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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SUGAR FACTORY EMPLOYEES – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Dr. Supriya R[1], Danamma S Math[2]
[1]*Research Supervisor, Davangere University*
[2]*Research Scholar, Davangere University*

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ABSTRACT

The socio-economic conditions of employees play an important role in identifying their quality of life, job satisfaction and overall productivity. Understanding socio-economic conditions of helpful to identify the challenges they face and resources they require to improve in livelihoods. Compare to last decade, now factories give importance for well-being of employees. Well-being factors like income, job security, education, wealth benefits, safety at work place, cleanliness, work load and access to basic amenities are directly influence not only well-being of employees but also how efficiently they work at work place. In industrial sectors like sugar manufacturing employees are considered as backbone of operations. The assessment of socio-economic status of employees is important to formulate policies and welfare measures that ensures both employees welfare and sustainable organizational growth. Hence, this study examines the socio-economic conditions of sugar factory employees in Vijaypura District, Karnataka, Focusing employee satisfaction on factors like safety, income, health benefits, housing and access to basic facilities. The research conducted among employees of Shri Sai Basava Sugars Limited, Vijaypura District. The study reveals that trade union support access to health care and availability of bonus are the most satisfied factors among other welfare benefits. However, the findings also indicate that employees expect good relationship from management and job security.

KEY WORDS: *Socio-Economic Conditions, Welfare Benefits, Sugar Factory*

INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic conditions of sugar factory employees are a significant area of study, as they straightly influence workers quality of life. Job satisfaction and contribution to factories growth. Sugar factories, particularly located in rural areas, are not only sources of employment but also play a significant role in the local economy by supporting the livelihood of many families in rural areas.

Understanding socio-economic conditions involves examining key factors such as job security, access to health care, working hours, overtime facility, housing and other basic facilities. In most of the cases, sugar factory workers belong to diverse social groups and their opportunities for improvement in status are shaped by the economic stability and welfare provisions are shaped by the economic stability and welfare provisions available to them. A good employment system, together with effective labour policies and welfare programs can enhance their living standards and improve productivity. However, in many rural industrial contexts, challenges remain in the areas of health, education, housing and social security. Understanding these issues helps in identifying gaps and suggesting both policy makers and management in developing measures that ensures for wages, safety working conditions and adequate access to essential services, such improvement not only benefit employees but also contribute to sustainable rural development and the long-term stability of the sugar factory.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SL. NO.	AUTHOR	MAJOUR FINDINGS
1)	Afaq, M. (2025)	• Industrial workers face financial instability due to low wages and irregular employment • Gender disparities and lack of social security persist; • Fair compensation and regulated hours are critical for better welfare.
2)	S. Farvah & A. Rashmi (2024)	• Study in Ballari, Karnataka's garment sector finds poor working conditions, low wages, irregular and delayed payments, and lack of union representation. • Welfare facilities and wages are unsatisfactory, particularly in unorganized units. Satisfactory conditions are reported only in government-supported units.
3)	Gopal, T., & Naidu, G.V. (2023)	• In Pune district, 60% of sugar industry workers are female; most belong to SC, ST, OBC, or MBC groups. • Wages are low, with expenditure generally exceeding income—most borrow to meet basic needs. • Socioeconomic conditions are described as "not encouraging"—lacking sanitation, savings, and security.

