



COLONIAL INDIA IN THE ILO AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Amritha V. Shenoy*

Abstract

With an ideological domination of Western academic discourses with respect to international law, there is a lack of a holistic approach to international law with a distinct disadvantage to third world nations and their citizens. History of international law has most often been documented from a European perspective. This paper attempts to fill this gap by narrating an alternative history of international law and thus seeks to move beyond this Euro-centric 'turn to history' with a Third World Approach to International Law (TWAIL) perspective. The paper traces India's relationship with international law by examining this anomalous position of colonial India and its princely states at the international organisations. It recognises that although Indian membership at the ILO was merely representative with a deep and entrenched British control, Indian representatives at the ILO attempted to further true Indian multicivilizational interests at their meetings. In the above context, the paper traces the Indian struggle to be represented at international fora, including the ILO. Finally, the paper concludes by questioning the legitimacy of international law in the colonial period. Thus, the paper attempts to reflect on this history of international law, from a diverse and inclusive perspective.

Keywords: British India, International Conventions, League of Nations, Princely States, TWAIL

* Kathmandu School of Law, Kathmandu; amy.shenoy@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Fragmentation of international law has created various sects within the discipline. One such fragment is the History of International Law, which has always been an integral part of the Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL). History of international law was studied by TWAILers beginning in the 1960s. In the recent past, there has been a 'turn to history' in international law literature. However, this literature merely narrates the history of international law from a European perspective and thus, there is a need for alternative histories of international law to be added to the existing literature. This paper attempts to bridge this gap and offers an alternative history by narrating the struggles of Indian representatives of colonial India in the ILO. If at the domestic level, Indians struggled for freedom from colonial rule, at international level, Indians struggled to express freely about India's conditions under the colonial rule.

Colonial India had representation in various international forums for a while, participating in several international institutions. In 1876, colonial India (hereinafter referred to as 'India') became a member of the Universal Postal Union. In 1890, India also represented the Conference of the International Union for the Publication of Tariff Customs. In 1912, India became a party to the International Wireless Telegraph Convention. The International Radio Telegraph Conference was convened in 1912 wherein India had a separate vote. Thus, the country had become a party to over 150 multilateral treaties² and 44 bilateral treaties.³ The League of Nations dealt with multiple facets of international relations and comprised of several limbs like the International Labour Organisation, Health Organisation, Economic and Financial Organisation and others. However, the present paper is limited to the representation of colonial India in the International Labour Organisation and deals with Indian participation in the making of international law. In addition to this, India's political entity was complicated in composition, which was taken as a whole comprising of British administered territories and the Princely States

² (LNTS 124; UNTS 26)

³ (LNTS 32; UNTS 12).

2. Anomalous Position of Colonial India

To avoid an anachronistic view of India in colonial times, it should be understood as a complicated political entity comprising of British administered territory and the Princely States. First, the focus is on the British administered territory wherein the British dealt with both its internal and external affairs. This included the right of the British Crown to declare war on behalf of colonial India. In addition to this, the Indian Office in London dealt with India's external affairs (as opposed to the Foreign Department of the government of India) and formulated Indian foreign policy. Therefore, the Secretary of State and the India Office in London were given such advantageous powers whereas the government of India neither dealt with India's external affairs nor did they represent India in international organisations. It merely resolved the territorial disputes and the issues within Indian States.⁴ Due to these powers exercised by Britain over external as well as internal matters, colonial India was never a self-governing territory.⁵ Despite its representation in the League of Nations, India was considered to be a part of the British Empire.⁶ According to Section 18(5) of the Interpretation Act, 1889, India was interpreted as British India.⁷ Moreover, the Government of India (implies Governor-General in Council) was not accountable to the people of India.⁸ The Interpretation Act did not interpret India as a colony, therefore India was considered as a separate personality from Britain. Due to this separate personality, India became a member of various international organisations.⁹

⁴ Verma, D.N. (1968), *India and the League of Nations*, Patna: Bharati Bhawan., p. 83

⁵ Lissitzyn, Oliver J. (1968), "Territorial Entities other than Independent States in the Law of Treaties", *Recueil Des Cours*, 125: 1-92., p. 66

⁶ Supra note 4 at p. 23-24

⁷ Sundaram, Lanka (1930), "The International Status of India", *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 9(4): 452-466, p. 452

Section 18(5) of the Interpretation Act of 1889 defines India as follows:

"British India, together with any territories of any native prince or chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty."

