

A study of socio-biography of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and their constraints in Ahmednagar District

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ABSTRACT

The socio-biographical characteristics of sugarcane harvesting labourers were studied. In all 210 sugarcane harvesting labourers were randomly selected for the present investigation. The study concluded that overall (71.91 per cent) of the respondents were from young age group of below the age of 36 years including 72.85 per cent males and 27.15 per cent females. Overall 25.23 per cent of the respondents were educated upto Secondary level. More than half (56.19 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the Scheduled caste and Tribes. About 41.90 per cent of the respondents had agriculture labour + farming as their main occupation. Majority (94.77 per cent) of the respondents had small size of family their members (upto 3). Overall 42.42 per cent of the respondents had land holding from 1.01 to 2.00 hectares which included 48.80 per cent rainfed, 40.47 per cent seasonally irrigated and 10.71 per cent was annually irrigated. Majority (71.90 per cent) of the respondents had income range from Rs. 9334 to 14333 per head per season. Almost all respondents (100.00 per cent) faced problems regarding children's education, inadequate accommodation facilities, lack of toilet and bathrooms facilities at factory site.

KEY WORDS : Socio-biography, Sugarcane harvesting labourers, Constraints

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INTRODUCTION

The Nation's wealth and strength is located in its human resources. However, it is observed that since immemorial time our planners, economists, administrators, scientists of various technologies, educators and social scientists have given proportionately more attention to mobilize financial resources and improve the land rather than training the manpower for improving their skills and livelihood status which is one of the major parameters of the agricultural development. India is the world's largest sugar producer and Maharashtra is the country's largest sugar producing State contributing over one-third of the country's output through its 174 co-operatives and one private sugar factory. Sugarcane farming was introduced in western Maharashtra by the pioneers of the Co-operative movement during 1950s. 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 (Desai and Gumber, 1982). When all options for livelihood cease, there is no alternative with them unless they migrate to other areas for their livelihood survival (Deshinkar and Daniel, 2003). 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. 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

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income, knowledge about welfare programme, livelihood status and causes of migration. 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 was undertaken with following specific objectives to study the socio-biographical characteristics of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and to study the constraints faced by the sugarcane harvesting labourers.

METHODS

The present study was carried out in Ahmednagar district of Western Maharashtra. The co-operatives have been the most dominating processing units in Maharashtra. The investigation study was conducted in the jurisdiction of Ahmednagar District of Maharashtra. The district was purposively selected. The study was undertaken in the jurisdiction of the Dr. Baburao Bapuji Tanpure Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. Shri Shivajinagar Rahuri which was established in 1954 and is one of the biggest co-operative sugar factories in Ahmednagar district. The data were collected from 10 respondents each from 21 villages (guts). In all 210 sugarcane harvesting labourers of Dr. Baburao Bapuji Tanpure Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. Shri Shivajinagar, Rahuri were randomly selected for the present investigation.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 reveals that overall (71.91 per cent) of the respondents were from young age group of below the age of 36 years including 72.85 per cent males and 27.15 per cent females.

Table 2 reveals that overall 25.23 per cent of the respondents were educated upto Secondary level. *i.e.* Std. 8th to 10th which included 79.25 per cent male and 20.75 per cent female respondents.

Table 3 reveals that 56.19 per cent of the respondents belonged to the Scheduled caste category and Tribes. About 41.90 per cent of the respondents had agriculture labour + farming as their main occupation and the 79.04 per cent of them were married. Furthermore, it was found that 9.53 per cent of the respondents were unmarried. Majority (93.33 per cent) of the respondents had small size of family their members (upto 3) whereas 75.72 per cent of the respondents had nuclear family. Rest 24.28 per cent of the respondents had joint of family.

The information on the possession of land by the respondents was collected, tabulated and analyzed. It was found that in all, 12 household/ sugarcane harvesting labourers were landless. The remaining 198 of them possessed the land. The status of their land is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 reveals that overall 42.42 per cent of the respondents had land holding from 1.01 to 2.00 hectares which included 48.80 per cent rainfed, 40.47 per cent seasonally irrigated and 10.71 per cent annually irrigated.

Table 5 reveals that majority (71.90 per cent) of the respondents had income range from Rs. 9334 to 14333 per head per season, whereas 18.09 per cent of the respondents had income range of Rs.14334 to 19333.

However, in the present investigation it was found that the average income of the respondents from contractual period (*i.e.* 212 days) towards the payment from sugarcane harvesting work per head/ or per worker was found Rs.11376 (Rs.53.66 *i.e.* Rs.54.00 per day per

Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents by their age

Sr. No.	Age category	No. of respondents (n=210)			Overall
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Young (upto 35 years)	110 (72.85)	41 (27.15)	151 (100.00)	151 (71.91)
2.	Middle (36 to 55 years)	27 (62.79)	16 (37.21)	43 (100.00)	43 (20.48)
3.	Old (56 and above years)	11 (68.75)	05 (31.25)	16 (100.00)	16 (7.61)

