

SOCIAL SECURITY DISCRIMINATION OF UNORGANISED WORKERS OF SUGARCANE INDUSTRIES IN UTTAR PRADESH (INDIA)

Vikas Deep Verma & Dr. Radheshyam Prasad***

Abstract: The sugarcane industry in Uttar Pradesh, employs a significant workforce but remains plagued by social security discrimination, particularly against unorganized workers. This research highlights the challenges faced by these workers, including insufficient wages, lack of awareness about their rights and limited access to essential benefits like health insurance, provident funds and maternity or paternity leave. Seasonal employment exacerbates their vulnerability, leaving them financially insecure during off-seasons. Women in the industry face additional barriers, including unequal pay and inadequate support systems. The research, based on field surveys conducted across 10 sugar factories in various districts, reveals that only 26% of workers receive Social Security benefits. In contrast, 96% are unaware of their entitlements under the *Social Security Code, 2020*. Delays in wage payments, insufficient compensation and non-compliance with gratuity laws further deepen the crisis. None of the surveyed workers reported access to maternity or paternity benefits, and over 73% lacked health and medical coverage. This research paper underscores the urgent need for reforms to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Recommendations include stricter enforcement of labour laws, increased worker awareness, gender-sensitive reforms and the introduction of support systems like childcare facilities and emergency funds. By addressing these gaps, the sugarcane industry can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment, ensuring the dignity, security, and well-being of its workforce.

Keywords: *Social Security Discrimination, Sugar Mills, Social Security, Maternity Benefits, Gratuity*

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I. INTRODUCTION

*“No lasting peace without Social Justice,
No Social Justice without Social Security.”*

-Lee Killbmann.

Social security benefits are a complement of social welfare systems, designed to provide essential financial support to individuals during periods of economic vulnerability. Unfortunately, the unorganised workers of sugarcane industries in Uttar Pradesh (India) face rampant social security discrimination, largely due to systemic gaps in policy implementation and a lack of awareness. Despite sugarcane industries being a crucial sector in India's agricultural economy, employing millions of workers, the labour force, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, continues to be deprived of fundamental social security benefits. This issue is deeply rooted in the inherent challenges faced by unorganised workers—seasonal employment, low wages, hazardous working conditions and limited access to legal protections.

The Indian Constitution enshrines social welfare principles aimed at ensuring equality and justice for all workers, including those in the unorganized sector. However, workers in the sugarcane industries are often excluded from these protections. Laws such as the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952,¹ the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961,² and the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972,³ offer social security measures to factory workers. Unfortunately, the seasonal nature of sugarcane factories exempts them from certain laws like the Employee State Insurance Act, 1948,⁴ further exacerbating the exclusion of workers from essential benefits such as health insurance.

The sugarcane industry, though labour-intensive, provides little financial stability for its workforce. Workers often endure long hours, unsafe conditions, and insufficient wages, with a significant portion unable to meet their family's basic needs. The disparity in the distribution of wages, delayed payments, and the absence of bonuses further highlight the financial vulnerabilities faced by these workers. Women in the industry face an even starker reality, with gender disparities in wage distribution and access to social benefits like maternity leave and child care.

¹ Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952

² Maternity Benefit Act 1961

³ Payment of Gratuity Act 1972

⁴ Employee State Insurance Act 1948

This research seeks to explore the extent of social security discrimination in the sugarcane industry, focusing on the practical challenges workers face in accessing their entitled benefits. Through a field survey conducted across multiple districts in Uttar Pradesh, including Moradabad, Sambhal, Shahjahanpur, and others, it was revealed that only a fraction of workers are aware of or receive their social security entitlements, such as provident funds, health insurance, and medical dispensaries. Despite the existence of the Social Security Code, 2020,⁵ most workers remain unaware of its provisions, with implementation gaps preventing the realisation of their rights.

II. SOCIAL SECURITY OF THE UNORGANIZED WORKERS IN INDIA

The Indian Constitution contains several provisions that characterize India as a ‘Social Welfare State.’ Especially, ‘labour’ is explicitly mentioned in the Concurrent List, allowing both the Central and State Governments to legislate on this subject, with certain matters reserved for the Central Government.⁶

Specifically, Entry No. 22 Indian Constitution addresses trade unions, industrial disputes, and labour-related issues;⁷ Entry No. 23 pertains to social security and insurance, as well as employment and unemployment;⁸ and Entry No. 24 focuses on labour welfare, encompassing working conditions, provident funds, employer liabilities, workmen’s compensation, and benefits for invalidity, old age, and maternity.⁹

Moreover, the Preamble of the Constitution ensures social, economic, and political justice, alongside equality of status and opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of their employment type or social standing. This constitutional commitment has been consistently reaffirmed through various judicial pronouncements.

In the landmark case of *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court asserted that: Both the Central Government and State Governments are obligated to uphold social welfare and labour laws enacted by Parliament, ensuring that workers lead a life of basic human dignity in accordance with the Directive Principles of State Policy.¹⁰ Similarly, in *D. S.*

⁵ Social Security Code 2020

⁶ Jeet Singh Mann, Labour Law Reform (Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Governance, National Law University, Delhi 2021)

⁷ Constitution of India 1950, Entry No. 22

⁸ *Ibid*, Entry No. 23

⁹ *Ibid*, Entry No. 24

¹⁰ *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v Union of India* [1984] SC 802

Nakara v. Union of India,¹¹ the Supreme Court emphasized that: The primary aim of a socialist state is to eradicate inequality in income, status, and living standards. Socialism must strive to ensure an adequate standard of living for individuals and prioritize security from cradle to grave.¹² Most recently, in *National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour v. Union of India and Ors.*¹³, the Supreme Court directed the enforcement of the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, along with the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996. The Court noted that, despite the passage of 12 years since these Acts were enacted, their provisions had not been implemented.¹⁴

As, Social Security benefits are essential components of social welfare, providing financial support to individuals who are unable to work due to age, disability, or other life circumstances. These benefits are typically administered through government programs, offering income security to those who cannot engage in gainful employment. Examples of such benefits include retirement pensions, disability allowances, and survivor benefits, which ensure a stable income for individuals upon reaching a certain age, provide financial assistance for those facing physical or mental impairments, and help families maintain economic stability during challenging times.

