AMELIORATION OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAYS:  
THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

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ABSTRACT

Trade Unions are integral part of any organization. Whatever organization it may be, whether big or small, private or public; trade unions do exist to safeguard the interest of the employees working therein. Trade unions also improve the living as well as the working conditions of the employees. Indian railway is one of the oldest public sector organizations in India that encourage the establishment of trade unions. In order to find out the facts and to measure the satisfaction of the railway employees about the role performed by the trade unions and other activities of the trade unions related to the up gradation of the railway employees in the Vijayawada division of S. C. Railway, we have undertaken this study which is an exploratory one and based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected from the railway employees and also from the trade union officials. The collected data have been processed through tabulation and other simple statistical tools to reach the conclusion.

Key words: Employees, trade Union, perception, satisfaction, role, working condition.

INTRODUCTION

Trade unions are a major component of the system of modern industrial relations in any nation, each having, in their constitution, their own set of objectives or goals to achieve. Change in the political, social and educational environment has seen them rechristened as a forum that protects and furthers workers’ interests and improves the quality of life of workers, enlarging their traditional roles of establishing terms and conditions of employment. (Dankert, 1948)

In the beginning when business was in its family ownership form called „family business“ , the workers” relation with the employer were simple and straight. However, these relations gradually changed to complex and strained with the advent of industrial revolution. The growth of modern industrial establishment involves the employment of a large number of workers in conditions which make them helpless in bargaining individually for their terms of contract. As such, the workers felt the need for having some organization to establish contacts with the employer to protect their interest. They gave birth to trade unions in the industrial organizations. Trade union has emerged over the period as a major institutional mechanism for resolving conflicts of interest between the workers and the employers in a free society like ours. (Sinha, Sinha and Shekhar, 2009)

In developing countries, the right to form a union and bargain collectively protects workers from exploitative and abusive conditions at work and puts pressure on employers to share productivity gains with their employees. Protection of basic worker and human rights in developing nations thus necessitates
unionization so that the working population can reap the benefits of economic growth (Ghosh and Geetika, 2007).

Historically, union representation and collective bargaining have been the keys to the growth of a stable working population in developed economies, and have made it possible for workers to gain a more equitable share of the wealth that they create; they are also able to improve working conditions and help workers gain job security. Changes in the political, social and educational environments regarding awareness of rights – such as the right to organize, the right to bargain, and the right to settle terms and conditions of employment – have caused worker unions to spring up to protect and further workers' interests. Thus, with the establishment of minimum wages, norms for mandatory work hours, provisions for health and safety, and overall improvements in working conditions, unionization has become instrumental in improving the quality of life of workers.

FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions are a legitimate system for organizing workers to voice their rights and grievances. Without unions, companies would become either too paternalistic or too dictatorial (Thomas, 2005). Responsible unions play an important role in maintaining cordial relations between management and labour. The aims and objectives of the major trade unions in India are seen to vary according to their political ideologies (Ratnam, 2006). For instance, some unions are influenced by Leftist principles aimed at overhauling the capitalist mode of production as a whole. However, irrespective of trade unions' political affiliations, their generic functions may be categorized as follows:

The primary role of a trade union is to promote and protect the interest of its members (Perlman, 1928; Hoxie, 1921). This can be summarised as follows:

i. To improve working and living conditions and to represent workers' interests in various fora (Freeman and Medoff, 1984).
ii. To offer responsive cooperation in improving levels of production and productivity, discipline, and high standards of quality.
iii. To secure fair wages for workers.
iv. To enlarge opportunities for promotion and training.
v. To promote identity of workers' interests with their industries.
vi. To cooperate in and facilitate technological advancement by broadening workers' understanding of underlying issues.

Value Addition and New Functions

Rapid changes in technology and successive revisions in pay have undoubtedly improved workers' conditions within the organized sector but mostly at the cost of loss of control over jobs (Ratnam, 2006). Such structural changes among the working population, along with economic growth and a sustained increase in capital intensity in both the product and labour markets (Jose, 1999), have necessitated a paradigm shift in the roles of trade unions: from predominantly bargaining institutions, they have become specialised, representing the voice and interests of labour. Ranganathan (2004) attempted to understand the dynamics of the trade union movement in public sector units (PSUs) when measured against economic reforms in India. According to him, in the post-economic reforms era, the enhanced penetration of media has caused workers to become better informed and increasingly aware of economic issues in their respective industries.
As a result, management has also become more sensitive and skilled in handling relationships with employees, even in family-owned and managed businesses (Thomas, 2005).

In addition to their traditional bargaining activities, unions now have a newly acquired voice and representative function. Many of them are trying to increase their value to workers by providing a variety of services to their members, as well as to the community to which they belong. Such services range from providing legal and financial advice to improving skills.

These new functions of trade unions (also called ancillary functions [Monappa, 2000]) can be categorized into the following groups:

i. Communication
ii. Welfare activities
iii. Education
iv. Research

Indian Railways at a glance

Indian Railways is an Indian state-owned railway company headquartered in New Delhi, India. It is owned and operated by the Government of India through the Ministry of Railways. Indian Railways has 114,500 kilometers of total track over a route of 65,000 kilometers (40,389 mi) and 7,500 stations. It has the world's fourth largest railway network after those of the United States, Russia, and China. The railways carry over 30 million passengers and 2.8 million tons of freight daily. In 2011-2012, Railway earned Rs 104278.79 crores which consists of Rs 69675.97 crores. From freight and 28645.52 crores from passengers tickets. Indian Railways is the world's fourth largest commercial or utility employer, by number of employees, with over 1.4 million employees. Railways were first introduced to India in 1853. By 1947, the year of India's independence, there were forty-two rail systems. In 1951 the systems (many of which were already government owned) were nationalized as one unit, the Indian Railways, becoming one of the largest networks in the world. IR operates both long distance and suburban Rail systems on a multi-gauge network of broad, meter and narrow gauges. It also owns locomotive and coach production facilities. The Indian railways are proposing to build the highest railway track in the world overtaking the current record of the Beijing-Lhasa Railway line.

Indian Railways is divided into several zones, which are further sub-divided into divisions. The number of zones in Indian Railways increased from six to eight in 1951, nine in 1952 to sixteen in 2003 then to seventeen in 2010. Each zonal railway is made up of a certain number of divisions, each having a divisional headquarters. There are a total of sixty-eight divisions.

Profile of Indian Railway, Vijayawada Division

In the South Central Railway (SCR), Vijayawada division was one of the divisions of South Central railway since inception of the zone. Vijayawada division is traditionally been called in IR as ‘Bezawada Division’, as the city being known during colonial rule. 108 stations are there in Vijayawada division. In Vijayawada division 20,075 employees are working including Group “A”, “B”, “C” and “D”. The employees are mainly distributed in Open Line and Construction Wings having Engineering, Signal and Telecommunication, Electrical, Administration, Accounts and Stores Department. Open line in addition has staff working in the Transportation, Mechanical, Commercial, Medical and Security Departments. There are four trade unions exist at Vijayawada, but only two of them are recognized: Employees Union (sangh) and Mazdoor Union.
EMPLOYEES’ Union (sangh)

The Employees’ Union is affiliated to Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and has its Head Office at Delhi named National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) and Zonal Office at Secunderabad. This union has 1200 employees as members from Vijayawada division. The union committee is changed after two years at the General Meeting through secret ballot process or on submission of panel to the election conducting trade union officials.

MAZDOOR UNION

This union is affiliated to HIND MAZDOOR SABHA (HMS), the union has its head office at New Delhi named All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) and its zonal office at Secunderabad. This union has 1550 members at Vijayawada branch. The union committee is changed every year through the process of general election from the members at branch level. Zonal committee is formed by all the branches and federation committee is formed by all the zonal committees.

