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Education, General Awareness and Social Media Usage among Trade Union Leaders and Workers in Punjab

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Abstract

This paper examines the educational profiles, general awareness, and social media usage among 75 leaders and 300 workers selected from 15 unions across different industries in Punjab. The results indicate that leaders' formal education is satisfactory, but the majority of workers, mainly migrant workers, have lower levels of education. Various indicators show that the level of knowledge and awareness among the leadership is relatively higher than among workers. The majority of leaders use contemporary e-communication and social media, but the use of these tools is lower among workers. The results suggest a dire need to raise education levels in general, and union education in particular, to increase awareness and expand the use of modern e-communication and other platforms among trade union leaders and workers, thereby strengthening the trade union movement in Punjab and making it more resilient.

Keywords

Trade unions, Leaders, Workers, Education level, Social media usage.

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1. Introduction

Education is one of the basic needs, alongside food, shelter, and clothing, for a human being in the present times. It has been recognized as the cornerstone of economic and social development because it is a crucial input for development and enables a person to understand his surroundings and acquire knowledge to promote his or her interests. The significance of education can never be overlooked because it is a tool for bringing economic, social, cultural, and technical changes in society. Education raises productivity, creativity and efficiency of labour. It is the key to improving the economic efficiency and social consistency as it increases the overall productivity and intellectual flexibility of the labour force. It plays a vital role in technological capability and technical change in a country's industrial development (Ozturk, 2008).

Modern machinery in the industrial sector depends to a peculiar degree on education. It is difficult and perilous to build modern machinery with an illiterate workforce. Therefore, the education of industrial labour should receive special attention (Royal Commission, 1931). The National Commission on Labour (1969) found that no concrete steps were taken by the Government, employers, or most trade unions to educate and enlighten workers for a long period of time. It is recommended that the programme of workers' education should be formulated, administered and implemented by the trade unions themselves. To overcome the difficulties of the unions, the Central Board of Workers' Education should provide aid to trade unions for workers' education until the unions take over the programme of workers' education. Simultaneously, employers should provide the same facilities recommended by the Board to educate and enlighten workers.

Cunniah (2007) defined 'Union Education' as a process through which the workforce learns to be unionist. It is education provided by unions, leaders or independent labour educators to workers through union schools, workshops, union journals or magazines, seminars, meetings, discussions, campaigns, strikes and other activities. Compared with the individual-centred approach of formal education in schools/colleges/universities, union education is group-oriented. Thus, both formal and union education should be provided to the workers for their betterment.

Like big organizations, trade unions also print and distribute their newsletters, magazines, and journals to educate and raise awareness of current labour and industrial issues among the working class. Thus, the regular publication of

newsletters, magazines, and journals by unions provides a means of educating and raising awareness among the working class. Furthermore, workers' participation in union meetings and strikes provides unions with an avenue to provide informal education and raise general awareness among the working class (Berrell, 2013). Thus, to evaluate union education, we have analyzed general awareness among leaders and workers using their access to newspapers, magazines/journals, union pamphlets, etc.

The advent of mobile networking has led to the ubiquity of social media in everyday life. The way we communicate has completely changed with the advent of revolutionary social media technologies. Social media provides a platform for people to connect/collaborate, communicate, and exchange information with one another in work and personal life. WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn are well-known social media platforms, but social media can take many forms, including internet forums, email, podcasts, online profiles, and instant messaging. Social media has brought both negative and positive impacts to various organizations and workers nowadays (Ali-Hassan *et al.*, 2015). In the present competitive market, organizations that do not include social media in their business strategy run the risk to survive. Social media enhances information discovery and delivery, enables employees to discuss ideas and broaden their networks, serves as a useful and effective recruitment tool, and promotes diversity and inclusion. It is found that the use of social media has a positive effect on an employee's routine and innovative job performance. There is a positive relationship between social media use and job performance (Cetinkaya & Rashid, 2018). Similarly, social media can be a weakness for organizations because using Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. during working hours can negatively affect workers' productivity. Therefore, the productivity can be enhanced only if the social media use is managed in proper and effective ways (Wushe & Shenje, 2019).

