NHCV's General Approach On Trade Unionism

1. Basic Approach

Nature-Human Centric Viewpoint holds that capital comprises a two-sided phenomenon, i.e., the environmental resources, on the one hand, and the human resources, on the other. This is because the environmental and human resources constitute the very life of human community, and, without them, nothing has any value in human society.

It firmly rejects the two concepts of capital, i.e., the liberal (Corporate) theory of capital and the Marxian theory of capital. While the liberal (Corporate) theory maintains that capital is the product of four factors, i.e., technology, labour, raw material and capital, the Marxian theory considers that workers surplus value (realised by the capitalist through paying the worker less money wages than the actual value of worker's labour) represents the capital. In fact, both theories in practice hold that money or wealth and its growth denotes the capital. This is, because both liberal and Marxian theories are in agreement that development, progress and prosperity, whether (individual or collective), is represented by capital. That is why, in the entire world, all government budgets, business accounts and individual incomes are accepted as the indicators of development, progress and prosperity.

Given the foregoing reality, it is necessary that workers should always remain accountable (in thought and action) to the people in general and the workers (both mental and manual) in particular, on the one hand, and committed to environmental (or its components) promotion, on the other. This basic approach should be reflected in all the activities of workers everywhere.

2. Workers Three Basic Demands (In All Countries)

(a) Workers Right to have one-third representation in management.
(b) Social security for every deprived and unemployed.
(c) A Maximum of 1:5 personal income differences in each country.

3. Main Issue

Workers should everywhere stand for ending labour subordination and establishing labour-capital partnership in management so as to set up equality of workforce and the controlling staff.

4. Main Feature

Workers main feature as a constituent of society remains human in general and labour (due to the quality of their work), in particular. As such, workers organisation is organised on the professional basis, i.e., having similar nature of work and similar working conditions, and is free from the influences of race, caste, religion, different cultural groups, political parties, etc. That is why workers organisation is simply called a Trade Union and not something else.

5. Trade Union Movement's Historical Experience

The Trade Union Movement, covering a span of 200 years, is characterised by both types of features—positive as well as negative.

The positive features include: widening of human vision by uniting workers of different races, religions, nations, nationalities, cultural groups, etc., into one union. Enabling workers to achieve a number of rights for all the working people, namely, (i) workers right to unite in one union, (ii) right to strike and collective bargaining, (iii) increase in wages and salaries, (iv) reduction in working hours, (v) prohibition of child labour and employment of minors, (vi) maternity leave for working women, (vii) social security for working people in matters of housing facilities, sickness benefits, child-care centres, factory canteens, ventilation system, safety measures, insurance advantages, holiday homes, health-care centres, labour welfare schemes, etc.

Today, trade unionism has become a general approach of functioning and organising of all trades and occupations, i.e., peasants, middle strata, businessmen and even the big capitalists and monopolists, thus universalising the TU role and place in society.

Notwithstanding its numerous achievements, the TU movement has also been marked by some weakness. These are:

* The TU leaders and activities are generally allied with established political parties which use the workers for their political ends.

* The politically dominated TUs lay more emphasis on individual problems of its members than the more important task of raising workers social consciousness, in general, and providing them legal education about the laws and rules concerning workers in each country, in particular.

* The politically dominated TUs are marked or influenced by certain leftist and rightist one-sided concepts, such as:

The leftist concepts of working class as the sole liberator of mankind; labour and capital as antagonistic forces; management as always anti-labour; workers to have concern only with their demands and not with their productivity; workers to care for brave (demagogic) leaders, ignoring their irrational behaviour, etc.

The rightist practice of organising the TUs on casteist, communal and sectarian lines and making the unions docile to the management.

6. Main Task Of Trade Unions

1. The trade unions need to perform a three-sided integrated activities: (a) to enhance the workers social consciousness by raising their political, economic, legal and cultural levels, (b) to strive for the democratic functioning of the trade unions, and (c) to unite the workers on the basis of their immediate and long-range demands in conformity with the rule of one trade-one union.

2. For enhancing the workers social consciousness, it is necessary to create an adequate understanding of the workers about global social reality and its demands.

3. For democratic functioning of the TUs, it is necessary to follow the democratic principle at all times and all levels. This also implies the adoption of legal and peaceful means to achieve every labour demand. This includes negotiations, conciliation, arbitration and lastly strike.

7. Trade Unions General Charter Of Demands

1. Political right to employees to contest elections.
2. To treat labour as a human capital and not as a commodity.
3. To end the subordinate position of work-force to management by giving constitutional right to the people, including workers, of participation in the management/administration.
4. Formulation of a proper government labour policy, which aims at achieving harmonious labour-capital (workforce-management) relations by assuring equal status to workers and management.
5. Development of the capacities and capabilities of workers.
6. To demand withdrawal of government plans of developing India's competitive equality through the route of anti-labour legislation.
7. To demand 1:5 of difference of wages between the bottom and the top.

8. Trade Unions Particular Charter Of Demands

It will vary from union to union.

