rest two, could describe the differences between his union and RMS in terms of the ideological differences between two great leaders like J.P. and Lohia. Though this respondent had a vague understanding, of the whole thing, at least he was aware of some very general issues. The remaining respondent reflected upon the problem of affiliation³⁵ faced by the union and was quite satisfied with its present independent status.

With this understanding of the different issues in the formation and development of the individual trade unions in Rourkela, it will be easier for us to identify different trends in them while making a critical assessment of the trade union movement here. But this discussion of

35. The union was affiliated to Hind Mazdoor Panchayat (HMP). But with its merger into RMS, the union has not affiliated itself with any national federation.

the trade unions will be incomplete without a brief analysis of their organisational structures. Therefore, we will conclude this chapter with the following observations regarding the organisational patterns in these unions:

1) All the unions follow the following organisational hierarchy:

President
 Vice-President(s)
 General Secretary
 Executive Council
 General Council
 General Body

This general framework is applicable to all the unions with minor differences in naming different offices and in the strength of different posts (like vice-president).

2) The main function of the unions, i.e., the demands of the workers, are taken up at following levels, depending on the nature and scope of the demands:

- (a) Shop-floor level
- (b) Departmental level
- (c) Plant level
- (d) Company level.

3) Regarding the general character of members and leaders of these unions,³⁶ following observations can be

36. For detailed statistical informations regarding this see Annexure No.14.

made:

- (a) Majority of the members and leaders are middle-aged;
- (b) Most of the leaders possess educational qualifications upto matric standard, while one third of the workers are illiterate;
- (c) The majority of workers belong to lower jobs in relation to leaders, who mostly belong to higher posts;
- (d) The workers are financially more sound than their leaders;
- (e) Majority of members and leaders belong to Orissa followed by Bengal and Bihar;
- (f) Majority of leaders belong to higher castes;³⁷
- (g) While majority of the workers joined unions for the solution of their immediate problems, the majority of leaders have joined the unions on humanitarian grounds;
- (h) There is not a single women leader, perhaps might be the reason that they constitute a very little part of the total membership; and

37. The issues like caste does not play any vital role, particularly in the context of leadership-a fact, which was unanimously agreed by all. The absence of caste-feelings is reflected in the case of the general secretary of INTUC's unit, who, being a brahmin, has married a tribal. But on the other hand, it exposes the absence of emergence of leadership from lower castes.

(1) Majority of the leaders are outsiders, i.e., not employees of the plant, and most of them have remained in the same post for more than ten years.

4) Regarding the internal regulation of the unions, we have taken into consideration the following four factors which will expose their true nature of functioning:

(a) Information and communication system: it is marked by lack of education on part of the majority of members in particularly non-communist-led unions. This information and communication system between leaders and members is quite effective in the communist-led unions;

(b) Participation and decision-making: As regards participation in union elections, while the former category of unions enjoy freedom to some extent, the communist-led ones do not allow such freedom. But on the question of workers' participation in the decision-making, the latter has a dominance over the former as the communist-led ones always stress on involving the general workers in the process so as to educate them through this. But, by and large, the decision-making privilege has remained with the leaders;

(c) Union finances: (1) Most of the unions do not have

a sound financial position as membership fees, being the chief source of union finance, are not paid regularly by the majority of members of the unions; and (ii) The major heads of expenditures for the unions are salaries and allowances of the union officers, maintenance of office, meetings, pamphlets and payment for legal services; and

(d) Expectation and satisfaction from the union:

The members' responses varied from union to union. It was maximum in case of SUCI-led union followed by CITU, AITUC, EMS and INTUC to BMS-where it was found to be minimum.

To sum up, the internal regulation system, in its different facets, is marked by the fact that the unions in Rourkela are, by and large, average half-open and quasi-democratic. Although, the non-Communist unions seem to be more democratic than their counterparts in elections, the highest offices in all unions almost go unopposed. While the members belonging to the former category of unions enjoy freedom of expression and independent action, the strict disciplined later category of unions would not allow these in practice. But the example of AITUC shows that it provides enough freedom of independent action for its

members, which other unions might not afford to do. Thus, while comparing both the categories we should not treat the constituents to be equals. They differ in degree only though not much in kind. Lastly, the Communist-led unions have fared well in comparison to others on the issues of educating the general workers and involving them in the process of union activities.

With this understanding of the nature and character of individual unions, we will proceed on to present an analysis of their functions in the next chapter.

Chapter IV

THE TRADE UNIONS AT WORK

Having discussed the ideological and organisational characteristics of the individual unions at Rourkela in the previous chapter, an attempt shall be made here to analyse the working of these unions in general. Safeguarding and promoting workers' interests being the primary purpose of the trade unions, this chapter will begin with a discussion of the working conditions of the steel workers, which will explain the major issues and demands in the trade union movement in Rourkela. The next part will be devoted to the study of the dimensions of union-management relationship, which is otherwise known as 'industrial relations'. In the end, an assessment of the individual unions' relative performance in this movement shall be attempted.

As mentioned above, we will present an issue-wise discussion of the various constituents of the working-conditions (viz., wages, incentive bonus, overtime, etc.) in order of their significance as stimulant issues in the workers' struggle. In this order, 'wages', as the main concern of the workers, should ideally command the primary position among others. But, in this case, the wages of

the steel plant employees are agreed upon in the National Joint Consultative Committee (NJCC) for the Steel Industry instituted by the government with representation of both workers and management from all steel industries. The Committee in its latest agreement on 19 June 1979 had decided upon the following wage structure for different categories of workers.

TABLE NO. 14

Code No.	Scale of Pay (Rs. per month)
<u>A. Works Grades</u>	
S1	400-8-488
S2	410-9-473-10-543
S3	430-12-514-13-605
S4	455-14-553-15-658
S5	490-20-630-21-777
S6	530-26-894
S7	590-27-779-30-989
S8	650-33-881-37-1140
S9	750-40-990-42-1158
<u>B. Ministerial (Clerical)</u>	
M1	440-20-580-26-814
M2	540-26-748-30-988
M3	650-33-881-37-1140 (same as S8)
M4	650-40-890-42-1142

Source: NJCC for Steel Industries, Memorandum of Agreement; (New Delhi, 1979), p.38.

The above wage structure remains fixed till another agreement takes place, which usually takes four years. But the dearness allowance (D.A.) rates are revised every quarter corresponding the rise and fall in the All India Consumer Price Index for industrial workers (Base 1960=100), which in no case can be reduced below the figures given in the following table.

TABLE NO. 15

Basic Pay Range (Rs. per month)	Fixed D.A. (Rs. per month)
Upto 469	85.50
470 to 619	90.50
620 to 719	95.50
720 & above	100.50

Source: NJCC for Steel Industry, Memorandum of Agreement (Delhi, 1979), pp.11 & 39.

Due to the fact that wages (including D.A.) are already agreed upon at national level for a fixed period, the unions do not see it (wage) as an issue at all in workers' struggle except for contract labourers, who need to be treated as a separate category as, for all practical purposes, it does not come under the purview

of NJCC. Thus, while discussing this category, we should examine it in its totality by analysing other issues in addition to the main issue of 'wages' for these labourers. Out of the varied problems faced by this category, the general pattern of demands has been -

- a) Wage increase;
- b) Continuation of employment even after expiry of the contract; and
- c) Extension of medical facilities, housing allowance and other fringe benefits at par with the regular employees.

These three issues have served as the hot-bed of trade unionism in Rourkela and helped in its continuation so as to keep the movement alive. The trade unions have mobilised the contract labourers on these issues and reached agreements with the employers from time to time. In the latest agreement signed between the recognised union and the management on 29 April 1982, the following decisions were reached over these three main issues.

Vide Cl.1 and 2 of the said agreement¹ the wages of the contract labourers employed in the steel plant

1. Agreement No.308, Rourkela Steel Plant Publication, 1982, p.2.

(including fertilizer plant); and construction, horticulture, township, public health and water supply; were fixed at Rs.324 (Basic Rs.300+D.A. Rs.24) and Rs.309 (Basic Rs.285+D.A. Rs.24) respectively.

While medical facilities for these workers were guaranteed (vide Cl.6); issues regarding annual bonus, provident fund, workmen's compensation, maternity benefit, leave holidays, continuation of employment, employment of a family member of a deceased worker, were not settled properly as the management could not take a firm decision on these issues by taking the position of an advisory body to the contractors.

Thus, it is clear that the phenomenon of contract labourer leaves many unsettled issues for the unions to take up and fight for them.

Now coming to the issues concerning the general workers, we find that next to wages, as a major source of income 'incentive earnings' serves as an important demand of the unions in Rourkela. We can make an analysis of the 'incentive earnings' rates from the following table which provides a comparative statement of the wages and non-wage earnings (in crores), which constitute the 'incentive earnings' of the workers.

TABLE NO. 16

Year ²	Salary & Wages	Incentive Bonus/ (%)	Reward/ (%)	Overtime/ (%)	Misc. Allowance (%)	Total
1977-78	20	2.82 (11.53)	0.21 (0.86)	3.21 (15.62)	3.77 (18.70)	30.01
1978-79	22	2.63 (11.52)	0.12 (0.52)	3.62 (15.86)	5.00 (21.90)	34.20
1979-80	29.78	3.28 (11.01)	0.28 (0.94)	4.82 (16.19)	8.51 (28.57)	46.67
1980-81	33.80	2.79 (8.29)	0.37 (1.09)	5.29 (15.65)	5.91 (17.49)	48.16
1981-82 (Upto Feb.)	33.96	2.98 (8.77)	0.35 (1.03)	5.18 (15.25)	6.23 (18.24)	48.70

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Rourkela Steel Plant.

Figures in the brackets indicate the components of the total wages bill, expressed as percentage of salaries and wages. Thus, logically following the above table, the average earnings (in Rs.) per employee per year stands as follows:

- See the graph on the next page which provides the trend of incentive earnings since the year 1976-77.

INCENTIVES PAYMENT, OVERTIME PAYMENT,
REWARD AND MISCELLANEOUS ALLOWANCE AS PERCENTAGE
OF SALARIES AND WAGES.

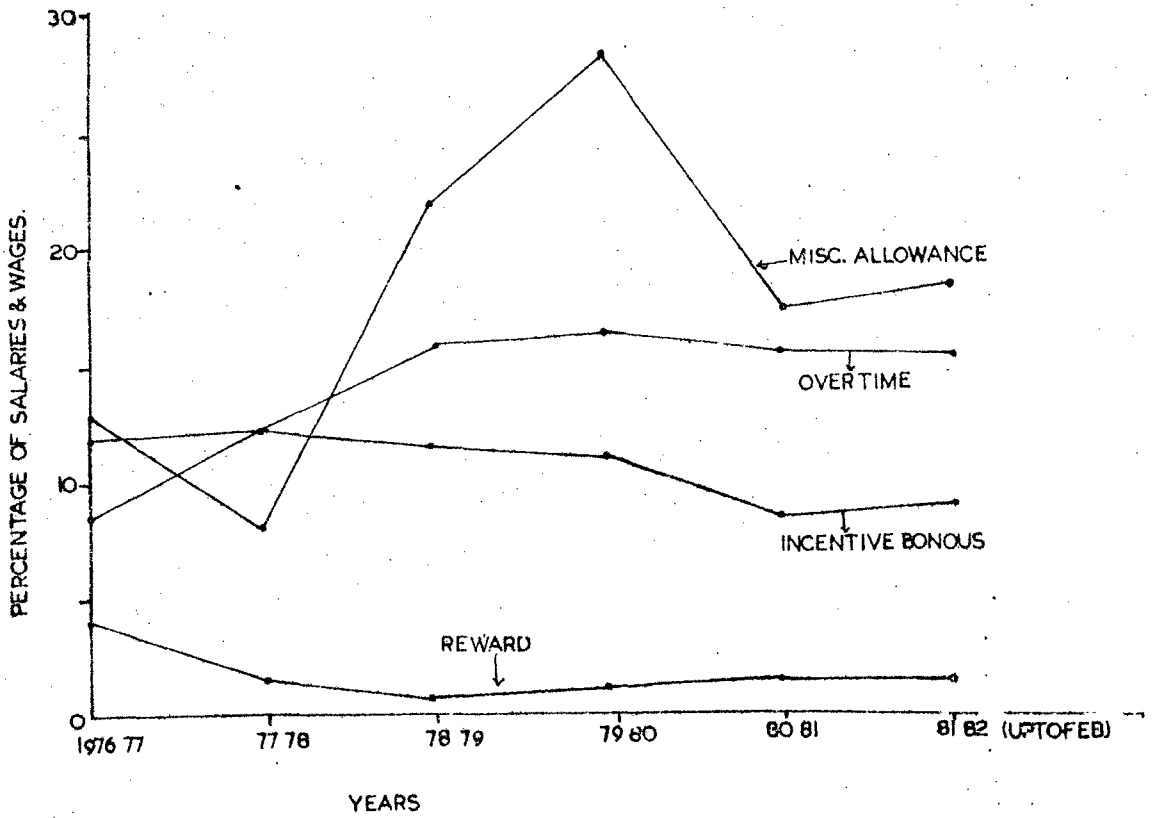


TABLE NO. 17

Year	Salary & Wages	Incentive Bonus	Reward	Overtime	Misc. Allowance	Total
1977-78	4,837	528	21	953	1,402	7,741
1978-79	6,506	749	34	1,032	1,424	9,745
1979-80	8,459	932	80	1,369	2,417	13,257
1980-81	9,577	790	104	1,499	1,674	13,646
1981-82	9,892	873	92	1,528	2,046	14,431

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1982, Rourkela Steel Plant.

