INTRODUCTION
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The present work entitled 'A Study of Labour Problems in the Sugar Industry of Eastern U.P.' has been designed to study the conditions of workers in the sugar industry, especially, in eastern U.P. Particularly in U.P. and Bihar, the prosperity of cultivators depends on its stability, as there is no other pre-dominant cash crop to balance their economy. The reasons for such a heavy concentration of sugar mills in U.P. and Bihar are manifold. Uttar Pradesh has rich and fertile alluvial soil of the Gangetic plain, the bulk of which contains adequate quantities of lime and potash, the presence of thin varieties of cane admirably suited to the climate conditions of the region and the existence of cheap and extensive irrigation facilities. The concentration of sugar cane crop in compact blocks enables the sugar factories to get fresh supplies of sugar cane direct from the fields. Moreover, the cost of cane cultivation is less and cultivators are not accustomed to raise alternative crops like ground-nuts, chillies and plantains etc.

The locational factors in recent years have influenced the dispersal of sugar industry to the south. The sucrose content in the sugar cane grown in the tropical regions (southern region) is greater than that in sub-tropical
regions and the development of cane in the south is mainly responsible for bringing about locational changes in the industry. Further the sugar industry has received greater stimulus from the completion of numerous irrigation projects like the Irwin Canal in Mysore (Karnatak) Nizamsagar and Tungbhadra projects in Andhra Pradesh and Cauvery and Mettur and Periyar irrigation projects in Madras (Tamil Nadu). But still the states of U.P. and Bihar are enjoying predominant position as far as the locational pattern and total production of sugar are concerned. In 1931, we had only 29 sugar factories, but at present their number has been increased to 368, which have provided employment to 3.20 lakh persons and earning opportunity to 25 million cane-growers. Further it plays its role in providing jobs to thousands of people in the sugar trade, in the transport of sugar cane and sugar etc. Its byproducts have their own importance because of being used as raw materials in industries such as alcohol, plastics, synthetics, rubber, fibre board, pharmaceuticals, paper etc. Besides, the industry has begun to earn foreign exchange through the export of sugar. These are the basic significant facts regarding the sugar industry. Among the major consumer industries it ranks second only to cotton textile industry.

The industry, having its dispersal in rural areas, is not only out of strategical dangers to which big industrial

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centres are exposed now-a-days, but it is of immense benefit from the viewpoint of providing employment to the village folk and for bringing their earnings on par with those of the urban workers.

The industry occupies a pivotal position in the infrastructure of our economy. No other organised industry provides job opportunities to our rural masses as this industry does. Our agricultural workers in rural areas get jobs in the sugar factories for nearly 4 to 5 months in a year and retaining allowance in the off-season, which have favourable efforts on their sustenance.

The Area of Study (Eastern U.P.)

The eastern region of U.P. has been selected for the purpose of the present study. The districts of Gorakhpur, Deoria, Basti, Gonda, Jaunpur, Bahraich, Azamgarh, Ballia, Varansi have been included in the area of eastern U.P. This region of U.P. has been selected on the basis of the following facts:

(1) The sugar industry was started in the district Gorakhpur of eastern U.P. with the installation of a sugar factory at Partabpore in 1903. (At present Partabpore falls under the jurisdiction of District Deoria, but during those days the whole area of Deoria was a part of Gorakhpur District). It is to be mentioned here that at present District Deoria
'Gorakhpur labour' were in great demand in those regions for handling technical jobs in sugar mills. This was in the initial stage, but afterwards, unskilled workers also were recruited from eastern U.P. for whom recommendations were made by their friends already employed as skilled and technical personnels. Most of the non-technical workers are still drawn from the eastern region particularly from Gorakhpur, Ballia and Deoria districts, while the figures of labour-force from Punjab and Bihar constitute a negligible proportion. It may be cited here that Lakshmi Sugar and Gen. Co.Ltd., Hardoi (central U.P.) has 70% of its labour force from Gorakhpur, Lord Krishna Sugar Works Ltd., Saharanpur (Western U.P.) has 60% of its total strength of workers from the same 'Gorakhpur labour' and Panniji Sugar Works, Buland Shahar (Western U.P.) also has the same percentage of 'Gorakhpur labour'. In this connection it is quite important to note that the State Government set up a recruiting Depot at Gorakhpur in 1942. This Depot flourished and developed into a big labour organisation. The term 'Gorakhpur Labour' refers to the workers belonging to eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh known for a widespread poverty. So, this organisation of recruiting labours came to be known as 'Gorakhpur Labour Organisation' (G.L.O.).

