

The International Labour Organization and Asian Region

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Abstract

It is now well realized that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. Therefore, the developed countries feel that if they are to enjoy the fruits of progress, it is essential for the whole world to unite and work in close co-operation with one another. And accordingly to ILO has been adapting itself. The problem of the people who lived in colonial territories were regarded mainly the responsibility of the metropolitan nations. The tradition of holding regional seminars for Asia has been a very constructive step of the ILO for this poor under-developed region. If these seminars are organized frequently and follow-up actions are taken, there would be immense benefit accruing to this region.

Keywords: Poverty, Prosperity, Progress, Cooperation, Individualism

Now-a-days, it is the policy of the Government of discard the idea of individualism. It is now well realized that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. Therefore, the developed countries feel that if they are to enjoy the fruits of progress, it is essential for the whole world to unite and work in close co-operation with one another. And accordingly to ILO has been adapting itself. Recently, it was embarked on a scheme of increased regionalization and decentralization. Under this scheme, four regional branches have been set up covering Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East. It has established office in each region, headed by a Regional Coordinator with power to deal with programmes and projects affecting the region as a whole.

Though some countries of the Globe were members from the very inception of the ILO, in the beginning, the ILO was largely European minded. Its conferences and

meetings were primarily concerned with the questions facing labour and industry in the more economically advanced countries of Europe and the Americas. The problem of the people who lived in colonial territories were regarded mainly the responsibility of the metropolitan nations. It was after 1930 that the International Labour Convention adopted resolutions for the protection of native labour.

Consequently, holding of regional conferences became an important activity of the ILO. It was been laid down in the constitution of the ILO that "in framing any Convention or Recommendation of general application the Conference shall have due regard to those countries in which climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial organization, or other special circumstances made the industrial conditions substantially different and shall suggest the modification, if any, which it considers may be required to meet the case of such countries."¹

In this way the regional conferences are of great value and of necessity to sort out and solve regional problems. It is well known that the labour problems of the Asian countries are different from those of the Western countries that their special problems were not getting adequate attention of the conference of the ILO. Hence, there arose the need for regional conferences. It was expected that these conferences would help in bringing industrial development, reconciliation between labour and capital, improvement in labour conditions and social security.

Thus, for Asian countries such conference were suggested and efforts were made to persuade the ILO to summon a Tripartite Asian Labour Conference in 1927-28 by the Japanese representative and in 1930 by S.C. Joshi of India. A draft resolution for this purpose was accepted in 1931. But due to certain reasons, the Asian Conference could not be held. Again Regulations to this effect were passed in 1935 and 1936.

In the closing period of the Second World War, a decision was taken by the UNO for the reconstruction of the war-devastated countries. And decentralization in the ILO's activities was deemed as a means to that end. A declaration was adopted in Philadelphia Conference in 1944, chartering the post-war future of the ILO. It called for antipoverty action on the part of all countries supported by a concerted International effort. Under it, the representatives of workers and employers enjoyed equal status with those of workers and employers enjoyed equal status with those of Governments in discussion and decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare. In accordance with this declaration, the ILO (which became the first United Nations specialized agency

in 1946) began a major drive to help developing countries in promoting social progress and achieving economic independence. Important tools of this campaign were technical cooperation and organization of regional committees and conferences.

Conferences and Recommendation

The tradition of holding Asian Regional Conference took start in 1947. It was the consequence of a resolution passed in the 26th Session of the International Labour Conference at Philadelphia in 1944. Accordingly, a Preparatory Asian Regional Labour Conference was held in New Delhi at the invitation of the Government of India. The Conference was held from October 27 to November 8, 1947. The conference was attended by delegates from France, French Establishments in India, Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, china, United Kingdom, Malaya, Indo-China, Netherlands, New Zealand, Siam Singapore, India and Pakistan. It was also attended by 'observer delegations' from Nepal and the USA and a delegation from the Governing Body of the ILO. It was addressed by the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and presided over by the Labour Minister, Jagjivan Ram.² "The Conference was a great success and adopted resolutions, regarding social security, Labour policy, employment services, co-operative system and family budget, productive efficiency, intensification of the Asian work of the ILO, tripartite machinery and social objectives of the ILO, etc."

The Second Asian Regional Conference was held in January 1950 at Nuwara Elias (Ceylon). India sent in tripartite delegation to this Conference. The Conference adopted 16 resolutions. These resolutions

related to Asian representation on the governing Body. Asian seafarers, intensification of Asian work of the ILO, technical assistance, labour inspection, workers' welfare, co-operative movement, agricultural workers and their wages, vocational and technical training, manpower organization, etc.