From the above tables and the graph (showing variations in incentive earnings expressed as percentage of wages and salary), the following patterns in the earning trends are discernible:

- i. There has been a consistent increase in wages and salaries; it has increased by 13.4 percent in 1981-82.
- ii. The average incentive earnings per employee per year has declined.
- iii. Although reward earning has increased, its share in the total wage bill is not significant.
- iv. The overtime curve has overtaken the incentive

curve in 1977-78, and since then the gap between the two is widening.

As evident from the above observations, the most important phenomenon that needs attention is the declining 'incentive earnings', which, therefore, serves as a serious issue in the trade union movement in Rourkela. This gap between money wage and real wages has created large-scale dissatisfaction among the workers leading to occasional outbursts steered by the unions. Though, the management claims to have reduced this gap by making increasing investments in fringe benefits, which works out at average Rs. 5,512 per employee per year, during 1978-81,³ the unions criticise it as mere 'eyewash' and continue to agitate on this issue.

Another factor, which occasionally activates the unions, is the phenomenon of "victimisation of workers by the management" - a much-used terminology, particularly in labour-relations. Apart from the cases of real 'victimisation' of workers, who are very vocal in fighting any injustice to them or exposing the corrupt practices by the management, on the charges of theft, intimidation, assault and fraud, the unions agree that sometimes the workers also involve

3. For classified Plant's investment on Fringe Benefits, see Annexure No.15.

themselves in these charges and in these cases the unions only look to the extent of punishment given to them by the management.⁴ During 1981-82, 1,384 charge-sheets were issued in works department; in 360 cases, minor punishment were imposed; and in 54 cases, workers were removed/dismitted. In spite of all these actions, 84 cases are pending at the Enquiry Cell and 261 cases are pending at various departmental levels for disposal.⁵

A study of the disciplinary actions taken in the plant during this period reveals that 72 percent cases were related to unauthorised absence. The cases of theft and fraud, though comparatively low, correspond to a figure of 39, and cases of intimidation and assault to 24. In course of various interactions with line personnel, shop-floor workers' representatives and informal work groups;

-
4. A trend is discernible from the analysis of some general cases of victimizations. It was found that while the top union activists were not victimized, it was the middle-ranking activists, who generally fall a prey to the management and the unions are quite vocal in fighting these cases apart from the "victimization" of ordinary members. According to unions' sources, out of a total 47 such cases of victimization during 1981-82, 5 belonged to the first category, i.e., top-union-activists and 28 to the second category. Further instances of victimizations are more in cases of Communist-led unions in comparison to others. For a detailed union-wise break-up of victimizations, see Annexure No.16.
 5. Compiled from different files in the Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

and counselling sessions with habitual absentees, the management observes that an attitude of withdrawal from work is common -

- i) among the workers of higher age group;
- ii) in labour intensive areas, viz., coke ovens, SMS, B.F., etc.; and
- iii) on the plea of sickness.

The unions also agree with the management on this issue to a great extent and point out that their only objection in this issue refers to the management's relating this phenomenon to overtime by explaining that workers resort to absenteeism and more particularly unauthorised absenteeism in order to make money from overtime.⁶ On the other hand, the unions justify the workers' demand for overtime, which, they feel, is need-based and should be granted for the benefit of both the workers and the plant from the point of view of higher production. As there is no scope, in this study, for going into details of this debate, so as to examine the rationality of such demand here, we can only mention it as an issue in the workers

6. For a comparative statement of average absenteeism and overtime figure, see Annexure No.17 which shows decreasing rate of unauthorised absenteeism.

struggle in Rourkela.⁷

Demand for promotional avenues constitutes another important issue in the unions' interactions with management. In order to get rid of stagnation and to avail better opportunities, the unions' demand promotion for the workers, which can give them financial benefits also. The problem of stagnated personnel, particularly in S2 and S5 grades (unskilled and semi-skilled respectively), who have already been placed in service Linked Personnel Grade (SLPG) scales, has assumed serious proportions and unions have mobilised workers for promotion prospects by framing demands in this regard. In the operation area, like-wise, the helpers and khalasis have been constantly demanding for promotions, having spent 7/8 years in their existing grades. The link-pin personnel, i.e., in S8 grade (supervisory), have also been claiming wider opening for promotion to executive posts on the basis of their stagnation in the same grade. Nearly 35 percent of S8 personnel have already been placed in SLPG grade of S9 in works unit.

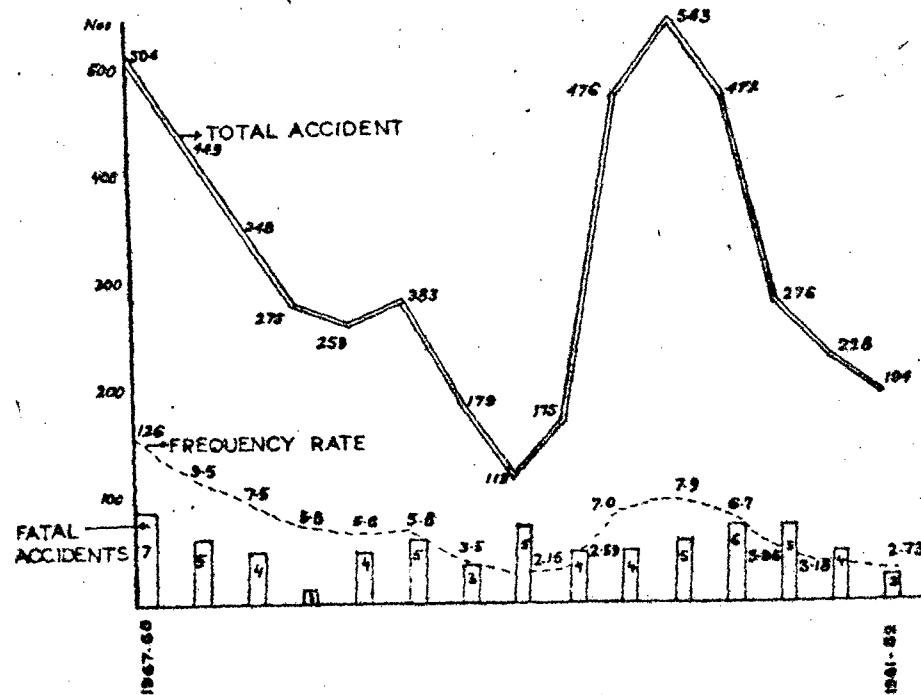
7. It should be mentioned here that all the non-recognised unions allege management for giving preference to the worker-members belonging to RMS (recognised union) in giving overtime and promotions. But this was denied by the concerned union and the management.

'Workmen's safety' constitutes one of the major factors in shaping the working condition of workers in any industrial sector. And the breach of this condition leading to 'accidents' serves as the most immediate issue in rousing workers' emotions against the management. In such an issue, the demands of the unions include the suspension of the concerned executive, adequate compensation in cash, employment to any kins of the deceased, etc. But dimensions of the movements on this issue are more important than the demands. According to the Assistant Labour Commissioner of this region, these accident cases figure frequently in workers' unrest and very often they take violent forms. During 1981-82, one case of fatal accident of a regular employee and six cases of fatal accidents of contract labourers were reported in the plant. Since 1977, there has been a steady decline in the total accident rates.⁸ In correspondence to this, there is an appreciable fall in violent agitations, which used to erupt in such situations in the past.

Apart from all these important issues in the trade union movement in Rourkela, there are other minor issues,

8. For the trend in the accident rates in the plant since inception, see the graph on the next page.

ACCIDENT STATISTICS



such as the problems arising out of interpersonal relations between the workers and their supervisory officers. While, the management explains it in terms of workers' reaction to improved supervision, the workers allege the management for unnecessary and excessive interference of the supervisors to show off their power, or what they call 'bossism'.

Lastly, the impact of the external environment on the unions' activities does also serve as an issue in ventilating the workers' grievances, which are conditioned by the non-plant environment. As in the case of our country in general, growing unemployment among the youth has posed a serious problem, which is quite alarming. As a part of this reality, the unemployed youth in Rourkela have formed various splinter pressure groups and, of late, are indulging in intimidating the senior executives at their offices and also residences, demanding different concessions, particularly job opportunities. Though, this issue has not yet been taken up seriously by the unions, but they have started raising demands for absorbing the children of the Steel Plant workers, students passing out from the Regional Engineering College and other technical and non-technical colleges in Rourkela. But this issue has not acquired any significant proportion.

With this discussion on the main general issues in the workers' struggle arising out of their working conditions, we can now proceed on to provide a demand-wise and union-wise analysis of these issues, for which the period 1981-82 will be taken into consideration, as further inclusion will be too exhaustive to be analysed in the given scope of this study.

Now, notwithstanding the fifteen settlements agreed upon during this period on major issues like manpower, incentive modifications, etc. in various departments, the present inventories of charter of demands are sizeable. On shuffling of priorities on demand management, applying Industrial Relations parameters, the demands are categorised as follows:

TABLE NO. 16

Status of Union Demands

A. Non-recognised Unions:

Name of Union	Areas
AITUC	Coke Ovens
INTUC	Top, Refractories, Crane Maintenance
CITU	Contractors' Labour

B. Recognised Union (RMS)

Areas of Commitment covered in Agreements/ Minutes	Centralised Elect. Maintenance LDBP & ETL
Areas, where discussion on the charter of demands have already started	BF, Coke Ovens (O) & (M), BSM, Water Supply, CRM(M), Power Plant & Contractors' Labour, etc.
Areas of Pressure for Negotiation	Plate Mill, Cr. OP, SEP, ESM(M), etc.

Source: Compiled from the files in IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

It is evident from this table that RMS, as the recognised union, has obviously entered into agreements with the management in a number of issues. In spite of that, the position of the non-recognised unions has not been insignificant.

Now, let us discuss the modes of presenting these demands by the unions, which can reflect upon their strategy and tactics of achieving their objectives. As we have already discussed the strategies of individual unions while describing different movements led by them separately in the previous chapter, here we will discuss them in a general context with specific stress on the

recognised union, which, as discussed above, has a major share in the entire movement. The strategies of the unions invariably follow the professional pattern as given below:

- i) Soliciting shopfloor responses through joint signature campaign and meeting in union office.
- ii) Submitting charter of demands.
- iii) Meeting the shop-floor management in groups to get sympathy and date.
- iv) Adopting agitational tactics, viz.,
 - Demonstrations,
 - Work to rule,
 - Go-slow,
 - Work stoppages,
 - Strike notice,
 - Gherao,
 - Hunger strike, etc.

