

## **CHAPTER III**

### **GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT DURING 1947 – 1971**

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### 3.1. Introduction

Trade union movement started in a new dimension in 1947 as the country was divided into two independent nations – India and Pakistan. They started their activity into two separate environments and under separate Governments, though they had the common experience of fighting against capitalism and foreign master. East Bengal (the region of East Pakistan) was industrially backward in the British regime, so the trade union movement in the areas forming Pakistan was less strong than territories falling within Indian Union. Moreover, what it achieved regarding union activity that credit went to 'All India Trade Union Congress' (AITUC). The AITUC was instrumental in giving the trade union movement in East Bengal its early backbone (Ahmed, 1978: 31).

There are some salient features of trade union movement of Indian subcontinent which has definite effect on trade union movement of Pakistan and Bangladesh as the later two geographical territories have originated from undivided Indian union. There were some common features among them.

During British period workers were very much insecure as they were ill paid and had no support either from Government or their masters. Moreover, labourers were treated as low class people in the society though they were the integral part of production process. Almost the entire labour force was unskilled. And unskilled labour always receives low wage. Skilled labours were seldom found amongst the natives. There were strong reasons behind it.

The indigenous industries of Bengal as well as India had been destroyed in a planned way in the aim of introducing British manufactured goods in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, large number of artisans became unemployed and they had no option but to join agricultural activities (Mukherjee, 1951: 1). But when factory system had been introduced in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century landless work force and displaced villagers, as well as urban craftsmen were recruited as industrial labour (Weatherford, 1962: 18-19). And management could not arrange training for those newly recruited workers. Workers used to follow their predecessors. Actually the foreign or native owners or the management did not try to give birth to an industrial labour class in India and Bengal. But in western countries including the UK Industrial Revolution took place during 18<sup>th</sup> century, the change over from

cottage to factory production was more or less natural one with no gap in between (Rahaman, 1969: 157). So craftsmen switched over directly from the cottage to the factory production.

So mostly workers were unskilled as they were coming from agricultural background. There was acute shortage of skilled workers. Moreover management's attitude was too not favourable, as a result the rate of turnover was also high. Another reason was that workers used to switch over from one mill to another for better wages and better working conditions. Except wageworkers looked for better living and working conditions. It is an economic truth that productivity is always co-related with living and better working conditions. So employer and employee should put their heads together to create better working conditions and increase productivity (Malik, 1954: 13). Recruitment was also defective. In all the factories workers were recruited through middlemen (i.e. jobbers), in local term labour *Sarder*. These middlemen used to take bribe from the workers. So the workers were more loyal to the middlemen than to the employer. These middlemen very often used to change the workers from one factory to another. These middlemen were also responsible for high turnover which led to the unstable work force and industries as well (Siddique, 1989: 86-87). Moreover frequent change of jobs was one of the impediments to be skilled and experienced workers. Unskilled workers had little idea about trade union or no experience to be united to form any association. These workers had a very little knowledge about collective bargaining process. That is why they had to depend on a group of leaders known as 'outsiders'. But when we look at the UK or other western countries we can see a different picture.

The skilled workers first took up trade union movement in the western countries. The skilled workers were found to be associated with 'trade clubs' or societies (first with the trade guilds or the association masters, journey men and apprentices or later with separate societies organized independently by the workers) even before the industrial revolution (Cole, 1962: 11-13). In many other European countries industrial revolution took place in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Those countries switched over from cottage industries to factory production and there was no gap. There was natural and continuous change over from small to bigger factories. So they had checkered experience. Due to this continuous process supply of industrial labour and trade union leaders emerged through a gradual

process. But the situation in the Indian subcontinent was completely different. Workers had no legal support, there was no minimum safety and security measures and no arrangement of hidden payroll (employee benefits and services or fringe benefit). And mostly they were lacking formal education and knowledge. Thus, workers were not in a position to bargain on any issue.

In this situation workers had no other option but to take political shelter. Political leaders on their part thought that if they could organise the large industrial labour force that would have strengthened their fight against the British. On this understanding political leaders came forward to form trade union. The trade union movement thus became an integral part of freedom movement. Though its main outlook was to use trade unions as an instrument to fight against the British, yet it did also some constructive work for labour movement in the beginning (Sharma, 1990: 90). It was a necessity of the time, but this practice of taking political shelter gave a pattern of the trade union structure that could be characterised as the weak organisation without the political support. This practice made them so weak that they could not conduct collective bargaining at the enterprise level without the political backing (Mondal, 1992: 8).

After a short while of the birth of Pakistan in 1947, political instability consequent upon the military rules hampered the development of a sound trade union structure in Pakistan (Mondal, 1992: 3). Division, disunity and disintegrity were a common phenomenon which was more aggravated by the leadership conflict. Moreover trade union activity was absolutely minimum in the areas of contemporary Pakistan. Major centres of trade union activity in British India, were located in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Kanpur etc. The territories then forming Pakistan, being predominantly agricultural, contained limited base for trade unionism. There were only 181 registered trade unions in Pakistan in 1948 and by December 1951 the number rose to 309 with membership of 3,93,137 (Mahmood, 1986).

After the war of liberation in 1971, the situation did not improve, but in fact deteriorated, in independent Bangladesh because of division and disintegration among workers as well as among the unions influenced by political parties (Bhuyan, 1991:155-156). Due to a change in the economic policy of the country after liberation, 80% of the major industries and services including banks and insurance had been nationalised. So the role of

trade unions became less important regarding wages and other benefits as the National Wage and Productivity Commission fixed it. Still the practice is on. Instead of that unions move for better the said Commission for all mills decides wage and benefits but that unanimously (Akkas and Hussain, 1998: 151).