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4)	S. Banakar (2022)	• Workers face job insecurity, poor wage payments, lack of benefits, and harsh working conditions. • Many lack formal employment contracts and are from socially marginalized communities.
5)	M.M. Jain & S. Shetty (2022)	• Study reveals low salaries, poor living and working conditions, and limited access to government welfare schemes. • Government policies are only partially effective in uplifting migrant workers.
6)	K.P. Suresha (2020)	• Major problems include low wages (often below minimum wage), poor health and safety provisions, limited welfare, and complex challenges arising from rapid industrialization. • Economic participation is rising, but so are vulnerabilities.
7)	Sharma, M., & Vyas, D. (2018)	• Spinning mill workers in Bhilwara (Rajasthan) face low salaries, excessive working hours, insufficient healthcare, and limited education, but show resilience and community support. • Policy actions needed for wage, health, and educational improvement.
8)	Chauhan, M. (2017)	• Both permanent and seasonal workers in Indian sugar mills have poor socioeconomic status: low and irregular income, little social security, and poor living standards. • Seasonal workers are more vulnerable—lacking stability, healthcare, and benefits. • Disparities exist among castes and genders, with women and those from lower castes facing greater hardships. • Improved regulations and systematic welfare measures are recommended.
9)	Desai, Z.K. & Rami, G. (2015-16)	• Seasonal, mainly migrant, sugar workers in Gandevi (Gujarat) face precarious employment, low wages, job insecurity, lack of formal benefits, poor housing, and limited education (over 25% illiterate, 71% primary-educated). • Scheduled Tribes dominate workforce. Many have marginal landholdings, work as agri-labour at home, and migrate due to lack of livelihood. • Labourers spend most income on bare necessities. Lack of labor law enforcement and welfare amenities is acute.
10)	Mala, P. (2016)	• Female textile workers in Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, experience contract-less jobs, bonded labour practices, discrimination, abuse, and frequent rights violations. • Poverty, caste, and low status increase vulnerability. Some positive efforts exist, but systemic change and corporate accountability are still lacking.

Sugar Factory

Sri Sai Basava Sugars Limited (Formerly Manali Sugars Ltd.,) The, Almel , Vijaypura District, Karnataka is a public Ltd company incorporated on 26th December 1995. The company remains active, with its last corporate updates reflecting ongoing operations, expansion projects, and statutory compliance. In 2024, the company achieved the necessary government approvals for expansion, supporting further industrial growth and employment in the region. It is recognized for its role in local rural employment, agricultural support, and as an engine of regional economic activity.

SSB Sugars is classified as non-government company with authorized share capital of Rs 400000000.00. It has established sugar industry consisting of 3500 TCD (tonnes of cane per day) (as of 2023-24). The plant features 4 milling units with a total of 16 rollers. It is equipped with modern technology supplied by SITSON, KRUPP, and NHEC, and runs a 15MW co-generation unit for energy production. In 2024, the Karnataka government approved an expansion project for the company, allowing for increased production and new unit installations to diversify its portfolio. It is investing ₹85Crores in boosting its integrated distillery and sugarcane plant project at Malaghan, adding to its industrial significance in the region. It maintains active compliance with GST, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and regulatory standards, validated by annual audits and financial registrations.

The sugar cane is the primary raw material for manufacture of sugar which is obtained from agriculture source. It comprises about 80% of world's sugar production and is the pillar of Indian sugar industries. Sugar Beet is the secondary raw material which serves as the alternative raw material for manufacturing of sugar. Supporting raw materials such as hot water, chemicals and seed crystals are used in manufacturing. Steps like Extraction of Juice, Juice Clarification, Filtration, Evaporation, Crystallization, Centrifugation and Drying are followed to produce sugar.

RESEARCH GAP

Despite several studies on the socio-economic conditions of industrial workers, including those in textiles and sugar factories across India, there remain **important research gaps**. Existing literature highlights common issues—such as low wages, job insecurity, limited social security, lack of proper housing, poor access to education and healthcare, and unsafe working conditions. However, most studies are broad or focus on select regions, leaving out a **comprehensive, up-to-date analysis of smaller and newly established sugar factories like Shri Sai Basava Sugars Limited in Vijaypura, Karnataka**.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives

1. To study the concept of socio-economic conditions.
2. To evaluate the satisfaction level of sugar factory workers on welfare benefits.

Research Design

The present study has employed both descriptive and casual research design.

Data Source

This information required to propose a solution to the problem outlined in the research use both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Data: The survey approach was used to collect first-hand information from the sugar factory employees with a structured questionnaire from 35 employees.

Secondary Data: secondary data was collected through website and journal.

