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GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON TRADE UNIONISM IN INDIA: UNVEILING REALITIES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES

ABSTRACT

Trade unions were initially established to foster amicable relations between workers and management, safeguarding employees from exploitation. Globalization and subsequent development of hiring of contract labour have contributed to the decline of trade unionism and its influence. IR experts opine that other factors like dominance of select union leaders, pervasive politicization of unions and government apathy have also contributed to this turn of events. The first research question delves into the distinct elements that have led to this decline. The study aims to explore the intricate impact of globalization, with a specific focus on the outsourcing trend and the prevalent preference for contractual agreements with workers. The second research question specifically addresses how these global phenomena have influenced and altered the operational dynamics of trade unions in the Indian context. By explicitly addressing these research questions, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the evolving landscape of trade unionism in the face of both domestic and global influences, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and transformations experienced by trade unions in India.

Keywords: Trade unions, globalization, industrial relations, labour, workers' rights, collective bargaining

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INTRODUCTION

Globalisation of capital has weakened trade unions across the world. The impact of globalisation on labour markets has been profound affecting traditional labour structures worldwide. The increasing prevalence of contract labour and the informalization of the workforce underscore the transformative influence of globalization on the nature of employment. The labour legal framework and labour contracts are threatened by transnational and neo liberal policies. Post 1990, the increase in part time employment has led to the increase in the size of contractual work force including those actively engaged in the gig economy today.

Post 1992, when the Indian economy was opened up, India witnessed economic growth but without a substantial reduction in poverty levels. This is why, in 2005, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched by the Government. Reforms have always insisted on flexibility in labour laws. These ideas have become institutionalized at the international level with the spread of global production networks aimed at exploiting labour arbitrage.

The World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index ranks countries on the basis of their business-friendly environment. Here, the interests of capital are prioritized over labour. A country's rank in the Ease of Doing Business index improves if fixed term employment is offered in place of permanent jobs, minimum legal wages are removed, hire and fire at will are allowed, weekly holidays and annual paid leave are suspended. Fixed term employment can deregulate the labour market.

Labour reforms in most cases are about reduction in wages and extending the working hours for the same wages, restriction of workers' rights and refusal of social security. Labour market flexibility has resulted in casualising regular employment. Regular workers are forcibly removed through voluntary retirement schemes. Service conditions have dramatically changed through outright privatisation of public sector units (Roychowdhury and Sarkar, 2021). The changes in Indian labour laws [29 out of 44 central laws] into four labour codes have resulted in a situation where it is impossible for workers to go on a legal strike.

A 2018 report by International Labour Organization claims that more than 60% of the world's employed population (about 2 billion people) are in the informal economy – most of them are located in emerging economies. India is one of the largest informal economies in the world (about 88.2% of employees are informal workers). The 2018 Wage Report by International Labour Organization indicated that production was being shifted

to less developed or remote areas, where labour was available cheap and where the region was without any trade union history.

The construction sector in India has grown by leaps and bounds in the last three decades. However, payments to the workers have remained stagnant and are not commensurate with associated risks in the construction sector. In December 2020, thousands of workers erupted into violence in the Wistron facility in Karnataka. The company that manufactures iPhones for Apple had created sweat shoplike conditions (12-hour shifts, non-payment of full wages and denial of overtime pay). Another Apple subcontractor that had a manufacturing facility in the state of Tamil Nadu was in the news when there was a major incident of food poisoning that affected all the contract workers housed in the dormitory. When such instances are reported, politicians begin showing interest in resolving such issues to gain political mileage out of it. In April 2023, delivery workers of online grocery delivery start up Blink It went on a strike when their wages were substantially reduced.

The above instances point out to the decadence of industrial relations in a country like India which is otherwise on the radar of multinational corporations wanting to set shop in the country to explore its business potential. This is why it is relevant to study how and why the trade unions have lost their relevance in India—a country that boasts of demographic dividend. Has economic progress in India been achieved at the cost of compromising labour welfare and interests? This study has attempted to understand if globalization has had a predominant role in the rise of contract labour and subsequent decline in the trade union activities. The other research question is to explore if transnational and neo-liberal policies have threatened India's labour law framework.