It is argued that technological developments in social media could facilitate decentralized communication and reduce the distance between union leaders and members. Hodder and Houghton (2015) found that the content of the union's messages remained aligned with traditional union communication, while opportunities for social media engagement remained under-utilized. Barnes *et al.* (2019) also found that although social media technologies provide a significant forum for union members to express their views, their use remains limited. Social media has changed the political activism and mobilization of trade unions. These are cheap, fast, and have the potential to reach the masses, social media platforms have become popular in the present times (Uba & Jansson, 2021). Thus, in this paper, we have examined the levels of formal education, general awareness, and social media usage among trade union leaders and workers in Punjab.

2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the present study are:

1. To examine the education profile of trade union leaders and workers.
2. To analyze the general awareness among trade union leaders and workers.
3. To evaluate social media usage among trade union leaders and workers in Punjab.

3. Research Methodology

This paper uses primary data obtained through purposive sampling. Firstly, most industrially concentrated districts of Punjab, namely Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar, have been selected. In the second phase, 15 trade unions are selected from different industries. Among these 15 unions, 4 are from Ludhiana, 6 are from Jalandhar, and 5 are from Amritsar district. These unions are affiliated with different trade union organizations such as All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Indian Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), Centre of Trade Unions (CTU) and Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS). The unions are divided into three categories- factory unions, industrial unions and general unions. In the case of a factory union, membership is limited to a single factory. The membership of an industrial union is not limited and is scattered among the different units/factories of a particular industry. The membership of the general union is scattered across the different units of different industries. Among the 15 sampled unions, 4 are factory unions, 8 are industrial unions, and 3 are general unions.

In the subsequent phase of the study, a sample of 75 union leaders was selected, with five leaders drawn from each of the fifteen unions. Additionally, a total of 300 workers were sampled across these unions, including 90 workers from factory unions, 150 from industrial unions, and 60 from general unions. This sampling framework ensured representation of both leadership and worker perspectives across the different categories of trade unions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Educational Status of Union Leaders and Workers

Education equips trade union leaders with essential skills and knowledge to organize and represent the workers. Educated leaders can understand complex labour laws and industrial relations and effectively negotiate with employers in the new globalized era. The picture of the formal educational status of trade union leaders in Punjab is presented in Table-1. Of the 75 sampled leaders, the highest proportion (40.00 per cent) of respondents have a matric-level education. Further, 3 leaders (4.00 per cent) have a 12th level education, and 18 leaders (24.00 per cent) are graduates and postgraduates. Thus, it makes clear that the majority of leaders (68.00 per cent) are qualified up to primary, middle and matric levels of education. There is only 1 illiterate leader and 2 leaders (2.67 per cent) with below-primary-level education. The results further state that 9 (12.00 per cent) have primary-level education, and 12 leaders (16.00 per cent) have middle-level education. Out of the 75 respondents, only 10 (13.33 per cent) have a professional or technical diploma after matric or the 12th level of education.

Table-1: Educational Status of Trade Union Leaders

Sr. No.	Educational Status	Total Sampled Leaders	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	1	1.33
2.	Below Primary	2	2.67
3.	Primary	9	12.00
4.	Middle	12	16.00
5.	Matric	30	40.00
6.	12 th	3	4.00
7.	Graduate or Post Graduate	18	24.00
8.	Total	75	100.00
9.	Any Professional/Technical Diploma (After 10 th or 12 th)	10	13.33
10.	Not any Professional/Technical Diploma	65	86.67
11.	Total	75	100.00

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

Educated workers have the knowledge to better understand their rights, labour and industrial laws, address their grievances, understand occupational health and safety, and demonstrate good leadership qualities. Education might affect workers' participation in trade union activities and could also play an important role in the training of workers as union leaders. Table-2 presents data on the formal educational qualifications of union members in Punjab. It is evident from the table that, among the 300 sampled workers, 67 (22.33 per cent) have never attended school. There is a wide educational gap among factory, industrial, and general union members.

Table-2: Educational Status of Union Member Workers

Sr. No.	Educational Status	Factory Union Members	Industrial Union Members	General Union Members	Total Sampled Members
1.	Illiterate	4 (4.44)	53 (35.33)	10 (16.67)	67 (22.33)
2.	Below Primary	2 (2.22)	21 (14.00)	13 (21.67)	36 (12.00)
3.	Primary	10 (11.11)	47 (31.33)	16 (26.67)	73 (24.33)
4.	Middle	25 (27.78)	25 (16.67)	16 (26.67)	66 (22.00)
5.	Matric	34 (37.78)	4 (2.67)	4 (6.67)	42 (14.00)
6.	12 th	15 (16.67)	—	1 (1.67)	16 (5.33)
7.	Graduate or Post Graduate	—	—	—	—

