



A study of relationship between some selected independent characteristic of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and their status of socio-biography

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ABSTRACT

Sugarcane harvesting is a heavily labour-intensive operation and thousands of labourers use to come from drought prone areas to work as sugarcane harvesting labourers for the requirements of their livelihood. In all 210 sugarcane harvesting labourers were randomly selected for the present investigation. The study concluded that the relationship between some selected independent and dependent variables showed that the variables like age, education, caste, marital status, family size, family type, land holding and occupation had statistically non-significant relationship with socio-biography. The variables viz., experience, income and nature of migration showed significant relationship with socio-biography. The respondents sugarcane harvesting labourers were consuming Bajra/Jowar *Bhakari* with curry of cereals/pulses, edible oils every day and weekly meat/egg/ vegetables as energy source since they have to perform the heavy and untired work. More than half (69.04 per cent) of respondents were using more than two pairs of cotton cloths, incase of Terrelina majority i.e. 71.90 per cent of the respondent were using one pair. About 37.14 per cent of the sugarcane harvesting labourers were using hand pumps as their source of drinking water. All the sugarcane harvesting labourers were using as there shelter bamboo hut covered with sugarcane trash the during harvesting period at factory residence. Majority of respondents (93.33 per cent) brushed their tooth every morning followed by more than half i.e. 53.33 per cent of the respondents were washing their clothes regularly. During harvesting work at factory site, the respondents sugarcane harvesting labourers were not much worried about their health and cleanliness so they many times faced their health problem.

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INTRODUCTION

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 use to come 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. It is therefore necessary to study the socio-biographical characteristics of sugarcane

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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 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 the following objectives.

- To study the relationship between some selected independent characteristics of the sugarcane harvesting labourers and the level of socio biography.
- To study the socio-biography of the sugarcane harvesting labourers.

METHODOLOGY

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 present 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 factory 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.

OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been summarized under following heads:

Age and socio-biography:

Table 1. indicates that the relationship between age and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers was non significant ($r=0.010$) at both 1 per cent and 5 per cent levels of significance. This means that age does not have considerable effect on socio-biography.

Education and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.044$) between education and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was no significant relationship. It means the levels of education do not have effect on the socio-biography. The probable reason is that nearly all the sugarcane harvesting labourers were doing the work of harvesting as a traditional profession for their

earning as a way of their life which helped them to livelihood survival even without having expected levels of education.

Table 1: Relationship between some selected independent and dependent variables of the respondents

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Coefficient of correlation
1.	Age	0.010NS
2.	Education	0.044 NS
3.	Caste	0.044 NS
4.	Marital status	0.097 NS
5.	Factory experience	-0.142**
6.	Overall experience	-0.165**
7.	Family size	0.083 NS
8.	Family type	-0.086 NS
9.	Land holding	0.046 NS
10.	Occupation	0.104 NS
11.	Income from sale of sugarcane tops	0.461**
12.	Income from harvesting	0.224**
13.	Annual gross Income	1.333**
14.	Nature of migration	-0.276**

** indicate significance of values at $P=0.01$, NS = Non-significant

Caste and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.044$) between caste and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was non-significant relationship. It means that low socio-biography was observed in lower caste while few people were having low socio-biography from higher caste. The probable reason may be that majority of the sugarcane harvesting labourers were from lower strata, from lower castes and doing the work of harvesting for their earning as a way of their life which is helped them to livelihood survival only.

Marital status and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.097$) between marital status and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was negatively non-significant relationship. The probable reason may be that majority of the sugarcane harvesting labourers were married and the work of harvesting was more convenient while working in pairs (*i.e.* husband and wife).

Experience and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=-0.142$) and ($r=-0.165$) between present factory and overall experience and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was negatively significant relationship. The probable reason was that more experienced sugarcane harvesting labourers had more tendencies to prefer the work of

sugarcane harvesting. As the experience of harvesting work increases it will decrease the socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers.

Family size and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.083$) between family size and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was non-significant relationship. This means that family size does not have considerable effect on socio-biography.

Family type and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=-0.086$) between family type and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was negatively non-significant relationship. This means that while the members of family increases the socio-biography level also decreases.

Land holding and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.046$) between land holding and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was non-significant relationship. It indicated that landless labourer and those who had smaller size of holding having low socio-biography levels so they were searching employment opportunities like work of sugarcane harvesting.

Occupation and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.104$) between occupation and socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers indicated that there was statistically non-significant relationship between occupation and socio-biography. This means occupation does not have considerable effect on socio-biography of sugarcane harvesting labourers.

Income from sale of sugarcane tops and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.461$) indicated that

there was statistically significant relationship between income from sale of sugarcane tops and socio-biography. The reason of this is that, after sale of sugarcane tops respondents receive additional so they were more interested to move from one place to another place for such additional income for their livelihood status.

Income from sugarcane harvesting and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=0.224$) indicated that there was significant relationship between income from sugarcane harvesting and socio-biography. The income from sugarcane harvesting work is not sufficient for increase their livelihood status.

Nature of migration and socio-biography:

The correlation co-efficient ($r=-0.276$) indicated that there was negatively significant relationship between nature of migration and socio-biography. The probable reason may be that increasing the rate of migration to outside district decreases the socio-biography of the sugarcane harvesting labourers.