⁸ *Ibid* p. 452-453

⁹ Kemal, R. (2012), "The evolution of British Sovereignty in India" in Bhatia, H.S., *Political, Legal and Military History of India*, Vol. 8, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., reprinted 2012, 98- 125. , p. 122

During the formation of the League of Nations, India was represented at the League by the British to increase its “voting strength”¹⁰ along with other dominions. The British had six votes in their hands, (Great Britain, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa) thus, increasing their strength.¹¹ This voting strength of Britain was criticised by Govind Ballabh Pant, Bhagwan Das and others. But the British justified themselves with Article 5 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which states as under:

Except where otherwise expressly provided in this Covenant or by the terms of the present Treaty, decisions at any meeting of the Assembly or of the Council shall require the agreement of all the Members of the League represented at the meeting.

All matters of procedure at meetings of the Assembly or of the Council, including the appointment of Committees to investigate particular matters, shall be regulated by the Assembly or by the Council and may be decided by a majority of the Members of the League represented at the meeting.

The first meeting of the Assembly and the Council shall be summoned by the President of the United States of America¹².

Be that as it may, the British exercised powers on the appointment of committees, and in the matters of procedure because of the strength it had in the Assembly. Consequently, Britain had power over the membership of the entire Council.¹³ The representatives were criticised as being part of the British system. J.S. Gupta¹⁴ criticised the delegation severely, by stating that “it must consist of members who were poles asunder from each other and who might not belong to such divergent species as the autocratic Indian Prince, bureaucratic Government official and an irresponsible Indian, all

¹⁰ R.P. Anand, *The Formation of International Organizations and India: A Historical Study*, 23 LEIDEN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, 5, 7 (2010).

¹¹ SHIVA V. RAM & BRIJ MOHAN SHARMA, *INDIA AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS*, 142 (The Upper India Publishing House Ltd, 1932).

¹² Article 5, Covenant of the League of Nations

¹³ *Id.* at 24-25.

¹⁴ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 61.

three of them owing allegiance not to the Indian nation but to an alien bureaucracy”.

India was granted equal rights with all other nation states and Indian delegates were treated equally.¹⁵ But scholars note that they were not technically equal to other members because the other representatives served the interests of their peoples but the Indian delegates served that of the British. India was the only non-self-governing member of the League.¹⁶ Unlike States like Finland, Albania, Latvia and Lithuania who had problems seeking membership in the League, India's membership was accepted without any conditions. When all the nation-states met at the Paris Conference to decide on membership in the League, India's participation in the First World War as a result of colonial rule acted as an important factor.¹⁷

Even though India participated in many international conferences, the British decided this representation.¹⁸ This selection of the representatives by the British gave rise to a power tussle between the Secretary of State and the Government of India. However, in 1920, it was decided that the appointments were to be made in "prior consultation and agreement" between the Government of India and the Secretary of State.¹⁹ During the conferences, a separate meeting was held amongst the British Commonwealth delegates in which issues were discussed frankly and opinions were weighed.

After the conference, the delegated members were required to send reports to the Secretary of State and a copy was forwarded to the Government of India. This clearly demonstrates that the British Government exercised control over the external affairs of colonial India. On the flip side, the representatives of workers and employers to the International Labour Conferences were selected by the Government of India. Therefore, the reports on International Labour Conferences were submitted to the Government of India and copies were sent to the Secretary of State. The treaties signed by India were ratified by "an instrument of ratification signed by the King on the

¹⁵ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 24-25.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 20.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 29.

¹⁸ Anand, *supra* note 10, at 12.

¹⁹ Lanka, *supra* note 7, at 462.

advice of the British Cabinet".²⁰ In less important matters, the Secretary of State for India ratified the treaties, leaving the Government of India with minimal autonomy.

