CHAPTER VII

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Having made an analytical study of the labour problems in the sugar industry of eastern U.P., the present chapter is an endeavour to make an appraisal as to how far the labour force, in this agro-based industry of eastern U.P., has been given a fair deal by the management and the Government as well. Labour problems in a developing economy like ours call for special attention and study. Generally, the working force comes out of the poorer and often exploited stream of the society. So the economic development in its broader sense aims at raising their lot and living. The succeeding lines, thus, deal with the basic question whether the various problems of working force in the sugar industry of eastern U.P. have been solved as they ought to be in our planned economic system. Besides, suggestions for the upliftment of the standard of life of this poor but significant section of the society have also been given, as this will pave the way for their economic betterment and social amelioration and provide larger opportunities in life to the people of this economically backward, and thickly populated part of Uttar Pradesh.

The I Chapter of this thesis envisages the basic
phenomena like recruitment, composition (age-composition, caste composition, marital status and state of literacy) supply of labour, absenteeism and labour turn over etc., in the sugar industry. The analysis reveals the fact that the process of recruitment deserves careful consideration of a wide range of resources and a number of common practices, as it is a complex, continuing and vital organ of the personnel management. In this industry, it has been observed that about 65 per cent of the working force are seasonal, the permanent employees constitute about 29% and the rest are temporary. About 82 percent of the total employees fall under the manual category, whereas the clerical, supervisory administrative, executive and miscellaneous staff together account for 18 percent of the total strength. Further, classification of manual category shows that 62 percent belong to unskilled, 15 per cent to semi-skilled, 20 per cent to skilled and 3 per cent to highly skilled.

Under the skilled and highly skilled category various grades of mechanics, fitters, welders, turners, paraman etc. are included. Most of the workers belonging to clerical staff are undergraduates while majority of the employees in the supervisory and administrative category are graduates or post-graduates in various disciplines viz., Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Agriculture and Technology. Thus, it is evident that work force in the sugar industry presents spectrum of trained and untrained categories.

So far as recruitment is concerned, the personnel, in the technical and supervisory cadres, are recruited through the employment exchange and advertisement. Direct contact in regard to appointment is also in practice, unskilled workers are drawn mainly from the surrounding areas and adjacent villages, especially in eastern U.P. However, the methods of recruitment appear to be satisfactory but they call for more rational and radical reforms. For promotion purposes, the management is found under pressure to consider the seniority only as the base. Authorities usually bow to the fear of igniting agitation, on account of which they are chary of recruiting senior and trained craftsmen from outside. Consequently, the industry, therefore, is devoid of the benefits of the induction of new blood in the skilled trade. Induction programme, meaning thereby to make a worker familiar with the organisation and establishment he joins, has not yet been considered adequately as an aspect of personnel management. The same was the observation of the National Commission on Labour also.¹

Absenteeism in the off-season in sugar mills is found higher than what is found in crushing season. It reaches at its peak point at the end of the crushing season. The engineering department has the lowest percentage of absenteeism.

as compared with other departments, because of having permanent nature of jobs with higher percentage of skilled and semi-skilled personnel. It has also been experienced that absenteeism is the highest among the workers belonging to unskilled categories comprising of low income group. Besides, night shifts account for higher rate of absenteeism than day shifts.

As it has been examined earlier that in eastern U.P. during the period of May and October, diseases like malaria, cholera, itches and flu frequently operate, which increase the absenteeism. Agricultural operations, which starts in July and August, restrain the workers from going to work as the majority of the unskilled seasonal workers are drafted from the local areas. The department-wise analysis demonstrates that there is higher absenteeism in the manufacturing department, as it has the maximum figure of unskilled and seasonal workers, who do not possess the characteristics of industrial labour-force and ability to realise virtues of punctuality and regularity in its economic perspective. The workers, on the other hand, dwelling in the factory premises are found more regular than those living in local villages.

The study of labour turn over presents the fact that it was highest during pre-independence period, particularly before 1939, when large numbers of workers belonging to lower categories were dismissed every year and amenities
and incentives given to them were inadequate, so a majority of the engineering or manufacturing departments used to join other factories with the aim of getting better remuneration to overcome their pessimism. But at present, in the absence of differences in wages and security of services and amenities, to a great extent, the labour turnover has been too much reduced.

