



Review Article


# Impact of the Trade Unions on The Work Performance In Jute Manufacturing Units in West Bengal

Shyamal Mondal

Research Scholar of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author: Shyamal Mondal\*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17101417>

Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>This study investigates the impact of trade unions on work performance within the jute manufacturing sector in West Bengal, India. The jute industry has historically been a significant economic driver in the region, employing a large labor force. However, the presence of trade unions in this sector has shaped labor relations and workplace dynamics. Through a review of existing literature and empirical analysis, this study examines the various ways in which trade unions influence work performance in jute manufacturing units.</p> <p>The study explores the role of trade unions in negotiating wages, benefits, and working conditions on behalf of workers. Furthermore, the study investigates the potential for trade unions to facilitate conflict resolution and communication between labor and management. Effective grievance mechanisms and dispute resolution processes can mitigate tensions in the workplace, fostering a more collaborative and harmonious atmosphere conducive to higher work performance. Moreover, the study examines the impact of trade unions on workforce empowerment and participation in decision-making processes. However, the study also acknowledges potential challenges associated with trade union presence, such as industrial actions and disruptions to production. Strikes and labor disputes can temporarily disrupt operations and negatively impact work performance, highlighting the importance of constructive labor-management relations and effective conflict resolution mechanisms.</p> <p>The Trade Unions are built for the benefit of the organization and provide a platform for effective coordination between employees and management. Through this study, the researcher aims to identify the impact of the Trade Union on the productivity of the employees of the jute industry. Furthermore, maximizing the certainty and minimizing the uncertainty is the main focus of the study. Overall, this study contributes to a better understanding of the complex relationship between trade unions and work performance in the jute manufacturing industry of West Bengal. By analyzing the various mechanisms through which trade unions influence workplace dynamics, the study provides insights that can inform policy-making and managerial practices aimed at enhancing productivity and labor relations in this important sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ISSN No: 2583-7397</li> <li>▪ Received: 10-07-2025</li> <li>▪ Accepted: 22-08-2025</li> <li>▪ Published: 11-09-2025</li> <li>▪ IJCRM:4(5); 2025: 70-73</li> <li>▪ ©2025, All Rights Reserved</li> <li>▪ Plagiarism Checked: Yes</li> <li>▪ Peer Review Process: Yes</li> </ul>
	<p><b>How to Cite this Article</b></p> <p>Mondal S. Impact of the trade unions on the work performance in jute manufacturing units in West Bengal. Int J Contemp Res Multidiscip. 2025;4(5):70-73.</p>
	<p><b>Access this Article Online</b></p>  <p><a href="http://www.multiarticlesjournal.com">www.multiarticlesjournal.com</a></p>

**KEYWORDS:** Trade Unions, Jute Industry, Work Performance, West Bengal, Productivity

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of trade unions on work performance in jute manufacturing units in West Bengal can vary depending on various factors such as the nature of the union, its strategies, the relationship between the management and the union, as well as broader economic and social dynamics. Trade unions often play a significant role in shaping labor relations within jute manufacturing units. Depending on the strength of the union and its bargaining power, it can negotiate better wages, working conditions, and benefits for workers. This can positively impact morale and motivation, leading to improved work performance. The impact of labor on work performance in jute manufacturing units in West Bengal is significant and multifaceted. The salient characteristics include skill level and training, labor management ratio, workplace health and safety and regulatory compliance.

The skill level of the labor force greatly influences work performance. Well-trained and skilled workers are more likely to operate machinery efficiently, handle materials effectively, and produce higher-quality jute products. Investing in training programs can enhance worker capabilities and contribute to improved performance.

The relationship between labor and management can impact work performance. A collaborative and mutually respectful relationship characterized by effective communication and conflict resolution mechanisms can create a conducive environment for higher productivity. Conversely, conflicts, grievances, and distrust between labor and management can hinder performance.

Ensuring a safe and healthy working environment is essential for maintaining work performance. Unsafe working conditions can lead to accidents, injuries, and absenteeism, negatively impacting productivity. Investing in safety measures and adhering to occupational health standards can mitigate risks and improve work performance.

