

## ON THIS ISSUE

This issue introduces a new editorial policy for DECISION, namely, of presenting occasional special issues around particular themes. The idea of thematic treatment as well as the substantive theme of this number is drawn from the Thematic Series Programme of the Faculty Seminar which was initiated in the IIMC during the last term, January—April, 1978. It is hoped that the readers will find such an effort of interest and relevance. Depending on the response to this attempt, more such thematic issues might be organized by the Editor in the near future.

Industrial labour research is a relatively unexplored field in this country. This is surprising when we consider that the importance of the industrial labour force in the developmental process has not been denied in any of the different perspectives that one may bring to bear upon the subject. In the absence of adequate data base and analysis, it is no wonder that generally the Indian manager, no less than the academic, suffers from stereotyped thinking on the subject. Is the Indian labour force "committed" to the industrial way of life? Answers to such questions may generate more heat than light. What we need to do is to make a conscious effort towards formulation of correct questions before we may expect to come out with relevant answers. In such an endeavour, the practitioners may gainfully cooperate, given favourable conditions, with the social and behavioural scientists. Here is one more area where the fruits of research have direct implications for policy and action at different levels, from plant to the nation.

The articles in this issue are exploratory in nature and none of the contributors has denied the need for further research in the field, this is so even though most of them have drawn from considerable research and other relevant experience. Without wishing to imply a mechanical demarcation, it might be suggested that the first three articles take up the task of investigating the existing condition.

Saila Ghosh and Sengupta present a macro study conducted in West Bengal with emphasis on the rate of cancellation of trade unions, the first such effort known to me. Though it is clear from their study that the trade unions in the state do not show the tenacity to survive actively in spite of a high rate of formation/registration, it is misleading, at this stage, as they themselves suggest, to jump to a simplistic formulation regarding the influence of political parties in this respect.

Sengupta and Subrathesh Ghosh offer us two micro studies conducted in Durgapur and Adityapur respectively. Sengupta brings out a particular feature of the workers and their trade unionism in a large industrial centre by suggesting that the workers have an instrumental orientation towards the trade unions. In this respect, the political affiliation of the trade unions is believed by the workers to be functional and at the same time disruptive. Subrathesh Ghosh, on the other hand, examines the condition of the labour force and labour relations in small enterprises, a neglected area so far. His findings are relevant for characterization of the different segments in the small scale sector as well as for a discussion on the appropriate policy regarding these segments.

The two articles by Sethi and Chattopadhyay that follow cover a broader ground and are centred round a particular issue, the issue of workers' participation in management. Both of them, in their respective ways, question the simple interpretation of the concept. They also spell out the implications at different levels of the adoption of the practice. Finally, the article by Luther attempts a critique of Walter Galenson and argues against hasty generalizations.

The deficiency of coverage, necessarily involved in such an endeavour, is partially met by the selection of books for review. Thus, we have reviewed the industrial experiences of Bagaram Tulpule, a book on the settlement of industrial disputes, and a recent study of the Indian working class movement.

One may agree or disagree with the points raised by the contributors to this issue. As stated earlier, there is a need for further research and thinking in this area. I hope the contributions to this issue will provide pointers in that direction and provoke discussion.

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*Issue Editor*