8.	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
9.	Any Professional/ Technical Diploma (After 10th or 12 th)	6 (6.67)	—	—	6 (2.00)
10.	Not any Professional/ Technical Diploma	84 (93.33)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	294 (98.00)
11.	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

The factory unions have the lowest proportion (4.44 per cent) of illiterate members, while among the industrial unions, the share of illiterate members is very high (35.33 per cent); further, this share is 16.67 per cent among the general union workers. Primary education is considered a basic human right and holds a central place within the formal education system. The data show that 12.00 per cent of workers have below primary education, and overall, about one third (34.33 per cent, including the illiterate) of the union members are unable to obtain basic primary education.

Among the factory, industrial, and general unions, the share of members who studied up to the primary level is 11.11, 31.33, and 26.67 per cent, respectively; overall, this share is 24.33 per cent. Further, 22.00 per cent of the total sampled workers are qualified up to the middle level. Among the factory unions, the highest share (37.78 per cent) of workers has matric-level education, while this share is very low among the industrial and general unions, at only 2.67 and 6.67 per cent, respectively. This shows that the education qualifications of the factory union members are better than those of the industrial and general unions. Further, among the factory unions, 16.67 per cent of workers are educated up to the secondary level (12th), and only one member from the general union is educated to that level. There is not a single worker from the total sample of 300 respondents who has graduated or post-graduated. Overall, the highest share (24.33 per cent) of workers is in the category of primary level education, followed by illiterate (22.33 per cent), middle level (22.00 per cent), matric (14.00 per cent), below primary (12.00 per cent) and secondary level (5.33 per cent).

It is found that no worker from industrial and general trade unions has any professional/technical diploma. In the factory unions, 6.67 per cent of workers hold a professional/technical diploma, whereas this share is only 2 per cent among the 300 sampled workers. The results indicate that the workers' educational level is not satisfactory. As a large share of the sampled workers belongs to the migrant labour category, the literacy level among migrant workers is very low, and these results are also supported by Madhur's (2017) study on industrial relations and migrant workers.

4.2 General Awareness among Trade Union Leaders and Workers

A newspaper is an important and efficient tool for disseminating information in society. It is a great source of knowledge/information. The newspaper has created a positive impact on the working class in particular and on society in general. Trade union newsletters, magazines, or journals play a vital role in raising workers' awareness. The majority of the central trade union organizations publish newsletters, magazines, or journals to communicate with their members and leaders, raise their awareness of union policy, political consciousness, and the union's stand on certain principal issues. They also keep them informed about union matters, such as struggles and achievements.

Table-3 summarizes data on various indicators of general awareness, such as reading newspapers, journals, or magazines, the Trade Union Act, and union pamphlets, among the sampled trade union leaders in Punjab. It is found that the majority of the leaders have replied that they read newspapers. As many as 67 leaders (89.33 per cent) confirmed that they read newspapers. Of these, 35 (52.24 per cent) read the newspaper regularly in their routine lives, and the remaining 32 (47.76 per cent) read it occasionally. It explains that although a large majority of leaders read newspapers, about half do not read them regularly. It was noted during the field survey that the majority of whole-timer trade unionists read newspapers because they have some time during their trade union activities. On the other hand, the insider leaders work in factories as workers; they face time constraints and read the newspaper occasionally. Further, the result shows that 50.67 per cent of leaders read journals and magazines related to trade union and working-class activities.

Table-3: General Awareness among Trade Union Leaders

Sr. No.	Item	Total Sampled Leaders	Percentage
1.	Do you read newspaper(s)?		
	Yes	67	89.33
	No	8	10.67
	Total	75	100.00
If, Yes	Regularly	35	52.24
	Occasionally	32	47.76
	Total	67	100.00
2.	Do you read journal(s)/magazine(s)?		
	Yes	38	50.67
	No	37	49.33
	Total	75	100.00
3.	Have you contributed any articles on the subject of labour to any journal, magazine or newspaper?		
	Yes	13	17.33
	No	62	82.67
	Total	75	100.00

4.	Have you read The Trade Union Act, 1926?		
	Yes	39	52.00
	No	36	48.00
	Total	75	100.00
5.	Do you know about the number and percentage of workers required to register a union in a factory?		
	Yes	52	69.33
	No	23	30.67
	Total	75	100.00
6.	Do you read union pamphlets?		
	Yes	49	65.33
	No	26	34.67
	Total	75	100.00
If, Yes	Regularly	40	81.63
	Occasionally	9	18.37
	Total	49	100.00