Indian delegates put forth their arguments and successfully procured the required changes in the drafts of the conferences. For instance, in the Genoa Maritime Conference of 1920, India demanded special treatment for Indian seamen in British ships. The British were adamant on firing these Indian seamen. But the Indian delegates did not budge and convinced the Secretary of State. India's freedom to express freely at these conferences were also controlled by the British. They collectively took decisions for the Empire as a whole. For instance, Latin American countries tried to take a joint stand, but the British emulated this.²¹ All the important political matters "affecting the Empire as a whole" were left to the British Government.²² It is laudable that whatever autonomy the Indian delegates obtained, they utilised it for the benefit of India and her interests. Although later, some autonomy was granted to India, International obligations were taken care of by the British Government. However, if international matters concerned India only, discretion was given to India. Some treaties had special provisions for taking consent of the Dominions like India. For instance, the Locarno Treaty and the Imperial Conferences of 1923 and 1926 contained special provisions.

Based on the above account, Indian position in international fora was a peculiar one. The Indian delegates truly represented India despite the British control over international affairs. Therefore, many scholars understood India to be in an anomalous position. For instance, D.H. Miller²³ termed India's membership in the League as 'an anomaly among anomalies'. V. Shiva Ram and Brij Mohan Sharma²⁴ opined that, 'India is a political curiosity inside the League.'

²⁰ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 30.

²¹ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 115-116.

²² Lanka, *supra* note 7, at 461.

²³ *Supra* note 4 at 20

²⁴ Shiva, *supra* note 11, at 139.

India's situation in the period between 1919 to 1947 is described as an 'anomalous situation' by T.T Poulouse.²⁵

3. Anomalous Position of Princely States

India broadly had two components in the colonial period viz. the British-administered territories and the 562 Princely States. The Governor-General was in charge of maintaining the relationship between the two components. The Princely States were prohibited from entering international relations. They resembled the vassal states under the control of Britain.²⁶ "At the Paris Peace Conference and in the Covenant of the League of Nations, India was recognised to be of composite and corporate character".²⁷ Therefore, India was represented by one Prince in the League Assembly's annual sessions. They were part of the Indian delegations to the Imperial Conferences and the Paris Peace Conference. The Princes played a crucial role in supporting the British in the First World War and hence, were made representatives of India in international forums as a bridge between the Chamber of Princes and the Government of India. An Indian Prince was also appointed as a cultural diplomat in the League.

The political entities of Government of India and the Princely States cooperated in international relations as the Maharaja of Bikaner signed in the Treaty of Versailles. This step brought both political entities closer²⁸ and showed India as a single political unit.²⁹ However, in reality, it was multiple political entities projected to be one India. At this juncture, the Indian nationalists proposed a federalist structure for independent India.³⁰

The representation of India by a Prince was also an "anomaly", according to D.N. Verma.³¹ One of the problems with the representation of Princes was that they represented the British India

²⁵ T.T. Poulouse, *India as an Anomalous International Person*, 44 BRITISH YEARBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 201, 206 (1970).

²⁶ Shiva, *supra* note 11, at 11.

²⁷ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 240.

²⁸ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 310.

²⁹ Shiva, *supra* note 11, at 143.

³⁰ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 246.

³¹ *Id.* at 244.

and could not express on behalf of Princely States or Indians.³² The Government of India had to convince the Princely States to follow the international obligations. Sometimes, it was difficult to convince them. Therefore, the Covenant of the League of Nations and other conferences provided for exclusion of territories from its purview.³³ On this pretext, the British excluded the Princely States.

Sometimes, the Chamber of Princes refused to agree with some conventions even after their signature by the representation. They claimed autonomy of internal administration. Therefore, the Government of India issued a circular dated January 21, 1926, giving the Princely States autonomy to follow international obligations under the League of Nations.³⁴ The Princely States demanded further autonomy. Thus, the Government of India excluded them from various international treaties like the Hague Opium Convention, the Slavery Convention, Convention regarding Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, etc. The Princely States were termed as "international orphans".³⁵

4. Colonial India and International Labour Organisation

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea of ILO emanated due to two reasons.³⁶ First, there was unrestricted capitalism, violation of human rights and exploitation of labour. Thus arose the need for an institution for regulating these problems. Second, an organisation which would fulfil the demands of the workers was the need of the times. Thus began the demand for ILO. The workers who contributed in the First World War, wanted to ensure that their leaders kept the promises made to them during the war. The International Association for the Legal Protection of Labour was transformed to International Labour Organisation in 1919. The Commission appointed in the Paris Peace Conference, 1919

³² Shiva, *supra* note 11, at 464.