This research effort has also attempted to understand how trade unions can adapt to the changing dynamics in labour relations imposed by globalization. The role played by institutional and legal factors in the diminishing influence of trade unions in India is also an area worthy of exploration. Another area that is of interest is to investigate if the impact of globalization has been uniform across developed nations and developing nations.

This is a research study exclusively based on secondary sources and involved an extensive review and synthesis of extant literature including research papers, academic articles and reports pertaining to the state of industrial relations (IR) in India. Key themes, trends and theoretical frameworks have been identified to shape the discourse on IR in the Indian context. The study intends to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the multifaceted dimensions of IR in India. While primary data collection is not involved, the

research methodology emphasizes the critical examination and synthesis of diverse secondary sources to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The decline in the trade union movement is a global phenomenon. Free movement of production and capital has resulted in a confrontation between labour and growth of capital. 92% India's labour force is in the informal and unorganized sector. The politicization of trade unions and the multiplicity of unions with differing political ideologies led to the rampant growth of trade unionism in India but eventually the decline began when the unions were unable to adapt to the changing social and economic climate across the globe. Membership of trade unions keeps varying depending on which political party is in power. Trade union strategies in India drifted away from actual situations on the ground. The key question is—amidst changing economic, political and social climate, how relevant are trade unions today? (Dhal, 2018)

In the United Kingdom, trade unions and employers are investing in building long term relationships based on co-operation and collaboration rather than those based on adversarial intentions. Trust and mutual commitment are bulwarks for a successful and enduring relationship between employers and trade unions. In Spain, Poland and New Zealand, union leaders are persuading members to learn new skills and move up the learning curve to stay relevant.

India is one of the fast-developing economies across the globe but job creation has been sluggish leading to jobless economic growth. Introduction of new labour practices, recruitment freeze, the intermingling of HRM with IR (without integration), unitary policies of employers (disregarding pluralism), increase in outsourcing, contractual engagement of workers, freedom to hire and fire, liberty to close industrial undertakings, a soft labour inspection system, labour being replaced by automation and privatization of non-viable public sector enterprises through disinvestment are factors that have sounded the death knell of trade union movement in India. Contract labour was primarily introduced to reduce production costs.

On their part, trade unions have failed to protect the interests of workers. Trade unions have often taken a confrontationist and aggressive stance without giving importance to the protection of employment of members and regulation of working conditions. There is no clear rule regarding labour union recognition in India. This has weakened the process

of collective bargaining. Akin to throwing the baby along with the bath water, reduced role of trade unions due to their politicisation has impacted welfare measures of workers and compromised their rights and interests.

As per the new IR Code, companies employing 1-299 workers can lay off workers without any government permission removing 85% of companies outside the ambit of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. This shows the extent to which attention towards labour interests have got diluted.

Globalization has contributed to India's jobless growth, hindering workers' rights through labour reforms. Amidst intense competition for investments, labour rights have been overlooked, leaving economic reforms with minimal benefits for the Indian working class. Researchers face challenges due to the media-centric approach to studying India's trade union movement. While media coverage often focuses on sensational events like violent worker outbursts or contract worker killings, there are underlying labour issues that require attention to promote worker welfare and reforms (Roy, 2015).

Research on trade unions predominantly uses indirect measures like strikes and lockdowns, neglecting the crucial aspect of rising temporary labour and its effect on the significance of trade unions (Singh et al., 2019). Media portrayal of trade unions often paints them in a negative light, influenced by close ties to politicians and corporate interests. News coverage of labour disputes frequently employs a tone that vilifies worker actions as militant, while downplaying issues like unfulfilled demands, unpaid wages, safety violations, and layoffs. The media's one-sided coverage is evident in reports on strikes at Maruti, Toyota Kirloskar, and Bangalore garment industry workers' protests. Despite comprising over 90% of India's workforce, the informal sector remains largely unrepresented by trade unions. India's labour landscape is marked by deep-rooted inequalities, sectoral disparities, hierarchies, and marginalization based on caste and gender. State policies and production practices often prioritize labour force discipline, advocating for deregulation as a means to boost efficiency and global competitiveness in the manufacturing sector (George and Sinha, 2017).