These strategies vary from issue to issue and from union to union. Regarding the latter, we find that generally the Communist-led unions, particularly UTUC and CITU unions followed by INTUC and AITUC (in order of frequency), resort to direct actions and the rest of the unions, specifically the recognised union, resort to a balanced strategy with the combination of both. The pressure tactics applied by this union has the multiplier effect in creating pressure pockets in other departments, thus consuming lot of time of the shop-floor management and then ultimately throttling

the tempo of production. The recognised union has been attributing this 'delay factor' over settlement of demands to be the main cause of discontentment provoking the workers to take resort to agitational methods.

Thus, the unions present the workers' grievances through these various strategies, which result in creating conflict situations in the industrial relations (IR) climate. The issues and, more significantly, the mode of their expression by unions, determine the dimensions of IR conflict, which are expressed in terms of man-hour loss, production loss and financial loss. Now, after discussing the strategies of the unions, let us analyse the extent of its impact on the management by analysing the dimensions of IR conflict during 1981-82.

The strain profile on industrial relations with its implications on loss of production and revenue are represented in the following table.

TABLE NO. 19

Area	Man-hour loss	Production Loss		Financial Loss	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Works	12563	Coke 6250T	Pig Iron 2265T	Rs. 30 Lakhs (fixed charges)	Rs. 4.18 Lakhs (fixed charges)
		Hot Metal 2200T	Ingot Steel 5560T		
		Ingot Steel 3665T	Hot Metal 200T		Rs. 483.33 lakhs (sales value)
		Slab 720T	Saleable Steel 14000T		
			CAN 850T		
Mines	332795	Iron- ore	1,40,972.72T	Rs. 84.21 lakhs (sales value)	
Township	2912				
Strike on 19.1.82	33216				

Source: Compiled from files in IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

The above informations given by the management does not show any financial loss and production loss due to the strike, i.e., the 'Bandh', observed on 19 January 1982 throughout the country as a response to the call given by all opposition parties in India. The reason is

obviously political. In such a massive strike participated by all the major trade unions in Rourkela including even the major faction of the INTUC's unit there, it is very unconvincing to believe that the plant did not suffer any financial loss. Concealment of such a fact clearly exposes the step-motherly attitude of the government towards the potentiality of the vast labour force which opposes its anti-labour policies.

Now, coming to the individual unions' involvement in the total IR conflict during the same period, we find that, for the works department only, the recognised union was responsible for 10910 man-hours' loss; thus, accounting 86.7 percent of the total man-hours loss. Let us find out this figure for other unions from the following table.

TABLE NO. 20

Sl. No.	Union	Man-hours loss	In Percentage
1.	RMS(EMS)	10910	86.7
2.	RSMU (AITUC)	1097	9.0
3.	HSWA(INTUC)	42	0.3
4.	No Union	514	4.0
	Total	12563	

Source: Official Files from IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

As evident from the above table, AITUC's unit is next to the recognised union in being responsible for man-hours loss in the plant during 1981-82, which reflects its activeness in the trade union movement in Rourkela. Equally important with 'man-hours loss' is another factor, i.e., the method through which it is caused. Therefore, an analysis of the mode-wise loss of manpower, as given below, will help us in finding out the most-commonly-resorted method as adopted by the unions while fighting for workers' demands.

TABLE NO. 21

Sl.No.	Incidents	Man-hours loss	Percentage
1.	Work stoppage	3598	28.7
2.	Gherao/Demonstration	124	0.9
3.	Others	8841	79.4
	Total	12563	100.0

Source: Official Files from IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

From the above table, 'work stoppage' is found to be most frequently adopted by the unions. Out of the total of 11 work-stoppages during 1981-82, 8 were engineered

by RMS, 2 jointly by RMS and RSMU and 1 by RSMU. The main issues in these work-stoppages alongwith union-wise involvement is as follows.

TABLE NO. 22

Sl. No.	Reasons for work stoppages	Union(s) involved	No.
1.	Charter of demands	RMS RSMU RMS & RSMU	2 1 2 5
2.	Manning	RMS	1
3.	Demand for compensation due to death of worker	RMS	1
4.	Change in shift schedule	RMS	2
5.	Against disciplinary action taken	RMS	1
6.	Miscellaneous	RMS	1

Source: Files from IR Section, Personnel Department Rourkela Steel Plant.

The above table indicates 'Charter of demands' as the most important reason for work-stoppages in the plant and further shows two such cases where the recognised union and the AITUC's unit were combinedly involved in the work stoppages.

Apart from work stoppages, some other incidents also cause loss of production. The following table provides a union-wise break-up of such incidents for the year 1981-82.

TABLE NO. 23

Sl.No.	Incidents	No.	Union involved
1.	Refusal to stay on overtime	1	RMS
2.	Refusal to do acting	1	RSMU
3.	Demand for attendance	1	RMS
4.	Not reporting for duty	1	-
5.	Group conflict	1	RMS
6.	Refusal to do work	1	-
7.	Demand for safety appliances	1	-

Source: Files from IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

In addition to the above incidents, 17 token demonstrations were organised by the unions for settlement of their charter of demands. The union-wise involvement in the demonstration is given below.

TABLE NO. 24

Sl. No.	Union	Number of demonstration
1.	RMS(RMS)	13
2.	HSWA(INTUC)	1
3.	RSMU(AITUC)	1
4.	SBTU(CITU)	1
5.	Jointly by RMS and RSMU	1

	Total	17

Source: Files from IR Section, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

Another instance of joint action by the recognised union and the AITUC-affiliate RSMU is evident from the above table. From the above analysed informations regarding the dimensions of industrial relations (IR) conflict in Rourkela Steel Plant, we can observe that RMS (the recognised union) has taken the leading role while others have played peripheral roles in the movement. But apart from the official informations, mentioned hitherto, meetings with different trade unions, government officials and general workers reveal that the Communist-led trade unions,

specifically the AITUC and CITU units, are gaining grounds among the workers and they occupy next position to the recognised union in terms of their involvement in the workers' movement in the plant.

After this discussion on the IR conflicts, let us proceed on to analyse the outcome of these conflicts in terms of the agreements reached between the unions and the management during last five years, i.e., 1977-82.⁹ The main observations are as follows:

1. 2,048 employees have been offered avenues for growth in terms of promotions/upgradations.
2. 32 agreements were signed in the incentive and manning areas, thus, removing a ²major surface of conflict.
3. After the reactivation of the Plant Level Committee (PLC), a number of cases have been taken up and disputes have been resolved.¹⁰
4. The increasing trend in the number of agreements concluded during this period bear testimony to the faith of the parties in collective bargaining as a means to resolve differences.

9. For a detailed year-wise break-up of these Agreements, see Annexure No.18.

10. For a detailed dispute-analysis of this period, see Annexure No.19.

5. A significant achievement of the collective bargaining relationship in 1981-82 was the extension and modification of the annual bonus scheme based on labour productivity and capacity utilisation.

6. In addition, another landmark has been set by the agreement reached on DA issue in respect of contractors' employees.

These are the main areas of achievement for the workers in Rourkela Steel Plant, as an outcome of the unions interaction with the management during last five years, which has shaped the industrial relations situation in the plant.

But the overall review of this industrial relations (IR) situation will necessarily involve an analysis of the inter-acting varied factors, both in external and internal environments. In this context, it will be unrealistic to analyse the events shaping the industrial relations (IR) structure in Rourkela Steel Plant in isolation. Hence, a schematic review of the IR scenario at the national level, which influenced, to some extent, the industrial relations situation in the Plant, should be taken into consideration in the context of government's policy, new enactments, recent developments in trade unionism and revival of the

image of public sector, as discussed below:

(a) Government's policy influencing industrial relations scenario in the country is reflected in its formulative attitudes on the following issues:

- i. Inculcating discipline in the IR system as reflected in government's firm attitude during the strikes in Bangalore public sectors, Banks, LIC and Bombay Textiles;
- ii. Return to tripartitism by reactivising the forum of Indian Labour Conference;
- iii. Settlement of issues like Port and Dock workers and Central Government employees through negotiations;
- iv. Declared objective in evolving a National wage structure and emphasis put on the concept of linking wage to productivity;
- v. Observing 1982 as the 'Year of Productivity'; and
- vi. Monitoring of IR situation through a net work of Labour Control Rooms.

(b) The government's enactments having considerable impact on the trade union movement, include mainly, Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) and National Security Act (NSA).

(c) The recent developments in the trade unionism

at the national level is marked by militant and turnkey unionism such as of Dr. Dutta Samanta, split in Hind Mazdoor Sabha, weakness of INTUC-infighting and increased strength of leftist unions.

(4) Lastly, there has been a consistent effort on the part of the government for the revival of public sector in our country and Damodar Valley Corporation is a case in point.

With the above format in the background, we find the impact of the IR climate at the national level on the industrial relations pattern in Rourkela to some extent. The management has sought to the policy of maintaining harmonious IR climate by continuing bilateral negotiations with RMS, the recognised union, as well as containing the efforts by non-recognised unions to upset IR equilibrium. However, this relationship was subjected to periodical stress and strain due to the agitational indulgences on the part of the recognised union, apparently resorted to under environmental pressures, particularly while implementing the agitational programme called by its National Federation - RMS. At the same time, it can be observed that the developments in RMS has hardly any impact on RMS. On the other hand, the weakness of the INTUC-affiliated BSWA has been accentuated by the intra-party rivalry in

its parent party at the state level in addition to the infighting in the national organisation. Confirming to the developments at the national level, i.e., increasing strength of leftist unions, the AITUC and the CITU affiliated ones have made a significant headway in the IR climate in Rourkela. These two, in addition to the other leftist union of SUCI, have also attempted to form an alliance to pose a viable threat to the recognised union. The RSPEA, ■ affiliated to erstwhile HMP, was slowly relegated into oblivion during the period under study (1981-82) of the IR scenario in Rourkela Steel Plant.

But for a clear and complete understanding of these union dynamics based on the observations of their individual role in one year (1981-82), we should make an attempt at critically examining the inter-union relationships over the years, which serves as a very important factor in the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant or for that matter, in any industrial establishment. Keeping this in view, let us proceed on to the next chapter to critically assess the interrelations between the trade unions in all complexities with special emphasis on their (unions') political involvement in process of the movement, which constitutes the main objective of this study.

Chapter V

UNION DYNAMICS

The inter-union relationship, also can be called as union-dynamics, plays a vital role in shaping the character of trade union movement in any organised industrial sector. In a significant way, the nature of this dynamics reflects the strength of the movement. Therefore, a proper understanding of the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant calls for a critical analysis of this dynamics as prevalent here. Following the discussions in previous chapters, an attempt shall be made here to examine various factors conditioning the inter-relationships among the unions in this plant. Emanating from our main objective to determine the extent of political involvement of the trade unions under study, the aforesaid examination will naturally take into consideration such factors as the impact of external political developments (specifically in the State) on the nexus of inter-relations among these unions. Such an understanding of the union-dynamics requires a study of the following categories of 'external regulations', which are in fact the various patterns of interactions of the unions with their immediate environment:

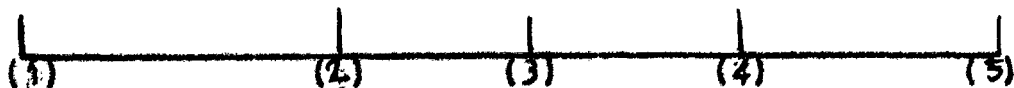
- 1) The relationship between the unions and the management;

- ii) The relationship among the unions;
- iii) The relationship between the unions and different governments in the State.

These categories will help our historical analysis of different issues explaining the nature of relationship that has developed among various unions at Rourkela over the years. The above mentioned interactional variables not being mutually exclusive,¹ we shall generally have to refer them alongwith some main issues reflecting the dimensions of union dynamics. Therefore, in the beginning, the existing union-management relationship shall be discussed in terms of the attitudes² of the members and leaders belonging to all the unions towards the management

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1. The management's attitude towards the unions is the mere reflection of the government's attitude towards them as this plant is a government undertaking. Further, these attitudes determine the kind of inter-union relationship in this place.
 2. In order to study the pattern of the aforesaid relationships, we have tried to measure the attitude of various respondents by asking them a set of questions in a fixed schedule and putting the responses in a five point scale as given below:

Very Satisfactory Satisfactory O.K. Unsatisfactory Hostile



We have measured the individual attitudes of respondents by quantifying their responses in the above scale and derived the attitude of a particular group (for example, leaders) by averaging out the quantified responses of all constituents in it.

and vice-versa. Then, we will discuss the present nature of inter-relationship among the various unions for finding out the extent of conflict and cooperation in terms of absence and prevalence of joint actions by them. Finally, an attempt shall be made at explaining this relationship by analysing various issues having immense bearing on such a historical development.