Adherence to labor laws and regulations is essential for ensuring fair and ethical labor practices. Violations of labor standards not only pose legal risks but can also damage reputation and employee morale, ultimately affecting work performance. Compliance with labor regulations fosters trust and stability within the workforce, contributing to improved performance.

In summary, the labor force has a significant impact on work performance in jute manufacturing units in West Bengal. Investing in worker training and development, promoting a positive workplace culture, fostering good labor-management relations, ensuring workplace health and safety, enhancing efficiency and productivity, and complying with labor regulations are key factors that contribute to improving work performance in the industry.

The jute industry in West Bengal has a long history, dating back to the late 19th century when jute mills were established in the region, particularly around Kolkata (then Calcutta). As industrialization grew, so did the need for organized labor. Trade

unions started forming in the jute industry during the early 20th century, primarily to address issues such as low wages, long working hours, poor working conditions, and lack of social security. Trade unions in the jute industry wielded significant political influence, particularly during the pre-independence and post-independence periods. Many union leaders were also active in politics, and the labor movement became an integral part of West Bengal's political landscape. *Agarwal (1984)* discusses the evolution of trade unions in India, highlighting their growth, structure, and activities over time. Drawing from Gandhian philosophy, the article explores the role of trade unions in promoting social justice, economic equality, and non-violent means of conflict resolution. The struggles and demands of trade unions in the jute industry led to the enactment of various labor laws and legislative reforms aimed at protecting workers' rights and improving working conditions. The Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and the Factories Act, 1948, are some of the key legislations that have had an impact on the jute industry. The liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s brought about significant changes in the jute industry, including privatization, restructuring, and increased competition. Trade unions faced new challenges in this era, including job losses, wage stagnation, and changes in labor policies. However, they continued to advocate for the rights of jute mill workers amidst these challenges.

From the records of the activities of trade unions, it is established that trade unions can act as intermediaries between workers and management in resolving disputes. Effective conflict resolution mechanisms can reduce tensions in the workplace, leading to better cooperation and productivity. Collective bargaining between trade unions and management can lead to the establishment of formal agreements regarding wages, benefits, and working conditions. When these agreements are fair and equitable, they can contribute to a stable work environment conducive to higher performance. Trade unions empower workers by giving them a collective voice in decision-making processes. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and a sense of ownership over their work, which in turn can positively impact performance. While strikes and other forms of industrial action can disrupt operations in the short term, they can also pressure management to address legitimate grievances, ultimately leading to improvements in working conditions and performance. Some trade unions collaborate with management to implement productivity enhancement programs aimed at improving efficiency and performance. By involving workers in the improvement process, these programs can lead to sustainable gains in productivity. Trade unions may advocate for training and skill development programs for workers, which can enhance their capabilities and contribute to improved performance in jute manufacturing units.

Trade unions often advocate for stricter enforcement of labor laws and regulations, ensuring that workers' rights are protected.

