

A study of level of knowledge towards labour protection laws, acts and welfare programmes of the sugarcane harvesting labourers

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ABSTRACT

In all 210 sugarcane harvesting labourers were randomly selected for the present investigation. The study concluded that 60.95 per cent of the respondents had semi-medium level of knowledge (47 to 56 scores) regarding some selected labour protection laws. More than half (54.28 per cent) of the respondents had neutral reaction regarding some selected labour protection laws. More than half (64.76 per cent) of the respondent had semi-medium (48 to 59 scores) level of knowledge regarding some selected labour welfare programmes. More than half (56.66 per cent) of the respondent had neutral opinion regarding some selected labour welfare programmes. Almost all the respondent sugarcane harvesting labourers made suggestions like proper accommodation facility and permanent toilet and bathrooms facilities to be made available on the site of accommodation, followed by provision to be made for children's educational (94.28 per cent).

KEY WORDS : Knowledge level, Labour protection laws welfare programmes

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INTRODUCTION

India is the world's largest sugar producer and sugarcane is the most important cash crop in the state of Maharashtra. Sugar industry plays a pivotal role in the social change of the rural people. On the other hand, sugarcane harvesting is a heavily labour-intensive operation and thousands of labourers came from drought prone areas to work as sugarcane harvesting labourers for the requirements of their livelihood. When all options for livelihood cease, there is no alternative with them unless they migrate to other areas for their livelihood survival. Generally the duration of sugarcane-crushing season is from November to April/May every year. During this approximately six-month period, people from Central Maharashtra and Marathwada region, migrate to the sugarcane belt. A large majority of labourers migrate from Beed, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Nashik, Jalna, Parbhani, Aurangabad, and Latur districts in search of more employment days through sugarcane harvesting work. The sugarcane harvesting labourers in factory area face the problems of accommodation. It is also necessary to undertake analysis of migration, effects of migration, socio-economic situations at their native places and the factory areas. So even the area under sugarcane crop is stable,

there is continuous increase in the yield of sugarcane per unit area. Hence, there is no alternative to demand of sugarcane harvesting labourer. The attention must be given to their conditions of work and problems that they have to face particularly at the spot where they work and at the factory site in general. In view of this, the present study entitled, A study of level of knowledge towards labour protection Laws, Acts and Welfare Programmes of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and their suggestions, is undertaken with following specific objectives : to study the level of knowledge towards labour protection Laws, Acts and Welfare Programmes of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and to study the suggestions made by the sugarcane harvesting labourers.

METHODS

It is therefore necessary to study the socio-biographical characteristics of sugarcane harvesting labourers *viz.*, age, education, size of family, marital status, experience, caste, occupation, size of holding, annual income, Knowledge about welfare programme, livelihood status and causes of migration.

The present study was carried out in Ahmednagar District of Western Maharashtra. The co-operatives have

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