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

The next question asked respondents whether they had contributed any articles on labour to any journal, magazine, or newspaper. It turns out that only 17.33 per cent of leaders have ever written an article or piece on labour that was published in any journal, magazine or newspaper. It highlights that only a small proportion of the sampled leaders have written about the working class, their struggles, and activities. Further, of the 75 sampled trade union leaders, 49 (65.33 per cent) reported that they read the union pamphlets, and 26 (34.67 per cent) said that they do not read the pamphlets at all. Among these 49 leaders, 40 (81.63 per cent) have replied that they read the pamphlets regularly. Overall, leaders' participation in regular publications is not satisfactory.

The Trade Union Act, 1926, grants workers the legal right to organize and form trade unions. It defines the law governing trade unions and provides certain privileges and protections to registered unions. The table shows that only 39 leaders (52.00 per cent) have read the Act. Further, 52 leaders (69.33 per cent) know the number and percentage of workers required to register a union in a factory. There is a lack of knowledge among the trade union leadership, even regarding basic labour legislation. It is observed from the field survey that the awareness about all the indicators discussed above is higher among the outside leaders (whole-timers) than the trade union leaders working as a worker in the factory, because these leaders have more time to read newspapers and other material, and they have more experience with the unions and industrial relations. In terms of formal education, the leaders have better education, awareness and exposure than workers.

Table-4 presents data on various indicators of general awareness among the sampled trade union workers. The data show that of the 300 respondents, only 41 (13.67 per cent) reported reading newspapers, while the remaining 259 (86.33 per cent) do not read any newspaper at all. The union-wise data show that the percentage

share of workers who read newspapers is 24.44, 6.67 and 15.00 among the factory, industrial and general unions, respectively. The relatively higher proportion of factory union workers can be attributed to factors such as higher educational levels, higher incomes, and the permanent nature of their jobs. Because of their regular and fixed working hours, they have time to visit trade union offices and read newspapers. It is found that, except for one worker from the factory union, no worker reads newspapers as part of their daily routine. All the workers replied that their working hours are longer and they have no free time to read newspapers. They read newspapers occasionally, especially when they visit the trade union office or a nearby shop. Thus, it shows that the organized workforce is unable to read newspapers in their daily lives.

Table-4: General Awareness among Union Member Workers

Sr. No.	Item	Factory Union Members	Industrial Union Members	General Union Members	Total Sampled Members
1.	Do you read newspaper(s)?				
	Yes	22 (24.44)	10 (6.67)	9 (15.00)	41 (13.67)
	No	68 (75.56)	140 (93.33)	51 (85.00)	259 (86.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
If, Yes	Regularly	1 (4.55)	—	—	1 (2.44)
	Occasionally	21 (95.45)	10 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	40 (97.56)
	Total	22 (100.00)	10 (100.00)	9 (100.00)	41 (100.00)
2.	Do you read journal(s)/magazine(s)?				
	Yes	14 (15.56)	2 (1.33)	4 (6.67)	20 (6.67)
	No	76 (84.44)	148 (98.67)	56 (93.33)	280 (93.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
3.	Have you contributed any articles on the subject of labour to any journal, magazine or newspaper?				
	Yes	—	—	—	—
	No	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)

4.	Have you read The Trade Union Act, 1926?				
	Yes	10 (11.11)	3 (2.00)	4 (6.67)	17 (5.67)
	No	80 (88.89)	147 (98.00)	56 (93.33)	283 (94.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
5.	Do you know about the number and percentage of workers required to register a union in a factory?				
	Yes	17 (18.89)	7 (4.67)	5 (8.33)	29 (9.67)
	No	73 (81.11)	143 (95.33)	55 (91.67)	271 (90.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
6.	Do you read union pamphlets?				
	Yes	43 (47.78)	20 (13.33)	8 (13.33)	71 (23.67)
	No	47 (52.22)	130 (86.67)	52 (86.67)	229 (76.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
If, Yes	Regularly	11 (25.58)	2 (10.00)	2 (25.00)	15 (21.13)
	Occasionally	32 (74.42)	18 (90.00)	6 (75.00)	56 (78.87)
	Total	43 (100.00)	20 (100.00)	8 (100.00)	71 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

The second question from the respondents was whether they read any trade union journals or magazines. Only 6.67 per cent of respondents replied 'yes', and the remaining 93.33 per cent of workers do not read any journals or magazines at all. Similarly, as with reading newspapers, this proportion is higher among factory union workers (15.56 per cent) and is only 1.33 and 6.67 per cent among industrial and general union workers, respectively.