1. Union-Management Relationship

The union-management relationship in Rourkela is substantially marked by the management's interaction with Rourkela Masdoor Sabha (RMS) - the recognised union. Hence, the relationship between RMS and the management vis-a-vis other unions has to be traced to a significant extent.

As already mentioned, the attitudes of the members and leaders belonging to all the unions vis-a-vis the management will be taken into consideration for tracing the union-management relationship in Rourkela.

(a) Ordinary Members and the Management

Regarding the mutual relationship between the ordinary members of all the unions and the management as reflected in their responses, following [REDACTED] attitudinal patterns were observed. The attitude of

the management was found largely unsatisfactory by all the ordinary members.³ The members expressed dissatisfaction because of the management's general apathy towards the workers' needs and aspirations. Similarly, the management also showed its dissatisfaction towards the members for not cooperating with it in achieving the set production target.⁴ Interestingly, as observed from the members' responses, the attitude of the management towards all of them was not found to be uniform. A majority of the members belonging to non-recognised unions alleged that they were discriminated by the management in favour of the members of RMS, particularly in matters like giving overtime and promotions.⁵ This charge was refuted by both the management and members of RMS. Some members of

3. The score was 2.5 in the five point scale.

4. The score was 2.3 in the five point scale.

5. The four-non-unionized workers selected in sample also expressed similar feelings. As the responses of these workers were similar with the members of non-recognised unions, we have not discussed them under a separate category. While asked about the reason for their not joining any union, interestingly, all of them replied that they do not want to involve themselves in what they called 'union politics'. Further, replying the researcher, they said that as they were getting their things done by approaching any union in times of needs, they did not feel the necessity of joining any union. Out of the four respondents, two used to approach SETU(CITU) and one each to RMS and RSMU(AITUC).

RMS said that the management victimizes the union-activists (although the examples were mostly from the distant past).

(b) Leaders and the Management

The attitude of the top management towards the top leaders of all the unions was found to be fairly positive.⁶ From leaders' point of view, while the top leaders of the recognized union were found to have amicable attitude towards the management,⁷ their counterparts in other unions expressed dissatisfaction for management's preferential treatment towards RMS.⁸ This dissatisfaction has resulted in open hostility among the middle ranking leaders of these unions,⁹ who criticised what they referred to as 'collaboration' between the management and the RMS. Some of these leaders expressed feelings against the recognised union what Bruce put in his term of "Company

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6. The score was 4.2 in the five point scale.
 7. The score was 3.3 in the five point scale.
 8. The score was 4.6 in the five point scale.
 9. The score was 4.9 in the five point scale.

dominated union".¹⁰ The main allegation of these leaders was that the recognised union was financed and given patronage by the management in giving promotions and other financial benefits like overtime, rewards, etc. to its members.

Regarding the charge of RMS being financed by the management, (as the researcher cannot go by what takes place behind the scene), a modest investigation did not come across any supporting evidence. The allegation regarding the management's preferential treatment towards the members of RMS in giving promotions, overtime, etc. also could not be substantiated as such evidences were not found in the examination of the promotion and overtime records in four vital departments.¹¹ Therefore, in the absence of such concrete evidences, the allegations of the non-RMS unions do not hold ground.

10. Bruce H. Millen, Political Role of Labour in Developing Countries (Washington, D.C., 1963), p.21.

Some other factors, as enumerated by Bruce, like Company's assistance in constructing union's office, in running its (union's) organisational works, etc. were not evidenced as union's office was constructed long before it got recognition. The union maintains enough autonomy in its functioning.

11. These departments, mostly referred by the alleging respondents, were Transport, SMS, Blast Furnace and Pipe Plant.

However, a comparison of attitudes of all the unions towards the management reveals that RMS has the least-hostile attitude towards the management.¹² The leaders of RMS, while asked about the nature of their relationship with the management, said that it was marked by a combination of both 'conflict' and 'cooperation'. They felt that while there was not much to be achieved from a local management in terms of immediate job-oriented demands of workers, they kept the issues alive in order to maintain a perpetual confrontation with the management. This attitude of RMS can be explained in terms of its leaders' effort to maintain a pro-worker and anti-management image before the workers. This image-maintenance on the part of RMS explains its moderate attitude towards the management. On the other hand, all other unions exhibit a clearly hostile attitude towards the management with a marginal variance in degree.

Looking from the management's angle, its attitude was found to be quite cooperative towards the recognised

12. While scaling this attitude from the responses of the members and the leaders of all the unions, we found the following pattern:

- a) Most hostile - RSU(UTUC), HSWA(INTUC), SETU(CITU), RSMU(AITUC) & RSPEA;
- b) Hostile - ISS & NOWU; and
- c) Moderately Hostile - RMS.

union¹³ as against other unions.¹⁴ This kind of union-management relationship can be explained if the following factors are taken into consideration.

Firstly, the management would never prefer a host of antagonistic and militant trade unions for the sake of ensuring industrial peace in the plant. Hence, the left-wing unions, viz., RSMU (AITUC), RWU (UTUC) and SETU (CITU), being more militant than others are badly detested by the management.¹⁵

Secondly, as the management would like to remain above political controversies, it would not prefer to be intimate with HSWA (INTUC), which has been fraught with acute factionalism since long and more so because of its antagonistic relationship with the present Congress(I) government in the State.

13. The score was 4.2 in the five point scale.

14. The score was 3.9 in the five point scale.

15. The management's hostile attitude towards the Communist-led unions, particularly CITU presently and AITUC in the recent past, is reflected in the case at captive mines, where inordinate delays have occurred in cases of verification and recognition when the conditions were favourable to CITU unions and extra-ordinary expediency was witnessed when conditions were favourable to RMS.

Thirdly, the existing smaller unions never had an imposing strength to be able to carry the favour of the management. Therefore, in such a situation, Rourkela Masdoor Sabha (RMS) has perfectly fit into the management's choice. Its apparent ideological amorphousness, non-political character and a substantial membership strength are of extra significance in this context.

This attitude of the management towards RMS vis-a-vis other unions has, in effect, accentuated the inter-union relationship, which is marked by a combined hostile attitude of the non-recognised unions towards RMS.

2. Inter-Union Relationship

The character of the inter-union relationship in Rourkela can be better understood by analysing the extent of 'conflict' and 'cooperation' among various unions while fighting against the management for workers' needs. The cooperation among the unions can be found out from instances of 'joint actions' by them and the absence of such 'joint actions' can reflect a situation of acute inter-union rivalry.

(a) Joint Actions of the Unions

As observed from the nature of union-management

relationship, RMS has been severely detested by rest of the unions at Rourkela because of its, what these unions perceive, suspicious relationship with the management. Hence, no joint action of RMS with the other trade unions in the plant has taken place. While there has been a sort of national federation of non-INTUC unions at the national level, the situation in the plant turns out to be quite different. Even, it was observed that there were no prospects of joint action to be planned in the immediate future. However, there are few instances of joint-actions by the non-recognised unions. The main reason for such few instances of joint actions was found to be the perceptive fear among these non-recognised unions that a joint action comprising all of them might turn out to the benefit of any individual union in it. In other words, they feel that any union might exploit the situation by claiming the gains of 'joint action' in its own favour at the cost of others.¹⁶ Apart from that, the mutual distrust, differential political affiliations and a lack

16. Most of the leaders belonging to the non-RMS unions cited an example of a sort of joint front made on the bonus issue in the year 1966, in which RMS gained membership-wise and overall popularity which ultimately led to its getting recognition. Therefore, they do not want to repeat the same mistake.

of formal consensus for scores of reasons have created insurmountable difficulties in launching common fronts on various issues. However, in line with the initiative taken by the left-wing National Federations, at Rourkela RSMU (AITUC), RWU (UTUC) and SETU (CITU) have recently attempted at forming a viable joint front for the protection and furtherance of workers' interests. But as this attempt is yet to take a concrete stance, the general character of the inter-union relationship at Rourkela, in the conspicuous absence of joint actions, is thus predominantly marked by conflict and rivalry among the various unions.

As already seen, the inter-union rivalry in Rourkela is greatly characterised by an anti-recognised union feeling among other unions. This feeling among the non-RMS unions is deep-rooted in the developments of some issues in the course of the history of trade union movement in Rourkela. There are many small issues which have accentuated the hostile attitude of non-recognised unions toward RMS. For example, as already discussed in the previous chapter, the main strategy of RMS is to keep the issues pending for the maintenance of its position in the trade union movement at Rourkela. In many cases,

RMS tries to paralyse the action of other unions by claiming that it (RMS) had already taken up the issues long before they were raised by these unions. Such a claim of RMS has caused embittered feelings among other unions. This intense anti-RMS feeling among the other unions has reached its zenith in the issue of elections to works committee which needs a detailed discussion as it is the most important issue in the inter-union relationship in Rourkela.

(b) Elections to Works Committee

"Works Committee" was constituted in pursuance of section III of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The importance of this body lies in the fact that it is the only Committee to which the constituent of worker-members are directly elected by the workers of the entire plant. A brief reference to the constitutional provisions and institutional framework of the Committee is discussed as follows:

Some relevant provisions of Section III of the Act read as follows:

"...the appropriate Government may by general or special order require the employer to constitute, in the prescribed manner, a Works Committee consisting

of representatives of employers and workmen engaged in the establishment so however that the number of representatives of workmen on the Committee shall not be less than the number of representatives of the employers".¹⁷

The constitutional specificities are laid down in the Part VII (Rules 40 to 63) of the Orissa Industrial Disputes Rule, 1959. It empowers the Labour Commissioner to fix the strength of the Committee, prescribe the procedure of election and dissolve it if he is satisfied after hearing both the parties that it has ceased to represent the workmen or for any other adequate reasons.¹⁸ In pursuance of this provision the total strength of the Committee is fixed at twenty with equal representations from workers and management. Thus, the entire plant complex (including Fertilizer Plant) has been divided into ten constituencies, each directly electing one to the Committee for two years from the date of notification. The tenures of different works committees has been given in the following table:

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17. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, quoted in Works Committee in Action, A Publication of the Joint Committees' Cell, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant, 1978, p.1.
18. Ibid., p.5.

TABLE NO. 25

No. of Works Committee	Date of Election	Date of Notification	Date of the Expiry of the Term
I	8.8.1962	18.3.1963	13.3.1965
II	25.2.1966	26.4.1966	25.4.1968
III	18.3.1969	17.5.1969	16.5.1971
IV	19.2.1972	11.4.1972	Continues

Source: Works Committee in Action, Joint Committees' Cell, Personnel Department, Rourkela Steel Plant, p.10.

As evident from the above table, the elections to Works Committee are not being held since 1972 and this is the root of the intense anti-recognised union feeling among the other unions. Because, in the last elections held in the year 1972, RMS had won majority of seats¹⁹ and the other unions strongly feel that 'RMS in collaboration with the management' has stopped holding of elections in fear of loosing seats and consequent loss of popularity which might hamper its status of being the recognised union in the plant.

