

Vol 3 Issue 10 Nov 2013

ISSN No : 2230-7850

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Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal

# *Indian Streams Research Journal*

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**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2230-7850**

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## A STUDY OF LABOUR ABSENTEEISM IN SUGAR CO-OPERATIVES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SHARAD CO-OPERATIVE SUGAR FACTORY LTD., NARANDE

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**Abstract:-** Sugar industry is one of the major industries in India. Among the agro based industries, the sugar industry in India holds the pride as an instrument of rural reconstruction and development. Labour being one of the basic factors of production in a manufacturing concern, generates an integrating force in policy implementation. The basic characteristics of the labour in sugar industry is quite different from those of the labour in other industries. The peculiar characteristics of the former lies in its being seasonal and in the proportion of the unskilled labour being very high.

**Keywords:**Co-Operatives , Labour Absenteeism , policy implementation.

### INTRODUCTION

Labour absenteeism means the absence of workers from regular duty without intimation to the employer. Absenteeism amounts to unauthorised absence from duty. The absence of worker is treated as absenteeism, in case he is properly scheduled to work. So, it is necessary to consider the two aspects, viz. what constitutes presence of an employee and who is scheduled to work. The workman who reports for any part of a shift is treated as present. Secondly, in case, the worker has complete information about the work available with the employer and the employer does not think of any reason that the employer will not report for duty at specified times, such worker is put in the category of the worker scheduled to work. This is why the workers on a regularly scheduled vacation are neither treated as scheduled to work nor absent. On the contrary, if workers make request for time-off for such period, which does not come under regular vacation, is to be considered as absent from scheduled work until he comes back at work or the duration of his absence is such that he does not remain in the list of active workers. In the same way, the workers not reporting, for duty without any notice are to be taken as absent from scheduled work.

It may, therefore, be said that absenteeism refers to the gap, created on the basis of difference between the total number of workers scheduled to work during or at a particular time and the total number of workers actually present during or at that time. Hence, for calculating the rate of absenteeism two factors are essential i.e. total number of workers scheduled to work and the total number of workers actually present at work.

### Several Studies On Labour Absenteeism:

Several factors are responsible for excessive absenteeism of workers. Myers feels absenteeism is

encouraged due to the lenient policy of management.

Workers regard factory jobs as "more or less permanent, which can be interrupted by periodic visits to the villages." Sinha lists some 20 variables under the following heads: i) in plant causes; ii) personal causes; iii) community and social causes.

Desai has also listed socio-cultural factors and job related factors as causes for absenteeism.

Sharma in his studies states that the factory system initiates changes in the attitude and values of its workforce. Most of the workers need care and a belongingness which they received earlier in joint families; the industrial economy is not able to offer the same to them which affects on higher rate of absenteeism.

### Statement of the Problem:

Absenteeism in this very sense has not been systematically studied in sugar industry and so there is lack of proper understanding of the real implication of this problem. The extent of absenteeism and its effect on working and efficiency of the factories are yet to be determined. There are 20 sugar factories in Kolhapur District, of which 19 are in Co-operative sector and one is in private sector. All co-operative sugar factories in the district are facing the problem of 'overstaffing' and that is why, it may be one of the reasons that management of sugar co-operatives have not considered this problem seriously. The problems of absenteeism in all the sugar factories are similar in nature and therefore, to avoid the same and repetitive problems researcher has selected one sugar factory, viz. Sharad Co-operative Sugar Factory Ltd., Narande as this is a new technology in its production. With a view to assessing the problem, an attempt has been made to analyse it from various angles.

Objective of the study:

The object of the study was to investigate the association of certain variables, i.e.organisational and personal factors that are linked with absenteeism of the employees in the particular sugar factory being studied. The aim was to identify, if possible, the major factors consistently associated with high level of absenteeism.

Research Methodology:

For analytical convenience, the factors generally associated with absenteeism have been divided in two categories.  
1.Organisational factors, e.g. season-wise and department-wise absenteeism, absenteeism according to shift, absenteeism according to wage group.  
2.Personal factors, e.g. length of service, material status, family responsibility and size, personal habits, participation in religious ceremony etc.,

Preliminary Survey:

A preliminary survey was carried out for this purpose. The attendance record for the whole year was studied. To study the personal factors in all 50 workers were identified as chronic/habitual absenteeism from various departments. The chronic absentees for this study are those who had been absent over 50 days during the year. For understanding the weightage of organisational factors affecting on absenteeism secondary data i.e. records from time office department was utilised. During the course of investigation, six major causes of absenteeism among the workers have been found i.e. Sickness, low wages, work in night shifts, uncongenial working condition, job satisfaction and religious functions etc.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

i.Organizational factors:  
With a view to assessing the problem, an attempt has been made to analyse it from various angles. Specific instances from particular factories have been cited it arriving at a result.  
a) Season-wise Analysis of Absenteeism: As we known that in sugar factories season is attributed as: i) off-season and ii) Crushing season. Absenteeism during off-season is higher than during the crushing season. It reaches its highest peak during March and April, the months of the closure of the factory.

