

ISSN 2277 - 5730  
AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY  
QUARTERLY RESEARCH JOURNAL

# AJANTA

Volume - VIII

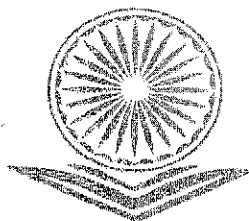
Issue - I

January - March - 2019

English Part - X / XI

Peer Reviewed Refereed  
and UGC Listed Journal

Journal No. 40776



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

**IMPACT FACTOR / INDEXING**

**2018 - 5.5**

**[www.sjifactor.com](http://www.sjifactor.com)**

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**Ajanta Prakashan**

Aurangabad. (M.S.)

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**Printed by**

Ajanta Computer, Near University Gate, Jaisingpura, Aurangabad. (M.S.)

**Published by :**

Ajanta Prakashan, Near University Gate, Jaisingpura, Aurangabad. (M.S.)

Cell No. : 9579260877, 9822620877, Ph.No. : (0240) 2400877

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**AJANTA - ISSN 2277 - 5730 - Impact Factor - 5.5 (www.sjifactor.com)**



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## 4. Problems of Sugarcane Laboures in Maharashtra State

**Dr. Jogdand D. A.**

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### **Introduction**

The sugar industry has brought about major changes in Maharashtra state. These changes are conducive to qualitative production, social development and educational progress. Along with development and progress, the sugar industry has also created some problems. It is very essential to take a serious note of these problems. These industries felt a need of labourers for getting the sugarcane to the factories. Sugarcane Cutters and workers provide the ultimate flexible workforce to employers who can hire and fire them without any obligations whatsoever and extract cheap labour for very little payment. The conditions of Sugarcane laboures in not encouraging, many of them have managed to make some progress. They have to face problems of educations of children, medical problems, natural calamities and yet, they leave there family and complete their stipulated time in the sugar factory.

The sugarcane and allied industry employs more than a million cane-cutters who are almost always SC, ST and OBC migrants with little or no land from the poor, arid districts of the Maharashtra state especially Marathwada region. The cutting cycle lasts for six months from November to April/May. Cane cutters usually migrate in families and are recruited by a contractor against an advance payment. The contractor provides very basic accommodation without proper sanitation. Access to fuel and drinking water are difficult and this increases the work burden on women. While the earnings from such work are good compared to work in the village. This paper aims to study the problems of sugarcane laboures in Maharashtra state.

### **Problems of Sugarcane Laboures**

#### **Social Factor**

The sugarcane laboures comes from different caste and category. Majority of the sugarcane laboures are Hindus to be more specific, they are Vanjaris, Dhangars, Matangs, Marathas, Buddhist and rest of them are Muslims. These sugarcane laboures play a significant



role in harvesting at the second level. Sugarcane harvesters are weak by economic factor means. They are deprived from years and years.

#### **Uncertainty of Employment**

As far as rain, weather, production of agricultural goods, living standard of people is concerned, it is quite below average. Due to lack of employment and even non-availability of water has made these workers migrant from the one district to other. Majority of the Sugarcane laboures and cane transporting labourers are recruited through Mukadams. Mukadams are the agents to provide sugarcane laboures to sugar factories on commission basis.

#### **Literacy**

Sugarcane laboures face many problem due illiteracy. Migration pattern of sugarcane labourers cut off from the society and school for nearly six to seven months during the season and thus remain illiterate most of the time ultimately to become sugarcane laboures one day.

#### **Marital Status**

Majority of the sugarcane laboures are married, because the criteria of koyata formation is a married couple. To get more advances and more income generally very young boys and girls are getting married early and are working as sugarcane laboures. There are certain disadvantages of early marriage. Education and social awareness among them will certainly help to increase the marriage age.

#### **Economic Orosperity**

The income of sugarcane laboures is low which can not cater the diverse needs of their family. The work of sugarcane laboures is seasonal. This obviously means that these sugarcane laboures are living below poverty line. Majority of the sugarcane laboures are under heavy burden of private loan of local money lenders and mukadams. It was found that the interest rate paid by them is beyond imagination and ultimately sugarcane laboures live and die in the vicious circle of debts and never ending interest on it.

#### **Land Holding**

Most of the sugarcane laboures don't have agricultural land. Very few of them have their own land, but the land is divided in pieces. This land is non- irrigated as there is no water for cultivation. So the land remained un- productive because of complete dependence on monsoon season.

### **Over Daily Working**

The working hours of sugarcane labourers are 14 to 16 hours every day. Majority of sugarcane harvesters work from the early morning and work continuously without a break. Sometimes cane loading during night is a part of their duties, and no extra charges are paid from factory for this. This situation leads harmful effects on their health.

### **Health and Life Security**

The life of sugarcane labourers is unstable and filled with hard work. So many times sugarcane harvesters face problems of health and some times the existence. The sugar factories should provide them medical facilities through medical centre in the factory zone. The situation of Sugarcane labourers goes worst as they become older. At that time, money problem becomes more hurdle.

The sugarcane labourers have many problems which they are facing in their daily life. It is the need of the time, government and society should consider the facts and try to their level best to improve the condition of sugarcane labourers in the Maharashtra state.

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21/5/19