19. For the Union-wise representation in all the Works Committees, see Annexure No.20.

While RMS and the management are not in favour of holding elections, the rest of the unions are agitating over the issue that it is the denial of fundamental democratic right of the workers. Further, while defending their stand, both RMS and management maintain that the Committee has outlived its utility with the gradual emergence of other specialised committees in the course of time, other unions allege it to be a weak alibi used by the recognised union to escape an exposure of its weakness to reveal, what they call, 'false popularity' of the union. The alleging unions claim that the management also has a stake in not holding the elections as it cannot afford to loose a 'loyal friend'. Justifying their earlier claim, RMS and the management maintain that this Committee was instituted at a time when there was no such representative body to discuss matters relating to the promotion of "...measures for securing and preserving amity and good relations between the employers and workmen, and matters of their common interest or concern and endeavour to compose any material difference of opinion in respect of such matters".²⁰ At that time, the Works Committee was regarded as the most powerful body as it used to discuss

20. Ibid., p.1.

matters of vital importance. But in course of time other committees have come up to look into the special matters, which were under the purview of this Committee earlier. Now the Committee does not have power to discuss matters relating to wages, bonus, provident fund, profit sharing schemes, gratuity schemes, incentive schemes, allowances, retirement benefits, housing and transport services, quantum of leave, national and festival holidays, fixation of work-load, fixation of standard labour force, programmes of planning and development, retrenchment, lay-off and victimization for trade union activists.²¹ The Committee is now left with some 'inconsequential responsibilities' of welfare measures like conditions of work, such as ventilation, lighting, sanitation, drinking water, medicine and health services, promotions of theft and savings, safety and accident prevention, educational and recreational activities.²²

Both RMS and the management are of the opinion that a general election for such a superfluous committee

21. Ibid., p.10.

22. To avoid friction between the management and labour representatives over the agenda of meetings, a sub-Committee on 17th Indian Labour Conference (ILC) held in 1959 has specified these powers and limitations of the Works Committee.

involving all the workers would destroy industrial peace as it would actually accentuate inter-union rivalry resulting in violent conflicts and subsequent loss of production. Further, offering a rationale for the impotency of the Works Committee in recent years, RMS counters other unions by explaining that making the Committee powerful, through holding an election for it, would eclipse the role of individual unions. The general secretary of RMS goes further to explain that presently all the vital matters are discussed by the committees lacking direct representative character.²³ Therefore, the unions have the scope to take up these issues directly with the management on their individual capacities. Hence, he (the general secretary of RMS) argues, if the Committee is given immense power, which is a necessary corollary to the elections held for it, all the unions have to surrender their bargaining status to this body that might restrict their individual prominence. And he claims, without this delegation of power, there is no meaning for holding an election for this Committee.

23. Presently the Committees have workers' representatives nominated by the recognised union.

However logical the above mentioned arguments might be, the demand of the other unions for holding elections to Works Committee is founded on a different basis. These unions stress on the correlation between the elections to the Works Committee and granting of recognition to the most representative union. They argue that RMS had made a claim for its recognition in the year 1967 on the basis of its sweeping victory in the Works Committee elections held in 1966 and it was duly rewarded after some formal verification of membership records were held. All these unions argue that secret ballot system should be adopted for the award of recognition as against membership verification, which introduces large-scale mal-practices. In the absence of the secret ballot system at Rourkela, all these non-RMS unions strongly feel that the elections to the Works Committee will provide an outlet for the general workers' cumulative dissatisfaction towards RMS. These unions argue that without workers' support RMS does not have any right to represent all the workers as the recognised union.

Whatever might be the dimensions of this controversy regarding elections to the Works Committee, a clear pattern emerges from the demands of the non-recognised unions,

which is reflected in their demand for the adoption of 'secret ballot' system as against 'membership verification' for the conference of recognition to a union in the Rourkela Steel Plant. It is here that the role of the government comes to the picture.

3. Government and Trade Unions

Among the various policies of the government directly affecting the trade unions, its policy on the issue of recognition has immense significance, particularly from the point of view of inter-union relationships in any industrial establishment. The government's role in this regard is quite important as 'recognition' (i.e., the right to be recognised) lacks a statutory status.²⁴ Eventhough the National Commission on Labour (NLC) had recommended a statutory provision for the granting of recognition to a representative union,²⁵ the Government

24. Though an amendment to the Indian Trade Union Act, 1926, was adopted in 1948 towards this direction, it was never brought into force. There are also some State Acts like Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946, etc., but they are of very limited application. It is through the 'Code of Discipline' that the Government has tried to spread it to all industries.

25. National Commission on Labour, Report of the Study Group on Industrial Relations (1968), New Delhi: Govt. of India Publication, 1974, p.24.

has not yet worked out any distinct policy-decision on this matter. The division in the trade union movement on the question of the method to be adopted for recognition has provided the excuse for delaying Central Legislation on this issue.²⁶

Another factor responsible for such a delay in the government's action in this regard lies in its intention to allow the continuation of the present largely adopted method of membership verification, which is severely opposed by most of the non-INTUC unions as they strongly feel that the party in power can use its good offices to manipulate the verification of membership records in its favour.²⁷ Such manipulations result in the politicisation of the whole issue and the union(s) supporting the government are aptly to be rewarded with recognition, which arouses hostility among the rest of the unions towards the recognised union. It is in this manner that government's attitude towards the individual unions, in

26. V.B. Karnik, Trade Union Movement and Industrial Relations (Bombay: Somaiya Publications, 1981), p.22.

27. Very interestingly, while asked about this issue, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Rourkela (the conducting authority) expressed his doubts over the objectivity of the process by which the verification of membership is conducted.

a particular industrial sector, determines the nature of inter-relations among the unions.

This is what has precisely happened at Rourkela, where the method of verification has been followed in determining the most representativeness of a union for the award of recognition. But interestingly, the RMS affiliated Rourkela Mazdoor Sabha (RMS) and not HSWA (INTUC), has been continuing as the recognised union here since 1967.²⁸ The rest of the unions alleged that RMS has succeeded in retaining its recognition because of its good relationship with the different governments in the state over the years. The truth in it can be traced from a historical analysis of the various developments in the political situation in the state and their corresponding relationship with different unions in the context of 'recognition', which explains the 'union dynamics' in Rourkela.

Recognition of Trade Unions in Rourkela

No union was recognised in Rourkela Steel Plant till 1964, the year when recognition was awarded to the

28. The INTUC's union was recognised for a period of 3 years, i.e., 1964-67.

INTUC-affiliated Hindustan Steel Workers' Association (HSWA). However, the Rourkela Masdoor Sabha (affiliated to HMS) secured an absolute majority in the Works Committee elections held in 1966 and following a membership verification got recognition in the next year and has retained it till date. The Ispat Shramik Sangh (ISS)²⁹ had won 6 out of 10 seats and RMS rest 4 in the Works Committee elections held in 1969. But in the verification of membership records for the award of recognition, it (ISS) failed to show a membership higher than that of RMS. In this year (1969), the membership of RMS had reached the lowest level of only 4,000. It (RMS) regained back its dominant position by winning 8 seats in the next works Committee elections in 1972. After this no elections have been held in the plant and RMS continues to hold sway as the recognised union.

But this issue of recognition is not as simple as it appears to be. The above-mentioned discussion only shows as to 'how' it has developed. But while probing into the question as to 'why' certain developments occurred at the time they occurred, we have taken into

29. This union was said to have sectional overtones in its appeal towards the non-Oriyas, tribals and Christians.

account the immediate political context (i.e., the political developments in the State), with which a strong correlation of the different developments in union-dynamics in Rourkela was found. An attempt shall be made here to analyse this 'correlation' in the different phases of its historical development.

Recognition was awarded to the INTUC-affiliated Hindustan Steel Workers' Association (HSWA) in 1964, when the Congress Party was in power in the State. But verification process was initiated as early as 1961 when RMS demanded recognition and the verification could not be completed due to the dispute over the date of reckoning of membership. 1st August 1961, the date fixed by the verification officer, was not accepted by RMS and the proceedings were stalled by a stay order obtained by RMS from the court. Meanwhile, the management complained the State Implementation and Evaluation Machinery (SIET) about the violation of Code of Discipline on the part of RMS. On investigation, the Committee held RMS guilty of infringing the Code and Industrial Truce Resolution. Following this stricture, RMS was disqualified from being considered for recognition. The management understood this as nothing short of a direction to accord recognition to HSWA(INTUC) and recognition was conferred on it on

31 March 1964. Interestingly, there were lot of omissions and commissions. Neither the verification of membership was complete, nor the representative character of the union established. Even the condition that at least 15 percent of workers should be the members of the very union was also not adhered to. The Congress Government in the State could ensure patronage to its affiliated union at Rourkela by overlooking all established norms and regulations.

However, the political scene in the State underwent a dramatic change after the state elections held in 1967. The Swatantra and Jana Congress³⁰ coalition ministry was formed with the support of the Praja Socialist Party inside the legislature and for the first time Congress found itself as the opposition. The Socialists had fought this election on anti-Congress slogan.³¹ Significantly enough, the general secretary of RMS, Sri Raj Kishore Samantrai, was elected to State Assembly as a PSP candidate from Rourkela. His entry into the assembly strengthened RMS's claim for recognition. The Swatantra-Jana Congress

30. It was a regional party led by Sri Harekriahna Mahatab after splitting away from the Congress.

31. Sukhdev Nanda, Coalitional Politics in Orissa (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., 1979), p.72.

coalition, receiving the support of the Praja Socialist Party with the Congress as opposition, endorsed RMS's claim for recognition against that of HSWA (INTUC). Thus, RMS was recognised in 1967.

Here, it should be mentioned that stressing on the political factors while explaining the above discussed issue does not undermine its genuineness. The main objective here is to find out the extent of the role of the political factors in shaping various developments in the union-dynamics in Rourkela. As it was found, recognition was conferred on RMS at a particular time and by a particular set of political actors.

Still more interesting is the process by which RMS has retained its recognition. It can be understood if we analyse the relationship of RMS with the different political parties forming governments in the State at different points of time.

The elections to the State Assembly held in 1971 brought the Swatantra, Utkal Congress³² and Jharkhand Parties to power and Congress was again put to opposition. The

32. It was a regional party formed by Sri Biju Patnaik after splitting away from Congress.

Praja Socialist Party had tacit support towards this coalition. Such a situation, being not different from the one in 1967, ensured continuance of recognition for RMS.

But Orissa's politics took a dramatic turn in 1972, when large scale defections occurred from the parties in the coalition government to Congress(R), which was led by Smt. Nandini Satpathy. Subsequently, she became the chief minister by toppling the coalition. Still dramatic, at this juncture, was PSP's merger with Congress(R) on 27 May 1972.³³ PSP was a part of the 'invisible coalition',³⁴ led by Smt. Satpathy and even one of these socialists was inducted into her cabinet.³⁵ The socialists' position in the Congress remained unchanged till 1977. In 1977, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the Congress Party for the emergency excesses. Some of the erstwhile PSP leaders also joined

33. Sukhadev Nanda, op. cit., p.94.

34. Ibid., p.99. The term 'invisible coalition' was explained by the author in terms of the constituents of Congress(R) Government, who were all defectors from other parties.

35. Ibid., p.95.

the Janata Party.³⁶ Finally, the socialists (belonging to erstwhile PSP) renewed their support to Congress(I) during the elections in 1980.

As evident from the above discussion, the strategy of these socialists in Orissa was found to be a result of their prior-perception of the modes of changes in the political equations in the State. They have shifted their loyalties with the changing demands of time, which reflects the sacrifice of their independent ideological conviction for political prominence.

The RMS, being the affiliated union of PSP, has gained out of such developments in the State politics and has succeeded in retaining its recognition at Rourkela. Apart from this kind of relationship between these socialists and different political parties forming government in the State, other factors have also contributed for ensuring governments' patronage towards RMS. We can discuss them phase by phase in lines with the changes in the political climate in the state.

36. The president of RMS and a prominent PSP leader Sri Surendra Nath Dwivedi had joined Janata Party in 1977. He was also heading a commission in the ministry of Food and Agriculture in the Janata Ministry at the Centre.

As we have found in our earlier discussion, there was no threat to RMS's continuance of recognition till 1972, the year when Congress(R) again came to power. The period between 1972-74 witnessed a state of utter political chaos in the state marked by massive horse-trading and large scale defections leading to the resignation of Smt. Satpathy from the chief ministership. In such a situation, there was hardly any scope for a threat to the union's status. Further, its parent political party had already joined the party in power (Congress-R).

In 1974, Smt. Nandini Satpathy again became the chief minister of the State. At that time some change in government's attitude towards RMS might have been expected. There was only one other choice left for the Congress government, i.e., granting recognition to HSWA (INTUC) again. But the situation was quite complex. The following factors can be attributed to explain the Congress government's policy of not granting recognition to HSWA - the INTUC's union at Rourkela:

Firstly, at that time, HSWA(INTUC) was in a state of chaos due to the intense infighting between the erstwhile leadership and the leaders of RSMU's(AITUC) faction in it who had joined HSWA(INTUC) in 1973 and were competing for

its control.

