

DISTINCT FEATURES OF BMS

In India many unions are functioning simultaneously in one and the same establishment. On this background the BMS has some distinct features of its own:

- a) One of its basics is to build a structure of society, which would promote India's contribution to humanity.
- b) It has a firm belief in Indian Culture and its ultimate success, and takes inspiration from India's ancient culture and spiritual concepts.
- c) Naturally, It believes that the whole humanity is one and different nations are only its various facets. It therefore rejects the "Class Struggle" theory of Marx and hence the fight of BMS is not against any class but against injustice and exploitation.
- d) It believes in co-existence of nations and tries to promote brotherhood among them.
- e) It has a nationalist outlook not attached to any -ism (capitalism, socialism or communism).
- f) It is not linked or to any political party and is therefore independent of party politics.
- g) It is a genuine trade union working not only for the economic needs of the workers but also for their total upliftment.
- h) Unity in diversity is the special feature of Indian culture and accordingly BMS tries to bring together different trade unions and participates in joint campaigns for the solution of workers problems. No compromise on concepts and leaving the stamp on the deliberations of joint campaign committees and joint actions has been the tradition of BMS.
- i) It does not believe in violence and destruction/ and adheres to constructive approach in all its struggles.
- j) It considers workers interest in the context of National interest and hence propagates workers participation right coupled with duty.
- k) It believes in increasing production with proper distribution and hence propagates PRODUCE MAXIMUM but CONSUME WITH RESTRAINT.
- l) It strives for removing foreign influence on Indian Society.
- m) It considers STRIKE as a last resort after failure of bilateral talks, negotiations and arbitrations.

Philosophical Background of BMS

The BMS has ideologically a distinct approach than the rest of the Central Trade Union Organisations in India. Bharatiya culture forms the ideological basis of the BMS The word culture denotes a trend of impressions on the mind of a society which is peculiar to its own, and which again, is the cumulative effect of its passion, emotion, thought, speech and action throughout its life. Bharatiya culture looks upon life as an integrated whole. It has an integrated viewpoint. It admits that there is diversity and plurality in life, but always attempts to discover

the unity in diversity. The diversity in life is merely an expression of the internal unity. The unity in seed finds expression in various forms - the roots, the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits of the tree. Unity in diversity and the expression of unity in various forms have remained the central thought of Bharatiya culture or "Integral Humanism." If this truth is whole-heartedly accepted then there will not exist any cause for conflict among various powers. Conflict is not a sign of culture or nature. "Integral Humanism is the name given to the sum total of various features of Bharatiya culture- abiding, dynamic, synthesizing and sublime", Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay propounded. This is the idea, which determines the direction of BMS.

Marxists and socialists of every variety conduct their trade unions as instruments of intensifying class conflict with the ultimate goal of establishment of socialism. BMS is a votary of nationalism and integralism. Therefore, it rejects the class conflict theory. The class conflict, carried to its logical length, would result in disintegration of the nation. All the nationals are only so many limbs of the same body. Their interests cannot, therefore, be mutually conflicting. BMS is opposed to class struggle based on hatred and hostility, but it has always struggled against the evil forces of inequality, injustice and exploitation

With a view to achieving national prosperity and eradicating poverty, BMS is pledged to "maximum production and equitable distribution". Capitalism over-emphasises the importance of production. Socialism over-emphasises the aspect of distribution. But BMS lays equal stress on both. Maximum production is the national duty of labour, but at the same time equitable distribution of the fruits of production ' the legitimate right of workers. BMS has, therefore introduced in the labour field a new slogan based on patriotism: "We will work in the interest of the nation and will demand full wages".

Non-Political Trade Unionism

Politicisation of labour movement and affiliation of Central Trade Union Organisation with one or other political parties led to division of trade union movement in India. Affiliation to political parties results in inter-union rivalries. INTUC has links with Congress. It supported the policies of congress government. Even when it disagreed with government's action it indulges in nothing more than a mere verbal protest. "... By virtue of the common source of inspiration and common leadership, the INTUC has the tradition of working almost as a wing of the congress party with unassailable commitment to the party's policies and programmes. Since inception many leaders of the INTUC have been contesting the parliament and assembly elections. Several of them have been given berths in the council of ministers at the central and state levels....".