Limitations of the study

The study is limited Sri Sai Basava sugar factory Vijaypura district. The information gathered from the respondents may be subjective as there could be personal and recall bias when answering the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean Value	Rank
1. The safety measures provided at the workplace	8	4	0	19	4	**2.83**	VIII
2. The cleanliness and hygiene in the factory	8	4	0	20	3	**2.83**	VIII
3. The working hours and overtime policies	6	5	3	15	6	**2.71**	XI
4. The physical work load job demands	6	5	10	10	4	**2.97**	V
5. The adequacy of your salary to meet daily needs	6	6	3	14	6	**2.77**	IX
6. The availability of bonuses and incentives	10	4	9	8	4	**3.23**	III
7. The fairness of wage distribution in the factory	7	5	7	10	6	**2.97**	V
8. The stability and security of your job	5	6	4	15	5	**2.91**	VI
9. Access to medical and health benefits	4	13	8	8	2	**3.26**	II
10. The availability of paid leave (sick leave, maternity leave)	8	4	0	18	5	**2.77**	IX
11. The support provided by labour unions or worker associations	8	11	7	5	4	**3.40**	I
12. The housing/ accommodation facilities provided	4	10	11	6	4	**3.11**	IV
13. The relationship with supervisors and management	4	7	2	19	3	**2.71**	XI
14. The level of respect and dignity given to workers	5	7	1	19	3	**2.77**	IX
15. Opportunities for skill development and promotions	8	3	4	16	4	**2.86**	VII
16. Your overall satisfaction with the job	7	4	1	18	5	**2.71**	XI

FINDINGS

The table presents responses to 16 statements regarding various aspects of factory work, using a Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Mean value each statement is calculated (presumably on a scale from 1–5); higher means indicate greater satisfaction.

- Support provided by labour unions or worker associations ranks first with the mean value of 3.40, indicating, workers feel positively about union support and representation.
- With the mean value 3.26, access to medical and health benefits ranks second which implies access to healthcare is perceived relatively well within the factory premises.
- The availability of bonuses and incentives scored 3.23, meaning workers appreciate the extra money they receive beyond their basic salary. These additional payments help improve their financial situation.
- Workers rate their housing and accommodation facilities at 3.11, which is above average. This means the company provides decent living arrangements for workers who need them.
- Workers feel that their physical workload job demands are reasonable, scoring 2.97. Most workers don't think their jobs are too hard or too easy. Wage distribution also scores equally presenting wages paid for some workers are fair but there is a scope to improve fairness.
- Workers have mixed feelings about job stability and security and, with a score of 2.91. Some workers feel secure while others worry about losing their jobs.
- Workers see only moderate opportunities for skill development and promotions, scoring 2.86. While some training and promotion chances exist, many workers want more opportunities to learn new skills and advance in their careers.
- Both safety measures and cleanliness scored only 2.83, showing that workers are not fully satisfied with how safe

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and clean their workplace is. This is concerning as it affects their health and safety.

- Adequacy of salary to meet daily needs, availability of paid leaves and level of respect and dignity given to workers scored mean value of 2.77 representing workers are not satisfied by the salary they get, paid leaves and they don't often feel respected by management.
- Overtime work, relation with management and overall job satisfaction have the lowest mean score of 2.71. Workers are most unhappy to work too many hours, poor relationships with their bosses, and generally not satisfied with their jobs.

SUGGESTIONS

- Implement clear policies for permanent employment and reduce contract-based uncertainty to boost employee morale and loyalty.
- Organize regular meetings, feedback sessions, and conflict resolution workshops to foster transparency, understanding, and mutual respect between supervisors and workers.
- Periodically review and adjust wages to keep pace with inflation and local living costs.
- Ensure transparent and equitable wage distribution based on role, experience, and performance.
- Continuously monitor and upgrade safety provisions and hygiene standards.
- Conduct frequent safety drills and provide training on use of protective equipment.
- Broaden insurance coverage and access to quality healthcare facilities for employees and their families.
- Increase awareness and accessibility of paid leave, health check-ups, and wellness programs.
- Offer timely bonuses and extend incentive schemes for high performance.
- Assess and improve staff accommodation to ensure safe, clean, and affordable housing.
- Encourage constructive engagement between management and labour unions to address employee grievances and develop welfare policies collaboratively.
- Cultivate a workplace culture of respect and inclusivity for all employees, regardless of their background or job position.
- Ensure reliable access to clean drinking water, sanitation, canteen facilities, and transport for all staff.
- Conduct annual or bi-annual surveys to understand employee satisfaction, needs, and to monitor policy effectiveness.

KEY FINDINGS

- Workers appreciate union support, health benefits, bonuses, and housing facilities.
- Major dissatisfaction exists around working hours, overtime, salary adequacy, relationships with supervisors, and respect/dignity in the workplace.
- Workplace safety and hygiene are only moderately satisfactory, indicating potential risks to well-being.
- Overall job satisfaction is low, showing a need for fundamental changes in employment policies and workplace culture.

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