The second chapter has been devoted to evaluate the details of working conditions and hours of work prevailing in the sugar mills of eastern U.P., as these aspects have close link with efficiency, productivity, absenteeism and labour turnover etc. Though, it is quite correct to say that financial incentives are the dominant motives, yet the goal of higher efficiency cannot be achieved being dependent only on wages and security, because the roots of bad factory morale are not always economic. Physical factors have a wholesome impact on framing the mental background of work. Organisational environment as a whole has got its considerable influence on efficiency and industrial atmosphere. It is economically worthwhile to give proper weightage to the working environment which not only promotes the productivity and industrial peace but it inculcates the sense of responsibilities and cooperation among workers. Congenial working conditions lead to stability and contentment of working force and ensure their commitment to work.
It is important to note that variations in the conditions of work are found from factory to factory and region to region. There are some factories providing satisfactory working environment, but in the same region even in the same locality there are factories known for unsatisfactory working conditions.

Though the enactment of the Factories Act, 1948, the Indian Boilers Act, 1923 and the Ships and Commercial Establishments Acts of the respective State Governments, the standard of minimum working conditions have been laid down making the implementation a responsibility of the management. The Factories Act, 1948, provides a comprehensive coverage of the hours of work, spread over, weekly rest, annual leave, cleanliness, disposal of effluents, ventilation, temperature, safety measures, and humidification etc. Under this Act, provisions have also been made for the standards of welfare amenities like drinking water, washing facilities, first-aid arrangement, rest shelters and canteen etc. It is a matter of concern that the standards regarding physical conditions of work have been kept low, because these standards are prescribed for factories in general.

Generally, the recently installed factories can be said to be in a good state in relation to various aspects concerning layout, light, ventilation, heat conservation, cleanliness and drainage. There are a few other old units
also which have paid due attention to these matters.

The management of the many old units took up the work of expansion in an unplanned and haphazard way and modifications of the plant in scanty manner.

The disposal of effluents in these mills has become a serious problem because of the underlying objects and their harmful properties which create an unhygienic and unhealthy atmosphere.

Besides the working condition inside the factory and the surroundings wherein labourers and their kith and kin, near and dear live and spend their leisure hours, the working hours-arrangement has important bearing on operational capability, attitude and morale of the workmen. Since the sugar production is a continuous process, the whole period of 24 hours is divided into three shifts of 8 hours each which are known as general shifts, A.B.C. These three shifts are interchangeable usually after one week. The prevailing shift system in detail has been discussed in the later part of the second chapter.

In the III Chapter, the housing facilities are dealt with the aim of assessing the living condition of workers employed in sugar industry of eastern part of Uttar Pradesh. Neat and clean dwellings situated at reasonable distances from the factory premises in healthy surroundings having adequate provisions for privacy, generate the feelings of
well-being which results into far reaching effect on industrial relations and overall production system. In most of the factories of eastern U.P., a wide variety of construction in regard to factory quarters is found. It is surprising that in some old units even thatched and mud-built dwellings exist by the side of palatial construction. The sugar factory managements have responded the 'Subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme' with scant regard to the construction of residential houses for these poor and toiling labourers.

So far as the qualitative aspect of housing problem in sugar mills is concerned, there is nothing more to worry, but the residential accommodations are in appalling condition qualitatively, as over-crowding, below standard tenements, high density of population and lack of other basic amenities are common features of those dwellings provided to factory employees.

After going through the housing conditions, a careful examination of wage and wage-structure, has been the objective of the IV and V Chapters respectively. As far as the wage structure comprising D.A., Bonus, Retainer etc. are concerned, it may be mentioned with satisfaction that Second Central Wage Board for Sugar Industry—recommendations have been implemented in all the sugar factories of the country. The disputes surfaced in connection with the fitment of workers
in the various categories and nomenclatures recommended by the First Central Wage Board for Sugar Industry, but the situation was prevented from taking any ugly turn through voluntary negotiations, arbitration and adjudication. Retaining allowance is given to seasonal employees during the off-season as recommended by the First Wage Board which is, indeed, a matter of gratification.

