



# The Socio-Economic Problems of Sugarcane Migrant Workers: A Case Study of Marathwada

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**Abstract:** The concept of sugarcane migrant workers is relevant to understanding the major socio-economic problems faced by sugarcane migrant workers after migrating to the sugarcane cutting field. The socio-economic issues include wages, income, and savings. And what are the before-migration and after-migration wage rates? Is the wage rate increasing or not? All such questions have arisen. This study identifies the socio-economic problems faced by sugarcane workers at the workplace. To estimate the income earned during the sugarcane cutting period., This paper is based on the primary data collected by questionnaires and field studies, which were collected from 2022 to 2023. The researcher used MS Excel for data analysis, and the Paired samples test was used for hypothesis testing from before to after sugarcane migration.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic problems, Sugarcane migrant workers, Seasonal migration, Before and after migration.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sugarcane is essential to our country's economy because it is India's second-largest agriculturally based industry. Sugarcane is one of the sweet products in agricultural cultivation. Uttar Pradesh is one of the largest sugar producers, and Maharashtra is India's second-largest sugar producer. It plays a dual role in both the industrial and agricultural sectors. All over Maharashtra, people have always been a big sugarcane migrant group. They are going wherever a sugarcane cutting opportunity exists. In the Beed District, the sugarcane migrant laborers are supplied every year, everywhere in Latur, Kolhapur, Solapur, Sangli, and Ahmednagar. Maharashtra has a large interstate sugarcane migration. Sugarcane migration is not a new phenomenon in the state of Maharashtra. Sugarcane is a multiple process product, such as sugarcane producers (land owners), sugarcane cutters, and the sugar industry, which includes final sugar production. Migration is the most crucial terminal point for improving the living standards of impoverished sugarcane workers. In Maharashtra, many low-income families migrate each year to the sugarcane cutting fields (Shah & Lerche, 2020). Because they do not have employment opportunities to work in their home place, do not receive wages, do not have full-time work, they have dry agricultural land, water scarcity, poor education, lack government schemes, and low standard of living. In this study, researchers will examine sugarcane migrant workers' socio-economic problems and sources of income. When sugarcane migrants enter the workplace, they do not get sufficient wages from the sugarcane contractor or the sugar industry. That is why sugarcane migrants face many socio-economic problems after migration. Most of the studies found that many contractors are not paid the proper wage rate and are not provided with other facilities given by the sugar industry or the government, like education, health facility, drinking water, electricity, and are also not provided with a salary (Kendre, 2013) and investigated the socio-economic background of the migrant sugarcane cutting workers. The large numbers of the scheduled cast, scheduled tribe, and OBC

category are migrants each year for sugarcane harvesting. All the sugarcane workers are economically and socially impoverished people in this field (Kendre, 2011). A study was conducted on sugarcane harvesting workers' health and living conditions in the Ahmednagar District in Maharashtra. The living and housing conditions at the working site were deplorable (Somasundaram and Bangal, 2012). The economic problems facing sugarcane migrant workers in the workplace are discussed. They face many issues in the workplace, but they do not lack proper housing, education for children, health facilities, social issues, good food, and hospitality (Leite et al., 2018). The present study, based on primary data, such as interviews and face-to-face interviews, has been effectively used to get authentic information from sugarcane cutters and is partly based on secondary data. (Mane and Tadakhe, 2013).

There are two types of socio-economic problems: the native place and the workplace after migration. There are different problems that sugarcane migrants face. The main problem is a lack of employment in the home place and no daily earnings. In this study, two factors are essential: one is the pull factor, which refers to the attractive aspects of the destination that encourage migration, and the second is the push factor, which refers to the negative aspects of the origin that compel migration (Kumar & Sidhu, 2005). Push factor is poverty, no employment, no education, poor economic background, depth, unskilled, son or daughter marriage, bad habits, no primary necessities available for daily living (Parkins, 2010). Pull factor is advanced money, good wages, and continuous work for five to six months, etc. Economists agree that migration can improve family income, so these people are migrating for better employment opportunities in nearby districts and the same region of South Maharashtra.

## 2. MEANING AND DEFINITION OF THE SEASONAL MIGRATION

Seasonal migration, a key aspect of the study, refers to the labor movement from one rural region to another to earn extra income from seasonal work, especially sugarcane cutting work. This type of migration is often temporary, with workers returning to their home regions after the seasonal work is completed.

### 2.1 DEFINITION OF MIGRATION

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, migrating means " moving from one place to another."

According to the Webster's New World Dictionary, it means to "move from one place to another, especially to another country" or "move from place to place to harvest seasonal crops."

Everett Lee (1968) states that "migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act, and distinction is made between external and internal migration".

According to Mangalam (1961), "migration is a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called migrants, from one geographic location to another preceded by decision making on the part of the migration based on a hierarchically ordered set of values or value ends and resulting in the changes in the interaction system of the migrants".

According to Caplow (1975), "migration is a change of residence and need not necessarily involve any change of occupation, but it is closely associated with occupational shift of one kind or another".

According to Weinberg (1961), "human migration is changing the place of abode permanently and temporarily for an appreciable duration. In the case of seasonal workers, it is used symbolically in the transition from one surrounding to another during human life."

### 2.2 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

This definition, given by a researcher, is that seasonal migration is when people temporarily move to a different place for work because jobs are only available during certain times of the year.

## 3. TYPES OF MIGRATIONS

There are four main types of migration: 1. Rural to Rural 2. Rural to Urban 3. Urban to Urban 4. Urban to Rural. In this research study, sugarcane migration has come into rural-to-rural migration. Most of the economically poor people are from an impoverished economic background (Roy et al., 2015). These migrants are migrating to another area with high labor demand in the sugarcane cutting agricultural field.

Most sugarcane migrants migrate from the Beed District to South Maharashtra, like Latur, Solapur, Kolhapur, Satara, and Pune.

#### 4. RESEARCH GAP

The examination of the literature revealed that research studies on sugarcane migrants have already been conducted by many researchers in Marathwada, as well as all of Maharashtra, and overall, India. Context, however, major studies are biased towards some sugarcane migrant workers. The findings of these studies often highlight the problem faced by the sugarcane migrant in the Marathwada Region in Beed District. Some studies depict the plight of not only the sugarcane migrant but also their family left behind. However, no single study has been found that deals with the positive results of sugarcane migrant workers and their income impact. This study often makes the research in this area incomplete and biased. All these research studies failed to find solutions to track the benefits of sugarcane migrant workers in the workplace and government policies. Studies highlighting the sugarcane migrant workers, their income contribution, and reasons behind permanent invisibility are rare in the seasonal migration in Marathwada. So, the present study title "Socio-Economic Problems of the Sugarcane Migrant Workers: A Case Study of Marathwada" is expected to fill this gap and analyze different aspects of sugarcane migrant workers in Marathwada with special reference to Maharashtra.

#### 5. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The empirical studies on the sugarcane migration have produced mixed results. Studies on the sugarcane migrant movement have not given much attention to the parents and children of old age, the causes and consequences, wage rate patterns, and the impact of migration on the children's future. Almost all research studies have thrust sugarcane migration into the field of work. Sugarcane migrant is not only a sole of improved slandered living. Sugarcane migrants are a marginalized category in every society. There is no such ideal society that gives sugarcane migrants complete respect and acceptability. Sugarcane migrant exploitation indeed involves doing sugarcane cutting jobs in the field. Even though the researcher positively addresses the migratory movement of sugarcane cutters, they have not tried to secure a sufficient wage rate in their native place. Common problems are that all sugarcane migrants are like other sugarcane group migrants. Like, what is rising behind sugarcane, migrant workers migrate from one district to another in South Maharashtra.

#### 6. REASONS FOR MIGRATION

In sugarcane migration, workers migrate year on year because they have many reasons behind their migration. The two main reasons behind migration are seasonal employment and better wages or advance money from their contractor. Sugarcane laborers have decided to migrate because of push and pull factors. A push factor induces migrant workers to move out of their native place, and a pull factor induces migrant workers to move into a new sugarcane cutting field or location. Most of the migrants are a significant step that is not taken lightly; both push and pull factors typically play a role. To migrate workers, they view their current residence so negatively that they feel pushed away, and they view another place so attractively that they feel pulled towards it. One can identify three significant push and pull factors: Employment, economic, and agricultural income, which are not well-defined.

#### 7. IMPACT OF THE SUGARCANE MIGRATION

The concept of migration is related to how migrants migrate from one place to another. This sugarcane migrant positively and negatively affects the family and socially, and positively impacts the extra source of income. However, it negatively impacts the family because older parents and children stay home, so nobody cares for their older parents and children at their native place. Most of the parents are facing health issues, and children's primary and secondary education, and they are also facing health issues, are rising during sugarcane migration. Migrants also do not attend social and cultural events during working periods. Most of the time, migrants have always created an imbalance in managing resources such as water, electricity, health, housing, and transportation in their native place and work place.

## 8. THE MAIN REASON BEHIND THE PULL AND PUSH FACTOR

1. **Financial stability and better prospects:** Sugarcane migrant workers get better wages and seasonal employment during the working period.
2. **High standard of living:** Parents have sent money to their children for a better life in their native place.
3. **Better education:** Migrant children get an education at their home place and at better schools or colleges and universities, which is why sugarcane migrants have been earning money for their children's education and for a better future.
4. **Financial debt return:** Most of the migrants have banks, contractors, friends, and financial debt; they charge high amounts of debt and have higher interest rates, so this debt must be returned as soon as possible after returning to their home place.

## 9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

**Contribution of the Study:** This study analyzes the problems faced by the sugarcane migrant workers both at their hometown and their sugarcane workplace. The key issues include poor living conditions, financial difficulties, transportation issues, health concerns, work-related challenges, lack of proper food, limited educational opportunities for children, inadequate healthcare facilities, delayed payments, and the absence of full-time employment.

## 10. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective is given below.

1. To estimate the income earned during the sugarcane cutting period.

## 11. RESEARCH QUESTION

The following are the research questions raised in the study.

1. How much do the workers get paid or earn during the sugarcane cutting period?

## 12. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS TEST

H0: There is no mean income difference between before and after migration among sugarcane migrant workers.

H1: There is a mean income difference between before and after migration among sugarcane migrant workers.

## 13. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will be collected from the Marathwada region based on primary data. The researcher used the following research methodology and data collection methods to achieve the study's objectives. This study is based on cluster sampling under questionnaires; in this sampling, the researcher took part in the Beed District. Sub-districts, such as Wadwani, were selected for this research. Wadwani sub-district has 45 villages, but the researcher chose only five villages. In this study, a detailed questionnaire was prepared. Before the data collection and the finalization of the questionnaire, a pilot survey of sub-districts was conducted. The data was collected through a questionnaire tool canvassed among 250 selected sample sugarcane migrant workers. A field survey was conducted from November 2022 to April 2023.

## 14. ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY

The researcher study collected data from the questionnaires and the field study, and the data was analyzed by using Excel for percentages, averages, tables, and figures to establish the relationship between the variables and to draw inferences about sugarcane migrant workers.

## 15. TOTAL INCOME PATTERN FROM BEFORE TO AFTER MIGRATION

Table 1 shows the average income pattern from before to after migration. There are three columns: Column A shows the total average income, and column B and C show the respondents. Below the table show total average income Rs. 5000 rupees earned 119(47.6%) respondents before migration, and 12 (4.8%) respondents are earned after the migration, Rs. 6250 total average income was earned before the migration 65 (26%) respondents and 20 (8%) respondents are earned after the migration, Rs. 8750 rupees income

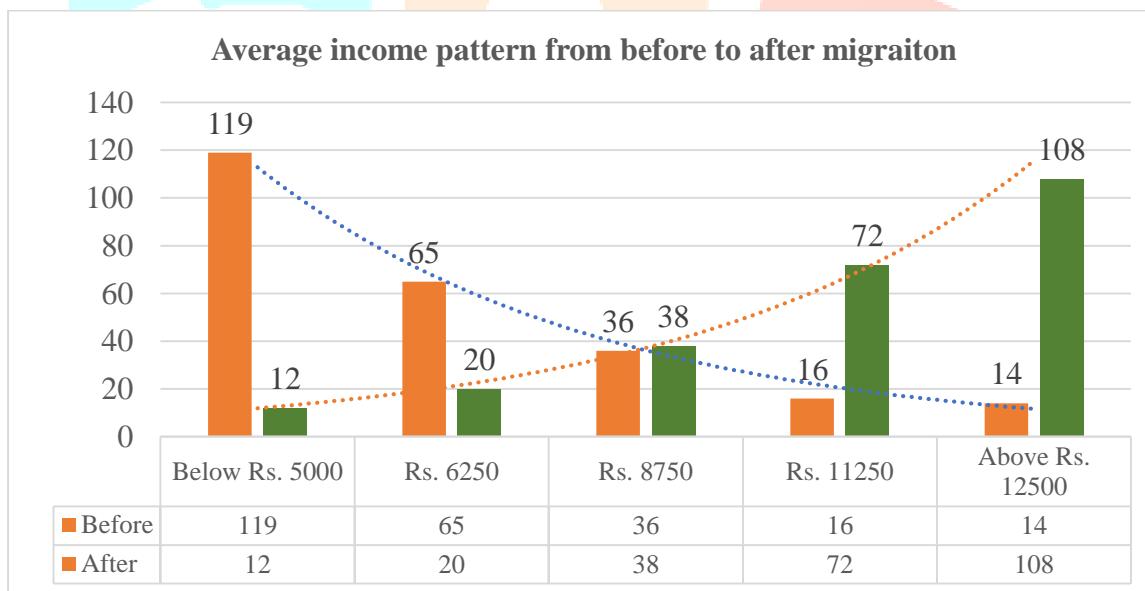
earned 36 (14.4%) respondents are earned before the migration and 38 (15.2%) respondents are earned after the migration, Rs. 11250 rupees 16 (6.4%) respondent are earned income before the migration and 72 (28.8%) respondents are earned after the migration and above Rs. 12500 rupees earned income 14 (5.6%) respondent before the migration and 108 (43.2%) respondent earned income after the migration to the sugarcane cutting field.