Both the unions have certain similarity such as the unions do not have any paid fixed office bearer, the unions do not suffer from any kind of financial inadequacy. Even the grievance handling procedure is almost same in both the trade unions: for both the unions, an aggrieved employee has to first refer his grievance to his/her concerned departmental authority, if no response comes back within a month, then the employee may approach his union for negotiation, in case of major issues they are approved through negotiation machineries like PNM (Permanent Negotiation Machinery). However, certain differences are there in this case, as for example, if an employee belongs to Employees’ Union he can approach any of the trade union official for help, but if an employee belongs to Mazdoor Union he have to approach the branch secretary at first, if the secretary feels that his grievance is genuine, then only the union will take further steps. Again the weapons that both the unions take up in case the negotiation does not prove out successful is also almost same, the unions go for postering, Gate Meetings, Dharnas, Strikes. Besides these the Mazdoor Union also uses some other weapons like Hunger Strike, Tools Down/ Pens Down.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know the existing working condition of railway employees in Vijayawada division.
2. To know the satisfaction level of railway employees towards their working conditions in Vijayawada division.
3. To know the status of existing railway trade unions and also to assess the perception of the railway employees about working conditions and role performed by the trade unions for their betterment.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The present research study is an exploratory one and based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from available literatures, websites, journals, periodicals, newspapers and the office of the “Employees’ Union” and “Mazdoor Union” at Vijayawada of Indian Railways. For collection of primary data, a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire was developed. Questionnaire has been developed keeping in view the problems of the study and nature of the information to be collected. The questionnaire was designed with a set of statements using a Likert Technique or scale. The employees were asked to evaluate some statements and in term of their perception and expectation of
performance of the organization being measured. Their satisfaction is generally measured on a five-point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the present study, employees’ perception about their working condition and the role performed by the trade unions has been studied in Vijayawada division of N. F. Railways. It is not possible to study the perception of all the railway employees in Vijayawada division. So initially sample size of 100 was selected for the study as per convenient sampling. The data collected with the help of semi-structured questionnaire from 100 respondents were not accepted because it contained unnecessary information and under-emphasized facts. Therefore, respondents from 150 railway employees were considered for the purpose of analysis. Thus, the effective samples size for the study was 150.

In this study we have not considered the opinion of those employees who belongs to Officer Cadres.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS
Profile of Respondents

In order to obtain primary data, field survey conducted with the help of a questionnaire and responses of seventy five (150) railway employees in Vijayawada division were taken. Following is a summary of the railway employees in Vijayawada division considered for the present study.

Table 1: Age of The Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents belongs to the age group 41-50. It can so be said that most of the respondents are aged people who have long been in Indian Railways. A good number of respondent belong to the age group 31-40 who have gather some experience as well as Representing comparatively younger group.

On the question of gender, out of 150 respondents 63 (84%) are male and rest 12 (16%) are female; As per qualification, out of Seventy five (150) respondents 13% are HSLC pass, 31% are HSSLC pass, 40% are Graduate, 16% are belongs to Post-graduate. Respondents belongs to different departments which can be it can be revealed the following pie chart. Almost all the departments of Indian Railways were covered for conducting the survey.
Table 2: Experience of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-25 Years</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 Years</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that out of the total respondents about 45% of the respondents have rendered their service to this organization for more than 25 years and other 36% has rendered more than 10 years of services.

Table 3: Focuses On Pay Band of the Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Band</th>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PB-1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals that 46% of the respondent employees are eligible for PB-2, where in their revised pay band and grade pay, they are eligible for Rs. 9300-34800 and Grade Pay of Rs. 4600. The other employee respondents eligible for PB – 1 and PB – 3 were also being covered. Employees eligible for PB – 1 are eligible for Rs. 5200-20200 and Grade Pay of Rs. 2800 and employees eligible for PB – 3 are eligible for Rs. 15600-39100 and Grade Pay of Rs. 5400.

Table 4: Highlights Trade Union that the Respondent belongs to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Unions</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees Union(Sangh)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazdoor Union</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 reveals that out of the total respondents, most of the employees are the members of Mazdoor Union. The next most common union is the Employee’s Union to which also a good number of employees from different departments of the organization belong to. Other union includes “Association of SCs & STs”, which is not a recognized trade union and a few employees belong to this trade union. A very important issue to be focused here is that the teachers of the Railway Higher Secondary School, who are also the employees of Indian Railway, but not belong to any Trade Union.

Table 5: Shows Satisfaction level of the Respondents for salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly satisfied</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 reveals that most of the respondent employees are satisfied with the salary (including other perquisites) given to them by the organization. Hence they do not have any grievance relating to their salary.

Table 6: Describes Satisfaction about other benefits like free medical treatment, traveling pass, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 reveals that most of the respondent employees are satisfied with the benefits provided by the organization like free medical treatment, travelling pass, educational benefits etc. but still some of the employees are not satisfied with such benefits; according to them they do not get adequate medical facility whenever they needed the same. In such cases, the respondents expressed that the trade unions play a vital role by helping the victimized employees from the trade union fund, if the case is very urgent.

