



LEADERS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT: THEIR IDEOLOGIES AND INFLUENCES

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ABSTRACT

The position of a leader is not inherently constant, played by one person; it shifts with circumstances and is transitory. The concept of management provided by Bogardus best describes leadership in a trade. According to him, "leadership is a mechanism in which between leader and followers there is give-and-take. The position of the leader is always self-evident; it can obscure the function of the followers. But the follower is important, since there could be no leader "without him. The option of a decision is made through the involvement of the rank and file in such a situation, and the leader becomes organizationally accountable to them.

Similarly, the management is often implicitly the responsibility of a trade union leader, as he must work within the limits laid down by the job association. In addition, leadership will usually be effective, making itself appropriate to management (at least for negotiations) by correctly understanding management issues for employees. In a way, thus, he also directs the management to the degree that he is able to manipulate the staff for the management's purposes. In addition, through the state apparatus and political parties, a trade union leader becomes a public figure only by virtue of his position. His meaning thus continues to grow with the extension of his prominence'. The labour movement leadership in Bombay had the greatest disadvantage as the newly emerging leaders were not predominantly employees and had to follow their own philosophy and affiliations.

In the 20th century, the city of Bombay replaced the other two presidencies in colonial India, Calcutta and Madras, in terms of industrial growth, and began to give the British government more revenue. It is equally important to note that the British government's initial strategy was

to maintain India only as a mere supplier of raw materials and then promote it as an arena for selling only its manufactured products. Instead, the last five decades of the 19th century were a more calculative leap on the part of British Indian capitalists. While they seemed to be encouraging the development of the textile industry, they were simply an ally set up in India to assist the textile companies in Manchester and Lancashire, England. They allowed only those industries in India to develop which they would be able to control and have some experience of monitoring. This was also a deliberate move to not only remove the remaining small-scale cottage industries, but also to channel India's industrial policy along England's lines.

In the Indian economy, the conceptual nature of these industries penetrated and conveniently encouraged Indian traders and the market class in this field. Annie Besant rightly listed the survey of British rule and its effect on Indian economy in her book 'How India Wrought for Independence' where she emphasises 'that under the Company, the English connection reduced India to poverty and dislocated its industries, and that under the Crown, the Government is still hampering its industries, creating a cruelly severe drain on the region, and by the The economic transition had a profound effect on India's social structure,' a hundred families belonging to the same caste can be grouped into a town within the city that will therefore be divided into many natural areas controlled by common attitudes and feelings.

INTRODUCTION

The leadership of the movement of the working class requires some introspection about how its duties have to be carried out by the leaders. A leader should have "inter-personal influence, exercised in the situation and directed towards achieving a specified goal or objectives through the communication process." This interpretation suggests that leadership includes:

- **The Leader** - who is an influencer - is an entity who is in a position of control or has the ability to alter the situation or other individuals.
- **Context** - The situation in which the leader and the follower (followers) will create a potential relationship. It also involves objectives (whether real or implied) that establish and perpetuate the relationship between the leader and the leader. Depending on the essence of an organisation, leadership character is also an important aspect of leadership.

- **Mechanism** - the contact by which management is affected. It also applies to the mechanism by which the leader and the leader communicate and also the manner in which the organisation, the leader and the leader accomplish their goals.

As the 'unskilled workforce is incapable of fighting their own battles and can be easily made to surrender in negotiations between them and their trained, resourceful and wide-awake opponents'⁴⁶. The labour class is equally responsible for not merely following the instructions of its leaders, but using this opportunity to orient themselves and take the leadership into their own hands. Failure to do so would make them entirely dependent on this class of leader, who can exploit the circumstances and even negotiate on occasions; in order to maintain their roles before the management and the employees. 'Labor will finally discover its leaders from within its own ranks,' While we find that attempts were made by some leaders to orient workers around the world about the situation and they tried to draw a contrast such as Mr. G. K. Devadhar⁴⁸, during one such meeting of the Servants of India Society, he spoke on 'The Tendency of Labour Reforms in the West,' explaining the many stages through which the issue of reforming labour conditions had passed, shooting the topic of reforming labour conditions.