Secondly, by granting recognition to HSWA(INTUC) in such a fluid situation, the Congress Party, which had made a come-back to power after a long gap, did not want to invite criticism from all corners for patronising its affiliated organisation.

Finally, PSP led by Sri Surendra Nath Dwivedi and Raj Kishore Samantrai, the president and general secretary of RMS respectively, had joined the Congress Party. Therefore, the Congress Government did not want to alter the situation, while it was sure of RMS's support to it in return to its extended patronage.

This relationship remained unchanged between RMS and Congress Party, which remained in power in the State till 1977. With the coming of Janata Government in 1977, some changes in the union-government relationship might have been expected. The obvious choice for the Janata Government would have been Rourkela Steel Plant Employees' Association (RSPEA), the general secretary of which was elected to the state assembly from Rourkela on Janata Party ticket. But this could not materialise because of the following reasons:

Firstly, the general secretary of RSPEA, as he said, was making efforts for a legislation at the national level on the issue of the adoption of secret ballot system for the granting of recognition. He wanted his union to be recognised on the basis of secret ballot method. But the proposed Industrial Relations Bill, 1978, received a setback with the debacle of Janata Government at the Centre.

Secondly, the general secretary of RSPEA was not in good terms with the State's Janata leadership, particularly the chief minister, which would have been a support for the union in getting recognition through membership verification.

Finally, RMS, on the other hand, had maintained a cordial relationship with the Janata Government in the State and could manage to retain recognition in such a situation.

The Janata Government survived till 1980 with much hardship marked by utter chaos and confusion which had of course made the leaders busy in settling their scores with each other than patronising their organisation at Rourkela. In 1980, Congress(I) came to power in the State. This new development would also have been expected

to make any changes in the prevalent union-government relationship. Here, also for the Congress-I Government, the other choice would have been HSWA(INTUC). But it did not oblige it (HSWA) by granting recognition due to the following reasons:

Firstly, presently HSWA(INTUC) has become a hot bed of intra-union rivalry leading to the virtual split in the union.

Secondly, most important of all, the leader of the majority faction of the union is the supporter of the dissidents in the ruling party. Thus, there exists an acute hostile relationship among the leadership of the union and the bosses of the ruling party in the State.

Finally, HMS, on the other hand, has extended its support towards Congress(I) in the 1980 elections by adopting a formal resolution in this regard.³⁷ Thus, HMS has succeeded in ensuring the good will of the ruling party for the retention of its recognition.

37. Some trade union leaders and local prominent persons, while explaining the extent of the recognised union's support to Congress(I) in 1980 elections, cite instances of its general secretary electioneering with the present chief minister while on his tour in Rourkela constituency. But this was flatly denied by the leaders of the concerned union (HMS).

To sum up, a clear pattern of relationship of the recognised union with different governments in the State is discernible. The main observation to be made in this context is that, RMS has proved to be successful in evolving immediate goal-oriented political strategies for retaining its prominence in the trade union movement in Rourkela. This strategy of RMS has, in effect, created a hostile attitude among other unions towards it. Interestingly, all the unions have joined hands on the issue of, what they call, RMS's 'opportunistic alliance' with all the governments and these unions are demanding 'secret ballot method' to be adopted for the granting of recognition as against membership verification, which was found to be allowing the interplay of political factors in the inter-union relationship to a great extent.³⁸

But differences persist among these unions to a considerable extent, so much so that their consensus has failed to make any impact on RMS's strategies. As evident from their responses, the non-Communist unions possess an adverse attitude towards the left-wing unions, viz., RSMU (AITUC), RWU (UTUC) and SETU (CITU), obviously

38. While not actively pursuing the demand for 'secret ballot', the RMS does give an impression that it necessarily supports such a thing.

on ideological considerations. These left-wing trade unions, on the other hand, have been expressing their strong desire to form a united front along with other unions against what they call, 'favouritism', 'corruption' and 'politicization' as brought into the trade union movement in Rourkela by the 'opportunistic alliance' between RMS and different political parties in power in the state at different times.

With this understanding of union dynamics as prevalent at Rourkela, let us proceed on to conclude our study in the next chapter with an overview of the different trends and dynamics in the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant.

AN OVERVIEW

With an objective to find out the trade union politics in Rourkela Steel Plant, we have studied the different aspects of this problem in last five chapters. Here an attempt shall be made to summarize our observations in these chapters in the first part and to identify different patterns and general trends emerging from an analysis of these observations.

We have introduced the problem in the nature of studying the impact of the interplay of political forces at different levels on the trade union movement at Rourkela. Keeping this in view, we have, first of all, discussed the environment in which the movement has born and developed. It is found that the Rourkela Steel Plant is situated in a predominantly underdeveloped region, though rich with all infrastructural facilities for the establishment of a steel plant. The unique character of the place is its location in a tribal belt, which to a large extent explains the nature of the workforce in the plant.

In the second chapter, while providing a profile of the working class employed in the plant, it is observed

that the tribals have filled in the lowest categories of jobs and, more specifically, that of the contract labourer class, who leads the most miserable life in comparison to others. Apart from the tribals, other workers, as is observed from the sample, are migrant in character, who have an agrarian social basis. From the point of view of their position in the plant, it is found that the skilled and semi-skilled workers in the 'works' group constitute the backbone of the workforce in the plant. These categories are seen to have contributed bulk of the cadres to the trade union movement in the plant.

In the third chapter, while surveying the inception and growth of all the individual trade unions in Rourkela, it is found that the socialists (belonging to Praja Socialist Party) have pioneered the movement and still continue to dominate with the RMS (EMS) remaining as the recognised union from 1967 till date. We also observed the emergence of a union protecting sectional interests (as in case of Ispat Shramik Sangh), which has failed to retain ground. The emergence of a union (RSPEA) comprising of only one category of workers (ministerial employees)

has been observed; but this union has broadened its base in general workers. Two cases of intra-union rivalry, viz., HSWA(INTUC) and RSMU(AITUC), are marked and interestingly a defection from the latter to the former is also observed. It is found that the three left-wing unions, viz., RSMU(AITUC), RWU(UTUC) and SETU(CITU), had failed to make any headway in the movement in the past and presently SETU(CITU) and RSMU(AITUC) are gaining ground among the steel workers, particularly among the young entrants. An organisational analysis of these unions reveals that they are half-open and quasi-democratic with marginal variations on different grounds. Most of the leaders are found to be outsiders and almost all of them have contested elections. The members are found to have poor political consciousness, though those who belonged to left-wing unions have showed better ideological understanding than the others.

In the fourth chapter, a study of the unions' functions reveals that in the absence of basic economic issues, the unions have mostly taken up issues like accidents, overtime, bonus, cases of victimizations, better facilities for the workers (housing, medical, etc.), etc. The method of "work-stoppages" has been found to

be most commonly adopted by the unions while pressing workers' grievances. The recognised union (RMS) has claimed the maximum share in production and financial loss followed by RSMU(AITUC) and SETU(CITU).

In the fifth chapter, while probing into the nature of union-dynamics in Rourkela by taking into consideration the factors like, the union-management relationship, inter-union relationship and union-government relationship, it is observed that the non-recognised unions display a hostile attitude towards RMS. The main cause is found to be RMS's, what they called, 'opportunistic' relationship with the management and different political parties forming governments in the state, for retaining its (RMS's) recognition. But even though these unions feel the necessity of their unity, ideological and other differences among them are found to have left this bloc divided.

Deriving from the above observations, some emerging trends and patterns in the form of general conclusions can be discussed in the following order.

To begin with, the trade union movement in Rourkela has developed in a predominantly tribal and underdeveloped

environment marked by the absence of any prior experience of industrial culture. Therefore, the structure of the working class here has been mainly tribal and agrarian. Even the migrant labour force working in this plant has a purely rural background. This factor accounts for the conservative character of the workers, which has hindered the process of their radicalisation.

It is here that the role of trade unions assumes importance. The radicalisation of industrial labour in any predominantly agrarian society, where the attitudes and consciousness of this class is deep-rooted in its social milieu, has been largely undertaken by the sustained efforts of the left-wing trade unions. But as has been observed, the trade union movement in Rourkela, from the very beginning, has been dominated by unions adhering to centrist and left-centrist ideology. This phenomenon, to a considerable extent, explains the moderate character of the movement in Rourkela Steel Plant, which has not yet experienced a general strike involving the entire plant. Even if, some strikes were organised in the recent past, majority being led by Rourkela Masdoor Sabha (the recognised union), the analysis of the issues reveals its (the union's) strategy of maintaining a pro-worker and anti-management posture only. And, as

it has been observed, the issue of contract labour has provided it (RMS) ground for the maintenance of this posture.

A deep-entrenched fear-psychosis among the general workers towards communists has prevented the efforts of the left-wing unions to make any significant headway in Rourkela. However, this factor alone does not account for the relative success of other unions,¹ particularly of RMS, which has retained its dominance since it got recognition in 1967. This needs to be analysed in the broader context of the dimensions of relationships between trade unions and political parties, which constitute the main theme of our study.

The working class segment of the society finds itself continuously under the ideological influence of respective parties.² This general phenomenon has

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1. The relative success of the non-Communist unions can be seen in the following achievements of the individual unions:

1) RMS - Recognised Union; 2) HSWA(INTUC) - Enjoyed recognition (1964-67); 3) RSPEA(HMP) - Its general secretary was elected as MLA in 1977 elections; and 4) ISS - Won majority seats in the Works Committee Election in 1970.

2. Sukomal Sen, op. cit., p.434.

been reflected in the relationship between the unions and political parties in Rourkela from the very process of the formation of these unions. It has been observed that, all the unions have been initiated by members and activists of political parties, which is not a very unique phenomenon in our society.

In such a situation, where there exists a close link between the trade unionists and political parties, it is quite obvious that "...the conflict in the political field, between parties and groups is inevitably transferred to the trade union field".³ Following this we can safely deduce that the union dynamics, i.e., the inter-relationships between the unions, reflects the pattern of equations existing among various political forces at different levels of their operation.

Three broad models emerge out of such a matrix of relationships:

- a) Macro political dynamics, referring to a reflection of party equations at the national level in the relationship among the trade unions interse;

3. V.B. Karnik, op. cit., p.20.

- b) Macro-Micro (intermediate level) political forces involving both national and regional variables, which affect inter-union relationship; and
- c) Micro level political factors involving predominantly regional forces, which shape the nature and working of union dynamics.

The following instances of union-dynamics in Rourkela confirm to the first model as mentioned above:

- i. The proposed joint front of the Communist-led trade unions is a reflection of a similar initiative taken by their parent political parties at the national level; and
- ii. The independent status of Rourkela Steel Plant Employees' Association (RSPEA), affiliated to erstwhile HMP, is in accordance with the decision of a section of its national leaders, who were against the merger of HMP with EMS and are now trying to revive their old organisation.

While these two examples explain union-dynamics in terms of inter-party and inter-group relationships at the national level, the second model reflects a pattern

of union-relationships in Rourkela, which are influenced by the interplay of both national and regional variables. The case in point is the instance of a section of RSMU (AITUC) joining HSWA (INTUC) in 1973. Though this is said to have happened as a sequel to a similar move taken by some of its (AITUC's) leaders at national level in early 60's, we have categorised this under this pattern as it was a belated move which was more or less affected by a strong intervening regional variable, i.e., Smt. Nandini Satpathy, a leader of Congress Party with a CPI past, assuming the chiefministership of the State in 1972. Interestingly, the withdrawal of this group from HSWA (INTUC) has also followed a similar pattern (i.e., after the resignation of Smt. Satpathy from Congress), but with the difference that this group returned back to the AITUC-fold, while its political counterparts did not.

In these two models, we find a dominant trend supporting the proximity of union dynamics with the party and group dynamics at national level. This general trend has prompted a scholar to remark that "...the type of relationship that exists between the unions and parties are broadly worked out at the national level and then with modifications are followed by their counterparts in the

states".⁴

But the application of this generalisation in a specific context like ours, i.e., the trade union movement in Rourkela, might not be able to explain correctly the RMS-HSWA(INTUC) syndrome, as discussed in the previous chapter. This brings us to the third model emphasising the operation of micro forces in inter-union relationship. While explaining the RMS-HSWA(HMS-INTUC) syndrome, here the problem is more of a party-union relationship reflecting on the inter-union relationship than the type of proximity as mentioned above, i.e., inter-party and inter-group relationship determining inter-union relationship.