Table 7: Emphases on Satisfaction level of Respondents for Promotion Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 reveals that most of the respondent employees are dissatisfied with the promotion policy of the organization. According to those employees who have been working in the organization for more than 25 years, their grievance is that they are on their way to retirement, but they were not promoted fairly. In this regard, the employees responded that the trade unions are striving for a fair promotion policy through negotiation with the higher authorities, but yet the trade unions were not fully successful in achieving a fair promotion policy.

Table 8: Shows Satisfaction level of Respondents for New Pension Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 reveals that most of the respondent employees are dissatisfied with the New Pension Scheme though many of the respondents have no direct effect due to NPS as they have joined before 01.01.2004. Only a few employees are satisfied with the NPS. In this regard the employees told that the trade unions are striving to bring back the old pension scheme for the betterment of the employees.

Table 9: Shows Satisfaction level of Respondents for Sanction of Leave

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 reveals that all the respondent employees are satisfied with the sanction of leave by the organization. Therefore, they do not have any grievance regarding sanction of leave.

Table 10: Focuses on Satisfaction level of Respondents for Bonus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus, Table 10 reveals that most of the respondent employees are satisfied with the bonus that they receive occasionally, especially during Durga Puja. But some of the employees have minimum grievance regarding uniform amount of bonus at Durga Puja. In this regard, the employees responded that the trade unions are trying to negotiate with the higher authorities that if at all the amount of bonus cannot be increased; the bonus amount is not reduced in any respect.

Table 11: Describes Satisfaction level of Respondents for Quarter Facility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No Of Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfied</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Dissatisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 reveals that most of the respondent employees are dissatisfied with the quarter facility. Most of them have the grievance that the quarters that they are provided with are not in good position. Even some employees who have four or five family members, they have the grievance that the quarter is too small for them to accommodate. Again, some employees have the grievance that even after their promotion, they are not provided with a better quarter. However, in this respect the employees responded that the trade union tries to solve the various problems associated with quarters through negotiation with higher authorities. The trade union also tries to solve the problems associated with the quarters like water supply, electricity, etc.

Table 12: Highlights Respondent View about the Services Rendered by the Trade Unions to the Non-Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses of the employees</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage Of Respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions do help to non-Members</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions Donot help the non-members</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, Table 12 reveals that 76% of the employees responded that the trade unions help the non-members if they approach the trade union for help. Thus it implies that trade unions open their door for all the employees of the organization. In other word, it can be said that trade unions help all the employees impartially. But there are some employees who perceive that the non-members of the trade union are not being helped by them. Here we can take the example of the Railway School Teachers who are not allowed to join any union; hence they do not get any type of help from the trade unions.
Table 13: Showing Respondent View about the Role Played by Trade Unions in addressing their Grievances to the Higher Authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses of the employees</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage Of Respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions do play an active role</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>82.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions Donot play any role</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 reveals that more than 80% of the respondent employees are of the opinion that the Trade Union play an active role in addressing their grievances to the higher authorities and tries their best for mitigating those grievances. Again a few employees are of the opinion that the Trade Unions do not help in forwarding their grievances to the higher officials. Such employees expressed that trade union official pay more attention to higher grade employees.

Table 14: Shows Respondents view about the best way to be used by the Trade Unions for fulfilling their demands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses of the employees</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation with Higher authorities</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>85.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercive Actions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus the above table no 14 shows that all the respondent employees are of the opinion that if the trade unions negotiate with higher authorities, it provides a better way for fulfilling their demands. If any such negation does not provide fruitful outcome, then only TU should resort to coercive steps.

Table 15: Displays Respondents personal experience about the role played by TUs in bettering any of their working condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>No Of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quarter</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that although most of the respondent employees did not experienced in their service life up till now any particular point relating to their worming condition that was made better by the trade union effort; yet a good number of employees have experienced in their tenure of service some or the other factors that were not favourable to them before, but trade union have helped in bettering such conditions, some such examples could be like matters relating to availing of quarters (which is most common), transfer, promotion, posting of employees. Among the other conditions comes relaxation in duty hours, providing canteen facilities.
Table 16: Showing Respondents view about the overall performance of the Trade Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Of Satisfaction</th>
<th>No Of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Satisfied</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that more than 80% of the respondent employees are satisfied with the work done by the trade union. It implies that the trade unions of Railway at Vijayawada division is quite active and renders reasonable services to the employees working therein.