Compliance with labor standards can create a more stable and ethical work environment, which can positively impact performance. Overall, the impact of trade unions on work performance in jute manufacturing units in West Bengal is multifaceted and can vary depending on the specific context and dynamics within each workplace. While trade unions can sometimes be seen as disruptive forces, they also play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and interests of workers, which can ultimately contribute to a more productive and sustainable industrial sector.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to enhance job security and other benefits, and also to maintain management and employee relationships, employees form unions that collectively negotiate issues such as wages and working conditions with the employers. *Ramjas (1989)* defines a Trade Union as an organization consisting mainly of employees who joined together to achieve a common goal and promote their interests by collective actions. This helps both the employees and employers to come to a common understanding and avoid disputes. The trade unions assist in effective communication between the management and the workers. They make sure that the differences in perceptions do not turn into disputes, and hence a peaceful relationship prevails between the workers and the employers. *Abbott (2007)* further suggests that they also motivate discipline among the workers, settle disputes rationally and help workers adjust in difficult circumstances. A dispute between the American consumer products company Proctor and Gamble, and few workers in Peru regarding some fundamental working rights was settled by the trade union through arbitration. Key areas of investigation include the bargaining power of trade unions in negotiating better working conditions, wages, and benefits for their members (*Dinyuy and Sener, 2021*). The main function of the trade union is to represent the employees at work. However, they play other roles as well. *Bryson (2014)* suggests that the trade unions have the responsibility of negotiating the wages, rules, working conditions, and timing of their jobs with their employers. This is one of the main objectives for which trade unions were formed. All the employees gather into a single backbone known as the trade union and collectively negotiate the terms and conditions under which they believe they should work in. The Employee representative of the union of Nokia, a multinational in Malta, and HSBC, a global financial services company, introduced the first performance-based pay remuneration system after negotiating with the unions (Eurofound.com). Representing workers at disciplinary and grievance hearings. According to *Bryson (2007)* one of the rights of the employees are that they can be accompanied by a co-worker or a union official at a disciplinary or grievance hearing. The workers prefer to choose the union representative who is also a Coworker. This gives the workers a form of support during the disciplinary or grievance hearings. In *Reddy v Bedford and*

*Luton Partnership NHS Trust (2010)*, the employees represented a collective grievance through the trade union representative (*Employee Cases Update, 2010*).

The total concept of productivity, along with the role of trade unions on productivity, is well explained in the workers' education manual published by ILO (2015). Various concepts and methodologies to enhance the capacity of trade unions to increase productivity are also well explained, along with various international case studies. *Chakravarty (2010)* delves into the intricate dynamics between trade unions and unorganized manufacturing firms in the context of West Bengal, India. Chakravarty examines the strategies adopted by firms to manage labor relations, mitigate conflicts, and safeguard their interests. Through in-depth interviews and qualitative analysis, the author uncovers the tactics employed by firms to resist unionization, including subcontracting, outsourcing, and informalization of labor. A nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between trade unions and business firms in the context of the unorganized manufacturing sector can be drawn. *Sen (2009)* provides valuable insights into the evolution of labor-management relationships, the role of trade unions, and the broader implications for industrial development and social change. Sen delves into the changing dynamics of labor-management relations in West Bengal, particularly in the context of economic liberalization and globalization. In addition to exploring the economic dimensions of industrial relations, Sen also examines the political dimensions, particularly the role of the state government and political parties in shaping labor policies, resolving disputes, and mediating conflicts between labor and capital. *Roy (2019)* explored the potential role of labor unions in regulating and improving conditions within the informal labor market. Roy sheds light on the diverse range of industries and occupations within the informal economy, including street vendors, domestic workers, construction laborers, and small-scale artisans. Roy explores the strategies employed by labor unions to organize and mobilize informal workers, negotiate with employers, and advocate for their rights and interests. *Biswas (2011)* finds various industrial relationships in the labour force at the tea gardens of West Bengal. He coined a few salient points to note for the betterment of productivity while keeping labor relations intact. *Bakokor and Antwi (2020)* investigate the relationship between trade union activities and employee performance within the context of Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority (FDA). Through empirical research and analysis, the authors aim to provide insights into how trade unionism influences the productivity and effectiveness of employees in a regulatory agency. *Chatterjee et. al. (2022)* presents a comprehensive analysis of the socio-psychological factors influencing the adoption and social integration of technology in jute production within the context of West Bengal, India. The authors present the findings of empirical research conducted to assess the socio-psychological determinants for