An instance from the Sharad Sugar Factory, Narande supports the above generalization.

Table No.1  
Season – wise Absenteeism

Month & Year	Workers Scheduled to work	Workers absent	%
Nov.2012	221	27	17.88
Dec.2012	789	103	13.05
Jan.2013	789	266	33.71

(Source: Time office of Sharad Sugar Factory)

From the above table it is clear that the absenteeism in off-season is high at 17.88 % and comes down in December(crushing season) to 13.05% and as the season draws to its close, the percentage of absenteeism again went up to 33.71%.

a)Department wise absenteeism:

It was noticed after making a general study of absenteeism at the departmental level that 'manufacturing department' comes next. The 'workshop department' has the lowest record of absenteeism. Workshop department and engineering department which have the largest number of permanent jobs has the lower percentage of absenteeism but, the situation, in manufacturing department is reverse which is characterized with mostly seasonal jobs as the percentage is very high.

With the help of above data it is clear that absenteeism in the off season is higher than the crushing season. If we analyse the absenteeism department wise in off season and crushing season, it is found that “workshop department” records the lowest rate. The manufacturing department as the highest frequency while 'engineering department' recorded the absenteeism at the moderate rate. The nature of job also has bearing on the extent of absenteeism. The percentage of absenteeism is found smaller on the jobs of urgent nature, demanding high skill and experience and for which arrangement of substitute is not an easy task.

b) Absenteeism according to shifts:

Absenteeism is always high among the workers of night shifts. The analysis of total figures of absenteeism of 'manufacturing and engineering department' for Jan,2013 in the sugar factory shows that, it was higher in the night shifts (beginning from 12 pm). The reason behind this absenteeism were ill health due to cold and lack of transportation facilities in the night.

Table No.2  
Absenteeism according to Shifts

Shifts	Timings	Present workers
First	4 am to 12 pm	289
Second	12pm to 8pm	360
Third	8pm to 4am	186

(Source: Sharad Co-operative Sugar Factory)

From the above table it is clear that the workers found more absent in the third shift. Workers of this shift wear facing the problems such as natural sleep, which affects badly on their health.

Personal Factors:

During the course of interviews and the data collected through questionnaire suggests that personal factors have significant relationship with absenteeism and may be more important than the organizational factors.  
1.Age: The absenteeism found more in the higher age bracket. May be older workers often feel to be discriminated against in many insidious, covert ways leading to

absenteeism.

2.Wage structure: the absenteeism found more in workers whose salary is below Rs 1000. Researcher has also found that a marked majority of workers have no any other source of income and they were totally dependent on the monthly wages.

3.Level of education: the absenteeism was found more in the workers those who have less educational qualification.

4.It is also found that the percentage of absenteeism of married workers was more than that of others.

5.It is observed that the workers travel from long distance have more absenteeism as compared to those who resides nearer to the factory.

6.Nature of job is also affecting factor of labour absenteeism. It is observed that heavy and hazardous job results to more absenteeism.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It may be concluded that the absenteeism in sugar factory was higher in the off-season and rises to the highest point towards the close of the crushing season. Unskilled workers and those who works in night shifts have more absenteeism. It is found that the non co-operative nature of management and supervisory staff towards seasonal and unskilled workers is resulted in labour absenteeism. Some other points of absenteeism were: i) lack of awareness among the workers regarding leave norms ii) ill health iii) indebtedness.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

Researcher suggest some remedies to avoid labour absenteeism these are:

- 1.Better wage payment.
- 2.Provision of good medical facilities.
- 3.Transportation facilities should be provided by the management for night workers.
- 4.Establishment of credit co-operative society.
- 5.Rest rooms and subsidized food arrangement should be provided by the management.
- 6.Discipline actions should be taken.
- 7.Try to develop healthy work culture.
- 8.Try to give presenty rewards.
- 9.Try to improve working conditions.

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