This chapter traces out the growth of trade union movement from 1947 to 1971 in different phases with political, social and economic changes that took place in Pakistan. It also focuses on the achievement of trade union movement for the working class in economic and social spheres of life.

### **3.2. Growth of the Movement During 1947 to 1957**

We have noted earlier that industrial units were very few in number in Pakistan in comparison to Indian union. After partition and independence, Pakistan received 16 out of total 451 cotton mills, 9 out of 160 sugar mills, 5 out of 18 cement factories and none of 91 jute mills and 35 iron steel mills (Ahmed, 1978: 37). As industries were very few in number, naturally the number of workers was also less. Just before partition, in August 1947, there were about 95,000 workers in the areas of Pakistan, of which 50,000 were in West Pakistan and 45,000 in East Pakistan (I.L.O., 1962: 2). As the numbers of workers were small the trade union activity was very limited. Whatever the trade union activity was in Bengal (East Pakistan), it was the contribution of AITUC. It is to be recognised that the leftist labour leaders played a very important role in the wake of independence. Another notable fact is that responsible Muslim labour leaders never allowed communalism to raise its head in the labour movement (Ahmed, 1978: 31).

Just after the birth of Pakistan 'Eastern Pakistan Trade Union Federation' (EPTUF) was formed on September 28, 1947. The government of Pakistan announced its first labour policy in 1948, which affirmed that the growth of genuine and healthy trade unions would be encouraged to promote collective bargaining with full appreciation of national economy. It was also stressed that trade unionism would be saved from exploitation and the workforce, would be protected from victimisation for legitimate trade union activities. But nothing was done potential to reflect this policy either in Trade Union Act of 1926 or the Industrial Dispute Act, of 1947 (as adopted in Pakistan). The policy soon lost its impact as the industry developed fast

and the employers grew powerful, the trade unions remained weak and financially insecure. Moreover, the policy fell short of achieving desired objectives because the policy was not backed by appropriate legislation (Mahmood, 1968: 271). Within a shortwhile of the formation of EPTUF conflict mounted up with the leftist. The final break up with the leftist came on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1949 when the executive committee by a majority condemned the leftist dominated 'East Bengal Railroad Workers Union' for serving strike notice without prior approval of the federation. After this incident the communist members resigned from the federation. On 30<sup>th</sup> August, 1949 the EPTUF General Council expelled East Bengal Railroad Workers Union, Dacca District Textile Workers Union, Dacca Rickshaw Drivers Union, Barisal Bidi Workers' Union and Inland Steam Navigation Workers' Union from the federation (Ahmed, 1978: 31-33). Thus from the very beginning division and disunity started in trade union arena which gave advantage to the management. Political and ideological conflict causes serious setback to the development of the trade union movement specifically in developing countries.

The first tripartite labour conference was held in Karachi on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1949 with Hon'ble Labour Minister Jogendra Nath Mandal in the chair. Hon'ble Prime Minister Liakat Ali Khan opened the conference. Faiz Ahmed from East Pakistan attended the conference as a delegate where some union leaders from West Pakistan suggested to Faiz Ahmad that they would like to work together. Keeping in view of this suggestion a meeting of General council of EPTUF was called on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 and was decided in the meeting that to organise a federation embracing unions in both parts of the country and the name of EPTUF was changed to All Pakistan Trade Union Federation (APTUF) (Ahmad, 1978: 33).

Another Federation in the name of the Trade Union Federation, Pakistan (TUFP), Dacca was formed in January, 1949 with Nurul Huda as President, Kamruddin Ahmad as General Secretary and B.A. Siddique as Treasurer. By 1949 there were four major federations competing with each other. Later on APTUF was amalgamated with the Trade Union Federation, Pakistan (TUFP) on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1950, after a long and protracted negotiation between the leaders of the two federations. According to agreement between the two federations Nurul Huda became the President of the APTUF and Kamruddin Ahmad, its Vice-President. Faiz Ahmad continued as the General

Secretary and Aftab Ali, as Treasurer Abdul Awal and Zahur Ahmad Chowdhury were elected as Assistant Secretaries (Ahmad, 1978: 33-34). However, we see the unification spirit of leaders in the early age of Pakistan.

As Dr. Malik was sworn in as the Central Labour Minister since then he began to pursue the federation leaders to form a National organization. He contacted Mr. Khatib, the leader of Pakistan Federation of Labour in Karachi and Faiz Ahmad in Dhaka. The minister was successful to make them agree to form one national organization. In the tripartite conference held in Karachi in 1950, Mr. Khatib proposed the leaders of East Bengal to unite to a federation of the two organizations and the name All Pakistan Federation of Labour was suggested. But East Bengal labour leaders specially Aftab Ali and Kamruddin Ahmad agreed upon to have a confederation (Ahmad, 1978) last of all good sense prevailed, and in 1950 some of these federations merged together and formed a united platform by establishing 'The All Pakistan Confederation of Labour' (APCOL)<sup>1</sup> with two constituents units of East Pakistan Federation of Labour (EPFL) and The West Pakistan Federation of Labour (WPFL). To enable them to deal with the problems faced by the unions of a particular wing, the constituent units were given full autonomy (Rahman, 1969: 39-40). Of the two constituent federations, the West Pakistan Federation of labour was by far the more important and claimed two third of the total membership. The APCOL was affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (D'Costa, 1963:104).