AITUC adopts the policies and ideologies of communist party of India (CPI). CITU has affiliation with Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). HMS follows

the principles and policies of the Socialist Party.⁴ UTUC has close relationship with the Revolutionary Socialist Party and other splinter parties of the left.⁵

Non-political unionism has been held out as the only solution to the problems that beset trade unions. One of the most ardent advocates of this line was Shri V. V. Giri, the veteran trade unionist and former President of India. "It is time that workers realize that party politics are completely out of place in trade unions, that they should not play the role of pawns in the game of party politics, and that their organisations are concerned first and last with their interest and welfare. Trade union leaders and party leaders should also take active steps to ensure that workers are weaned away from disruptive party leanings, so that genuine trade unionism may grow in the country".

The BMS has kept itself away from power-hungry politics from its inception. Trade union can ensure that powerful influence of workers on management and government policy only when the principle of non-political trade unionism is followed. Of course every worker is conscious of his rights and duties as a citizen and is free individually to join or not to join, and work or not to work, for a political party of his choice. But as union members collectively the workers must keep out of politics.

BMS is pledged to eradicate economic inequality and exploitation; but it is not 'Leftist'. It rejects the class conflict concept of Marx; but it is not 'Rightist'. It is purely nationalist and has accepted the principle of genuine trade unionism i.e. an organisation for the workers, by the workers and of the workers within the framework of national interest. In the XII World Trade Union Congress of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) of Communist Countries, held in Moscow, in 1990, it was admitted by almost all delegates that the trade unions of labour must keep themselves away from the power and political parties. This again is an international recognition of the basic concept of BMS on non-political trade unionism.

Motto of BMS

The BMS has coined the following three sparkling phrases to depict in brief its distinctive approach to the Trade Union Movement:

NATIONALISE THE LABOUR

LABOURISE THE INDUSTRY

AND

INDUSTRIALISE THE NATION

Distinct characteristics

1. Nationalistic outlook.
2. Constructive Approach.
3. Idealism, not expediency.
4. Adherence to Constitution and democratic trade unionism.
5. Perfectly non-political character.
6. Admission to all Bharatiya workers irrespective of their caste, creed, community, or sex
7. Conviction that class concept is a myth.
8. Realise that labour interests are identical with national interests.
9. Determination to steer clear of both, capitalism as well as communism.
10. Equidistant to all power centres.

Since 1955 the BMS has introduced many slogans befitting its ideology to the labour movement like:

*** Bharat Mata Ki Jai**

"BHARAT MATA KI JAY" was a slogan quite alien to the Indian Labour Field. Workers were taken by surprise when BMS first introduced this slogan and thus tried to bridge the gulf between the sectional and national viewpoints. Being essentially patriotic, workers were not slow to adopt this slogan.

*** Workers, unite the world.**

In 1955, the widely current slogan was: WORKERS OF THE WORLD? UNITE - In reality this was a slogan of all round disruption. We rejected it and replaced it with our own slogan: **"WORKERS UNITE THE WORLD"**.

*** Nationalise the Labour, Labourise the Industry, Industrialise the Nation.**

BMS also propagates the concept of labourisation based on the theory of the workers being co-owners of the Industry on the basis of a fair evaluation of the labour capital deployed. Hence the slogan **"Nationalise the Labour, Labourise the Industry and Industrialise the Nation"**. BMS also demands, the constitution of a national commission on the problems of ownership of industry, which should suggest the pattern of ownership for each industry taking into consideration the particular characteristics of that industry and the total requirement of the national economy.

*** Desh ke hith me karenge kam, kam ka lenge pura daam.**

(We will work in the interest of the country and will take full remuneration for the work.)

*** Tyag, Tapasya aur Balidan**

(Sacrifice, penance, and martyrdom) that are the main hallmarks of the BMS Karyakarta (Workers).