The last chapter has been planned to analyse critically the labour welfare activities undertaken in the sugar mills. Under the head 'Labour Welfare' various aspects of labour welfare measures such as medical aid, educational facilities, recreational clubs, consumer's cooperative stores, messes and canteen, reading room and library etc. have been taken into account. These benefits may be proved to be the suitable way of supplementing the money wages, which usually do not cope with the rising prices of consumer's goods. In the sugar mills of the eastern U.P., overall picture of welfare activities is gloomy. The workers belonging to low income group and low social status are generally deprived of such non-wage-benefits.

The study made in the Chapters I to VI putsforth the multifarious labour problems in sugar mills of eastern U.P., which actually prevail throughout the whole state. These problems deserve serious attention with the aim of achieving the goal of better living conditions, committed work force and stable peaceful and harmonious industrial atmosphere.
based on mutual understanding. The following suggestions are made in the light of conclusions drawn from the critical estimate of all the issues discussed so far:

(1) Since the recruitment system in sugar mills of eastern U.P. is satisfactory, it is advisable to hold a competitive test in addition to interview for clerical and supervisory staff. In the selection of unskilled workers undue favour and pressure should not be given a berth. Balanced, democratic and rational approach need to be applied to the recruitment process. Physical fitness test of non-clerical staff should be undertaken invariably.

(2) For promotion purposes 'seniority-cum-merit' basis should be strictly followed and the rules in this connection are to be well defined and set out.

Induction programme should also be put into practice with care but at gradual pace, so that new blood may be inducted into the skilled trades.

(3) There should be a proper arrangement for refresher courses for highly skilled and supervisory staff. Institutional facilities in this regard are to be provided at larger scale. There should be an Institute of Sugar Technology particularly at Deoria or Gorakhpur to fulfill the need of eastern U.P., as the said Institute at Kanpur does not meet the requirements of the sugar industry throughout the north region of the country.
(4) As far as the problems of absenteeism and labour turn over are concerned, the improvement in working conditions, better provision for worker's education and technical training, sympathetic attitude of management towards worker's problems and enlightened policy of the administration regarding wages, transfer, promotion, leave and holidays alongwith improved welfare measures, will lead to the desired results.

(5) It is significant to note that existing statutory provisions should be strictly implemented in their true sense to bring adequate reforms and improvement in working conditions of the sugar mills. Factory inspectorate should launch a programme to gear up the inspection work on the lines conducive to the welfare of the workers.

(6) To solve the problem of sugar factory effluents, scientific researches are inevitable to evolve the easy and less expensive way of treating them, which should be encouraged on cooperative basis and be financed by the industry, the Government or CSIR. Government should take initiative in this direction by conducting such research programmes aimed at exploring beneficial measures under Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. It is further advised that the latest findings of research work should be made available to the factory employees and be published in three languages: Hindi, Urdu and English.
(7) It can be usefully suggested that there should be four shifts instead of existing three shifts for entire 24 hours. This new suggested system of shift will improve the health of workers and create more job opportunities. The National Commission on Labour has also opined in favour of reducing working hours from 48 hours a week to 45 or 40 hours a week in two phases. The Government should come forward with necessary legislative measures for the introduction of four shifts, as the work in sugar mills is quite monotonous and hazardous.

It is further suggested that in the night shifts, a credit system of 15 minutes should be considered for each hour of work, which makes a worker entitled to one and half hours extra payment after performing his duties for a six hours shift at night.

(8) Since the condition of factory dwellings on the whole cannot be said to be satisfactory, therefore, it may be suggested sincerely that in case of new installations no license should be granted without ascertaining the provision for residential accommodation keeping in view the size and location of the plot.

On the other hand, I realise it to be my duty to suggest for the creation of a "Sugar Factory Workers Dwelling Cess" for providing better housing facilities and erecting new houses. Through a separate enactment, it should be made
obligatory for every factory to deposit Re. 1.00 per quintal of sugar produced, under the suggested Cess for at least seven years and the fund so realised should be vested in Tripartite Board. It should be the task of the Board to release funds to the respective units for building worker's quarters having all the basic amenities. If any factory fails to avail of this facility, the fund should be forfeited and be diverted to the general pool or decision should be left to the Tripartite Board regarding this amount.