(3) In eastern U.P., agriculture is the main occupation and source of livelihood. The cultivators of this region have
no other alternative source of employment except sugar mills. Sugar cane is the basic cash crop of this part of the state, which helps them in balancing their economy. Not only the eastern U.P., but the whole state is fortunate enough in having the large-scale industry of sugar at such a big scale; no other organised industry in U.P. can claim to match it. This industry has become a boon to the rural folk for employment avenues.

(4) Agricultural land holdings have become uneconomic especially in eastern U.P. due to mounting pressure of population on land. The U.P. Banking Enquiry Committee revealed this fact that average holding of Gorakhpur, the centre of sugar industry was even less than the economic holdings of that division. This is why that availability of labour in this region has been the easy task and people have been moving to other parts of the state and even to other states too in search of livelihood. Expansion of sugar industry during post protection period in eastern U.P. provided an opportunity to the class of agricultural labourers in villages, who had become landless mainly because of (i) increasing population, (ii) small and uneconomic average landholding (iii) instability of land tenure; to some extent they were absorbed in those sugar mills. With the inception of Gorakhpur Labour Organisation at Gorakhpur in 1942, the State Government started recruiting unskilled
labourers and supplied them to the defence, and the coal fields in Bengal, Bihar and Hyderabad (Daccan) with the aim of providing economic relief to the inhabitants of this impoverished part of the state.

The above mentioned facts reveal the strategic position of the sugar industry in our economic set up, so it is unwise to allow it to decay or stagnate. In the interest of our national economy, sincere efforts are required to accelerate the growth of this agro-based industry. The attainment of such a goal is possible only through a scientific analysis of various aspects. The present study aims at presenting such an analysis from the labour side. Labour being an end and means of production, occupies a prominent place in every sphere of our economic life. Industry and labour are mutually complementary, therefore, the prosperity and growth of one depends upon the progress and prosperity of the other. The need of the time is to abolish the class conflicts which mar the harmony of industrial atmosphere. Indeed, what is required is not merely the maintenance of industrial peace, but the establishment of industrial harmony. Emergence of a disciplined labour force is recognised as a significant determinant of industrial development. Various labour problems are to be solved for getting the national economy self-sustained and industrialised in its true sense. The problems, concerning workmen being economic and non-economic in character, call for their proper synthesis from the social, psychological
political and economic viewpoint. It is the objective approach, which may bear fruit in solving these intricate problems of our labourers. As these have direct impact on industrial productivity, a close liaison between labour economists and organised labour not only makes for a more purposive and a more realistic study of labour problems, but it also leads to the work of the labour economists resulting in the betterment of labour welfare and improvement in productivity. Apart from the capital and management that holds a significant position in the process of democratic planned development, the workers are an important wing in the industry. Both workers and management, therefore, should appreciate each other's viewpoint. The delicacy of the problem lies in the fact that with the changing industrial landscape of the country, a process of industrial 'culturisation' of working class has resulted in social and political consciousness; this has inflated their aspirations. It is apt to say that "The industrial worker of today has acquired a dignity not known to his predecessor. He is no longer the unskilled coolie of the days gone by, engaged in an unending struggle to eke out his existence, neglected by society except for his labour and with every limited aspiration. He has a personality of his own.... A worker today is politically conscious more than before, more articulate in his criticism of the existing order and more sensitive to his conditions and hardships."¹

We find, in our industrial set up, marked differences between industry to industry as well as region to region in the same industry, therefore, an industry-cum-regional assessment of labour problems has become the practical approach. Our study of labour problems in the sugar industry conforms to this far-reaching and result oriented philosophy of labour economics.