The first convention of the national organisation was held with the labour leaders from East and West Pakistan on September 9th, 1950 in which 750 delegates represented about 320,000 organised workers (Quoted in Rahman, 1968: 51)

A constitution of A.P.C.O.L. was drawn up on the basis of the draft prepared by Aftab Ali and an exclusive board consisting of thirty members was formed. The first office leaders were:

Portfolios	Provinces	Names
President	Karachi (Sind)	M. A. Khatib (Karachi)
Vice President	East Bengal	Aftab Ali (E. B.)
	West Pakistan Sind	Umar Din (W. P.) Abdul Ghafoor (Sind)
General Secretary	East Bengal	Faiz Ahmed (E. B.)
Assistant Secretary	Karachi (Sind)	C. P. Dave (Karachi)
	East Bengal	M. Suleman (E. B.)

Source: Ahmed, 1978:

Out of 21 members of the first Executive Board 10 were from East Bengal; prominent among them were: Dr. A M Malik, Kamruddin Ahmed and Ghulam Murtoza (Ahmed, 1978: 35). Later on more federations were established like mushrooms.

As a result of personality clash and misunderstanding Nurul Huda along with A. R. Sunnamat left East Pakistan Federation of Labour and formed the Pakistan Labour Federation (PLF). Nurul Huda was elected its President, Nazir Mostafa, its General Secretary and A. R. Sunnamat, its Assistant Secretary. Due to this rift East Pakistan Railway Employees League (EPREL), Telegraph Association and Shops Association left East Pakistan Federation of Labour (EPFL). Pakistan Labour Federation continued with sincere effort of Sunnamat till 1956 when Pakistan Mazdoor Federation (East Pakistan Zone) was formed, Sunnamat as the President and K. A. Hye as its Secretary. Khaja Muhammad Hussain, President West Pakistan Mazdur Federation visited Dhaka and the two federations were amalgamated. Mazdur Federation used to be controlled by and large by the Tejgaon industrial area. There are all small industries but the unions ran on democratic trade union line (Ahmed, 1978: 35-36).

With the gradual development of industries trade union movement was also making headway. The following tables 3.1 and 3.2 pertaining to June and December, 1955, show the satisfactory progress of trade union movement in East Pakistan.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Unions and Number of Members in Eastern Pakistan on the Basis of Branch of Industries**

Branch of Industries	Number of Unions	Percentage to total	Total number of members	Percentage to total
Railways	5	2.7	58,544	38.6
Other transport	29	15.7	20,468	13.5
Cotton Textiles	17	9.2	11,874	7.8
Jute	23	12.4	18,921	12.5
Seamen	3	1.6	3,135	2.1
Municipal	5	2.7	774	0.5
Printing Presses	5	2.7	733	0.5
Dock	2	1.1	3,315	2.2
Port trust	5	2.7	4,343	2.9
Engineering	6	3.2	801	0.5
Tea	3	1.6	8,850	5.8
Power Electricity	7	3.8	539	0.4
Commercial	16	8.6	4,753	3.1
Miscellaneous	59	31.9	14,552	9.5
All Industries	185	100	151,602	100

**Source:** Government of Pakistan, 1955.

From the table 3.1 above, we find that as a single industry Jute occupies the highest number of unions. But as far as the number of members are concerned Railway occupies the highest position. It is due to the fact that unions at plant levels are widely practised in Jute Mills. In railways, unions are mainly found at macro level.

The table 3.2 shows the classification of trade unions by number of members.

**Table 3.2: Distribution of Trade Unions in East Pakistan According to Number (as on June 30, 1955)**

Membership	No. of Union		No. of Members	
	Actual No.	Percentage to total	Actual No.	Percentage to total
Below 50	23	12.4	711	0.5
50 and below 100	23	12.4	1,592	1.1
100 and below 300	69	37.3	12,349	8.1
300 and below 500	19	10.3	6,886	4.5
500 and below 1,000	29	15.7	18,272	12.1
1,000 and below 2,000	8	4.3	11,236	7.4
2,000 and below 5,000	9	4.9	25,161	16.6
5,000 and below 10,000	4	2.2	28,395	18.7
10,000 and below 20,000	-	-	-	-
20,000 and above	1	0.5	47,000	31.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>151,602</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Government of East Pakistan, 1955.

From the above table we find that unions consisting of 100 and below 300 members were the highest in number at that time.

In order to show the rapid progress of trade union movement of Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) within just six months' time we have furnished data in table 3.3 and 3.4 below pertaining to December, 1955.

**Table 3.3: Distribution of Number of Unions and Number of Members in Eastern Pakistan on the Basis of Branch of Industries (as on 31 December, 1955)**

Branch of Industries	Number of Unions	Percentage to total	Total number of members	Percentage to total
Railways	6	2.5	58,644	36.3
Other transport	39	16.4	22,379	13.9
Cotton Textiles	21	8.8	12,499	7.8
Jute	28	11.8	20,540	12.7
Seamen	3	1.3	3,135	1.9
Municipal	5	2.1	774	0.5
Printing Presses	5	2.1	733	0.5
Dock	2	0.8	3,315	2.1
Port trust	5	2.1	4,343	2.7
Engineering	7	2.9	842	0.5
Tea	3	1.3	8,850	5.5
Power Electricity	7	2.9	539	0.3
Commercial	21	8.8	6,133	3.8
Post and Telegraph	1	0.4	195	0.1
Miscellaneous	85	35.7	18,431	11.4
All Industries	238	99.9	161,352	100

**Source:** Government of East Pakistan, December, 1955.

From table 3.3 above, it is clear that Jute occupies the highest number of unions as a single industry and Railways had the highest number of members on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1955. The increase of number of trade unions and the number of members are visible.

Table 3.4 below displays the number of unions according to the number of members as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1955.