Following India's first three decades of centralized bargaining, a shift towards decentralized bargaining occurred during the period of partial economic liberalization. This shift was further amplified after 1991 when India's economy opened up for foreign participation, leading to deterioration in the union-management relationship (Rani and Sen, 2018). In their book "Worker cooperatives in India", Kerswell and Pratap (2019) focus on the struggles and successes of co-operative enterprises in India. The book gives examples

of trade unions that have established cooperatives for production and service delivery. While there is a preponderance of views in literature attributing the reduced impact/relevance of trade unions to globalization, the book argues that internal weaknesses in trade unions are the primary culprits. There are examples of co-operatives like India's Self Employed Women's Association that can serve as an example of a depoliticized trade union cooperative. Cooperatives offer a viable strategy for building working-class power in the 21st century, not only in India but also globally.

HISTORY OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN INDIA

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of the first trade unions in India. This was largely in response to the growth of textile mills and other industries under British colonial rule. These unions focused on improving working conditions and wages for migrant labourers from rural areas.

The first association of Indian workers was formed by N M Lokhande in 1890 in Bombay Mill Hands Association. Trade Union Act, 1926 gave rights to workers for organizing. Narayan Lokhande was a key associate of Mahatma Phule. In the nineteenth century, he organised the textile industry. Lokhande also voiced opposition to child labour in textile factories. His efforts led to the mill workers receiving a weekly Sunday off, a half-hour lunch break, and extra compensation for putting in longer hours. Despite the movement's growth and expansion to Kolkata, Chennai, Surat, and Coimbatore, it rose to prominence in Maharashtra where the fusion of political issues with labour unionism was the norm. Textile centres in Solapur, Thane, Dhule, and Jalgaon were reached by the trade union movement thanks to leaders like B T Ranadive, SA Dange, SS Mirajkar, and others. Solapur residents rose up in revolt against the British, and the demonstrators were silenced through killings by authorities.

In his book – “The Making of the Madras Working Class”, D Veeraraghavan identifies the core reasons that gave birth to trade unionism. Poor working conditions, attempts by workers to protect their interests, company policies that did not address the welfare of workers and political interference were the primary reasons. The Indian Factory Labour Commission was set up in 1908. On 19 December 1913, a foreman was beaten up and two workers were shot during the Perambur railway workers' strike. These incidents led to the genesis of trade union activity. The Madras Labour Union was set up in 1918. In 1918, Madras became the trade link between Europe and East Indies (now called as

Indonesia). The mills in Madras had Indian labourers who were supervised by British management.

The socio-cultural impact of the First World War was such that during 1918-19, there was a steep rise in inflation and an acute shortage of food. 22 incidents of loot and arson were witnessed on a single day (September 8, 1918) as food rioters went berserk. Though the working hours were reduced to 12 per day, there was no fixed day for disbursement of wages for workers. Subramaniya Siva and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai were considered extremist leaders of the Indian national movement. These leaders mobilized workers, organised a strike and exerted pressure on the British. The labour movement had got integrated with the Indian national movement. In the decades leading up to Indian independence in 1947, trade unions played a significant role in the anti-colonial movement, advocating for workers' rights and pressing for political change. However, after independence, many unions were co-opted by the ruling Congress Party or faced repression by the government, making it difficult for them to effectively represent workers' interests.

Trade unions have been an important part of India's labour landscape since the early 20th century. Over the years, the country has seen the emergence of several major trade unions, including the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS). These unions represent workers across a range of sectors, including manufacturing, agriculture, and services. Trade unionism appeared to wither away by 1938. It did resurface later; however, the growing political clout of trade unions paved the path for its gradual decimation. The political affiliations of trade unions in India began way back in the 60's (Dhal, 2018). Union avoidance strategy by employers, organizational restructuring, individualized human resource management practices, aggressive use of automation and technology upgradation are factors that are hampering the power and influence of trade unions. This has muted the voices of workers who had entrusted the unions to take up cudgels with employers on their behalf.

Trade unions are concerned about the shift of production from one country to another. Increase in the tendency to outsource has resulted in labour moving from organized to unorganized sector. This has increased the casual/ contract labour. Closure of factories, downsizing, organizational restructuring, the apathy of the government, weakening of labour laws and gap in the knowledge and skill base of workers have only exacerbated matters and contributed to the diminishing influence of trade unions in India. Today, upskilling of Indian workers has become crucial to make India a global manufacturing hub.

