

G.V. Chitnis, Mumbai

G.V. Chitnis was born on 20th May 1927 in Newasa, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. His family later shifted to Sawantwadi. He passed his Matric in 1943 from Sawantwadi. It was in Bombay that he passed his B.Com in 1947 and then M.Com and LLB.

Entry into Politics -

Chitnis as a youth was deeply influenced by the ideas of Sane Guruji. Reading his works, Chitnis decided to do 'something for others'; what exactly, he was not clear. In the course of his studies, he came across lot of books on economics. He began reading Marxist literature. This turned out to be the turning point of his life. He preferred Marxian way to Gandhian one. In Marxism, he found a way to change the society.

Chitnis began working for the welfare of poor, helpless, refugees at the time of Partition in 1947, in Bombay. He was simultaneously a Pool Officer in the Income Tax Department. In 1951, he resigned from the service and began working full-time in the CPI. It is interesting to know that though Chitnis decided to join the Communist Party, he did not know any communist leader, not even where the Party office was. His friend brought him in contact with V.D.Chitale, who brought him to Dange.

In T.U. activities -

Dange put him in contact with the AITUC office in Bombay. Chitnis began working as the office secretary. It was while working in the office and dealing with the cases that Chitnis got educated in TU matters. After 1957, Chitnis began working among the textile workers of Bombay. He was associated with Gulabrao Ganacharya, Jagatap and other in the GKU. The Mumbai Girni Kamgar Union greatly expanded during the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement during 1957-58, Chitnis gradually picked up the art and method of public speaking. He was elected the General Secretary of GKU in 1971. In 1972, he was made the general secretary of Maharashtra AITUC, which position he held till 1994, when he became its President. In 1974, he became the general secretary of the All India Federation of Textile Workers.

Among the memorable struggles he participated in, were the textile workers' strikes of 1962 and 1974. The 1974 strike began on 29 Dec. 1973 and ended on 8 Feb. 1974. Chitnis was the in-charge of the strike machinery, while Dange its leader. Chitnis was physically attacked during the strike, and had to be hospitalised.

G.V. Chitnis has a long experience in legal aspects of the TU movement. He has represented the AITUC on many tripartite committees. He participated in the ESI Corporation Review Committee of 1964-65. He was a member of state-level Disputes

Settlement Committee. He was on the Committee to study the conditions of workers of Powerloom and Handloom Industries. He has toured extensively in foreign countries. He was the vice-President of the TUI of Textiles and light Goods industries.

At present he plays the role more of an active guide of the TU movements and unions.