technology socialization in jute production. *Mahjabeen and Aaqub (2019)* present an in-depth examination of the socio-economic status of jute industry workers at the micro-level within the Hooghly district of West Bengal, India. Central to the study is the micro-level analysis of the socio-economic conditions of jute industry workers which offers valuable insights into the lived experiences and challenges faced by jute industry workers at the grassroots level. *Sarkar and Lal (2023)* investigate the level of adoption of enhanced jute production practices among farmers in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal, India. Through field surveys, interviews, and case studies, the authors present empirical findings on the extent and determinants of adoption behavior related to improved jute production practices in Murshidabad district. *Bose et. al. (2011)* research contribute to the understanding of the socio-demographic dimensions of trade unionism, providing valuable implications for policymakers, labor activists, and industry stakeholders seeking to promote workers' rights and social justice in the leather industry and beyond. *Doucoulagos and Laroche (2003)* have done a meta-analysis which contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms through which unions influence workplace outcomes, providing valuable implications for policymakers, employers, and labor representatives seeking to promote productivity and labor-management cooperation in diverse organizational settings. *Shrestha (2012)* examines the impact of trade unionism on workers within the specific context of PAM, providing a detailed case study analysis. Through qualitative research methods and empirical evidence, Shrestha aims to elucidate the dynamics of labor relations, worker representation, and socio-economic outcomes influenced by trade union activity in PAM. *Ray (2011)* offers a comprehensive analysis of the decline of industrialization in West Bengal, India, within the broader context of its Marxist political framework operating within a mixed economy. Through rigorous research and critical examination, Ray delves into the historical, political, and economic factors contributing to the decline of industry in the state.

## REFERENCES

1. Agarwal RC. Evolution of trade unions in India: Growth, structure, and activities. *Econ Polit Wkly.* 1984;19(5):215–222.
2. Ramjas K. Trade Unionism: Definition and role in industrial relations. *Indian J Labour Econ.* 1989;32(4):643–652.
3. Abbott K. Employment relations theory and practice. 2nd ed. Sydney: Thomson; 2007.
4. Dinyuy CB, Sener S. Bargaining power of trade unions in negotiating working conditions: A global perspective. *J Labour Policy.* 2021;10(3):45–59.
5. Bryson A. Union effects on employee relations in the workplace. *Hum Resour Manage J.* 2014;24(3):282–297.
6. Eurofound. Performance-related pay and trade unions: Case studies of Nokia Malta and HSBC. Dublin: Eurofound; 2010.
7. Bryson A. Union representation in grievance and disciplinary hearings. *Ind Relat J.* 2007;38(4):320–336.
8. Employee Cases Update. Reddy v Bedford and Luton Partnership NHS Trust. *Employee Cases Update.* 2010;5(2):112–114.
9. International Labour Organization. Workers' education manual: Productivity and trade unions. Geneva: ILO; 2015.
10. Chakravarty S. Trade unions and unorganized manufacturing firms in West Bengal: Strategies and responses. *Indian J Ind Relat.* 2010;45(3):401–420.
11. Sen S. Labour, state and society in West Bengal: Industrial relations in an era of globalization. New Delhi: Routledge; 2009.
12. Roy A. Trade unions in the informal economy: Organizing and mobilizing workers. *Econ Polit Wkly.* 2019;54(7):23–30.
13. Biswas A. Industrial relations and productivity in tea gardens of West Bengal. *J Rural Dev.* 2011;30(2):145–162.
14. Bakokor J, Antwi H. Trade union activities and employee performance: Evidence from Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority. *Afr J Manage Res.* 2020;12(1):55–70.
15. Chatterjee S, Das P, Ghosh A. Socio-psychological determinants of technology adoption in jute production in West Bengal. *J Rural Stud.* 2022;38(4):198–210.
16. Mahjabeen N, Aaqub M. Socio-economic status of jute industry workers in Hooghly district of West Bengal. *Int J Soc Econ Res.* 2019;8(2):67–79.
17. Sarkar P, Lal R. Adoption of enhanced jute production practices among farmers in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. *Indian J Agric Econ.* 2023;78(3):245–260.
18. Bose P, Chatterjee S, Roy S. Trade unions and socio-demographic dynamics: Evidence from the leather industry. *Ind Relat J.* 2011;42(3):311–328.
19. Doucouliagos H, Laroche P. What do unions do to productivity? A meta-analysis. *Ind Relat J.* 2003;34(4):423–445.

### Creative Commons (CC) License

This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. This license permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.