Patterns of Ownership

On the practical plane, BMS was the first to highlight the fact that neither nationalisation was the only alternative to private capitalism, nor was a panacea for all industrial maladies. There were various other patterns of industrial ownership such as, municipalisation, co-operativisation, democratisation, joint industry, joint sector, self-employment, etc. etc. It urged for the constitution of National commission on the pattern of industrial ownership. The pattern of ownership should be determined in the light of peculiar characteristics of each industry, and the total requirement of national economy. It firmly rejected both the extremes of "all nationalisation" and "no nationalisation"

Pleading for the organisation of autonomous Financial Institution to channelise small saving of poor people into industrial investments for the benefit of the specific industries, the BMS has said that the industrial structure in the future would continue to be complex, with various patterns of ownership, existing side by side/ but greater stress will have to be laid on setting up industries which will be:

**Financed by Commoners
Owned by Workers
Supervised by Institutions
Decentralised by Technologists
Served by Experts
Coordinated by Planners
Disciplined by Parliament
Assisted by State
Utilised by Consumer
&
Governed by Dharma**

Industrial Family

It was emphasized by B.M.S. that National goal cannot be achieved if there exists any feeling of enmity. The B.M.S. therefore, deprecated the theory of class conflict and emphasized that all the constituents should act and work in unison. This can be achieved by developing the concept of "family" in the industry.

Symbol of BMS

The BMS symbol characteristically Bharatiya, while its industrial wheel symbolises industrialisation, "BALI" agriculture and general prosperity and human fist workers unity, the real stress is on the opposable human thumb. No implement weapon or means of production could have been evolved, had man not been blessed with the opposable thumb. In this sense, human thumb is the real origin of all machinery, hammer, sickle, plough, charkha or spuntik. NO HUMAN LIMB HAS SO FAR FOUND ANY PLACE IN THE SYMBOL OF OTHER TRADE UNION CENTERS.

National Labour Day

In our country VISHWAKARMA DAY is being observed as National Labour Day from time immemorial. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh boldly introduced this day, happily enough it has received wide acceptability from the workers, though some of the so-called radical labour leaders are still hesitant on the point.

Viswakarma Sector

BMS was the first trade union centre to recognize the special importance of 'self-employment sector' Self-employment is the best status for men in society. Economic life without alienation is the life of ownership of one's own economic activity in agriculture, industry, trade and services. This is self-employment as a concept in economics.²⁰ Goldsmiths, blacksmiths, potters, tailors, engravers, barbers and washer men are self-employed. BMS rightly calls this self-employment sector as the Viswakarma sector. The western economics did not recognize this sector of self-employment which was neither a 'private sector' nor a 'public sector' but the 'people's sector'. Later on the Household Industries Act was passed by the erstwhile communist Soviet Union. Communist China and Hungary also had made legal provisions for the self-employment sector, recognizing its importance.

BMS urges a separate department under the Ministry of Labour and Employment to assist the self-employed persons. Self-employed people cannot be exploited nor can they exploit others. There is neither class war nor take-over of the state. It is a peaceful transformation.²¹ Self-employment sector should get more encouragement than at present.

Functional Representation in the Elected Bodies

BMS calls for the introduction of functional representation in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The territorial representation should be reduced numerically, each member being required to represent a larger electorate. In industrial sector, workers of each major industry and minor industries or their trade groups should be given representation in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies. The

organised labour should be given representation on Local-Self Government bodies and university senates.

There should be de-limitation of industrial constituencies on the national, the state and the local level for the above purpose. On the national level, the number of representatives to be elected by the workers of every industry should be directly proportionate to the extent of its contribution to the national income, BMS envisages.

Guidelines of the Future Socio-Economic Order

BMS is striving not only for the solution of immediate problems but also for the gradual evolution of the guidelines of the future socio-economic order. The memorandum on Labour Policy' submitted to the National Labour Commission on 22nd October, 1968. The National Charter of Demands of Indian Labour - An Order of Duties and Disciplines" submitted to Shri V. V. Giri President of India on 17th November, 1969 and "the National Charter of Directives of Bharatiya Workers" submitted to Dr. Shankar Daval Sharma, President of India on 20th April, 1993 are the documents of the collective thinking and the collective wisdom of BMS. These are also the guidelines to the architects of Indian Labour Policy for the 21st Century.

While opposing the New Economic Policy (NEP) and New Industrial Policy (NIP) BMS has suggested some positive alternatives. It has vigorously condemned the abject surrender to the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank <is that would amount to giving up our sovereignty. BMS considers the present moment as an opportunity to build up Swadeshi Model of Economy. D.B. Thengdi's "Third way" offers the general guidelines of the new socio-economic order. The ideal national paradigm of value-systems, institutional arrangement and parameters are given in the formulation of BMS.