

STRIKES IN THE BOMBAY COTTON TEXTILE INDUSTRY

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1. *Introduction*

The 62 cotton mills in Bombay, with about three and a half million spindles, 65 thousand looms and 200 thousand workers, constitute the major industry of the city, which is one of the leading centres of the textile industry in India. The purpose of this paper is to present some of the interesting findings of a study of strikes in the Bombay cotton textile industry.* The study analyzed the strikes in the years 1922 to 1964 and was completed in 1966.

Before proceeding to an examination of the strikes, it is necessary to explain the sources, the method of compilation, the nature, the utility and limitations of the strike statistics used in the study. By "strike statistics" are meant the statistics of the number of strikes, workers involved and man-days lost in the course of strikes. Let us then begin with the explanation of the sources of the statistics.

2. *Sources of the strike statistics*

The Government of Bombay instituted the Labour Office in April 1921. In September 1921, the Labour Office started the publication of the *Labour Gazette*, "a journal for the use of all interested in obtaining prompt and accurate information on matters specially affecting labour."¹

From the very first issue, the *Labour Gazette (LG)* began to publish regularly, for each month, as a part of its statistics, a statement of strikes that occurred in the previous month. Since June 1949,

* The doctoral thesis on the subject was approved by the University of Poona for the award of the degree in December 1967. The study was conducted under the guidance of Prof. P. N. Mathur in the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona.

¹ *The Labour Gazette (LG)*, I, No. 1, September 1921, p. 4. The gazette is a monthly publication, and it is now published by the Office of the Commissioner of Labour, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay.