

'Japanese Management and Indian Resistance' Written by Anjali Deshpande and Nandita Haskar

-Viraji

After a decade of the incident of the 2012 violent confrontation of Maruti Suzuki workers resisting the onslaught of the management on their statutory rights and entitlements, the details of the incident and the consequent **condition of the workers are provided by Anjali Deshpande a journalist and activist and Nandita Haskar a human rights lawyer, teacher and campaigner through the book "Japanese Management and Indian Resistance"**. It gives a "glimpse" into the new India which is 'emerging and transforming in to a corporate state' a state in which profits trump the rights of citizens. These authors righteously announce that they have not written this book to be objective as described by the academia with the kind of objectivity that invariably works against weaker, less powerful section of the people, but with the objectivity of truth, verifiable facts and justice with the perspective of Maruti Suzuki factory workers.

These authors (authoresses) gave valuable information in the book not only about how Suzuki had penetrated in to India by obtaining a license in October 1982 in to a joint venture between the govt. of India and Suzuki Motor Corporation and gradually by 2003 has gobbled up the Maruti Udyog Ltd by 2007 and became Maruti Suzuki India Ltd but also how Suzuki imposed the so-called corporate culture and particularly the Japanese work culture – KAROSHI : death by over-work-on the workers in India plants at the very same time stubbornly denying the statutory rights and entitlement of workers. They depicted vividly how workers are reduced into machines or parts of the machines through its automated assembly line by constantly increasing its speed and increased its productivity inhumanly disallowing the workers even a reasonable rest time. They also showed how the Suzuki management unjustly imposed times on works on the slightest pretexts and swallowed their legitimate earnings, earned through hard labour. They have shown vividly all forms of exploitation of labour power of workers by the Suzuki management intentionally disregarding and undermining the laws of the land and blatantly violating it. They exposed how the rulers, governments (central or state), the judiciary, the police and administrative machinery – the entire system – had colluded with the Japanese foreign capital and became subservient to the big-capital in furthering its interests even at the cost of workers and citizens of India and against their interests. They effectively depicted the anti-worker, anti-people class nature of rulers and governments in the rule of both the ruling class political parties the congress and the BJP. They provided a glimpse of the havoc being played by the foreign capital destroying the lives of workers in India in pursuing its goal of earning super profits.

On the other hand the writers of the book kept the statements of the workers of Maruti Suzuki, their leaders and some Central trade union leaders with regards to the incident of 2012 incident and aftermath before the readers to understand the depth of the worker's issue involved that has a larger bearing on the worker's movement of 'globalised' India.

During their depositions; recorded by the writer the workers have raised many pertinent questions with regards to the present state of worker's movement in India and the question of organizing workers in to a real union that could honestly and sincerely protect the interests of workers from ruthless and unbridled exploitation. The workers of Maruti in their statements have shown various aspects of not only the workers' movement but also about the nature of rulers and governments in treating the workers and their work related disputes with the managements.

In this book the authors have shown how the foreign capital in connivance with the rulers of our country has cunningly established a social base in support of its nefarious activity of inhuman exploitation in rural areas : as a reaction to the events of 18 July, 2012 at Manesar plant of Maruti Suzuki, villagers of 200 villages held a 'maha panchayat' and unanimously criticized the Maruti Suzuki workers union and condemned the violence that led to the death of a HR general manager. They called for the ousting of all labour unions".

This shows how the villagers of these villages who have to stand in support to the workers, have turned on to the side of management. This is because these villagers feared that they may lose their income if the plant is closed, they are earning by renting out rooms to plant workers and through shops from where the workers buy their daily necessities. More than this, the Suzuki company employed local villagers, and goons as bouncers, who are encouraged to discipline the 'workers'. The workers are non-locals and migrated workers from other states. On July 18, 2012, when the union leaders are conducting negotiations with Suzuki management over the charter of their demands, besides discussing the specific incident of a supervisor Sangram Majhi in an altercation with a dalit worker Jiyalal, making castiest remarks and insulting the worker and the management unjustly suspending the worker but not the supervisor who made the castiest slur; 100 to 150 bouncers entered the plant dressed in uniform of the factory workers who not only have attacked the workers on duty brutally with sharp weapons and arms but also destroyed and set fire to a portion of the factory. Due to the smoke of the fire, unable to breath properly a HR, Manager died with asphyxia. Several journalists reported about the entry of bouncers in to the factory and their vandalism. But cunningly the workers were falsely accused of violence and destruction of the plant by the Suzuki management and the power by implicating them in to false criminal cases that resulted in the sessions court sentencing 13 workers to life for murder including union leadership and one worker, besides convicting 33 workers for lesser crimes and sentenced. Suzuki management dismissed 2,500 workers including 546 permanent workers.