The trade unions could have lent their support to the Government in this regard but they seem to have lost their relevance despite a pluralist regime. Globalization is certainly one of the causes but not the only cause.

Table 1. Declining role of trade unions in India

Sr No.	Period	Development
1	1950-1960	Domination of unions in public sector enterprises
2	Mid 60's- 1979	Industrial stagnation, falling production, low labour productivity affected trade union activity and collective bargaining. This period also saw recurring spurts of violence in industrial establishments. The period between 1961-1974 saw the largest number of strikes
3	1980-1991	Partial industrial deregulation; Industrial Disputes Act was amended in 1982 – when an establishment had 100 or more employees, it had to take permission from state before retrenching and laying off workers.
4	1992-2008	This period was characterized by low wage jobs and increased outsourcing. Decline of trade unions had already begun. Post 1992, strikes were in public sector units.
5	2008-2017	Growth of globalized transnational organization. Employee relations were individualized. A new form of trade unionism sprung up in IT and IT enabled sector in the form of white collared unionism
6	2017 – until now	44 central laws were codified into four - Code on Wages, Code on Industrial Relations, Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, Code on Social Security; growth in informalization of labour.

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

India's IR landscape reflects a multitude of actors, including diverse trade unions, employers, and the government, aligning with the pluralist perspective. This calls for investigating the various theories that can be considered relevant for this study.

Table 2. Theories relevant for IR

Sr No	Name of the theory	Developed by	Description
1	Dunlop's System Theory	John Dunlop	IR is a system that connects actors, processes and outcomes. Interdependence of workers/unions, employers and government contributes to a stable economy. Changes in one component can have a cascading influence on other components.
2	The Structural Contradictions Theory	Wolfgang Streeck & Ralf Rogowski	Contradictions between capital and labour are structurally embedded in capitalist relations. IR is impacted by conflict between aspirations of workers and interests of employers in pursuing profit-oriented goals.
3	The Pluralist Theory	Allan Flanders	Conflict between trade unions, management, and government can be managed through collective bargaining and proper legal framework. Pluralism encourages acknowledging diverse points of view and use of negotiations to resolve disputes.
4	Human Relations Theory	Keith Davis	Conflicts can be reduced by addressing the emotional and interpersonal needs of workers. This can drive productivity and form the basis of healthy and harmonious industrial relations.
5	Trusteeship Theory	Mahatma Gandhi	Employers should act as trustees for welfare of workers and society as a whole. Resources must be used responsibly. The theory recommends a co-operative and compassionate approach so that economic interests can be mapped with social and moral responsibilities.

Source: Compiled by the author

Each of these theories provides a distinctive lens through which to understand industrial relations, offering insights into the dynamics, conflicts, and potential resolutions within the workplace. These frameworks can guide strategies for managing and improving industrial relations in diverse organizational settings.

The structural contradictions within the capitalist system are evident in ongoing struggles for fair wages and improved working conditions, aligning with Hyman's theory. The human relations aspect is crucial in a country with a diverse workforce, emphasizing the significance of addressing psychological and social needs for harmonious workplace relations. Gandhi's trusteeship theory, rooted in ethical considerations, provides insights into fostering a sense of responsibility among employers for the welfare of workers and society. Analysing contemporary IR in India through these theories enables a nuanced understanding of the interplay between systemic, structural, social, and ethical factors shaping the current state of industrial relations.

Dunlop's System Theory identifies key actors (workers, employers, and the government) and emphasizes the role of rules and regulations, thus aligning well with the complex and dynamic nature of India's IR landscape. India's evolving regulatory environment and the role of labour laws in shaping employer-employee relationships can be analysed through Dunlop's lens. Additionally, as India undergoes economic shifts and global integration, Dunlop's focus on the dynamic nature of IR systems helps in comprehending how changes in one component impact the entire system, offering insights into the adaptability and resilience of India's industrial relations framework.

Flanders' Pluralist Theory is particularly relevant in understanding the state of IR in India. Flanders' emphasis on the management of conflict through fair legal frameworks and negotiations provides insights into the functioning of India's IR system. The coexistence of different interest groups and the negotiation-based approach underscore the pluralist nature of industrial relations in India, offering a lens through which to understand the complexities and dynamics within the workplace.