**Table 3.4: Distribution of Trade Unions According to Number (as on 31<sup>st</sup> December June, 1955)**

Membership	No. of Unions		No. of Members	
	Actual No.	Percentage to total	Actual No.	Percentage to total
Below 50	33	13.9	981	0.6
50 and below 100	31	13.0	2073	1.3
100 and below 300	96	40.3	16655	10.3
300 and below 500	19	8.0	6936	4.3
500 and below 1,000	37	15.5	22915	14.2
1,000 and below 2,000	8	3.4	11236	7.0
2,000 and below 5,000	9	3.8	25161	15.6
5,000 and below 10,000	4	1.7	28395	17.6
10,000 and below 20,000	-	-	-	-
20,000 and above	1	0.4	47000	29.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>161,352</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** *Eastern Pakistan Labour Journal*, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1955.

It is clear from the above table 3.4 that the highest number of unions had the membership of 100 and below 300. However, as far as actual total membership is concerned, unions having membership of 500 and below 1,000 groups occupied the top rank.

From a perusal of the two tables pertaining to 30<sup>th</sup> June and two tables of 31<sup>st</sup> December 1955, the rapid progress of trade union movement of that time in East Pakistan is very much clear. Actual number of membership went up to 161,352 from 151,602 within six months.

After partition, democracy could not gain a solid base in Pakistan due to different reasons. From early fifties change of Government at quick succession led the country towards instability. Political instability and later on military rule prevented the development of a constructive trade union structure. There was mistrust between employer and the workers as the employers were mostly non-locals in East Pakistan (Mondal, 1992: 193). The territory of Pakistan was infrastructurally backward than Indian Union in all respects. So the country had to make steady progress with different limitations. From economic point of view, the period 1951-58 may be called a period of industrial foundation and groundwork. During this period a number of Government and semi-Government institutions were established

to help develop industrial and commercial undertakings. As a result, there was a gradual growth of the non-agricultural sector of the economy (Rahman, 1963: 52).

From 1950 to 1958 a number of political ups and downs took place in the country. In 1954 election was held in East Pakistan. The cabinets were reshuffled and dismantled and martial law was imposed. These political troubles also reflected in the socio-economic life of the country. During these years due to conflict amongst the leaders, the APCOL failed to give a unified leadership to the trade union movement. Instead of acting "selfless and honest for improving the working and living conditions of the toiling masses," the leaders of the APCOL "remained busy in maintaining their position, power and leadership" (Rahman, 1969: 40).

With the gradual industrial development trade union movement was also going on somehow satisfactorily, though there were division, disunity and personality clash in trade union arena. During the period 1951-54, the number of registered trade unions increased from 309 with a membership of 410,755, but the growth was hampered after 1954. The opposition party (the United Front) came to power in East Pakistan in 1954. But only after few months the ministry was dissolved and the province was placed under the administration of a Governor deputed by the centre. In the same year the communist party of Pakistan was banned and a large number of political and trade union leaders were arrested (Rahman, 1967: 110). This was a serious blow to the trade union movement of Pakistan as the leftists were very much active in providing leadership to the overall labour movement. During the Pakistan regime, Government used to interfere in the trade union activities from time to time. (Hussain *et al.*, 19: 146). In 1955 the number of trade union membership and the number of disputes declined to a considerable extent. After two years trade union membership showed an upward trend in 1957 and the figure rose to 384,127 in October 1958. But in the same month another political change took place - Martial Law was proclaimed under the leadership of Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan (Rahman, 1969: 110-111). All political and trade union activities came to a halt. So the natural growth of trade union movement had been threatened to a great extent.

### **3.3. Progress during 1958 to 1962 under Martial Law**

Martial law was imposed in October 7, 1958 and it was lifted on June 8, 1962. During Martial law, all democratic instructions were put under restriction until further order. Like political parties trade union organizations also lost the right to organize meetings and to address anywhere. So after the declaration of Martial Law trade union activities declined. The very act of military take over shattered the confidence of workers as to the gain from trade unions or other democratic institutions were not materialized and as a consequence immediately after the declaration of Martial Law trade union membership declined sharply (Rahman, 1968: 53).

After the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan inherited all the labour policies, legislations and regulations that were enforced in undivided India. Frequent political changes took place in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and each new regime that came in power declared one new labour policy containing similar programmes with minor differences (Khan, 1986: 37). First five year programme of action in the field of labour was drawn up in India during October 1946 and it was adopted in Pakistan in February, 1949 in the first labour conference, consisting of the representatives of the Government, employers and workers (Khan, 1986: 87). But from 1949 to 1955 nothing remarkable had been achieved regarding the interest of the working class. Without doing anything substantial in last five years, the Government made a formal announcement of its labour policy in 1955. This policy also did not bring any good to the workers like the previous one. The only achievement was the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Act that was passed by the legislature in March 1957. This amendment was for increased rates of compensation for accidents. And another amendment for Industrial Dispute Acts, providing for speedy remedy to the aggrieved workers in the case of violation of the condition of service, and conciliation of apprehended disputes, were made in the middle of 1958 (Khan, 1986: 88).

In February 1959, the Pakistan Government announced a 'Revised Labour Policy'. The need for a healthy and vigorous trade union movement in the interest of industrial and social peace has been recognised (D'Costa, 1963: 103). But in Martial Law period workers used to feel insecure to work freely. Though the Government also tried to take some legislative measures as a step towards the implementation of its declared labour policy. The Trade

Union Act, 1926 was amended in 1960 and 1961 by the Trade Union (Amendment) Ordinance, 1960 (Ordinance No. XIV of 1960) and the Trade Unions (Amendment) Ordinance, 1961 (Ordinance No. XI of 1961). The former ordinance provided for the recognition of trade unions and came into force on August 1, 1961. The later ordinance provided for the exclusion of outsiders from the executive of the unions and came into force from March 16, 1961 (Shafi, 1961: 323). So this Act debarred any outsider from becoming an officer of trade union, unless he was full time servant of the union.