Women Leaders

Women's trade union leaders' accounts also give us fascinating information such as the name of Miss Maniben. For twenty years, Kara championed the cause of the working class and represented the point of view of the labour class before the International Labour Conferences as well. She worked on various government committees and was also appointed to the Central Legislative Assembly, was arrested twice by the court, and also decorated the All-India Trade Union Congress President's ship as well as the Indian Labor Federation's later President of the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. The other popular names were: Mrs. Shanta Mukherjee, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, Mrs. Ambika Joglekar, Mrs. Prabhashini Banerjee, Dr. Mrs. Maitreyi Bose, Mrs. Indirabai Ruikar, Mrs. Khedgikar, Mrs. Leela Alwaris, Mrs. Parvatibai Bhore, Mrs. Pujari, Mrs. Radhabai Kambale, Mrs. Bayanbai Deshmukh and Mrs. Dhondabai, some of the prominent women who played a significant role in the trade union movement in India. For two years, Mrs. Shanta Mukherjee was Assistant Secretary to the All-India T.U.C. Mrs. Pujari, a woman employed in a textile factory, was on the Bombay National T.U.C. Executive. Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali was also one of the executives. Indirabai Ruikar played a prominent role in Madhya Pradesh's labour class struggles. Mrs. Parvatibai Bhore has been on the executive board of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress and

has been involved in the textile workers' struggles since 1938. Mrs. Ambika Joglekar and Mrs. Radhabai Kambale have played a leading role in fostering female workers' participation in the working-class movement. Mrs. Shanta Mukherjee started a monthly *Sharmika Mahila*, which was dedicated exclusively to the problems of women workers, and Mrs. Ambika Joglekar began a weekly *Kamgar Khabar*.

In 1921, the only female members of the 77 members of the AITUC standing committee were Miss Chattopadhyaya, Miss Reuben, and Mrs Avantikabai Gokhale. If labour slowly emancipated itself from poverty and slavery in the West and secured and retained a fair standard of living with some realistic view of its coming position in a new society, it was because of strikers and not because of welfare work or charitable organisations. The only salutary alternative for strikes is respecting the will of the workers in the production mechanism, rendering him a citizen in an industry and not a subject in a word to grant industrial self-government. However, India's labour class did not confine itself to the day-to-day trade union movement to realise economic demands alone with the accumulation of its own power, the Indian working class stirring up from the stage of day-to-day economic struggles began to appear gradually as a separate force in India's political arena. The post-war boom ended in 1922. There was no imminent beginning of a time of stagnation, but industrial profits started to fall, so the response to workers' demands became increasingly harsh. There were a number of strikes that failed and workers lost their immediate motivation to form and establish unions.

The years from 1926 to 1929 constitute an eventful period of India's working-class struggle, and during these years significant strikes were carried out. Although the government attempted to dub these strikes as 'communist conspiracies,' these struggles, led in many instances by the communists, were in reality a sharp manifestation of the simmering frustration of a working class plagued with crippling problems' 59.

In India, the labour class movement that began to develop extensively after the First World War made rapid progress over the next two decades and assumed a very important role in India's national-political movement on the eve of another imminent war. It was a time of the fascist powers gaining power globally, both Italy and Germany having gone under their political sway. The imperialist taught India's working class and peasantry that feudal India's splendid isolation is broken down, that its economy is now affected by foreign factors⁶⁰. Almost all the future communists were non-co-operators who were involved. They had reservations in retrospect about Gandhi's comedic over-amplification of the problems, but

they were struck by the scope of his movement and its potential as a reform tool. A fresh spectre plagued the British rulers in India after the successful Russian Revolution and the creation of the first Workers' State, a spectre of what would happen if the new Socialist philosophy took control of the working class of India.

The British Government has initiated a campaign of extreme repression to terrorise the Indian people against the revolutionary socialist ideology and the attempts of its handful of young revolutionary leaders to develop relations abroad and to associate with the International Working Class in their common cause of national and social liberation in order to crush the growth of Socialist ideas in India. 'Moscow Gold' has greatly contributed to many communist operations and adventures. Communist trade union work started around 1923. It started in Bombay and Calcutta, both cities. The communist way of thought was won over by some younger workers in the movement⁶³. In reality, the Government declared in 1920 that there was a situation of "Communist threat"⁶⁴ in India and made every effort to suppress and annihilate, isolate and establish public opinion against the radical segment of the labour movement. Some of the steps taken in rapid succession to accomplish this aim have been the Trade Disputes Act, the Meerut Plot Case, and the Public Safety Act. The events between 1920 and 1930 allowed more popularity for labour leaders than simply the repression of their movements. On the other hand, under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, the nation was preparing for a national upheaval, and we see parallel to it the consciousness among the workers against the unjust laws and exploitation by the naïve Indian capitalist class.

As it was the culmination of several variables, the emergence of the leaders also reveals a distinct pattern during that. In Bombay, the class struggle was not only to count the native entrepreneurs, but also to make space for the newly emerging class that would become the key catalyst of the nation's growing economy. What was interesting was that the attempts to merge the class struggle into a revolutionary movement were made to throw all masters over, i.e. It was imperial and imperialist, but it failed to obtain the support expected from fellow countrymen. Even the workers and the labour class could not establish it as a mass-based movement, unlike the revolutionaries of the fight for independence.