RESULTS

Specific aspects of globalization, including economic liberalization, technological advancements, and cross-border movements, have distinct impacts on trade unions in the context of their diminishing role in India. Economic liberalization, by fostering a more competitive and flexible labour market, often weakens the bargaining power of trade unions. Technological advancements, such as automation, may lead to job displacement and alter traditional employment structures, affecting the relevance of unions. Cross-border movements, driven by globalization, introduce new challenges and opportunities for unions, demanding adaptive strategies to navigate the evolving dynamics of the globalized economy, contributing to the varied and nuanced effects on trade unions in India.

The impact of globalization on trade unions varies across countries and regions, particularly between developed and developing economies. Developed nations may experience challenges related to job outsourcing and wage pressures, while developing economies may face issues of exploitation and inadequate labour standards. This leads to the need for context-specific strategies.

Trade unions can effectively adapt to the changing dynamics of globalization, especially in the context of technological advancements and automation, by embracing innovative strategies. Trade unions can facilitate continuous training and upskilling programs to equip workers with the expertise required in an automated and technologically

advanced workplace. Unions can foster partnerships with employers to navigate the impact of automation collaboratively, ensuring that workers' concerns are addressed and fair practices are maintained. Unions must make efforts to influence and shape government policies to safeguard workers' rights in the face of technological changes, including regulations on job displacement and the ethical use of automation. Trade union membership must be expanded to include workers in emerging sectors and those associated with the gig economy. They can also seek governmental support to build alliances with international trade unions to share best practices and coordinate efforts in addressing global challenges posed by technological advancements.

A combination of proactive engagement with employers, advocacy for favourable policies, and a commitment to continuous learning and development are what will strengthen the role of trade unions. By staying ahead of the curve and fostering collaborative relationships, trade unions can effectively navigate the challenges posed by globalization, technological advancements, and automation.

Government policies favouring flexibility in labour laws, increasing contractual employment, and facilitating ease of doing business can weaken the collective bargaining power of unions. Trade unions can navigate these challenges by actively participating in policy advocacy to influence legislation in Favor of workers' rights. Building strong relationships with policymakers, fostering dialogue with employers, and adapting negotiation strategies to align with legal changes are crucial for unions to effectively respond to the evolving institutional landscape, ensuring the protection and advancement of workers' interests in the face of globalization-induced transformations.

DISCUSSION

Comparative studies across different countries and regions can provide valuable insights into the variations in the impact of globalization on trade unions. Examining both developed and developing economies can highlight commonalities and differences in the challenges faced by trade unions. Research should focus on identifying and analysing the strategies employed by trade unions to adapt to the changing dynamics brought about by globalization. Understanding successful adaptation strategies can provide practical insights for unions facing similar challenges.

With the advancement of technology, there is a need to investigate how digitalization and automation impact the organization and effectiveness of trade unions.

Research should explore the role of technology in both facilitating and challenging union activities.

Investigating the role of institutional and legal factors in shaping the decline of trade unions is essential. This includes exploring how changes in labour laws, government policies, and employer practices contribute to the challenges faced by unions in the era of globalization. The erosion of traditional manufacturing jobs and the rise of the gig economy have changed the nature of employment relationships. Research should examine how these changes affect worker solidarity and the ability of trade unions to organize and represent workers effectively.

Understanding how trade unions align or conflict with other social/political movements can shed light on the potential for new forms of collective action in response to globalization. The impact of globalization on trade unions may vary across different sectors. Research should delve into sector-specific challenges and opportunities to provide a more detailed understanding of how globalization affects various industries.

Understanding the dynamics between globalization, trade unions, and economic growth can help shape policies that promote more inclusive economic development. This includes considering how workers can actively participate in and benefit from the global economy without compromising their rights and job security. Policymakers can gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by trade unions in the context of globalization. This knowledge can inform the development of policies that support the role of trade unions in protecting workers' rights, ensuring fair labour practices, and promoting social justice.