The following other ordinances were promulgated by the Martial Law authority before the imposition of a constitution by Ayub Khan in 1962.

1. The Industrial and Commercial Employment (standing orders) Ordinance, 1960.
2. The Working Journalists (condition and service) Ordinance, 1960 (Ahmad, 1978:71-72).
3. The Minimum Wage Ordinance, 1961.
4. The Road Transport Workers Ordinance, 1962.
5. The Tea Plantation Ordinance, 1962.
6. The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Ordinance, 1960.

Under the 1962 constitution, labours by and large become a provincial subject. The central labour laws were passed on to the Provincial Governments. It is very interesting to note here that Pakistan Central Government was very much orthodox regarding the provincial autonomy and decentralisation of power. But why they segregated labour as a provincial subject. A conclusion may be drawn regarding the matter that it is troubled subject let it be in the hands of the provinces. Moreover there is no chance of direct monetary gain and not involved directly to the security of the country. Following the transfer of this subject to the province, the Government of East Pakistan enacted several Acts by repealing the central Acts and Ordinances. The most important among the enactments by provincial legislatures were as follows:

1. The East Pakistan Trade Union Act, 1965;
2. The East Pakistan Labour Disputes Act, 1965;
3. The East Pakistan Employment of Labour (Standing Orders) Act, 1965;
4. The East Pakistan Factories Act, 1965;
5. The East Pakistan Shops and Establishments Act, 1965; and

6. The East Pakistan Water Transport (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1965. (Ahmed, 1978: 70-72)

These Acts gave a solid trade union, recognition and the employer had hardly any say against the trade union recognition. Accordingly, Labour Dispute Act, 1965 provided for collective bargaining but for all practical purposes, the use of strike was made impossible. Strikes were banned in public utility services. Employment of Labour (standing orders) Act, 1965 the most unfavourable provision was the termination of employment without showing any reason which was against the very spirit of collective bargaining. The Factories Act, 1965 incorporated some additional provisions with regard to leave of the workers (Khan, 1986: 90-91).

The following table 3.5 will provide a picture of Registered Trade Unions with membership in Pakistan till 1962.

**Table 3.5: Registered Trade Unions with Membership in Pakistan**

Period	Number of Unions	Total Membership
1950	251	Not Available
1951	309	393.137
1952	352	394.923
1953	394	424.563
1954	382	410.755
1955	474	325.610
1956	524	316.317
1957	611	366.317
1958	621	357.064
1959	618	347.522
1960	708	350.604
1961	723	398.723
1962	789	417.248

**Source:** *Government of Pakistan* (1966: 582)

### **3.4. Period from 1962 to 1971: Labour Movement under Restricted Democracy**

Martial Law was lifted on June 8th, 1962. In the June-July session of the national assembly in the same year, the ban on the formation of parties was lifted and democratic and constitutional form of Government was restored and the right to form and join associations was assured by the Constitution (Khan, 1980: 294-295). In addition to the All Pakistan Federation of Labour (APCOL) the Pakistan National Federation of Trade Unions (PNFTU) was formed in September 1962, and has been affiliated with the ICFTU with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1966 (Rahman, 1967: 112). There were 965 registered trade unions with a membership of 512225 in December, 1965

(GOP, 1966: 582), whereas in December, 1961 there were only 723 registered trade unions with 398, 723 members (GOP 1966: 582). This progress was due to restoration of constitutional democracy.

Though communist party of Pakistan was banned and a number of political and trade union leaders were arrested in 1954, the communists were not sitting idle. They began to concentrate their activities in plantation, cement factories, Fenchuganj fertiliser factory and Jute mills in Chittagong division, cotton textiles specially in Tongi, cigarette factories, soap factories, sugar mills, biscuit factories, railway and Biri Sramik in North Bengal (Ahmed, 1978: 46). They used to work with caution or underground as their party was banned. During communal riots in 1963, which began in Khulna and later on spread to Narayanganj, Demra, Tongi and Narshingdi, leftist decided to resist such conspiracy to break the unity among the workers. Trade union leaders like Mahbubul Haque, Farid Ahmed, Kazi Muhiuddin M. S. Haque, Abdul Jabbar (Khulna) were elected to convene a preparatory committee meeting for calling an all East Pakistan workers conference in August, 1964. But the conference was postponed on the request of Chatkal Srammik Federation and Mazdoor Federation. The conference was ultimately held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 1964, in which delegates of 124 unions attended (Ahmed, 1978: 46).

East Pakistan Federation of Labour (Branch of all Pakistan Confederation of Labour) split up into two factions in 1963 — one led by late Mr. Aftab Ali and the other by the late Mr. Faiz Ahmed (Hafiz, 1980). So disunity and disintegrity was the characteristics of the trade union movement in Pakistan. And as we have mentioned earlier, leadership conflict was the reason behind these divisions. Another organisation in the name of "Purba Pakistan Sramik Parishad", but most of the leaders lost interest after Indo-Pakistan war in September 1965, after which defense of Pakistan rule was promulgated and the organization survived as a federation of the leftist with the name of Purba Pakistan Sramik Federation with Mohammad Toha as the President and Sirajul Hussain Khan as the General Secretary (Ahmed, 1978: 46). The growth of trade union movement during 1951-1966 has been shown in the table 3.6 below:

**Table 3.6: Growth of Trade Unionism in Pakistan**

Year	Trade Unions	Membership
1951	209	3.9 lacs
1961	708	3.5 lacs
1964	898	4.0 lacs
1966 (May)	988	5.2 lacs

**Source:** *Eastern Worker*, 1968, vol. VIII

It is clear from table 3.6 that in 1951 the number of trade unions was 209 and the membership was 3.9 lacs. In 1961, the number of trade unions rose to 708, but membership did not increase rather went down from 3.9 lacs to 3.5 lacs. So multiplicity of trade unions had been started much earlier. In the succeeding years number of membership increased but not in proportion to number of trade unions. Multiplicity of trade union is the net result of disunity, disintegrity among the labour leaders and workers and outside leaders' influence.

