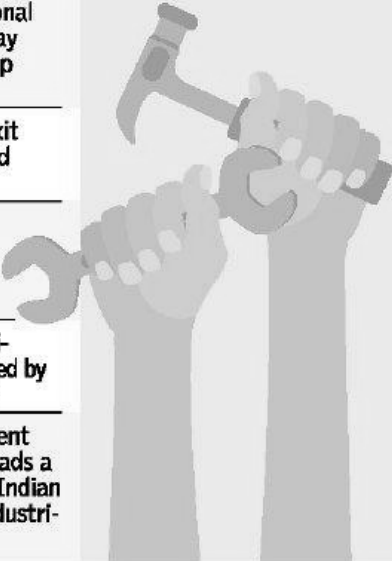


## Young employees signal an end to trade unions, says Deloitte-CII survey

• [Vikas Dhoot](#)

### A SHORT HISTORY OF INDIA'S TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

<p><b>*1884</b>   Bombay Mill Hands Association founded by Narayan Lokhande who worked as a store keeper in one of the city's textile mills</p>	<p><b>*1947</b>   Indian National Congress breaks away from AITUC to set up own union INTUC</p>	
<p><b>*1897</b>   Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of India and Burma set up</p>	<p><b>*1948</b>   Socialists exit AITUC to set up Hind Mazdoor Sabha</p>	
<p><b>*1905</b>   Printers Association of Calcutta, Dock Union Board formed in Bombay</p>	<p><b>*1955</b>   Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh comes up, now affiliated to the BJP</p>	
<p><b>*1920</b>   All India Trade Union Congress formed, Lala Lajpat Rai first president</p>	<p><b>*1970</b>   Centre of Indian Trade Unions formed by the Communist Party</p>	
<p><b>*1922</b>   All India Railwaymen's Federation formed</p>	<p><b>*1974</b>   AIRF president George Fernandes leads a 20 day strike in the Indian Railways, biggest industrial unrest till date.</p>	
<p><b>*First Factories Act passed</b></p>		

The survey covered 8,000 contract workers as well as permanent employees

India's increasingly young workforce appears to have signalled the beginning of the end for the trade union movement in the country, with over 60 per cent choosing not to be affiliated with any employee union, according to a survey of blue-collar workers in the manufacturing sector.

The survey of over 8,000 employees in a dozen large firms including Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel and Hindustan Unilever, was carried out by Deloitte and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to understand the implications of the demographic shift on factory shop-floors due to the induction of Gen Y or the millennials.

Its findings accessed by *The Hindu* reveal that over 95 per cent of baby boomers or those nearing retirement and 75 per cent of Gen X employees are members of a trade union.

But over 60 per cent of young workers (in the age groups of 20 to 35 years) choose to stay away from the collective bargaining mechanisms that unions offer.

The survey covered contract workers as well as permanent employees from sectors like automobiles, steel and fast moving consumer goods across the country. Unlike their older colleagues, GEN Y employees rated career growth as their most critical parameter at the workplace, rather than the employer's brand or a culture that promotes work-life balance.

Most unionised employees neither preferred to change jobs for better opportunities, nor did they want to move to new geographies.

"The baby boomer generation scores higher in most aspects related to the preference of unions. As a legacy, this generation had higher affiliations for the unions than the newer ones, in line with their priorities of job security and work life balance," according to the survey.

It also found that the younger workers who did feel the need for union membership tend to prefer internal unions rather than taking the support of the larger central trade unions. "One out of every three GenY respondents preferred an internal union compare to an external one," the survey said. Incidentally, the labour ministry is in the process of a periodic verification of formal membership claims made by central trade unions like INTUC, CITU and AITUC in order to gain proportionate representation in tripartite fora where labour issues are discussed.

Together, the top ten central trade unions (TUs) have claimed that they represent around 100 million workers in 2013, up sharply from just 24 million in 2002, data for which was verified by the government only in 2008.

The Congress-affiliated INTUC, for instance, has claimed that it has 3.33 crore members.

The general secretary of an apolitical employee union, who requested anonymity, said that TUs' membership claims appear 'inflated' and run counter to the global as well as local decline in unions' relevance.

"The latest generation of workers represent a new class of blue-collared employee: one shaped with a deeper appreciation for technology, higher learning orientation and ample opportunities to grow," the report's lead author, Vishalli Dongrie, Senior Director at Deloitte India states said.

This has implications on the industrial relations landscape that remains restive more than two years after violence at Maruti's Manesar plant claimed a manager's life, she said.

T.V. Narendran, Tata Steel Managing Director for India and South-East Asia said: "Manufacturing units have been witness to retirement of old age workers and the influx of a younger workforce."

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