

## WORK REPORT PHASE-III :- BIOGRAPHIES

### (9) ANANTHA SUBHA RAO

He was son of a middle school teacher. Born on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1942 in Hassan district of Karataka. Graduated in science. Was influenced into politics by M.C.Narsimhan in his college days. In the late 1960s and 70s entered the TU movement under his guidance. In 1976 was introduced by AITUC leaders to work in the road transport union i.e. KSRTC or Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation. Then the no. of workers were about 46,000 but now it is over 70,000.

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1977- Anantha Subha Rao led the first AITUC strike in KSRTC. From 1977 he was elected one of the Provident Fund members of the KSRTC by the management from the side of the workers.

From 1977 AITUC became a force in KSRTC. By 1980 the AITUC led union in KSRTC had grown to such an extent that they had to call them for negotiations.

From 1970s Anantha Subha Rao and other AITUC leaders had been always pressing the management that the KSRTC workers be allowed to vote by secret ballot to elect the union who would be their representative, but this was not allowed. For this Anantha Subha Rao led many struggles and was beaten and arrested many times. From 1985 to 1987 he started a struggle on this issue. Finally on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1987 the KSRTC management agreed to a referendum that would decide if there should be secret ballot or not. The referendum was held and finally workers voted for 'secret ballot'.

On 9<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1987 – Anantha Subha Rao's AITUC union won the majority in the secret ballot defeating all other unions. This was not liked by other unions and the management.

Thus when the next referendum took place on the issue of secret ballot on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1992 the INTUC union in KSRTC went to court and stayed the referendum. Then Anantha Subha Rao had to fight a long legal battle and political struggle in the HC and finally the SC which on 18<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1999 upheld the HC decision in favour of 'secret ballot'. But the JD govt in the state controlled by Deva Gowda did not implement the order.

From 31<sup>st</sup> July 1997 to 13<sup>th</sup> August 1997 Anantha Subha Rao organised and addressed over 200 public meetings all over the state against the issue of privatization.

In 1983 Anantha Subha Rao became the G-Sec of the Karnataka AITUC and later became the Asst. Gen. Sec. of the Karnataka state CPI. Then became the NC member of the CPI and the WC member of the AITUC. Over the years Anantha Subha Rao heads unions in various companies like MICO, WIPRO, VEDIA, Kirloskar, LIC, ESIC, and Silk Employees unions. Apart from this he is also supporting the peasant movement in the state particularly the one going on in Hassan district on an environmental and livelihood issue. Overall Anantha Subha Rao is a leader of the working class and is a man of great integrity and ability to almost fanatically fight.

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ANANTHA SUBHA RAO, Transport , Bangalore.

Anantha Subbha Rao's interview was another revealing one as far as understanding the TU movement in Karnataka is concerned. Anantha Subbha Rao's interview has added significance given the fact that it gives a good account of the trade union movement's history in the case of the road transport sector unions and that too the history of the Karnataka State Road Transport Workers Union (KSRTC). Anantha Subha Rao narrates the history of the struggle of the KSRTC workers from 1970s onwards when AITUC did not have much of a hold in them till now when AITUC is the main force in the KSRTC workers. From leading the May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1977 strike in KSRTC through to getting the secret ballot system accepted on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1987 when the idea got accepted in a referendum at the state level leading to the AITUC union of KSRTC workers gaining majority and therefore the right to formally represent it since 1987 till today. However the issue of secret ballot got challenged in 1992 in the HC by an INTUC union of the KSRTC workers. But that challenge also they won in the Feb.18, 1999 verdict by the SC. The interview with Anantha Subha Rao sheds a lot of light on the history of the struggle of the KSRTC workers and also he narrated his associated struggles in other unions like in MICO, WIPRO, VEDIA, Kirloskar, Police Constable Union, peasant struggle in Hassan his native district, and overall struggle against privatization. So in all these respects the interview proved to be very significant.