In 1964, Jute workers' historic strike continued for about eight weeks. The strike was organised by jute mills workers union under the leadership of Aftab Ali with a new charter of demand submitted on July 1, 1964 following the expiry of the agreement on June 30th, 1964. Other five Unions of Dacca, Chittagong were claiming their allegiance simultaneously with Purba Pakistan Sramik Federation, a rival federation of Pakistan jute mills workers union issued notices on their respective employers on the same date expressing their intention to go on strike from July 15, 1964. The strike actually commenced on July 31. Later on an interim agreement was signed on August 5, 1964 and the strike was called off under the direct intervention of the Governor of East Pakistan. Under the leadership of Abdul Mannan and Mulana Syudur Rahman Purba Pakistan Sramik Federation declared strike from the October 20 and continued till a settlement was reached in December 7, 1964 with other benefits. The minimum wages was raised from Rs. 65 to Rs. 81 (Ahmad, 1987: 47-48). Jute was the biggest sector at that time and the trade union movement was also strong in it.

**Table 3.7: Number of Workers in Jute Mills**

Year	Number of Mills	Number of workers (000) Permanent
1965-66	23	80
1966-67	29	100
1967-68	34	110
1968-69	47	150
1969-70	55	175
1970-71	68	170
1971-72	68	153

**Source:** *Government of Bangladesh*, 1980, p. 32.

It is revealed from the above table 3.6 that from 1965-66 onwards number of workers was rising gradually but in 1971-72 number of workers declined to a considerable amount. The reason might be that after liberation mills and factories could not open due to different reasons. But the Government was careful as it was the biggest source of foreign earnings and at the same time jute was the most important employment generating industry.

After lifting of Martial Law, trade union movement was in full swing, though due to leadership conflicts there was some division and disunity amongst the workers. Employer had always the tendency to exploit the workers, and the Government always supports the employers specially in the developing countries like Pakistan. Some other organisations came up in sixties. Another federation named "Jatiyo Sramik Federation" was formed in 1966 with Mr. Abdul Bashar as President. "Purba Pakistan Sramik Federation" was formed in 1967 with Mr. Tooaha as President (Hafiz, 1980).

Not only federations, number of workers and number of unions were also increasing gradually with the gradual industrial development, we can have a clear picture of 1966 from the table 3.8.

**Table 3.8: Classification of Trade Unions According to the Number of Workers as on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1966**

Membership	No. of Union		No. of Members	
	Actual No.	Percentage to total	Actual No.	Percentage to total
Below 50	54	14.83	1,763	0.53
50 and below 100	55	15.11	3,947	1.18
100 and below 300	113	31.04	21,441	6.41
300 and below 500	53	14.56	21,292	6.38
500 and below 1,000	33	9.06	24,098	7.22
1,000 and below 2,000	35	9.62	48,507	14.52
2,000 and below 5,000	14	3.85	39,718	11.89
5,000 and below 10,000	4	1.10	29,720	8.90
10,000 and below 20,000	1	0.27	19,431	5.82
20,000 and above	2	0.55	124,068	37.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>333,985</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Government of Pakistan, March, 1966.

From the above table 3.8, it is clear that small plant level unions having membership of 100-300 workers were much popular. Small sized unions were good in number because plant level unions were always in practice in this country. As size of the plants were small, maximum number of unions were also small from the membership point of view.

From the following table 3.9 we can assess the growth and development of trade unions within a year or so in the then East Pakistan.

**Table 3.9: Classification of Trade Unions According to the Number of Workers as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1966**

Membership	No. of Union		No. of Members	
	Actual No.	Percentage to total	Actual No.	Percentage to total
Below 50	54	14.40	1,599	0.50
50 and below 100	53	14.13	3,811	1.12
100 and below 300	119	31.73	22,638	6.62
300 and below 500	58	15.47	23,048	6.74
500 and below 1,000	34	9.07	24,798	7.26
1,000 and below 2,000	34	9.07	47,265	13.83
2,000 and below 5,000	16	4.27	45,265	13.24
5,000 and below 10,000	4	1.07	29,720	8.70
10,000 and below 20,000	1	0.27	19,431	5.69
20,000 and above	2	0.53	124,068	36.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>341,734</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Government of Pakistan, 1966

**Table 3.10: Classification of Trade Unions According to the Number of Workers as on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1968**

Membership	No. of Union		No. of Members	
	Actual No.	Percentage to total	Actual No.	Percentage to total
Below 50	54	13.46	1,573	0.48
50 and below 100	62	15.46	4,351	1.26
100 and below 300	127	31.67	24,245	7.03
300 and below 500	64	15.96	25,071	7.26
500 and below 1,000	36	8.98	26,592	7.71
1,000 and below 2,000	36	8.98	50,033	14.51
2,000 and below 5,000	16	4.00	45,252	13.11
5,000 and below 10,000	3	0.74	24,315	7.05
10,000 and below 20,000	1	0.25	19,431	5.63
20,000 and above	2	0.50	124,068	35.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>345,031</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Ahmad Kamruddin, 1978: Appendix VI.