As outsiders or not one of the workers, the movement and the founders were always condemned, which was probably due to their non-participatory approach within the mills' premises. However the statement has another advantage because on behalf of the workers, it gave the leaders more bargaining power since they were not the direct beneficiaries of the same. The management of the mill could not victimise or impose their unreasonable orders

on them. Movement leaders focused more on mobilising for the cause or rather promoting their intellectual umbrella for them. During these times, the numerous unions often indicate that the mill owners did not know which union rightly and credibly represented the views of the employees. This has often culminated in the separation of the workers and labour class over the call of the strike. Strong reasons for the withdrawal and failure of the strikes were sometimes the non-uniformity in reacting to the cause of the labour class.

After the First World War, the chord of labour consciousness was strongly struck, but the leadership of labour in India was not prepared to react to it. During the Great Economic Crisis worldwide, we do not find that they are in the helping position. At this point in time, the labour movement in India was in its nascent stage, but foreign visibility was very broad and varied, even though during those five years of economic crisis they were unable to give workers a support system. The methods of applying Meaning and Procedure as part of leadership were not clear to any labour leader at that time in the application mode. We find them more interested in claiming the membership's numerical superiority rather than fixing the problems. On numerous times, the labour movement was without guidance and it looked to the leaders of Congress for some sort of allied support. The next chapter will discuss the rise of trade union leaders who have promoted the cause of labour and the working class. It will describe the variables for their rise and determine to what degree they have been successful in their goals.

Ambedkar's views on Labour

Ambedkar had known that when he planned to enter into labour politics in 1929 in Bombay, he was treading on a very difficult turf. The textile industry was dominated by the Communists and the Socialists in the first place. He ventured into the cause of the textile workers in Bombay with his vocal political and economic thinking of a just society. In the arena of industrial strife, the left wing in Bombay was planning for another upheaval. The unsuccessful 1928 strike attempt now made them more unpredictable, and on April 26, 1929, they announced another strike. The Girni Kamgar Union spearheaded the campaign. It was something of a revenge for the employer's heavy handedness, which vindictively replaced the employees who actively engaged in the strike of 1928.

Ambedkar thought after a judicious analysis of the situation that the 'strike arm' should be used sparingly and for the good of the workers and not for the political aims of the Communist leaders'. Ambedkar's views unexpectedly introduced a new dimension to the strike; in his column he strongly charged that 'the Communists were forced to resort to a strike more with political aims than with the intention of improving the lot of the workers'.

There was a reason why Ambedkar felt so similar to this as the Communist and Socialist never took up the cause of the industry's frustrated class workers, who went through the double risk, according to him.

According to him because of untouchability, they were purposely kept hidden from the lucrative departments in the Mill sector'. He felt that the workers were not prepared to go through another economic crisis at the moment, as that would add to the dangerous situation created by the 1928 strike. He further felt that it was also important to address the issue of their debts and the explanation for this vicious cycle; the often overlooked position of the Sahukars and the creditors required equal attention. The strike process does not drive Bombay's textile workers into more suffering. Therefore, Ambedkar argued that it was their right to resort to strike in order to change their circumstances. For the better, there should be a change; it should be influenced without doing any damage to the workers' interests. He decided that the illness should be treated without impairing the patient's health. This was a more acceptable way of coping with the situation. A very extensive propaganda to counteract the Girni Kamgar Union's propaganda was carried out by R. Bakhale and Shyamrao Parulekar. On April 29, 1929, at the Damodar Hall, Bombay, the Textile Labour Union called a meeting of workers. After passing a resolution against the start of strike 108, Ambedkar chaired the conference. The slow and steady popularity he acquired made him realise that the formidable force is the textile workers and they need to be well guided. Ambedkar stayed busy for the next few years at the Round Table Conferences in London and with his social movements to uplift the depressed class.

Factors for the formation of Independent Labour Party (ILP)

His predecessors, such as Jyotiba Phule, Narayan Meghaji Lokhande and Tilak, led the efforts in the labour movements, which now required a much needed jolt to make it a mass mobilised movement. He thought that there had to be a committee of members to present the employees' grievances. A trade union can have three different goals, according to Ambedkar:

- Aim relating to the promotion of their personal interests as employees, employment, working hours, promotions in the industry, etc.
- Social reasons, granting such benefits, granting old age pensions, granting those members unemployment benefits, granting their widows pensions, etc.
- Political intention, viz. Right to promote a clear political line which the Union considers to be well suited to safeguarding its economic and social position.

Ambedkar did not believe that a group would merely float. He felt it should have a realistic programme and two points had to be addressed:

It is important to create communication with the masses in the first place. With its wares, its values, policies, proposals and candidates, it must go out to the people.