Regarding the party-union relationship at the national level, we find that, even if the Praja Socialist Party (the parent political party of HMS to which RMS is affiliated) has already merged with Congress, the HMS has retained its independent identity. It (HMS) has joined other opposition unions in expressing its critical attitude toward the ruling Congress Party. Hence, it has

4. Rakhaari Chatterji, Unions, Politics and the State: A Study of Indian Labour Politics (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1980), p. 205.

an antagonistic relationship with INTUC. Now coming to the situation at Rourkela, we find that the similar kind of relationship between RMS(HMS) and HSWA(INTUC) is not merely the reflection of the national equations. The interplay of regional variables has played a vital role in determining the relationship between these two unions. This regional factor is the nature of the Congress Party in the State, which has interestingly contributed to this. The inter-group relationship in the ruling Congress(I) Party in the State with its corresponding divisions in HSWA(INTUC) at Rourkela and RMS's support to the ruling Party have contributed often to the shifting of government's support from HSWA to RMS.

This third model constitutes the core of our study as it does not merely reflect the relationship between RMS and HSWA(INTUC), it, to a great extent, explains the character of union-dynamics in Rourkela. This specific regional factor, i.e., the ruling Party's attitude towards RMS vis-a-vis other unions, has given rise to alliance and relations based on expediency. This sort of alliances by RMS are evident from its relations with all the governments in the State since 1967, the year it got recognition. The RMS has kept supporting whichever parties and groups came to power in Orissa during this period.

This strategy of RMS explains its intention to retain recognition through the method of membership verification (as carried on by the State government) and not on secret ballot method, an issue which has become the most important target of insinuation by other unions against it. No doubt, RMS's better bargaining position than others as the recognised union has helped it in maintaining a steady membership strength. In any case, in the general context, financial benefits have remained one of the main considerations for the workers to join the trade unions. As Raman has aptly remarked:

"The average Indian Industrial Worker has been found to be prone to shift his allegiance to the union or group which holds the best prospect for him in terms of earnings and security and conditions of employment, he has not attached particular importance to the political label".⁵

However, in case of RMS, as observed from its members' responses, the leadership and not financial benefits nor ideology, has been found to be the main

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5. Ashok Mehta's personal interview with N. Pattabhi Raman, quoted in his book Political Involvement of Indian Trade Unions (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), p.42; Also see N.M. Joshi, "Towards Unity in the Indian Trade Union Movement", Trade Union Record, Bombay, vol.X, No.7, 1960, p.59; and V.V. Giri, "Labour Policy in a Socialist State", Industrial India, Bombay, Annual Number, 1956, p.33.

attraction for the workers for joining and remaining in the union. A similar trend is also observed in case of the other non-Communist unions, where the charisma of the leadership has overshadowed ideological considerations in determining the motivations of the workers for ~~■~~ remaining and joining the respective trade unions. Furthermore, some of these trade unions have developed around the charisma of their leaders so much so that they (the unions) have been identified by the name of their leaders instead of their actual names, like 'Raju Samantrai Union' for HMS, 'Bata Panda Union' for HSWA(INTUC), 'Braja Mohanty Union' for RSPEA(HMP), etc.

The conspicuous absence of such a trend in case of 'Communist-led unions' can be explained in terms of the relative prominence of 'ideology' over such 'charismatic' leadership as the main consideration for the workers for remaining in these unions. This factor is quite evinced from the higher level of ideological understanding possessed by the members of these unions than their counterparts in the other (non-communist) unions. As far as the motivation of the workers for joining these left-wing unions is concerned, out of many other sundry factors, the 'charisma of the leadership' in these unions has

played a crucial role because of the general political illiteracy of the workers in Rourkela.

It is observed that owing to the lack of adequate politicization among the workers, the 'leadership' phenomenon has assumed immense importance. Furthermore, from the point of view of studying trade union politics here, 'leadership' factor is very significant, as it is the leaders who provide the link between the trade unions and political parties. This nexus is important so far as it determines the political direction and orientations for the largely passive workers. While commenting on the dimensions of such a connecting role of the leaders, Karnik has pointed out that "...the unions that political workers developed tended to adopt the political colour and orientation of its particular leader or sponsor".⁶

It is observed in this study that all the trade unions in Rourkela are formed and are still actively led by activists and leaders of various political parties, who are also called outsiders (non-employees of the plant). This observation is in quite conformity with the findings of some scholars that the outsiders' dominance in the

6. V.B. Karnik, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

trade unions is a general phenomenon in a country like ours.⁷ Ideally, these outsiders should remain till leadership emerges from the rank and file of the workers. Interestingly, the general secretaries (the key leadership position) of all the left-wing unions are insiders (plant employees), while the outsiders have filled in the top echelons (specifically, the post of general secretary) of other unions, the fact which reflects the oligarchic tendencies in these unions.⁸ It is observed that the left-wing unions have allowed enough inner-mobility within their unions for the leadership to emerge from the rank and file of the members.

However, the leaders' political role as a link between the unions and respective parties can be observed from their participation in the electoral politics in the State.⁹ The various elections in Rourkela saw the unions

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7. See S. Mathur and J.S. Mathur, op. cit.; S.D. Punekar and S. Madhuri, Trade Union Leadership in India (Bombay: 1967); A.S. Mathur, Trade Union Elite in India (Agra, 1969); and K.N. Vaid, Growth and Practice of Trade Unions (Delhi: Delhi School of Social Work, 1962).
 8. In all these non-Communist unions the average continuation of a leader in the same post comes to 12 years, while it is 8 years in case of left-wing unions.
 9. As Rourkela comes under a reserved parliamentary constituency and further as there is no tribal representation in this top leadership category, which is also a fact to be noted, the elections to the state assembly have been taken into consideration. Rourkela was a reserved Assembly constituency till 1967.

gearing up their resources for the victory of the candidates put up by their parent organisations. In most cases, the office-bearers (particularly general secretaries) were chosen as candidates meeting with an occasional success.

Such elections involving competition among the union leaders have brought the rivalry at party-level to the trade unions and has consequently divided the working class. Such rivalries among the unions have been accentuated with the manifestations of the kind of union-dynamics prevalent here, which is found to have been greatly influenced by the state politics. Thus, we find that the state politics has, to a great extent, weakened the trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant, which has not yet observed a viable joint action of all the unions.

Finally, with this understanding of the nature of workforce, their mobilisation by different trade unions and the role of leadership, it is noted that the political dynamics at the regional level has played a vital role in shaping the nature of trade union movement in Rourkela Steel Plant.

However, the leadership phenomenon has, to a great extent, accounted for the character of labour politics

in Rourkela. A multi-dimensional study of the above factor in terms of locating the background, motivations, mobility, ideological orientations, etc., of the leaders is intended to be taken at a further level of my study. Very significant as they are, these factors could not be given justice because of the constraints imposed by the scope of the present work.

ANNEXURE 1

(a) Department-wise Break-up:

1. Blast Furnace	10
2. SMS	10
3. Power Plant	8
4. Coke Ovens	7
5. Sintering Plant	7
6. Traffic	6
7. Ministerial	5
8. Others	7
Total	60

(b) Skill-wise Break-up:

1. Highly skilled	17
2. Semi-skilled	24
3. Unskilled	19
Total	60

(c) Sex-wise Break-up:

1. Male	56
2. Female	4
Total	60

(d) Caste-wise Break-up:

1. General	38
2. S.F.	14
3. S.C.	8
Total	60

(e) Status of Employment:

1. Regular	49
2. Contract	11
Total	60

(f) Union-wise Break-up:

1. NOWU	3
2. RMS	10
3. RWU	8
4. RSCU	8
5. HSCA	8
6. ISS	4
7. IKRS	3
8. SFTU	8
9. PSPEA	8
Total	60

(g) Non-Unionized Workers - 4

ANNEXURE 2Sample Break-up of Managers:

(1) Personnel Manager	1
(2) Deputy Personnel Manager	1
(3) Asstt. Personnel Managers	4
(4) Personnel Officers in the departments of Industrial-relations, contract labour, cell, workers counselling Cell, social Welfare Cell, etc.	6
(5) Superintendents of some vital units like SMS, Blast Furnace	2
(6) Some top Executive officers in the research Cell of Personnel Dept. belonging to Asstt. Manager rank	2
Total	16

ANNEXURE 3Provisional Population Statistics of Sundargarh Distt.

Sl.No.	Break-up	1971	1981
1.	Total Population	1,030,758	1,336,818
2.	Total Male	530,836	691,754
3.	Total Female	499,922	645,064
4.	Rural Population	791,073	928,759
5.	Urban Population	239,685	408,059
6.	Total Literate Persons	272,801	485,502
7.	Percentage of Literacy	26.5	36.17
8.	Percentage of Male Literacy	36.1	46.34
9.	Percentage of Female Literacy	15.6	24.19
10.	No. of Females for 100 Males	924	933
11.	Density of Population Per Sq. Km.	107	138
12.	Percentage of Variation	(1961-71) 35.87	(1971-81) 29.69

Source: Census Reports, 1971 & 1981.

ANNEXURE 4Comparative Population Strength of both the Townships

Year	Rourkela Steel Township	Rourkela Civil Township
1971	125,426	47,076
1981	213,279	95,960

Source: Census Reports, 1971 & 1981.

ANNEXURE 5Annual Rated Capacities (in '000 T) of all the Steel Plants in Public & Private Sector

Sl.No.	Steel Plants	Ingot Steel	Saleable Steel
1.	Bhilai	2500	1965
2.	Durgapur	1600	1239
3.	Rourkela	1800	1225
4.	Bokaro	2500	2000
5.	TISCO	2000	1500
6.	IISCO	1000	800
7.	ASP	100.00	60.00
8.	VISL	182.00	119.00

Source: Steel Authority of India Ltd., Public Relations Dept., New Delhi.

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ANNEXURE 6

Products	End Uses	Main Purchasers
Plates	Wagon building, ship building, coach-building, dams, dumpers, cranes, Defence establishments etc.	Govt. of India,* Some Foreign Countries**
HR Sheets/ Coils	Wagon building, ship building, tube-making, cement industry, thermal power projects and defence establishments, etc.	Govt. of India
CR Sheets/ Coils	Drums and barrel-making, automaking, CR tube making, furniture and refrigerators, watercoolers, defence establishments.	Private Parties*** Govt. of India
Galvanised Sheets	Air conditioning, house-roofing, air-compressors, tea-processing	Private Parties and Foreign Countries
Tin Plates	Packing of milk and milk products, canned food, drinks, oil paints, enamels lubricants, etc.	Private Parties
Electrical Sheets	Electric motors, transformers, Thermal and nuclear power projects, Electric fans, Switch gears, etc.	Private Parties
ERW Pipes	Transportation of crude oils, water gas, etc., irrigation well, mining machinery, cement, paper-oil-fertilizer plants, thermal and nuclear power plants.	Govt. of India and Foreign Countries
Spiral Weld Pipes	Transportation of crude oil, other oil products and natural gas, drainage and sewerage	Govt. of India

(Cont'd on next page)

(Cont'd)

CRGO and CRNO	Transformers, motors and generators	Private Parties
Fertilizers	SONA Calcium Ammonium Nitrate and RAJA Ammonium Sulphate Fertilizers	Consumers
Granulated Slag	Cement Manufacture	Govt. and Private Parties
Extra Hard Pitch	Aluminium Industry	Govt. of India and Private Parties
Other Products	Coal products and for road making, chemical and paint industry, synthetic rubber industry	Govt. of India and Private Parties

NOTE: * Apart from the government departments of Defence, Railways, Petroleum and Chemicals, the currency Note Press (Nasik) and Bank Note Press (Dewas) also buy the products of RSP.

** Foreign Countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Mombasa, Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and USSR are the main purchasers of RSP products.