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents by their education

Sr. No.	Education level	No. of respondents (n=210)			Overall
		Male	Female	Total	
1.	Illiterate	31 (65.96)	16 (34.04)	47 (100.00)	47 (22.39)
2.	Pre-primary (Std I to IV)	17 (56.67)	13 (43.33)	30 (100.00)	30 (14.29)
3.	Primary (Std. V to VII)	23 (60.53)	15 (39.47)	38 (100.00)	38 (18.09)
4.	Secondary (Std. VIII to X)	42 (79.25)	11 (20.75)	53 (100.00)	53 (25.23)
5.	Higher Secondary (Std XI and XII) or diploma	11 (55.00)	9 (45.00)	20 (100.00)	20 (9.53)
6.	Graduates (Degree and above)	16 (72.73)	6 (27.27)	22 (100.00)	22 (10.47)

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

Table 3 : Distribution of the respondents by their socio-background			
Sr. No.	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=210)	
		No. covered	Percentage
Caste status			
1.	General category	19	09.04
2.	Other Backward Class	73	34.77
3.	Scheduled caste and Tribes	118	56.19
Occupation			
1.	Landless labourers	12	05.72
2.	Agril. Labour + Farming	88	41.90
3.	Farming	76	36.19
4.	Self employment	20	09.53
5.	Own business	14	06.66
Marital status			
1.	Unmarried	20	09.53
2.	Married	166	79.04
3.	Abandoned	3	1.42
4.	Destitute	4	1.90
5.	Divorced	6	2.85
6.	Widows	11	5.24
Size of family			
1.	Small (upto 3 members)	196	93.33
2.	Medium(4 to 8 members)	11	05.23
3.	Big/ Large (9 and above members)	03	1.42
Type of family			
1.	Nuclear	159	75.72
2.	Joint	51	24.28

worker) whereas, the maximum was Rs. 22,333 and minimum Rs.5,000 under the sample area.

From Table 6 it is observed that almost all respondents

(100.00 per cent) faced the problems regarding children's education, inadequate accommodation facilities, lack of toilet and bathrooms facilities at factory site. Similarly Inadequate drinking water facilities (91.90 per cent). Also botheration about social security and dearth about wild animals are constraints reported by the respondents. Overall the major constraints were education, accommodation facilities at factory site during the harvesting period.

Conclusions:

The study concluded that overall (71.91 per cent) of the respondents were from young age group of below the age of 36 years includes 72.85 per cent males and 27.15 per cent females. Overall 25.23 per cent of the respondents were educated upto Secondary level. *i.e.* Std. 8th to 10th which includes 79.25 per cent male and 20.75 per cent female respondents. More than half (56.19 per cent) of the respondents were belonged to the Scheduled caste category and Tribes. About 41.90 per cent of the respondent had agriculture labour + Farming as their main occupation The 79.04 per cent of the respondents were married. Furthermore, it was found that 9.53 per cent of the respondents were unmarried. Table also revealed that a majority (94.77 per cent) of the respondent had small size of family their members (upto 3). Majority (75.72 per cent) of the respondents had nuclear family. Rest 24.28 per cent of the respondents had nuclear type of family. overall (42.42 per cent) of the respondents had land holding from 1.01 to 2.00 hectares which includes 48.80 per cent rainfed, 40.47 per cent seasonally irrigated and 10.71 per cent is annually irrigated. Majority (71.90 per cent) of the respondents had income range from Rs. 9334 to 14333

Table 4 : Distribution of the respondents by their size of land holding						
Sr. No.	Size of land holding	No. of respondents (n=198)				Overall
		Annually irrigated	Seasonally irrigated	Rainfed	Total	
1.	Up to 1.00 ha	9 (10.71)	34 (40.47)	41 (48.80)	84 (100.00)	84 (42.42)
2.	1.01 to 2.00 ha	4 (4.65)	31 (36.04)	51 (59.30)	86 (100.00)	86 (43.43)
3.	2.01 to 4.00 ha	7 (26.92)	6 (23.07)	13 (50.00)	26 (100.00)	26 (13.13)
4.	4.01 and above	0 (0.00)	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	02 (100.00)	02 (1.01)

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

Table 5 : Distribution of the respondents by their income from sugarcane harvesting work and sale of sugarcane tops			
Sr. No.	Range of income from sugarcane harvesting	No. of respondents (n=210)	
		No. covered	Percentage
1.	Up to Rs. 9333)	05	2.30
2.	Rs. 9334 to 14333	151	71.90
3.	Rs. 14334 to 19333	38	18.09
4.	Rs. 19334 and above	16	7.61
Total		210	100.00

Table 6 : Distribution of respondents according to constraints faced

Sr. No.	Constraints	No. of respondents (n=210)	
		No. covered	Percentage
1.	Unable to educate the children	210	100.00
2.	Improper planning and execution of harvesting schedule create the problems	34	16.91
3.	Inadequate accommodation facilities	210	100.00
4.	Lack of electricity at the place of accommodation at harvesting site	210	100.00
5.	Inadequate drinking water facilities	193	91.90
6.	Lack of toilet and bathrooms facilities	210	100.00
7.	Botheration about social security	98	46.66
8.	Dearth about wild animals	82	39.04

per head per season. Almost all respondents (100.00 per cent) faced problems regarding children's education, inadequate accommodation facilities, Lack of toilet and bathrooms facilities at factory site

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