Table 1: Average income pattern from before to after migration

TOTAL AVERAGE INCOME FROM BEFORE TO AFTER MIGRATION				
(A) Total Average Income (In Thousand Rupees)	(B) Before Migration		(C) After Migration	
	(No. of Respondents)	%	(No. of Respondents)	%
Below Rs. 5000	119	47.6	12	4.8
Rs. 6250	65	26.0	20	8.0
Rs. 8750	36	14.4	38	15.2
Rs. 11250	16	6.4	72	28.8
Above Rs. 12500	14	5.6	108	43.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data was collected through field survey questionnaires by the investigator from 2022-2023.

Figure 1 shows the average income pattern from before to after migration



Source: Primary data was collected through field survey questionnaires by the investigator from 2022-2023.

Figure 1 shows the average income pattern from before to after migration to sugarcane cutting. Before the income average line goes down, it shows the income level at the native place. Before the total average income line is downward, after the migration, the income line moves from downward to upward. This figure shows that from before to after migration, the income level increased. This figure shows that there is a difference between before and after migration, where the income level increased. So, there is a big difference between income patterns, the main reason behind seasonal migration, and demand for labour, higher wages, and regular work.

## 16. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS TEST

H0: There is no mean income difference between before and after migration among sugarcane migrant workers.

H1: There is a mean income difference between before and after migration among sugarcane migrant workers.

Table 2 Paired samples test from before to after migration.

Paired Samples Test												
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)			
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference							
					Lower	Upper						
Pair 1	Variable2 and Variable1	4480.00	2642.44	167.12	4150.84	4809.15	26.80	249	.000			

Source: Primary data was collected through field survey questionnaires by the investigator from 2022-2023.

Above, Table 2 shows that the two-tailed significance value is less than the p-value ( $p<0.05$ ). The average migrant of all 250 sugarcane respondents exceeds the mean value (4480.00). The output indicates a significant difference in the monthly income of the sugarcane migrant workers after migration to the sugarcane cutting field. With  $t(249)=26.80$ ,  $p<0.05$ , it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is rejected after migration to the sugarcane cutting field, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

## 17. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study on the general status of migrant sugarcane cutter workers provides a baseline. It suggests measures to be taken to address the socio-economic problems of these workers in Marathwada. However, with this knowledge, it is possible to understand the nature of their problems. Thus, the in-depth study of these workers should be carried out in future research.

## 18. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based on primary data collected from the questionnaire and field study of sugarcane migrant workers. Hence, the primary data collected only from sugarcane migrant workers is limited. There will be some limitations in this study. It will not apply to the other districts of Maharashtra and all states of India regarding sugarcane villages. Migration. This study only focuses on the Beed District, which includes only five addresses.

## 19. CONCLUSION

This research paper found that migrants earn an income from migrating to the sugarcane cutting field because of the high wage rate, regular work, and the advance money given by contractors. The researcher has compared the workers' actual income conditions, from before to after migration. This study will also help the government implement the MGNREGA scheme in rural areas. It will also help the government to reduce the number of migrants. Some policy implications have been suggested by this research that could help solve the socio-economic problems. This research improves the economic condition of the sugarcane migrant workers and their family living conditions.

## 20. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Many sugarcane migrant workers migrate to the sugarcane cutting field because of poverty, unemployment, natural disaster, and financial debt. This study would like to suggest reducing poverty, unemployment, and natural disasters, as well as providing financial facilities in the native place.
2. Sugarcane migrant workers do not satisfy the sugarcane cutting work. This research suggests providing necessities like shelter, hand safety, and shoes.

## 21. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research. Authorship and/or publication of this article.

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