The Third Asian Regional conference was held in September 1953, in Tokyo (Japan). The conference adopted resolutions on three principle aspects-problems of workers' housing, protection of young workers and problems of wage policy in Asian countries.³

The fourth Asian Regional Conference was held at New Delhi (India) in November 1957. The important recommendations of the Conference were concerning participation of trade union and employers' organizations of Asian countries in the implementation of economic development programs, international action regarding small scale and handicraft industries, improvement of conditions of transport and similar categories of agricultural workers, etc.⁴

The fifth Asian Regional Conference took place at Melbourne from November 26 to December 1962. The import resolutions of the Conference related to (a) employment promotion to avoid waste of man-power resources and to bring about full utilization of human resources for economic development: (b) Vocational training and management development and (c) Government service for the improvement of labour-management relations and settlement of disputes. In this conference, India could send an observer only as there was emergency in the country due to the Chinese aggression.

The Sixth Asian Regional Conference was held in Tokyo from September 2 to September 13, 1968. India was represented at the Conference by a tripartite India delegation headed by Union Labour Minister. The Conference adopted resolutions on Asian man-power plan and population policy, social security development in Asia, management development with reference to personnel policies and practices and freedom of association in Asia.

The Seventh Asian Regional Conference was held in Tehran (Iran) from December 4 to December 15, 1971. The Conference urged the developed countries to orient their policies. It also urged that ILO's technical co-operation activities should be re-oriented to take into account the priorities of employment-oriented strategy. The Conference recommended that workers' and employers' organizations should play their role more seriously for the implementation of policies of their concerned Governments in response to the ILO's Conventions' and Recommendations. It also recommended that Asian countries should co-operate with each other for solving their problems of man-power.

The Eight Asian Regional Conference was held in Colombo (Sri Lanka). The Conference took place from 30th September to 9th October 1975. In this Conference, emphasis was held on the eradication of mass unemployment and illiteracy. Besides, attention was also paid on the training of women and young persons in order to develop human recourses. Thus the general debate of the conference focused on the problem of mass poverty in Asian, technical subjects dealt with human resources in rural areas

and the role of labour administration in development.

The period following the Second World War was in favor of the technical activities of the ILO. The countries that had just got independence have innumerable problems before them. A number of them had taken pledge of industrialization. But their knowledge, skill and experience were immature and poor. This mission showed up-to-date techniques of production and payment by results method. The purpose of such mission was to demonstrate “how by the application of modern management and industrial engineering method better use can be made of the resources available to the industries without the need of additional large-scale capital investment or the expenditure of foreign exchange.”⁵

Asian Regional Conference of the ILO (Colombo, September-October, 1975) in order to evaluate the impact of the ILO employment mission to Sri Lanka, Iran and the Philippines and to review current government policies in the employment fields. The Labour Ministers and the Central Planning authorities of the three countries were present at this session, as well as the Chiefs of the Iran and Philippines missions and a representative of the Chief of the Sri Lanka Mission.”⁶

The special manpower operation program demisted employment service,

Works Cited:

1. The International Labour Code, 1951, Vol. I, Geneva, 1952, p. 13.
2. ILO and Asia, 2015, Bangkok, Thailand, p.17.
3. Ibid page – 17.
4. Ibid page – 18.
5. Labour Organization, New Delhi, 1956. P. 79.
6. Activities of the ILO, 1975, International Labour Office, Geneva, 1976, P. 13.
7. International Labour Organization, Report I, Fifth, Asian Regional Conference Melbourne, Geneva, 2014 p. 148.

organization, vocational guidance and training and migration. Actually, “any decision, on how manpower can be used must be reached in the light of its twin economic and social aspects: on one hand, optimum use of manpower should lead to increased production and higher material living standards; on the other, by matching jobs to skill, and by helping towards security of employment, for all in suitable jobs it should promote personal satisfaction and social justice.”⁷ In this way ILO set on the assist and guides the developing counties of Asia as regards their problem of manpower.

Similarly, ILO’s actions and initiatives for manpower in Asian region would be held high. The ILO would deserve special praise if it not only tries to match skills to jobs and jobs to skills but has also in view the relation between primary education of the manpower with skills to be attained by him and the jobs to fall fit with him. The Asian Manpower Field Office may also take steps in this direction.

The tradition of holding regional seminars for Asia has been a very constructive step of the ILO for this poor under-developed region. If these seminars are organized frequently and follow-up actions are taken, there would be immense benefit accruing to this region.