The next question asked respondents whether they had written and contributed any articles on the subject of labour to any journal, magazine or newspaper. The surprising results are evident when it is found that, out of all 300 sampled workers, not a single worker has contributed any article on labour issues and their unions, for various reasons such as low levels of education and awareness, lack of time and resources, etc.

It is found that, among these unionized sampled workers, only 5.67 per cent have replied that they had read the Trade Union Act. Again, this share is higher

among the factory unions at 11.11 per cent, while it is only 2.00 per cent and 6.67 per cent among the industrial and general trade unions, respectively. Very disappointing results are found when a large number of organized workers have replied that they are unaware of any Act called the Trade Union Act, 1926. Further, the question was asked about the minimum number and percentage of workers required to register a trade union in any factory or establishment. It is found that only 29 (9.67 per cent) workers know this requirement, and the remaining 271 (90.33 per cent) lack knowledge of the basic minimum requirement for workers to register a trade union. The majority of these workers, who are aware of this requirement, have replied that they received the information from their leaders. The next question was asked to workers: When a union distributes pamphlets on any issue, do you read them? About one-fourth (23.67 per cent) of the respondents reported reading pamphlets. This share is 47.78 per cent among factory unions and only 13.33 per cent each among the industrial and general unions. Of the 71 respondents who read union pamphlets, only 15 (21.13 per cent) read them regularly, and the remaining 56 (78.87 per cent) read them occasionally.

The results show that factory unions rank first across all indicators of general awareness among workers because the majority of factory union members are employed permanently and earn higher incomes than workers in industrial and general unions. The educational status of factory union workers is also higher than that of workers in industrial and general unions. Further, compared with industrial unions, general unions have better indicators. The field survey found that general union workers have a higher level of commitment to unions. Among all sampled union members, the majority's performance on basic awareness indicators is disappointing. The results show that the awareness among these sampled workers from the organized workforce is not satisfactory.

4.3 Social Media Usage among Trade Union Leaders and Workers

Several scholars and those working within the working-class movement have suggested that the trade unions must use the contemporary and emerging forms of e-communication. It is suggested that trade unions can use social media as a channel to reconfigure how workers express their voices within and through trade unions, thereby enhancing the union and industrial democracy. It can help the trade unions to broaden their membership base and improve levels of activism and mobilization. Therefore, social media can serve as a new strategic tool for revitalizing unions. The use of social media and online platforms has given access to download and read the material. It can increase the potential for greater penetration for news platforms and union publications. The trade union literature can be provided to the young workers through social media and other online platforms, and a new wave of young trade unionists can be started (Berrell, 2013).

To examine the social media use by the trade union leadership, the data are presented in Table-5. On the whole, 43 leaders (57.33 per cent) have email accounts, and 59 leaders (78.67 per cent) report using social media. Thus, although

the majority of leaders use both email and social media, the use of social media applications is higher than that of email among trade union leaders in Punjab.

Table-5: Social Media Usage among Trade Union Leaders

Sr. No.	Item	Total Sampled Leaders	Percentage
1.	Email Account		
	Yes	43	57.33
	No	32	42.67
	Total	75	100.00
2.	Use Social Media		
	Yes	59	78.67
	No	16	21.33
	Total	75	100.00
If Yes,	WhatsApp only	12	20.34
	Facebook only	—	—
	Both WhatsApp and Facebook	46	77.97
	Twitter	1	1.69
	Total	59	100.00

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

It is found that the majority of leaders use WhatsApp and Facebook as social media platforms. Of the 59 respondents, only 12 leaders (20.34 per cent) use WhatsApp, and 46 workers (77.97 per cent) use both Facebook and WhatsApp. WhatsApp is the preferred social media application among leaders. Further, it is found that the popular social media platform, Twitter, is not preferred by trade union leaders, as only 1 trade union leader in Punjab uses it.