*** Among the Private Parties the following companies are prominent in purchasing the products of RSP:

1. Metal Box India Ltd.: Calcutta, Bombay, Faridabad
2. Larsen and Toubro Ltd.: Bombay
3. Kool Crown Corks (P) Ltd.: New Delhi
4. Bharat Crown and Metal Industries: Bombay
5. Hind Enamel Co.: Calcutta.

Source: A compilation from Rourkela Today, op. cit., pp.5-6; and files from the Order department, Rourkela Steel Plant.

ANNEXURE 7Production over the years in Rourkela Steel Plant

Products	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Ingot Steel	10.66	12.82	15.03	14.08	13.19	12.68	11.65
Saleable Steel	8.12	10.41	11.74	11.78	10.42	10.45	9.85
CAN Fertiliser	2.45	3.09	3.18	2.88	2.76	2.10	1.43

Source: Compilation from Annual Statistics, 1981-82, RSP, pp.1 & 9.

ANNEXURE 8Composition of Present Board of Directors of SAIL

1. Chairman, SAIL.
2. Vice-Chairman (Technical), SAIL
3. Director (R&D), Research & Development Centre for Iron and Steel, Ranchi.
4. Managing Director, Bhilai Steel Plant, Bhilai.
5. Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Steel and Mines, Dept. of Steel, New Delhi.
6. Managing Director, Rourkela Steel Plant, Rourkela.
7. Managing Director, Bokaro Steel Plant, Bokaro.
8. Director (Personnel), SAIL

(Anex.8 cont'd on next page)

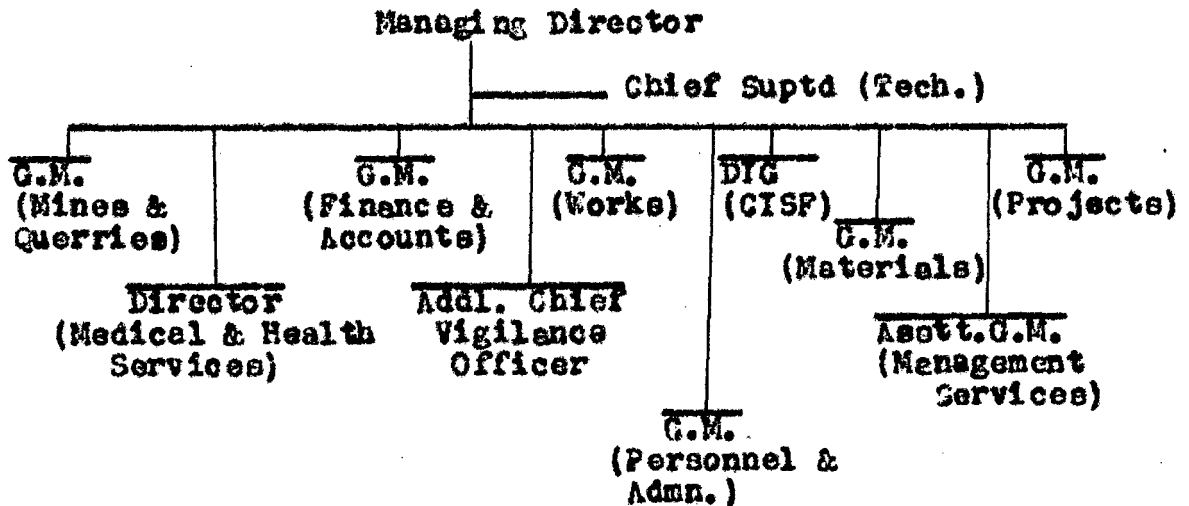
(Cont'd)

9. Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser to the Govt. of India, Ministry of Steel & Mines, Dept. of Steel, New Delhi.
10. Managing Director, Durgapur Steel Plant, Durgapur.
11. Chairman-cum-Managing Director, MECON India Ltd., Ranchi.
12. Iron & Steel Controller, Calcutta.
13. General Secretary, Indian National Metalworks Federation, Jamshedpur.
14. Managing Director, IISCO, Burnpur.

Source: SAIL, Public Relations Department,
New Delhi.

ANNEXURE 9

Managerial Hierarchy in the Rourkela Steel Plant



ANNEXURE 10DEPARTMENTAL HIERARCHY IN RSP

<u>Executive</u>		<u>Non-Executive</u>	
G.M.			
Dy. G.M.		Supervisors/Sr. Chergemen	S9
Asstt. G.M.		Chergemen	S8
Chief Suptds.	Skilled	Chergemen	S7
Superintendents		do	S6
Manager		Trade do	S5
Dy. Manager		Posts do	S4
Asstt. Manager	Semi Skilled	do	S3
Jr. Manager		Helper	S2
	Unskilled	Khelasi	S1

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual,
1981, RSP.

ANNEXURE 11Overall Manpower Trend since inception of the Plant (Regular, Temporary and Casual)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No. of Workers</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No. of Workers</u>
1955	318	1969	34,312
1956	956	1970	33,975
1957	1,307	1971	33,846
1958	1,939	1972	33,403
1959	4,276	1973	34,813
1960	7,188	1974	36,380
1961	12,834	1975	36,618
1962	16,917	1976	36,832
1963	20,545	1977	37,171
1964	21,613	1978	37,412
1965	26,677	1979	38,795
1966	30,897	1980	38,657
1967	32,975	1981	38,701
1968	33,893	1982 (Feb.)	39,076

Source: Personnel and Wage Manual, 1981
RSP.

ANNEXURE 12Comparative Statement of Working Conditions
of permanent and contract workers

<u>Permanent Employees</u>	<u>Contractors' Workers</u>
Minimum Wage Basic Rs.400 p.m. D.A. Rs.228 p.m.	Minimum Basic Rs.285 p.m. D.A. Rs.24 p.m.
DA linked to Consumers' Price Index @ Rs.1.30 each point variation in every quarter	DA linked to Consumers' Price Index @ Rs.0.65 each point variation in every year.
Housing facilities, company quarters provided	No
House Rent Allowance	No
Employees' Provident Fund	Yes
Incentive Bonus	No
Overtime Pay	No
Free education to children upto 10+2 standard	No
Conveyance Allowance	No
Free medical treatment in Company's Hospital (I.G.H.)	No. But a few contractors give medical allowance/free treatment as per Union Agreement
Annual Bonus linked to production & productivity	No
Gratuity	No
Leave Travel Concession	No
Advance for purchase of cycle/scooter/motor cycle/car	No
Leave/holidays as per rules	Yes

Employees' Welfare Scheme (Death Relief Fund)	No
Cooperative Credit Facilities	No
Grades and Scales of Pay for unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled category	No
Promotion Benefits	No
Medical benefits for both the spouses after retirement	No
Job to dependent in case of medical unfitness or death in accident on duty	No
Community Centres, Play Grounds, Parks and other recreational facilities	No

ANNEXURE 1]

Representation of SAs and STs in all the Units of SAIL

Sl. No.	Units of SAIL	Total Manpower	SA	%	ST	%
1.	BSP	59,698	7,490	12.54	3,972	6.65
2.	RSP	37,875	3,269	8.63	7,087	18.71
3.	DSP	32,929	3,952	12.00	439	1.33
4.	ASP	7,238	679	9.38	121	1.67
5.	BSL	43,546	5,571	12.79	4,567	10.40

ANNEXURE 14Analysis of the Personnel System of the UnionsA. Age-wise break-up:

Sl. No.	Persons	Average Age
1.	Ordinary Members	38.2
2.	General Council Members	37.83
3.	Leaders	40.19

B. Educational Qualifications:

Sl. No.	Persons	Education			Total
		Illiterate	Upto High School	Graduates & Above	
1.	Ordinary Members	17(28.33%)	21(35%)	-	38
2.	General Council Members	-	21(35%)	1(1.66%)	22
3.	Leaders	1(4.76%)	17(80.95%)	3(14.29%)	21

C. Occupation-wise break-up:

Sl. No.	Persons	Category of Job			Total
		High Skilled	Skilled	Unskilled	
1.	Ordinary Members	8(21.04%)	11(28.9%)	19(50%)	38
2.	Gen. Council Members	9(40.9%)	9(40.9%)	4(18.1%)	22
3.	Leaders	19(83.3%)	2(16.6%)	-	21

D. Income-wise break-up:

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Sl. No.	Persons	(Income Groups - total income)		Total
		Rs. 500-Rs. 1,000	Rs. 1,000 & above	
1.	Ordinary Members	22 (57.86%)	16 (42.08%)	38
2.	General Council Members	5 (22.65%)	17 (77.18%)	22
3.	Leaders	4 (19.04%)	17 (80.92%)	21

ANNEXURE 15Fringe benefits to the Workers given by the Plant, during the year 1980-81

Sl.No.	Items	Nos/Investment (Rs. in lakh)
1.	Cost of Medicines (including medical reimbursement)	75.36 (15.1%)
2.	School Uniforms	0.28 (0.1%)
3.	Coke Subsidy	145.89 (29.1%)
4.	Transport	60.29 (12.6%)
5.	House Rent	54.12 (10.8%)
6.	Canteen	141.60 (28.3%)
7.	Others	23.31 (4.6%)
	Total	500.9 (100.0)

Source: Annual Statistics, 1980-81, RSP.

ANNEXURE 16Union-wise break-up of cases of Victimization of Workers during 1981-82

Sl.No.	Unions	Nos of Cases
1.	SUCI	14
2.	CITU	9
3.	RMS	8
4.	INTUC	6
5.	AITUC	5
6.	RSPEA	5
	Total	47

ANNEXURE 17Absenteeism and overtime statement (1977-78 to 1981-82)

Year	Average authorised absenteeism	Average un-authorised absenteeism	Average total absenteeism	Average over-time hours booked per month
1977-78	9.63	7.41	17.04	340918
1978-79	9.38	8.50	17.88	441616
1979-80	10.04	8.34	18.38	451203
1980-81	10.31	8.21	18.52	433874
1981-82	10.62	7.77	18.39	424457

Source: Compiled from files of IR Department, Hourkela Steel Plant.

ANNEXURE 18Yearwise break-up of Agreements
(1977-82)

Years	Areas	No. of Agreements/Minutes				Total
		Works	Non-Works	Mines	General	
1977-78	Manning	2	-	-	-	2
	PLC/Upgradation	-	-	-	-	-
	Incentive	5	3	-	1	9
	Others	3	3	2	1	9
1978-79	Manning	-	-	-	-	-
	PLC/Upgradation	1	-	-	-	1
	Incentive	5	-	-	-	5
	Others	1	1	-	2	4
1979-80	Manning	1	-	-	-	1
	PLC/Upgradation	4	2	-	-	6
	Incentive	3	1	-	-	4
	Others	4	1	-	2	7
1980-81	Manning	-	-	-	-	-
	PLC/Upgradation	1	-	-	-	1
	Incentive	2	-	-	-	2
	Others	2	3	-	1	6
1981-82	Manning	10	1	-	-	11
	PLC/Upgradation	1	-	-	-	1
	Incentive	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	1	1	2	3	7

Source: Compiled from files of IR Department,
Rourkela Steel Plant.

ANNEXURE 19Dispute Analysis since 1978-79

<u>Years</u>	<u>Conciliation</u>	<u>Adjudication</u>	<u>High Court / Supreme Court</u>
1978-79	63	21	3
1979-80	42	26	6
1980-81	20	14	3
1981-82	19	23	8

ANNEXURE 20The Electoral Performance of Different Units in Works Committee Elections

<u>Years</u>	<u>RMS</u>	<u>INTUC</u>	<u>AITUC</u>	<u>CITU</u>	<u>ISS</u>	<u>Total</u>
1963	3	6	1	-	-	10
1966	10	-	-	-	-	10
1969	4	-	-	-	6	10
1972	8	-	1	-	1	10

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Rourkela Steel Plant:

- 1) Blast Furnace
- ii) Crane Maintenance
- iii) General Manager (Works) Office
- iv) Personnel Department - Contract Labour Cell, Industrial Relations Section, Joint Committee's Cell, Research Cell, ST&SC Cell, Workers' Welfare Cell.
- v) Pipe Plant
- vi) Safety Engineering Department
- vii) Steel Melting Shop (SMS)
- viii) Time Office
- ix) Transport Department.

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