

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### **7.1. Summary**

#### **7.2. Concluding Remarks**

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Trade union movement was taken birth in response to the changed conditions of the Industrial Revolution. But the movement, at its initial phases, was not successful in implementing the demands of the working class. The movement gained a momentum with the formation of Trade Union Congress and the enactment of Trade Union Act in 1868 in England. In Germany, the workers began to organise after 1848 although their actual growth was noticed after the Second World War. In France workers organised and formed union in the early nineteenth century. The movement became reform-minded since the mid nineteenth century and sought to change the economic and social system rather than simply to bargain with the employers. The American Federation of Labour formed in 1886 pointed out that the basic aim of trade unions was to improve the conditions of the workers through collective bargaining. This idea was, in fact, completely different from that of the socialist idea of trade unions whose objective was, among others, to transform the society.

In the Indian subcontinent the trade union movement began to emerge since the last decade of the nineteenth century with the formation of Bombay Millhands Association in 1890. The early unions were of adhoc nature. Most of them had no regular constitution, no regular membership, no sufficient funds and no constructive programme of actions. A notable development took place with the formation of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) in 1947.

To understand the position of the workers of organised sector we have to look at history. Naturally we have made an extensive analysis of the growth and development of trade union movement all over the world in general and a thorough investigation of the movement in Indian subcontinent, Pakistan (upto 1971) and independent Bangladesh in chapters II, III and IV respectively.

In the discussion of labour movement in the Indian context we have seen how labourers as a class emerged in India and Bengal with the gradual development of factory system. We have also analysed different phases of difficulties faced by the unions both from the employers and the Government. Trade union movement took a new shape after the formation of Pakistan. The movement could not develop unhindered upto 1971 due to division, disunity, personality class, ideological conflict and the control from outsiders.

The growth of the movement in the organised sector has been elaborately discussed with the changing circumstances of major industries including the jute industry in independent Bangladesh. The episodes of nationalisation and again denationalisation of major industries, including the jute industry, have clearly been elaborated. The core of the dissertation has been the representation of two case studies, one with nationalised jute mills and the other with private jute mills of Bangladesh. In the discussion of nationalised jute mills we have tested homogeneity and / or indifference of two jute mills namely the Jessore Jute Industries (JJI) and the Rajshahi Jute Mills (RJM) with the help of a statistical technique known as chi-square distribution ( $\chi^2$ ). We have essentially used this technique to test the significance of the population variation through confidence interval. An interesting picture has been portrayed while analysing the data collected from the two public sector jute mills. The data show that average rate of growth of profit of the public sector jute mills, as a whole, stands 12.5 percent. But the reality is that the mills are incurring huge net losses over the period. Insecurity of job and low wages have made the workers less efficient and thus less productive. Thus the jute mills are not in a position to secure positive level of net profit. The scenario of private jute mills is more or less same in terms of production, productivity, export, accumulation of profit or loss incurred. But the socio-economic positions of workers are more worse than the public sector jute mills. The trade unions in private jute mills are also less powerful and their collective bargaining power in raising wages and other benefits has been deteriorating continuously.

We have seen that union membership has been reducing rapidly. Bangladesh jute mills are not the only example of this. It is a worldwide phenomenon today. In spite of this trend workers have no alternative but to depend on trade union leaders to place their demands before the management. We have also seen that top-level managements hold anti-union attitude and create pressure on the union activities. Many recent studies also support the view that managers (senior, middle and junior level) have anti-union attitudes. Our opinion survey shows that trade unions have political affiliation and this is used by the leaders to gain the power and the confidence of workers. The study also finds that majority of the workers want to be affiliated with a union on the plea that union will improve their socio-economic status. We have so far tried to test the hypotheses we have formulated in chapters V and VI.

## **7.2. Concluding Remarks**

The Bangladesh jute industry was not making profit during the pre-liberalisation era but that loss was not as mounting as the present jute industry is incurring in the face of globalisation and liberalisation. In the pre-liberalisation era the jute industry was compensated; but the industry at present is getting nothing in the form of bonus voucher. What the sector gets is that it receives a cash incentive of five percent against jute goods export. But severe attacks come from the synthetics products. Moreover paper is a competitor of the jute goods products. Bulk-handling system of goods has again reduced the demand for jute products. The decaying condition of jute industry in Bangladesh has helped increasing poor socio-economic condition of the working class. Due to economic insolvency of the manufactured industry including the jute industry there occurs greater informalisation of employment. The managements are growing more and more rigid. They are declining to improve the conditions of the workers. They even threaten the workes unions to close down operation if they don't cooperate with the management in regard to settling economic issues. Trade unions are thus not in a safe position. Under the changed circumstances the concept of a secure job comes under severe attack. The message is that there will be a

freeze on secure jobs. In such a situation it requires a comprehensive safety net for all the workers engaged both in organised and unorganised sectors. To protect the interests of the jute industry and the interests of the workers engaged in this sector the Bangladesh Government should ban the use of substitute for jute goods products and and encourage the raw jute producers and jute goods producers by providing an enhanced subsidy in addition to the existing subsidy. If this industry is survived from a possible collapse then not only the the socio-economic conditions of the workers will be improved but also the millions engaged in agriculture sector in producing raw jutes will be getting protected. This will help stand the national economy on its own resource base. This again will help ushering in a development process for the welfare of all.