I have taken the opportunity of putting forth the following facts, while making a study of various aspects of labour problems viz: nature, supply, recruitment, wage and wage-structure, housing and welfare measures etc.

(1) The recruitment system in sugar factories is unsatisfactory. Nepotism and favouritism frequently prevail in the process of selection of workers.

(2) 'Seniority-cum-merit' principle is not followed for the promotion purpose. It is for namesake only as pressure counts much, which takes away the much-needed urge to improve the skill.

(3) Inspite of legislative measures, adequate improvement in working conditions is not found in the majority of the mills.

(4) The housing condition is quite unsatisfactory in most of the factories.
(5) It is a matter of satisfaction that wages are in accordance with recommendations of the Second Wage Board for sugar industry. But the growing need of the workers and increasing cost of living require something more from the management side such as subsidised meals and shops of food and cereals etc.

(6) Adequate medical facilities are not provided to workers. There is no provision of medical reimbursement. They have to get themselves treated in the dispensaries of the factories, which are not properly equipped. Workers neither have the means nor they are provided with any assistance by the management to go to better hospitals or clinics for medical treatment even in serious ailments.

(7) Adequate educational facilities to the children of the workers are not available.

(8) The factories, generally, lag behind to a great extent in introducing the proper social security and labour welfare measures.

On the basis of the problems of the workers in the sugar industry analysed so far, the following measures can be safely recommended for the improvement of their lot.

(1) Recruitment of technical and supervisory staff should be made strictly through employment exchange and in
certain cases, direct applications may be entertained, but fair selection through written test and interviews should be assured, so that the better talents and efficient persons may get a chance to foster their inherent capabilities as well as industrial production. In case of recruiting unskilled workers, pressure and other unfair practices should not be allowed to play their part. Rational approach need to be observed in framing promotion rules also.

(2) Every factory should be asked to observe the legislative measures in regard to working conditions and hours of work. Inspector of factories should make a proper inspection of the factories under his jurisdiction and the administration (Government) should be alert enough to put the concerned officials on right track.

(3) Workers should be provided with the basic facilities and amenities of life.

(4) Proper residential accommodation should be provided to the workers. The management should pay proper attention to the maintenance of the factory quarters.

(5) Better canteen facilities, subsidised meals, adequate medical facilities, recreational measures, rest-shelters etc. are of prime need of our labour society, which deserve immediate attention.

(6) Better educational provisions should be made to get the worker's children well equipped with advancing of
the science, commerce and technology. Besides, adult workers should also be given an opportunity to learn. So it is necessary to have part-time courses, correspondence courses, sandwich courses and other suitable courses geared to the requirements of industrial workers and aimed at giving them cultural, technical, professional and managerial skills.¹

(7) The State Government should be vigilant enough to ensure the prompt payment of the price of sugar cane to the cultivators. The delay in payment, often, frustrates the farmers which brings ill-will and bad name to the mills concerned. At the psychological plane it may have demoralising effect on the workers.

(8) New varieties of sugar-cane such as early ripening and late ripening varieties should be evolved, so that the crushing season may prolong. The long crushing season will result into more employment opportunities and reduction in cost of production etc.

(9) With the aim of reducing cost of production of sugar, the 'two byproducts of these mills bagasse and molasses should be utilise in a more profitable way. The bagasse is commonly used as fuel, but much more can be earned

by its use in producing paper and paper board. Molasses, on the other hand, is a waste product and its ever accumulating quantities create hygienic problem. It can be used in the manufacture of power alcohol, fertiliser, cattle feed etc. In this regard, greater co-operation and coordination among sugar factories are essentially required.