While such are the facts and realities the workers are criminalized by the management, government, judiciary and the society. An important lesson too has to be drawn from this

episode : that the workers shall not only organise in to an union in the plant, but they also have to mingle with the society and people where they reside constantly informing the people about the managements devious methods of inhuman exploitation and brutal treatment of workers. The workers shall make the villagers on their allies who, too are suffering from various forms of feudal oppression and false prestige of working in a foreign invested big factory shall not come in between to be allied with local villagers an alliance class to the working class. The workers shall be friendly with the villagers and behave as a part of the village society.

It is disheartening to know how the so-called learned judiciary could pronounce its judgement even without obtaining the deposition of supervisor Mahaji due to whose behavior the entire incident had occurred. Miraculously he disappeared into thin air from the very next day of the incident – logically with the courtesy of Suzuki management. Moreover the evidence of eternally functioning CC TV cameras in the entire premises of Manesar plant monitoring each and every operation minutely, particularly the performance of each worker and his movement was not adduced as an evidence nor examined by the ‘honourable courts’ before pronouncing the judgements. While it is reported that the CCTV cameras stopped functioning from 13 hrs. on 18 August 2012, the ‘fateful day’, the wise judiciary acquiesced with such false submission of Suzuki management, and adjudged that the workers were ‘guilty’ of violence and ‘murder’.

In this context of Maruti workers confrontation with Suzuki management, time and again the question of ‘violence’ of workers is being questioned and incessantly reported at the same time ignoring the desperation of workers in to which they are pushed by the management, governments, rulers, judiciary with the complicity of the traditional central trade unions; leaving the workers with no option than to violently confront the management and conditions of unending inhuman exploitation imposed on them.

This is not the first time that the workers resorted to violent confrontation with the management. Prior to this such violent confrontations occurred.

On 2015, in Orient crafts in Gurgaon workers set several cars on fire after one worker had suffered an electric shock in the factory and was seriously injured.

In Karnataka recently the workers of WISTRON, a supplier to Apple phone company, the contract workers have violently confronted with the management over the dispute of payment of agreed wages.

No opportunity of any kind of mitigating and bettering their working conditions is inevitable causing such violent confrontations of workers and the possibility of their continuance in the present circumstance of globalized India, where the rulers and successive governments are stripping workers of their rights by making less disenfranchising workers, to the advantage of foreign capital subserving to the imperialist corporate power is looming.

Today Suzuki is earning super profits by exploiting the labour power of contract workers, company trainees, apprentices, temporary workers and casual workers and fixed time

employees ruthlessly and inhumanly without any restriction and impunity whereas the workers are languishing in untold worst working and living conditions.

The Suzuki management which obstinately refused to mitigate worker's grievances and demands has pressed the spiritual gurus like Brahma Kumaris and Radha Soani Panth into service to organize sessions with its workers in which the workers could talk to them about their 'problems'. Brahma Kumaris have willingly accepted with zeal to serve foreign big capital to conduct the so-called sessions on spiritual well being (of workers) and to 'keep emotions (of workers) in place'. With such spiritual sessions, Suzuki management is drugging its workers, with spiritual opium. On the other hand Brahma Kumaris and other 'spiritual gurus' revealed their class nature that they are on the side of exploiting classes than to help the helpless workers in distress.

This aspect has to be particularly noted by the workers' movement to tackle it and seriously to deal with.

Through their book 'Japanese Management and Indian Resistance' Anjali Deshpande and Nandita Haksar has brought out the present-day actual conditions of workers in globalized India, the failures of workers movement of India and the challenges before trade union movement of India in to focus providing an occasion to critically review and examine to everyone who claims to be working in the interests of workers and working class of India. This book will be more useful to realise the vulnerability of trade union movement of India, so as to revitalise and revive it to a real movement of working class if sincerely intended to do so !