(9) It is to be mentioned that wages are paid to the workers in accordance with the recommendations made by the Second Wage Board for Sugar Industry and the whole wage structure is found in conformity with the First and Second Wage Boards for Sugar Industry—suggestions, but the cash wage should be supplemented with the enhancement of non-wage benefits such as medical benefits, residential accommodation facilities, stipends for education, entertainment and cultural facilities, light and fuel, uniform, railway fare to the seasonal workers at the commencement and end of the crushing season, fair price shops and canteens etc.

(10) It has become the need of the time that comprehensive legislative measures be introduced concerning those welfare measures, which are still voluntary. It is also advisable that the States Employees Insurance Act 1948 should be made applicable to the sugar industry by the Government.
In addition to above, it can be confidently suggested that the Government should make the worker's active participation possible in the organisational and administrative set up of welfare activities for delivering maximum good to the toiling labourers otherwise it would be futile to think of improvement in working-force-living.

(11) Non-contributory pension scheme should be introduced in sugar mills, which has been adopted in foreign countries viz. Denmark, Australia, Canada and South Africa with success. Only the sugar mills in U.P. running under Delhi Cloth & General Mills, Delhi, have provided its workers with the benefits of pension, gratuity and provident fund.¹

(12) The miserable living conditions of the sugar mill workers call for the introduction of 'Employees Health Insurance Scheme' also so that the workers may be given financial assistance immediately in the hour of their need. The State Government, therefore, should stand by the side of the labourers through enactment of laws and other required facilities.

(13) A Sugar Technology Institute with all the modern scientific and technical facilities has become necessary to

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¹ Introduction collected from Delhi Cloth and General Mills (Sugar Division) Office, Delhi.
set up either in Deoria or Gorakhpur with a view to provide refresher courses to cope with the rapidly advancing pace of science and technical know-how. Besides, under such an institute intensive research programme need to be launched with the aim of exploring new methods and techniques for greater stability and increasing profitability of the sugar industry, especially in eastern U.P, as modernisation and rehabilitation of old units have not been undertaken in this area, as it has been done in other parts of the state.

(14) Under the present circumstances, it has become inevitable to start a comprehensive research programmes particularly on 'Socio-economic impact on Workers' productivity of sugar mill worker in eastern U.P.' and 'Late and Early ripening variety of sugar cane containing more sucrose Contents'. The first programme will help in ascertaining the causes and remedies of low efficiency and productivity and the next work will increase the economic stability and decrease cost of production, which are important factors for the existence and development of this industry in relatively more backward and poor eastern part of the most populated state of the country. In this regard the State Government should made an endeavour with the cooperation of the mill management and Trade Union Leaders.

(15) Finally, workers should be invited to explain their problems without any fear and suggest remedies thereof. In
this regard a panel of economists and sociologists should be appointed to make an analytical microscopic study of the whole problem. The report should be finalised by the Committee consisting of the nominee/nominees of management labour welfare officers and Trade Union Leaders, and suggestions, thus put forth, should be considered and accepted by the administration of the mills concerned. The Factories Act, 1948, therefore, should be to add a new clause under the head 'Labour Welfare Measures' to make the above mentioned programme obligatory.

Thus, practical solutions to the various labour problems in sugar mills, in general, and in eastern U.P., in particular, have their own significance from the point of view of providing stimulus to the industry and bringing about the upliftment in the life of the workers discharging their duties in sugar mills. These problems are not associated with economic aspect only, but they have psychological, social and legal aspects also. The complexity of the problem is the outcome of the modern complicated industrial system. Every industrially advanced nation has realised the importance of rights and privileges of labourers and has, therefore, provided protection through labour legislation, as it is the legitimate right of the workers to be protected from womb to tune and cradle to grave. Without paying due attention to the genuine demands of labourers, cordial relations between the employers and the employees can not be established.
Having realised the sanctity and worth of the worker's toil, impetus has to be given to the sugar industry of eastern U.P., which would consequently benefit the workers as well as cane cultivators in millions. The desired results are not easy to achieve, unless the workers are assured of justified equitable share in the gains of productivity, which are actually seen in the economy mainly because of their patience, sacrifice, effort, and invaluable diligence and devotion to work.