(10) The management should conduct a research programme to ascertain views on their problems and find their solution. The study should involve not only the management, and the workers but also the sociologists and trade union leaders.

Research Methodology:

It has been my endeavour to make an academic assessment of the problem with conceptual justifications keeping in mind its practical applicability. Conclusions have been drawn from the data through a scientific analysis. Chronological history of the sugar industry and workers’ problems have been studied systematically. Moreover, the problem has been analysed on the basis of empirical observations on the sugar mills. Six out of thirty-two sugar mills in eastern U.P. have been selected for the present study. Random-cum-purposive sampling method has been used in taking sampled units. Locational factors, crushing capacity and efficiency have been the main points of consideration in relation to

1. Appendix 1(a).
sampled factories.

In sampled units, primary data have been collected by direct personal interviews and on the spot investigation. Secondary data have also been used in support of views. Government as well as private publications including journals and periodicals were taken into account as main sources of secondary data and references. An effort has been made to consider the pre-independence period also with the aim of making the study more scientific and realistic in the light of our Five Year Plans.

**Lay Out of the Work**

The present treatise is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter 'Nature, Source and Classification on recruitment and absenteeism of labour etc.' is devoted to the evaluation of the prevailing system of recruitment, composition (consisting of age-groups, caste-groups, marital conditions and state of literacy), mobility of labour, absenteeism, labour turn over and worker's classification in sugar mills. A study of these aspects, reveals that the present set up calls for further reformatory and revolutionary measures.

In an industrial establishment, physical, mechanical as well as organisational environment have a wholesome impact on efficiency, morale and industrial produce. These factors
are examined in the second chapter. 'Working conditions and hours of work.' The present situation in sugar mills is satisfactory, but more improvements are needed to accelerate the growth of the sugar industry on sound economic footing since congenial working conditions bring about stability of labour and increase their commitment to factory work. Besides, the good working conditions have reduced the extent of absenteeism and labour turnover.

The third chapter 'Housing' examines the appalling housing conditions of sugar mill workers. The enactment of 'The U.P. Sugar and Power Alcohol Industry Labour Welfare, and Development Fund Act 1951' is the only effort made by the state in this direction. But the workers could not yet enjoy the happiness of satisfactory dwelling conditions.

Wages are the main source of the worker's income. In all the countries of the world, the importance and complexity of wages have been recognised with great care. An analytical study of wages has been made in the IV chapter 'The Wages'. A critical estimate of the second wage board for sugar industry has been presented to highlight the facts.

A comprehensive study of wages has been undertaken under the V chapter 'The Wage-structure'. In sugar mills, the wage structure is basically concerned with basic wages, D.A., bonus and retainer etc. Uniformity, in relation to these aspects, is of course, a significant thing. Since the indirect
receipts in the form of social services and social security are limited in sugar factories, the workers are facing the hardships, because their take-home amount is insufficient.

Chapter VI 'Labour Welfare' deals with the various measures, associated with the betterment of the living conditions of the sugar-mill-workers, in the nature of social security and welfare schemes. The term 'Welfare' is comprehensive. In this chapter, the welfare measures existing in sugar mills such as medical aid, educational facilities, provident fund, reading rooms and libraries, consumer's cooperative stores, messes and canteens, dairy farm and recreational clubs are discussed. The study reveals that the overall welfare work in sugar factories is unsatisfactory. Discrimination and preferential treatment dominate the whole set-up of the factory. Facilities pertaining to welfare measures are usually enjoyed by men who matter.

The VII Chapter 'Conclusions' is an attempt to make suggestions to attain the goal of providing the factory workers of sugar industry with the opportunity to lead a better and happier life. Indeed, there is no scarcity of efficient, sincere and honest workers in the country, only an atmosphere has to be created conducive to better work. An attempt has been made to conclude the work with suggestions aimed at ameliorating the condition of labourers in the sugar mills in Eastern U.P.