**Table 3.11: Statement Showing the Distribution of Workers in East Bengal by Industrial Groups up to 1968**

Sl. No.	Name of Industry	Workers employed in East Bengal
1.	Jute Manufacturing (Jute Mills)	79,712
2.	Cotton Textiles, Ginning and Baling	33,627
3.	Jute Processing and Baling (Jute Press)	4,378
4.	Sugar Mills	13,464
5.	Rubber Plantation	N.A
6.	Plantation (Tea)	1,01,248
7.	Match Industry	10,088
8.	Shoe Industry	249
9.	Leather	620
10.	Silk & Rayon (including textile)	95
11.	Iron & Steel Re-rolling Mills	972
12.	Cement, Lime and Potteries	778
13.	Shipyard & Ship buildings	1,412
14.	Fertilizer Factories	
15.	Chemical (including Pharmaceutical & Cosmetics)	5,003
16.	Iron Foundries	1,839
17.	Paper and Newsprint	4,993
18.	Glass	2,114
19.	Ceramics	390
20.	Food (Biscuit etc.)	1213
21.	News Papers	817
22.	Tobacco	3,576
23.	Transport (Rail)	76,474
24.	Transport (Road)	22,51
25.	Transport (Inland Water)	N.A
26.	Mines and Quarries	473
27.	Ports and Docks	15,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,82,346</b>

**Source:** Ahmad Kamruddin, 1978: Appendix IX.

Awami League entered into the trade union arena very late. Leftist had a strong hold and Muslim League had little influence in the labour front. Before liberation of Bangladesh, the Awami League wanted to have its own trade unions in major industrial centres like Tejgaon, Tongi, Khulna, Chittagong and in other areas of the country. Sheikh Mujib created Jatiyo Sramik League in 1969 to have control over trade unions (Bhuyan, 1991: 152), Jatiyo Sramik League was formed with Mr. Nurul Haque as President and Abdul Mannan as General Secretary. At that time trade union Kendro was also formed with Mr. Harunur Rashid Chowdhury as President and Mr. Saifuddin Manik as General Secretary (Hafiz, 1980).

**Table 3.12: Classification of Trade Unions by Industry as on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1968**

Branch of industry	No. of Unions	Percentage to total	No. of Membership	Percentage to total
Railway	4	1.00	48,106	13.94
Other Transport	36	8.98	26,027	7.54
Cotton Textiles	47	11.72	30,080	8.72
Jute Textiles	37	9.22	35,627	10.33
Tobacco	24	5.99	8,124	2.35
Municipal	7	1.75	1,893	0.55
Printing Press	19	4.74	3,112	0.90
Sugar	10	2.49	17,169	4.98
Dock	1	0.25	8,758	2.54
Paper Mills	3	0.75	4,110	1.19
Port Trust	6	1.49	8,563	2.48
Match	9	2.24	4,155	1.20
Engineering	19	4.74	5,841	1.69
Tea	3	0.75	1,00,576	29.16
Power Electricity	9	2.24	3,641	1.06
Glasses	7	1.75	2,661	0.77
Commercial	51	12.72	8,605	2.49
Post & Telegraph	1	0.25	9	0.00
Miscellaneous	106	26.43	23,827	6.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,45,0.31</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Source:** Ahmad Kamruddin, 1978: 78, Appendix VII.

Everything was going on as usual, but again the country faced another Martial Law. President Ayub Khan resigned and handed over the power to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Yahya Khan on March 25, 1969. The whole of Pakistan was again declared to be under Martial Law by General Yahya Khan (Khan, 1980: 295). But this Martial Law did not continue for a long time. On December 21, 1969 a political activities regulation No. 60 of 1969 was issued and the following day the ban on political activities was lifted by another regulation and there by on January 1, 1970 normal political activity was permitted again within the standards of conduct laid down in Martial Law regulation 60 (Khan, 1980: 295).

The whole of Pakistan was passing through serious mass agitation combined with industrial unrest throughout the second half of the sixties, which reached its peak in 1969. Labour front was also very much annoyed regarding the Government politics and they used to take part with the anti-Government agitations. Labour disputes in East Pakistan almost became a regular feature at that time (see Appendix-I). In this situation Martial Law was imposed. The new Martial Law Government, headed by Yahya Khan, showed a sympathetic attitude towards workers and declared a new labour policy in July, 1969 which frankly accepted that workers had been deprived of their genuine rights in the past. It is claimed that the policy was far more

accommodative than those declared previously and even subsequently after the independence of Bangladesh (Khan, 1986: 91).

A new ordinance, called Industrial Ordinance, 1969 was promulgated which may be regarded as an important landmark in the history of labour. The Ordinance concerns the formation of trade unions and settlement of disputes between employer and workmen. Previously there were two separate laws on each subject in each province. These consolidated into this ordinance which was applicable throughout Pakistan – East Pakistan as well as West Pakistan. The Trade Union Ordinance and the Industrial Disputes Ordinance applicable in each province stood repealed (Shafi, 1969: 3-4).

The Minimum Wages (Fixation) Ordinance, 1969 was also promulgated for implementing the objectives cherished in the new policy. It fixed the rates of minimum wages for all industrial establishments, public or private, having 50 or more workers. So, at the fag end of the Pakistan period, all workers, both in public and private sectors, were allowed freedom of association and right of collective bargaining, including the right to strike. The minimum wages fixed were applicable irrespective of private and public workers of essential and service sectors like posts, telegraph and telephone, electricity generation, railways etc. were allowed the right to strike (Khan, 1986: 91-92).