9. Trade Unions Work Style

a. Leadership should always remain accountable to the workers as well as the trade union movement in thought and action.

b. The workers and the management should be accountable to the people.

c. The charter of demands should be reasonable and prepared in consultation with the workers and be familiarised fully among the workers.

d. Trade union work should be carried out daily to maintain close contact with the workers and the social consciousness of the workers should be increased, while attending the TU work.

e. Strictly uphold democratic norms in TU functioning.

f. Patiently listen to every worker and strive to know his personal, family and office related problems.

g. Organise regular meetings of TUs general members

h. Women be given due representation in trade union leadership.

i. Norms of environment promotion, equity, productivity, democracy, and transparency to be observed by workers everywhere.

10.Trade Unions Organisational Task

An organisational form, stressing the need for maximum possible unity among the workers by acting on the principle of one undertaking-one union. Wherever one union is not practicable, immediate efforts should be made to unite all the existing unions into a UF on the basis of a common minimum programme.

11. Nature-Human Centric Development Model

Nature-Human Centric Development model upholds two top priorities, i.e., environment and man and follows five basic principles, i.e., environmental promotion, fair equality (i.e., social security to every deprived and needy person and the rationalisation of irrational income differences in the proportion of 1:5), productivity (or growth rate), peoples-led democracy (empowerment of the people in place of corporate capital supported political parties and business circles) and all-sided transparency. This five fold fundamental principle corresponds with the bio-social nature of humankind, i.e., it co-ordinates man's self-interest with his social interest.

Nature-Human Centric development model represents the updated concept of development in contrast to the two traditional national development models, i.e., the corporate-led and the government-directed. While the corporate-led development model singles out profitability or productivity (which ensures the interests of money-owners alone) as its sole aim, the government-directed one opts for socialisation (or nationalisation) of the means of production as its only goal (which serves the interests of the ruling politicians and bureaucrats). Both these traditional national models serve only the self-interest of humankind contrary to his bio-social character, i.e., comprising both the self-interest and the social-interest. Again, they do not accord any priority to environment and any place to the upholding of democratic and transparent norms in the economic or growth process. Further, while the corporate model totally rejects the principle of equity (or social justice), the government-directed one fully ignores that of political equity and productivity,

Nature-Human Centric development model differs with both the corporate-led and the state-based development models on the issues of their purpose, management and style.

While the corporate model stands for developing the capital and capital-owners and the state model advances the interests of its ruling politicians and bureaucrats plus the labour aristocracy, Nature-Human Centric one serves the interests of people and environment, in general, and the poor and deprived sections, in particular.

In management, while the corporate sector upholds the monopoly corporate management and control and the state sector supports the monopoly bureaucratic management and control, Nature-Human Centric development model stands for democratic management and control of public limited companies.

In style, contrary to the authoritarian and secretive methods of corporate and state models, Nature Human Centric development model stands for democratic, transparent and accountable style.

Nature-Human Centric development model holds that both the corporate and the government-led development models be demonopolised by taking the following steps.

All shares in the public limited companies be made ordinary shares. No one be allowed to own more than 0.5 percent of these shares. However, the state may, in special cases, be allowed to own on-fifth of the ordinary shares. The rule of promoters shares (now prevalent in the corporate sector) be totally abrogated. Every ordinary shareholder will have one vote, irrespective of the number of his ordinary shares.

The management of the public limited companies be made fully democratic. In this respect, the ordinary shareholders be given two-third representation in the management board. The remaining one-third representation be reserved for the concerned labour of a given company. The labour

representatives be elected by both the blue and the white collar workers, having the same rights as enjoyed by the representatives coming from the ordinary shareholders.

The undertakings in which the government holds one-fifth of ordinary shares, the representation of ordinary shareholders and the concerned labour in the management board will be in the following order: ordinary shareholders 60 percent, labour 30 percent, government 10 percent.

The management board will be elected for a period of three years.

The above-mentioned democratic sector of Nature-Human Centric development model will be far more productive (may be twice) in contrast to both the monopolistic corporate and state-run sectors. The reason for the former's (i.e., the democratic sector's) high growth rate (or rate of wealth production) lies in its (i.e., Nature-Human Centric model's) greatly developed human and environmental resources due to its ensuring of equitable incomes with only 1:5 difference and providing of social security to everyone in all walks of Iife as a fundamental right; its fundamental principle holding people and environment as its main priorities; its adherence to global peace and security; its politics of peoples empowerment (particularly of women, workers and scientists-technologists) from the village to the UN level and all other economic, financial, and trading global institutions; its realistic and rational economics and its culture of human and environmental values.

As to the unviability of the government-Ied sector, it can be seen from the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the discarding of this model by the erstwhile socialist countries in the world. The ineffectiveness of the corporate sector can also be seen from the continuously rising graph of inequality, poverty, hunger, unemployment, houselessness, and above all, the continuing unsustainable crisis (now occurring hither and then thither) of the corporate model the worldover.

The increasing public demand for community (or public) control over the environmental and human issues shows the direction in which the human society is heading.

The corporate sector's newly-adopted stance of the philosophy of social accountability and ethical behaviour too reflects the unworkability of the corporate sector's fundamental theory of laissez-faire, which despises every social consideration in the economic development process and whose sole purpose is to maximise profit. November, 2004