³³ *Id.* at 465.

³⁴ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 251.

³⁵ Proceedings of the International Labour Conference 1944: 288.

³⁶ Gerry Rodgers, *India, the ILO and the Quest for Global Justice since 1919*, XLVI (10) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY, 45, 46.

enunciated the following nine principles while recommending the establishment of the ILO:³⁷

1. Labour is not to be considered as only an article of commerce.
2. The employers, as well as the employed, have the right of association for all lawful purposes.
3. Workers should be paid such wages as are adequate and reasonable to enable them to lead a comfortable life.
4. To adopt a forty-eight-hour working week whenever it has not yet been adopted.
5. At least 24 hours continual rest should be given to the workers, which should include Sunday as far as possible.
6. Children should not be employed for work, and young persons should be employed as to have sufficient time left for their education and physical development.
7. Men and women workers should get equal wages for works of equal value.
8. Each country should lay down a standard of conditions of labour with due regard to the equitable economic treatment of all workers.
9. Provision should be made for inspection to see that regulations and laws for the protection and welfare of workers are being enforced. Women also should take part in this inspection.

Two organs of the ILO were established viz. the International Labour Office and International Labour Conference. Ram and Sharma³⁸ opine that “the International Labour Conference is the proper machinery through which our delegates can ventilate the grievances of the workers and create world opinion in favour of necessary reforms”. Practically, International Labour Conference was a forum which was utilised by Indian delegates to point out to the world the plight of the workers.

³⁷ Shiva, *supra* note 11, at 61.

³⁸ *Id.* at 175.

India occupied a unique position in the ILO as it was the only non-independent nation member.³⁹ India had to fight the debates on its membership in the ILO, much like in the League of Nations. But, after much deliberation, India was admitted as a member of the ILO. She had to debate harder for membership of the Governing Body of the ILO as one of the main criteria for being a part of the Governing Body was that the State should be of industrial importance. This was to be decided by the Council of the League of Nations. The Organising Committee of the Washington Labour Conference, 1919 recommended eight countries of industrial importance as the USA, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland and Spain. Objections were raised by India, Sweden, Poland and Canada. India contended that her capacity to contribute to these international organisations was assessed high, but when it came to representation, she was given least importance.

India contended firmly and thereby a committee was formed comprising of four members of the Governing Body to define the term "industrial importance" and "to fix the criteria for the selection of the eight states".⁴⁰ The Council heard the contenders. Poland argued that India's membership in the Governing Body would mean more representation to the British. India's advocate was Lord Chelmsford who argued that India had a huge population - twenty million industrial workers. Moreover, he pointed out that the demand of peculiar situation of labour called for India to be a part of the Governing Body. Final contestants to the post were India and Sweden. Lord Balfour justified India as the deserving aspirant. Finally, the Council decided the eight States of industrial importance as Belgium, Canada, France, India, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Japan. India's membership in the Governing Body raised her international status.⁴¹ Finally, the Council accepted the recommended names.

The uniqueness of ILO is that its meetings, proceedings and discussions not only include the representatives of States but also

³⁹ Robert Gavin, *India and the I.L.O.*, 3(1) INDIAN JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, 74, 75 (1967).

⁴⁰ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 156.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 159.

stakeholders like workers and employees of a variety of industries.⁴² Out of the delegates who represented India at the ILO, one was Indian.⁴³ He attempted to use the rostrum of the International Labour Conference as a place for the expression of national aspirations unlike the others who merely appeased the British.

At the Washington Labour Conference, 1919, India suggested sixty hours of work in the Hours of Work Convention because of her industrial needs and this recommendation was accepted. In addition to this, India's interests were secured in the Convention on the Weekly Rest Day of 1921. Sometimes, the arguments formulated by the British were reformulated as per the needs of India.⁴⁴

V.V. Giri participated in the International Labour Conference of 1927⁴⁵ as the Workers' delegate. He spoke not only for India but also for other colonised countries which denied representation to the coloured:

Ungrateful though it may sound to many, I have to draw the attention of this Conference to the fact that, perhaps from causes outside its control, the International Labour Office has not devoted that time, energy and attention which it was to be hoped it would devote to the investigation and amelioration of conditions in those countries which are known as special countries, in mandated territories and in countries like India, where the Government is foreign and where the interests of rulers and ruled are at variance and where the workers are not well organised. I make this reference, not in a spirit of fault-finding, but to remind you and to remind the Office that there is much work to be done and that, if it is not accomplished, the international character and prestige of this Organisation is jeopardised.