Research can shed light on the social justice implications of the diminishing role of trade unions, including issues related to income inequality, job insecurity, and exploitation. Policymakers can use this information to design interventions that promote a more just and equitable society. Research can contribute to building more resilient labour markets by identifying factors that contribute to the adaptability of workers and unions in the face of globalization. This resilience is important for navigating economic changes while ensuring the well-being of workers.

By identifying successful adaptation strategies and understanding the impact of globalization on worker solidarity, research can contribute to the development of measures to enhance worker protection. This is crucial for safeguarding the rights and well-being of workers in both developed and developing economies.

Understanding the impact of globalization on trade unions can facilitate cross-border collaboration among unions. This collaboration can help unions share best practices,

coordinate efforts to address global challenges, and amplify their collective voice in advocating for workers' rights on an international scale.

Interventions based on crucial insights derived from research in this area can lead to evidence-based policies and strategies that can support workers, promote social justice, and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable economic development in both developed and developing economies. Thus, this research paper has been able to highlight future research directions that can guide public policy on the matter. Research in this field has often been presented in a single dimensional context without looking at different facets through which the importance of the trade union movement has become diluted over a period of time.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research has contributed to the existing literature by offering a nuanced examination of the impact of globalization on labour relations, particularly in the Indian context. The study has explicitly addressed the issue of the informalization of labour and the challenges resulting from structural changes in national and global policies. More importantly, the study looks at the interplay of capital, labour and regulation in an era of global economic integration. Considering that India wants to be a global manufacturing hub, addressing contentious issues like the diminishing role of trade unions will remain integral to India's long-term success in achieving its domestic and global ambitions. Solving pesky labour issues cannot be achieved using a one-size-fits-all approach and neither can there be silver bullet solutions to address decades-old labour law issues (both operational and regulatory). Many studies have highlighted the decline of trade unions in the context of globalization, but there is a need for more nuanced analyses of how specific aspects of globalization, such as economic liberalization, technological advancements, and cross-border movements, impact trade unions differently.

Structural reforms by the Government have hurt labour rights. Workforce in the informal sector belongs to marginalized sections of society and women have been unrepresented. There has been an excessive focus on issues at the national level even though labour law reforms are taking place at the regional level.

Industrial peace is an essential requirement for uninterrupted industrial progress. Trade unions represent a democratic system based on negotiations to stress on better terms and conditions of employment for workers. Trade unions have to do a lot of work to stay relevant. Trade unions must mobilize membership and ensure healthy working conditions

for labour. They must press for social security measures for labour. Numerous developments—technological advancement, the rise of the gig economy, decline in the share of manufacturing in GDP, the fall in the share of the public sector etc- have lowered the scope of unionisation. The working class is once again on the backfoot. Globally, the share of labour in total income is declining.

Progressive taxation can reduce income equality. The government can adopt an equitable tax system, one where income is taxed at the same rate regardless of whether it is earned by the sweat of one's brow, or from putting capital to work. The government must also ensure that inflation is kept under check. Many employers continue to neglect statutory provisions on the health and safety of workers, including those involved with hazardous processes and waste, because of their faith in the pliability of law-enforcing authorities and mild penalties for carelessness. We need mandatory and regular audits of safety rules, availability of safety tools like masks at all times and maintenance of safety items at prescribed replenishment levels.

Understanding the interplay between technology and industrial relations is crucial for developing effective strategies to protect workers' rights, ensure fair employment conditions, and maintain the relevance of trade unions in the evolving landscape of work.

As technological advancements, automation, and artificial intelligence reshape the nature of work, there is a significant research gap in understanding how these changes affect industrial relations and the role of trade unions. Technological advancements can lead to job displacement by automating routine tasks and eliminating certain occupations. Trade unions can facilitate the reskilling and upskilling of workers in the face of automation by providing training programs, supporting educational initiatives, and advocating for policies that promote lifelong learning.

Trade unions can adapt to the digital age by developing new organizing strategies, utilizing technology to connect with workers, and negotiating collective bargaining agreements that address the challenges and opportunities of the digital economy. Trade unions can adapt to represent and advocate for the rights of non-traditional workers by forming new alliances with gig workers, freelancers, and other atypical workers. New forms of worker alliances and solidarity can emerge through online platforms, social movements, and cross-industry collaborations.

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