Table-6 presents data on social media use among trade union members in Punjab. Of the 300 sampled workers, only 63 (21.00 per cent) have email accounts. A large majority of these workers do not know how to use email because their email accounts are created by mobile phone sellers or their friends/children, only to use multimedia touchscreen mobile phones. The union-wise data show that 37.78 per cent of factory union workers have email accounts, with shares of 11.33 per cent and 20.00 per cent for the industrial and general trade unions, respectively. These disparities can be attributed to differences in education and income levels across different unions. The above analysis reveals that factory union workers are more educated and have higher incomes than industrial and general union workers; thus, these gaps are major reasons for disparities in the use of the email facility among workers across different unions. It is observed from the field survey that a large majority of the industrial and general union workers have simple keypad mobile phones for calling purposes only, while the majority of the factory union workers have touchscreen multimedia mobile phones.

Table-6: Social Media Usage among Union Member Workers

Sr. No.	Item	Factory Union Members	Industrial Union Members	General Union Members	Total Sampled Members
1.	Email Account				
	Yes	34 (37.78)	17 (11.33)	12 (20.00)	63 (21.00)
	No	56 (62.22)	133 (88.67)	48 (80.00)	237 (79.00)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
2.	Use Social Media				
	Yes	69 (76.67)	65 (43.33)	30 (50.00)	164 (54.67)
	No	21 (23.33)	85 (56.67)	30 (50.00)	136 (45.33)
	Total	90 (100.00)	150 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	300 (100.00)
If yes,	WhatsApp only	28 (40.58)	36 (55.38)	13 (43.33)	77 (46.95)
	Facebook only	—	—	—	—
	Both WhatsApp and Facebook	41 (59.42)	29 (44.62)	17 (56.67)	87 (53.05)
	Twitter	—	—	—	—
	Total	69 (100.00)	65 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	164 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2021-22

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Among the total sampled respondents, 54.67 per cent reported using social media applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook. The percentage share of workers who use social media is 76.67, 43.33 and 50.00 among the factory, industrial and general unions, respectively. Similarly, as with email usage, social media use is higher among factory union workers than among industrial and general unions.

The results further highlight that WhatsApp was the most popular social media platform among users. The data show that 46.69 per cent use only WhatsApp, while the remaining 53.05 per cent use WhatsApp and Facebook. It shows that WhatsApp is workers' first choice due to its ease of use. Of the total sampled workers, none uses Twitter.

The comparative results on social media use among trade union leadership and their member workers highlight that the leadership of trade unions uses social media more actively than do trade union member workers. These results can be attributed to differences in the educational status of the two respondent groups, as

the leadership has higher educational and income levels, greater availability of time and resources, etc., than the member workers.

5. Concluding Remarks

In a nutshell, the majority of leaders (68.00 per cent) have studied up to the matric level of education, and about one-fourth have a graduation or post-graduation level of education, while among union workers, more than one-third lack basic primary education. The literacy level among migrant labourers is very low, and a large share of the sampled workers belong to this group.

The analysis further shows that a large majority of leaders said they read newspapers, but only about half read them regularly in their daily lives. About half of the leaders read journals and magazines, and only a small proportion have ever written any article or piece on unions or the working class that is published in any journal, magazine, or newspaper. About half of the leaders have never read the Trade Union Act, 1926, and about one-third do not know the number and percentage of workers required to register a union in a factory, which reveals a low level of knowledge among the leadership, even regarding basic labour legislation.

About 86 per cent of workers do not read any newspaper at all, which implies that even the organized workforce is unable to read newspapers, and no worker has ever contributed any article on labour issues or their unions. Among these unionized workers, fewer than one-tenth are aware of the basic minimum requirements for registering a trade union. It highlights that general awareness among organized workers in Punjab is not satisfactory. The comparative educational profile of factory union workers is better than that of workers in industrial and general unions; thus, their comparative general awareness is also higher. The results highlight that the majority of leaders use email facilities and social media. Further, WhatsApp is the first preference, and Twitter is not preferred among trade union leaders and workers.

The new economic environment has weakened trade unions, and their education programs have also suffered as a result. The results highlighted that formal education levels and union education, along with general awareness, are lower in Punjab. Thus, unions must make sincere efforts to provide union education and raise general awareness of current industrial relations systems and laws. There is a direct relationship between education and productivity, creativity, and labour efficiency; thus, governments at all levels must raise the educational level of the workforce to support industrial development and national development. The contemporary and emerging forms of e-communication, such as social media, can be utilized to educate unionists. These new platforms have the potential to serve as a strategic tool for regenerating and reviving unions, which can play an important role in protecting the interests of the working class.

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