Gherao movement of 1969 deserves discussion in brief as an important event in the trade union movement of Pakistan. The struggle against the dictatorial regime of Mohammad Ayub Khan started in the towns and cities in West Pakistan. Lawyers and students of the university took the leadership. Political leaders took the advantage of the discontents among the student and workers and mobilized them against the regime. The people of East Pakistan did not take the movement seriously in the beginning except the National Awami Party (Moscow group). The students — The East Pakistan Students League, The East Pakistan Students Union (both Moscow and Peaking groups) protested against the police action in the West Pakistan on November 23, 1968. Later on there was a public demonstration starting from Baitul Mokarram in Dhaka on November 24, by the NAP (Moscow). From the end of November, 1968 Maulana Bhasani, President of NAP (Peaking) called upon the rural poverty stricken peasantry to 'Gherao' (surround) the houses of the corrupt development officers and Tahsil offices. In many places 'Gherao' started from December. It is worth mentioning that the peasant revolt in Naxalbari in West Bengal (India) in 1966 had its impact

on the politically conscious peasant leaders of East Pakistan (Ahmed, 1978: 78).

The *Gherao* movement started in rural areas by Maulana Bhashani had its impact on the proletariat sections of industrial areas and the '*Gherao*' by the employers became a regular feature from first week of March 1969. But the *Gheraos* were not only confined within the workers of the factories and offices, rather the movement spread among the students too. Students were also involved in the movement inspired by political parties — both National Awami Parties (Moscow and Peaking group) and Awami League. This *Gherao* movement must have far reaching impact on society though apparently it might be thought that everything was settled with the fall of Ayub Khan on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1969 (Ahmed, 1978: 85-86)

The people and workers in 1969 went through '*Gherao*' and mass movement. As a result there was a change of Government (Hafiz, 1980). But another military bureaucrat appeared on the scene. Throughout the Pakistan period some Rushputins of the cantonment used to control everything behind the scene, sometimes they used to appear on the political dais. New Martial Law Authority announced that no retrenchment/termination of services of workers should be done without the prior approval of the Martial Law Authorities on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1969 (Ahmed, 1978: 93).

The Government took some positive steps for the workers. This Government arranged National Election to transfer power to the people's representative. The Government seemed to be better than other military Government up to the election. But after the General Election of 1970, the situation deteriorated as the power was not handed over to the representatives of the majority elected members (Hafiz, 1980). When Bengalees bagged the majority seats of the national assembly then Rushputins of the cantonment and Mr. Z. A. Bhutto (Peoples Party) arranged a nasty and nopherous drama to foil the transfer of power. The Bengalees were forced to take arms to protest against the crackdown and mass killing started by Pakistani army. Actually Pakistani administrators thrust the war of liberation upon Bangladeshis.

Workers, students, and army personnel, EPR and other professionals and people from all walks of life and irrespective of sexes did participate in the war of liberation. The Peoples Republic of Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign state in the World Map on December 16, 1971, with the help of India and other countries.

### 3.5. Summary

In this chapter, we have tried to depict the organizational development of trade unions and their movement with the gradual industrial development of a newly born country, which was far backward industrially and economically as a whole than the Indian union. As the country was industrially poor, naturally trade union activity was absolutely minimum.

Factory system set out its journey just in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century with the erection of a textile mill in Bombay in 1851 and a jute mill in Calcutta in 1854. After partition of India Pakistan got very few industrial units in comparison to India. After partition Pakistan tried to concentrate to develop industrially but her internal problem could not allow doing so. After a short while of the birth of Pakistan in 1947 poor economic infrastructure, political instability, continuous military rule hampered industrial development and development of a sound trade union structure as well. Despite all the limitations organisational development took place and trade union movement made its headway.

Division, disunity, personality clash, ideological conflict and outsiders' dominance hampered the growth of trade union movement of Pakistan. The scenario of labour movement of this sub-continent was almost same. However, humble effort has been made to trace out the growth and development of trade union movement from 1947 to 1971 in different places with political, social and economic changes that took place in Pakistan during the period.

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**Appendix-I**  
**Labour Disputes in East Pakistan since 1947**

Period to which the figure relates	Number of disputes resulting in stoppage of works	Number of workers involved	Number of man-days lost
1	2	3	4
1947 (for the period from 15 <sup>th</sup> August to 31 <sup>st</sup> December)	26	12,091	18,963
1948 ... ..	48	28,224	112,163
1949 ... ..	54	29,839	82,839
1950 ... ..	20	7,972	40,381
1951 ... ..	23	11,628	35,792
1952 ... ..	55	21,174	75,624
1953 ... ..	55	34,006	116,080
1954 ... ..	31	19,738	90,556
1955 ... ..	25	16,221	38,940
1956 ... ..	64	82,261	273,632
1957 ... ..	71	115,249	693,167
1958 ... ..	51	45,903	152,351
1959 ... ..	7	22,488	35,482
1960 ... ..	12	6,086	17,947
1961 ... ..	10	4,464	5,486
1962 ... ..	31	16,949	85,248
1963 ... ..	54	102,198	938,093
1964 ... ..	72	158,614	3,787,357
1965 ... ..	55	63,707	236,805
1966 ... ..	60	78,278	241,100
1967 ... ..	48	66,391	605,222
1968 -	3	1,322	2,767
January ... ..	1	134	938
February ... ..	3	5,346	13,798
March ... ..	3	7,212	42,207
April ... ..	3	1,696	3,537
May ... ..	4	30,896	37,303
June ... ..			

**Source:** Ahmad, Kamruddin, 1978: xxviii.