Socio-biography of the respondents:

In this study in, order to have some idea about the living conditions of the sugarcane harvesting labourers the following items *viz.*, food consumption, clothing, drinking water, shelter and health and cleanliness were attempted.

Food consumption:

From Table 2 it was observed that the entire respondents consumed Bajra *Bhakri* every day, About 15.23 per cent respondents consumed Jowar *Bhakri* occasionally and majority (94.28 per cent) of the respondents consumed Chapatti occasionally. Also 24.28 per cent of the respondents consumed rice occasionally. More than half (65.71 per cent) consumed vegetable occasionally, Majority (80.00 per cent) of the respondents

Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents by their consumption of food items

Sr. No.	Food items (Weekly)	Every day		Occasionally		Rarely	
		No. covered	percentage	No. covered	percentage	No. covered	percentage
1.	Bajra	210	100.00	00	00.00	00	00.00
2.	Jowar	00	00	32	15.23	178	84.78
3.	Wheat	12	5.71	198	94.28	00	00.00
4.	Rice	00	00.00	51	24.28	159	75.71
2.	Vegetables	00	00.00	138	65.71	72	34.28
3.	Milk	00	00.00	42	20.00	168	80.00
5.	Meat	00	00.00	171	84.42	39	18.57
6.	Cereals, pulses	32	15.23	178	84.76	00	00
7.	Edible oils	198	94.28	12	5.71	00	00.00

consumed milk rarely, 72.85 per cent of the respondents consumed eggs rarely. Majority (84.42 per cent) of sugarcane harvesters consumed meat occasionally in a week. Majority (84.76 per cent) of respondents consumed cereals/ pulses occasionally as their food.

Clothing:

From Table 3 it was observed that more than half (69.04 per cent) of respondents were using more than two pairs of cotton cloths, Incase of Terrelina majority *i.e.* 71.90 per cent of the respondent were using one pair.

Table 3 : Distribution of the respondents by their use types of cloths

Sr. No.	Type of cloths	Pairs	No. of respondents (n=210)	
			No. covered	Percentage
1.	Cotton clothes	One	20	09.52
		Two	145	69.04
		Three	45	21.42
2.	Terrelina/ polyester cloths	One	151	71.90
		Two	39	18.57
		Three	20	09.52

Drinking water:

About 37.14 per cent of the sugarcane harvesting

labourers were using hand pump as their source of drinking water (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents according to their availability of drinking water facility at factory site

Sr. No.	Source	No. of respondents (n=210)	
		No. covered	Percentage
1.	Hand pump	78	37.14
2.	Community well	53	25.23
3.	River	10	04.77
4.	Canal	28	13.33
5.	Water anker (provided by factory)	41	19.53
	Total	210	100.00

Shelter:

All the sugarcane harvesting labourers were using bamboo hut covered with sugarcane trash as their shelter during harvesting period at factory residence while, more than half (63.81 per cent) of the respondents lived in hut at permanent residence (Table 5).

Health and cleanliness:

It no evident from Table 6 that majority of respondents (93.33 per cent) used to brush their tooth every morning followed by more than half *i.e.* 53.33 per cent of the

Table 5: Distribution of the respondents according to their shelter (type of house)

Sr. No.	Type house	No. of respondents (n=210)			
		Factory site		At permanent residence	
		No. covered	Percentage	No. covered	Percentage
1.	Hut / Bamboo hut covered with sugarcane trash	210	100.00	134	63.81
2.	Kaccha cum-Pakka	00	00.00	60	28.57
3.	Pakka	00	00.00	16	07.62
		210	100.00	210	100.00

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents according to their health and cleanliness

Sr.No.	Details	No. of respondents (n=210)	
		No. covered	Percentage
1.	Washing of hands before taking food\	74	35.23
2.	Cleaning tooth in morning	196	93.33
3.	Take bath every morning	106	50.47
4.	Cut nails at proper time	86	40.95
5.	Wash clothes regularly	112	53.33
6.	Take injections	103	49.04
7.	Take medical advice	98	46.66
8.	Drink pure water	82	39.04
9.	Take care of drainages	27	12.85
10.	Tea / coffee / milk	134	63.81
11.	Chewing pan/ tobacco, smoking bidi, cigarette	82	39.05

respondents washed their clothes regularly. During harvesting work at factory site, the respondents sugarcane harvesting labourers were not much worried about their health and cleanliness so many times their health problem occurs. Deshi and Gumbar (1982) and Miskin and Bharaswadkar (1990) had also doovided some information regarding the characteristics of migration and reasons for seasonal migration, respectively.

Conclusion:

The study concluded that the relationship between some selected independent and dependent variables showed that the variables *viz.*, age, education, caste, marital status, family size, family type, land holding and occupation showed statistically non-significant relationship with socio-biography. The variables *viz.*, experience, income and nature of migration showed significant relationship with socio-biography.

Overall it was concluded that the respondents sugarcane harvesting labourers were consuming Bajra/ Jowar Bhakari with curry of cereals/pulses, edible oils every day and weekly meat/egg/ vegetables as energy source since they have to perform the heavy and untired work. More than half (69.04 per cent) of respondents were using more than two pairs of cotton cloths, incase of Terreline majority *i.e.* 71.90 per cent of the respondents were using one pair. About 37.14 per cent of the sugarcane

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