⁴² Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al, *India and the ILO in Historical Perspective*, 46(10) Economic and Political Weekly, 44, 44 (2011).

⁴³ Lanka, *supra* note 7, at 457.

⁴⁴ Lanka, *supra* note 7, at 459.

⁴⁵ (Proceedings of the International Labour Conference, 1927: 97)

Amongst the Indian representatives, P.P. Pillai, N.M. Joshi and Rajani Kanta Das created their niche. While working in the League of Nations, P.P. Pillai was sent to India in 1925 to open a League office. He had discussions with Jinnah and Nehru, who did not find the idea feasible. However, he proposed the establishment of an ILO office in India, which was set up in 1928 and Pillai was appointed as its head. He published papers and promoted ILO in India.⁴⁶

In 1925, Rajani Kanta Das joined the ILO where he was recommended to prepare a report on the labour conditions in Asiatic countries by N.M. Joshi at the Seventh Session of the International Labour Conference. This report was very critical of the labour conditions in India under the British rule. However, the British government did not consider the report to be official- so he used the findings in this report further to publish articles. These writings brought to light the various problems of labour in India with particular emphasis on child labour and the conditions of women's labour. He stood for compulsory primary education and social legislation to combat the problem of child labour and recommended changes in the labour conditions of women by suggesting that technical education be provided to women. While analysing the problems of labour in India under the British rule, Das highlighted various social problems and aspects related to labour.

Internationally, a significant step was taken to stop forced or compulsory labour in the form of the Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour of 1930. Domestically, in India, Criminal Tribes Act was enacted in 1924 which attempted to discipline the criminal tribes by employing them compulsorily in certain sectors. The provincial governments implemented the Act successfully employing 31000 tribesmen.⁴⁷ Therefore, the Government of India decided against the ratification of the Forced Labour Convention but with massive furores against the Government's stand in the Indian Legislature forced the government to ratify the Convention. Thus, the government exempted the Criminal Tribes Act 1871, from

⁴⁶ J. Krishnamurthy, *Indian Officials in the ILO, 1919-c 1947*, XLVI (10) ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY, 53, 56 (2011).

⁴⁷ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 203.

amendment. It also directed the provincial governments to check forced labour.

The Treaty of Versailles under Articles 405 and 408 provided for the ratification of treaties (by members' legislatures) formulated under the aegis of the International Labour Organisation. Under the aegis of the ILO, 28 conventions were formulated in the first decade of its establishment. India ratified many conventions before her independence

Many of the Conventions formulated under the aegis of the ILO are influenced by the discussions and debates by Indian representatives and many laws formulated in India are influenced by the ILO conventions. Thus, it is here again proved that international organisations are influenced by States and vice-versa.⁴⁸

Formation of industrial organisations in India was a repercussion of her membership in the ILO.⁴⁹ For instance, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was formed in 1920. The first president of the organisation was Lala Lajpat Rai. The rationale behind the organisation was to choose a deserving representative of the workers to the ILO rather than giving the power of nomination to the Government of India. Similarly, the employers questioned their representation in the ILO. Consequently, the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce was established in 1927.

The Indian representatives to the ILO argued against colonisation and personalities like Lala Lajpat Rai linked the importance of self-determination to the welfare of workers. Discussions in the ILO on decolonisation began after an impetus was given by the freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi. Workers' representatives at the International Labour Conferences like S.C. Joshi, Chaman Lal, Fulay and employers' delegates like Amritlal Ojha, Walchand Hirachand spoke for the right to self-determination of Indians. They unveiled the reality of the British rule in India. Decolonisation was supported by ILO after the second world war.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Sabyasachi, *supra* note 42, at 44.

⁴⁹ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 150.

⁵⁰ Gerry, *supra* note 36, at 46.