Secondly, it must carry out propaganda in support of its products among the people. He needed the intense propaganda of the party programme in society for this.

He firmly believed that men and their thoughts are created by a political group. He was saying People are mortal. Then the suggestions are. It is incorrect to say that a pro-priovigore idea would take root. An idea requires propagation as much as it needs irrigation for a plant. Otherwise, both will wither and die. Men are not interested in values and laws, according to him, but they are interested in things being done. For a group, what is important is to bring about collective action.

The post-1935 Govt of India Act of political growth was rapid and India was about to encounter the taste of provincial autonomy. Every political party has now started to consolidate and work on expanding its strategy. It was in the middle of this that Ambedkar was thinking about launching his party. It was intended to resolve the causes of farmers' poverty and the way out was to rehabilitate old industries and establish new ones. The party would aim to enact legislation to regulate the employment, dismissal and promotion of employees in factories for the benefit of industrial workers, to set maximum hours of work, to provide for adequate salaries and leave with pay, and to provide cheap and sanitary services.

In addition, in August 1935, the British Government passed the Government of India Act, which envisaged representation on a large scale for Indians in the Central and State legislatures. The general election, therefore, was to be held in 1937. Under their respective political flags, the political parties in India have been planning to contest elections. It was more than natural that under the banner of a political party, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also intended to participate in the election. The Bombay Legislative Assembly was to be composed of 175 members according to the Act of 1935, out of which the Scheduled Castes only received 15 seats to be chosen by a joint electorate according to the Poona Pact. In proportion to the general seats, Ambedkar claimed that the seats allocated to the Scheduled Castes were meagre. He thought it was therefore appropriate, on his own, to contest the elections for a better representation of his candidates.

CONCLUSION

The role of Dr. Ambedkar as a sentinel for the labour welfare of India' went beyond the reach of the Executive Council of the Viceroy. In the concurrent list of the constitution, the drafting committee of the constituent assembly headed by Dr. Ambedkar put the subject of Labour with an avowed objective to properly safeguard the rights of workers through the uniformity of laws throughout the world. The disparities in the degree of subjugation and economic exploitation of labour belonging to the Sudra and dalit communities were specifically analysed by Ambedkar.

- 1) Full Labour Employment Strategy.
- 2) A patronised labour welfare scheme funded by the state
- 3) A tripartite system of labour tribunals for the settlement of industrial disputes and
- 4) To create a participatory idealist labour process in nation-building by asking the unionised labour force not to be totalitarian in nature because of its collective bargaining power.

Dr. Ambedkar's life history epitomised the 'relentless fight against social ostracism and economic injustice of a downtrodden minority in our country. Through his personal example, he showed how one could lift himself to a life of purposeful grandeur and be a constant source of inspiration for his fellow men by a complete belief in self-reliance and by indomitable courage and perseverance. It was a remarkable distinction and honour bestowed upon one who was so eminently eligible for it when Dr. Ambedkar was selected to be the chief architect of the Free India Constitution. He could not have made greater use of his untiring quest for information, his amazing industry and his unflinching mission than in the work he did in that Assembly.

Perhaps Ambedkar was more focused on the question of labour and did not lose his grasp on the subject. His policy was much broader in scope and long-lasting²³⁶. While addressing the Social Protection for Labor problem at the Assembly, he stressed, 'Government is not the only party employing labour in this country. There is a huge amount of labour that private employers employ. As everyone in this House will agree, the Government of India should frame it in such a way that it should not establish a privileged class on the one hand and an under-privileged class on the other while framing its policy for the improvement of labour. The Government of India is not just a labour employer. It's just a state. It is a government and not just those who are in the immediate employment of the Government of India are responsible for it. In general, it also has a responsibility for labour'²³⁷.

Dr. Ambedkar alluded to the rise of Britain's Labour Movement and traced how it had twice taken the reins of government by wresting power from the ever-dominant Tories' hands. For the Indian Labor Movement, it was an example to imitate. He urged, on the model of the

British Labour Party, the need for the establishment of a United Labour Party in this region. Dr. Ambedkar, in conclusion, said that if England's democracy had failed, it was because it was in the hands of the Tories. It was necessary, therefore in whose hands Swaraj would be. He urged India's Labour leaders to see that it could be in the hands of Indian Labour²⁴³ when Swaraj comes.

A committed spirit, an uncompromising faith in the righteousness of the cause he struggled for was embodied by Dr. Ambedkar. His power of appeal, his capacity for direct speech and the honesty with which he put across his point of view often commanded respect and attention, whether or not one agreed with him in his approach to problems or in his method of coping with them.

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