Table 17: Describes Respondents level of Satisfaction for the Trade Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>No of Respondent</th>
<th>Percentage Of respondent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOOD</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very GOOD</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 reveals that the most of the employees those who are satisfied with the performance of Trade Union are moderately satisfied. A very few percent of respondent employee would like to rank the employee in higher order.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

From the study the following points could be highlighted:

i) The employees of Vijayawada division are satisfied with the salary, benefits provided by the organization, leave, working hour, maternity leave, and bonus. Since the employees do not have any grievance regarding these factors therefore the trade union just look after that this matters always remain satisfactorily to the employees.

ii) Most of the employees are not satisfied with the promotion policy of the Indian Railways, they have the complain that they are not promoted fairly. Hence, the trade union strives to bring a better and fairer promotion policy through negation with the authorities.
Almost all the employees are dissatisfied with the New Pension Scheme, to mitigate their grievance; the trade union is trying hard to bring back the old pension scheme.

A good number of employees are not satisfied with their quarters. Some of them complaint that the quarters are not in good position, and again no actions are taken to improve the quarters, while some other employees complaint that the quarters are too small for them to accommodate, in this respect the trade union sometime from their own effort try to sort out with small problems associated with quarters like water supply, leakages of roof, electricity. And again for permanent solution of quarter problems they put demands in front of the authorities.

The employees gave a mixed response about the attitude of the trade union officials toward the non-members. Though most of the employees responded that TUs equally help all the employees, some employees expressed that trade unions do not help the non-members.

The Trade Unions are not very much influenced by political parties. In Vijayawada division of IR, where only two recognized trade unions exist. The Mazdoor Union is not such influenced by any political party. But the Employees” Union follows the ideology of the Congress Government.

Regarding the role played by trade unions in forwarding the grievances of the employees to authorities, most of the employees expressed that trade unions are playing an active role. But again, a small number of employees responded that trade unions remain busy with gaining power over the other union, and in this way they overlook employee”s grievances.

Another important issue is that trade unions view the employees” grade wise, which means the trade unions, discriminates among the employees and dealing with their grievances as well. 15% of the employees expressed this fact, although the rest of the employees expressed that trade unions deal equally with all.

Among the respondents, there were about 27% employees whose quarter facility have been made better by union effort, 17% employees whose posting have been done through union effort, again there are some other whose promotion, transfer, feasibility in duty hours (for running staff) have been done through trade union effort.

The trade unions do not suffer from any financial inadequacy but still then they do not have any paid office bearer, having that they could have worked in a much better way.

Both the trade unions collect annual membership subscription of Rs. 100, but this amount is not fixed.

There are a good number of employees who are even not sure to which trade union they belong to, because the trade unions collect subscription from all those employees who are not any trade union official.

The unions organize cultural programs and social welfare programs like blood donation camp, flood relief camp etc.

From the study of the activities of Trade Unions of Indian Railway, Vijayawada division, it could be understood that although the trade unions are working well, till they could not be given full marks for their activities. Following are some of the suggestions for the trade unions which can guide them towards benefiting the employees:

Unions may actively involve themselves in organizing training and development Programmes on subjects such as technical skills, computers and safety measures at work, to ensure a healthy and safe working and learning environment.

Not only the individual development of workers, but the welfare of workers' families and the quality of their social lives may also be taken up as a concern by unions.
iii) The unions should appoint a paid trade union office bearer, this will add pace to their work.

iv) From the study it is revealed that there are two more unrecognized trade unions in Indian Railway, Vijayawada division, this is another sign of weak unionism. With the multiplicity of trade unions the strength of each union decreases, which, as far as possible, should be avoided.

To conclude, we can say, it is evident that trade unions at Indian Railway, which are operating in Vijayawada division, in particular, are not only playing an active role in improving the quality of work life of employees, but also in maintaining good industrial relation in the organization. In fact, the welfare of workers seems to be an inseparable component of the functions of these unions.

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9. “Indian Rail Worker” published by Employees’ Union of Indian Railway.
10. “Railwaymen”s Shramik Sangbad” monthly bulletin published by Mazdoor Union of Indian Railways.