It is pertinent to note that there were better labour standards in comparison to international standards in some private firms in India. In the 1920s and 1930s, Tata Iron and Steel Company followed better labour standards as compared to the national and international labour standards of those times.⁵¹

The labour legislations prior to the establishment of ILO, favoured the interests of employers rather than that of labour.⁵² As a consequence of membership in the ILO, colonial India enacted several labour legislations viz. Indian Factories (Amendment) Act of 1922, Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923, etc. The Indian Mines (Amendment) Act of 1935 proscribed employment of children below 15 years of age in mines. The legislations limited the hours of work of labour, provided dispute settlement mechanisms in an industrial dispute, compensation for an accident during work, etc. With untiring efforts of the Indian members of the legislature, indentured labour was abolished.⁵³ The result of all this was that the Government of India could not neglect the issues concerning labour. NM Joshi⁵⁴, who represented India in International Labour Conferences, opines that the "International Labour Organisation has done, to my mind a great amount of good to the working class of this country. The factory legislation and labour legislation of this country are not sufficiently advanced. But I must admit that whatever advance we have recently made in the sphere of legislation is to a great extent due to the International Labour Organisation."

As discussed in the section on anomalous position of Princely States, the Princely States demanded some autonomy in internal administration and were conceded to the demands by the British Government. Consequent to this, the Princely States were exempted from the operation of obligations arising out of International Labour Conferences. N.M. Joshi opposed this non-compliance by the Princely States. He was restricted from raising this question in the Legislative Assembly. The anomalous position of the Princely States

⁵¹ C.S. Venkata Ratnam, India and International Labour Standards, 35(4) Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 461, 475 (2000).

⁵² Verma, supra note 4, at 164.

⁵³ Sneh Mahajan, Imperialist Strategy and Modern Politics: Indian Legislature at Work 1909-1920 270 (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1982).

⁵⁴ Verma, supra note 4, at 165.

was analysed by the Government of India. It was reluctant to compel them to comply with International Labour Conferences' obligations because Princes were not part of the delegations sent to the International Labour Conferences and such demand would be interpreted as an intrusion in internal administration. The Government of India was in a dilemma because it could either ask for an amendment to the Treaty of Versailles or stop ratification of treaties after that. Finally, it suggested that the treaties shall be ratified for British India or will not be ratified at all. India's attitude was criticised severely.⁵⁵ The vulnerability of labour in the Princely States arose due to lack of labour legislations. The Government of India Act, 1935 changed the relationship between the Government of India and the Princely States. The Rulers of Princely States signed an instrument of accession specifying the matters on which the Government of India could enter into international treaties on behalf of the Princely States. They could also opt out of international labour conventions.

Post-independence, there are many changes which occurred within India. Vast changes are manifest in international relations as well as international law. The establishment of international human rights law has strengthened the position of ILO.⁵⁶ Independent India demanded that ILO needs to change structurally to get rid of Eurocentrism.⁵⁷ India ratified 47 conventions and 1 Protocol signed under the aegis of ILO.⁵⁸

3. Conclusion

The anomalous position of India in the international arena and the anomalous position of Indian Princely States as part of India being represented in the international forums raises the question of legitimacy of international law in the colonial period. Due to the power wielded by Britain and her vested interests, India received a

⁵⁵ Verma, *supra* note 4, at 264.

⁵⁶ DANIEL MAUL, HUMAN RIGHTS, DEVELOPMENT AND DECOLONIZATION: THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 1940-70 86 (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2012)

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 87.

⁵⁸ Government of India, Ministry of Labour & Employment, India & ILO, <https://labour.gov.in/lcandilasdivision/india-ilo>

separate seat in the League of Nations. The Indian delegates who represented India became cultural ambassadors and gave a multicivilizational aspect to the international forums. Their role was not easy. The Indian delegates in the international organisations had to struggle at each and every level. At the national level, they had to struggle for freedom and at the international level, there was struggle to be a part of international organisations. The struggle did not end at the membership of these organisations, but they continued. India struggled to be heard because she was viewed as a mouthpiece of the British and included to increase the Empire's voting strength. India raised her voice against many issues of significance till date. A revisit to the history of colonial India in the international organisations is a history of struggles and courage shown by the Indian delegates who spoke for India and the third world within whatever autonomy they were provided under the colonial rule. Such a revisit to the non-European world is a real 'turn to history' in international law.