Moreover, social security benefits encompass healthcare provisions, facilitating access to necessary medical services without imposing significant financial burdens. This aspect is particularly critical for older adults, those with chronic illnesses, and individuals requiring ongoing medical care. For instance, Medicare in the United States provides comprehensive health coverage, contributing to the overall well-being of recipients.

Additionally, social security benefits play a crucial role in mitigating poverty and inequality by offering a safety net for vulnerable populations. Unemployment benefits provide temporary financial relief for those who have lost their jobs, while programs designed for low-income families and children ensure that essential needs, such as food, housing, and education, are met. These benefits serve as a foundation for social protection systems globally, aiming to foster a more equitable society by supporting individuals and families through various life stages. By safeguarding against risks associated with age, disability, unemployment, and other life events,

¹¹ *Nakara v Union of India* [1983] 1 SCC 305

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Construction Labour v Union of India and Ors.* [AIR 2018] (3) Bom., CR 374

¹⁴ *National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour v. Union of India and Ors.* [2018] 3 Bom CR 374

social security benefits contribute to long-term economic stability and social cohesion. They ensure that all members of society can live with dignity and security, thus reinforcing the principles of social welfare that underpin the Indian Constitution.¹⁵

The **ILO's definition** underscores the importance of a comprehensive social security system in providing essential protections across various life situations. This includes ensuring that individuals have access to health care and financial support when facing challenges such as unemployment, sickness, or disability. It highlights the role of social security in maintaining social stability and individual well-being.¹⁶

Webster's Dictionary defines social security as “the principle, practice, or program of public provision—such as through social insurance or assistance—that ensures economic security and social welfare for individuals and their families.”¹⁷

Section 2(78) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 defines “social security” as the protective measures provided to employees, unorganized workers, gig workers, and platform workers to guarantee access to healthcare and ensure income security. This protection is particularly important in situations such as old age, unemployment, illness, disability, work-related injuries, maternity, or the loss of a family's breadwinner. These protections are granted through the rights and schemes established under this Code.¹⁸

According to **the Indian Planning Commission**, social security is acknowledged as a vital tool for social transformation and development, necessitating its preservation, support, and advancement. A well-structured social security system can foster progress, as individuals who experience increased security and reduced anxiety are likely to become more productive.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: “Everyone is entitled to a standard of living that is sufficient for their health and well-being, as well as that of their family. This includes access to food, clothing, housing, medical care, and essential social services. Additionally, individuals have the right to security in situations of unemployment, illness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other circumstances beyond their control that affect their livelihood.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Dr. V. Goswami, *Labour Industrial Law*, (first published 1980, 11th Edi. 2019, Central Law Agency)

¹⁶ Facts on Social Security, International Labour Organization, <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_067588.pdf> accessed 3 September 2024

¹⁷ Social Security, <[SOCIAL SECURITY Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)> accessed 3 September 2024

¹⁸ The Code on Social Security 2020, s 2(78)

¹⁹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art 25(1)

III. SUGARCANE INDUSTRY IN INDIA

India's sugarcane industry is a significant agro-based sector, supporting millions of farmers and providing employment in rural areas. The industry is labour-intensive, requiring a large workforce and often coming from economically weaker sections. Despite its economic significance, the sector faces challenges such as fluctuating market prices, climate variability, and health and safety risks. Social security benefits are crucial for the well-being of workers in this sector, serving as a safety net and addressing economic and health risks. Health insurance is vital due to the high risk of occupational injuries and exposure to hazardous conditions. Social security benefits like retirement pensions, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance provide financial stability during periods when workers cannot earn an income. Unemployment benefits offer critical support during off-seasons, while retirement pensions ensure workers can live with dignity after years of physically demanding work. Social security benefits also extend to the families of workers, offering maternity leave, childcare assistance, and survivor benefits in the event of a worker's death. This contributes to a more sustainable and equitable sugarcane industry in India, ensuring workers are protected from economic and health-related risks.²⁰

a. Sugar Industry in Uttar Pradesh

The sugar industry has been a cornerstone of Uttar Pradesh's economy for over a century. Sugarcane cultivation has historically flourished in the state, particularly in the lush Indo-Gangetic plains. Uttar Pradesh is responsible for a significant percentage of India's sugarcane agriculture, accounting for around 43% of the country's cane land and 39% of production.²¹

The sugar industry has played an important role in Uttar Pradesh's economic environment, particularly since the twentieth century. Uttar Pradesh has traditionally been a key sugarcane-growing region, accounting for a considerable share of India's sugarcane cultivation and production. Uttar Pradesh has 120 sugar mills spread over 45 districts, supporting around 50 million sugarcane farmers and approximately 5 lakhs directly employed individuals in the business. Over the years, the state has consistently expanded its sugar production capacity, reclaiming its position as the largest sugar producer in the country.²²

²⁰ Sushil Solomon, Sugarcane Production and Development of Sugar Industry in India (2016) V. 18 P 588-602, <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12355-016-0494-2>> accessed 10 October 2024

²¹ UPSMA, 'Upsma' (*Upsma.org*2023) <<https://upsma.org/>> accessed 10 October 2024

²² *Ibid.*

IV. SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS IN SUGARCANE FACTORY

In sugarcane factories, social security benefits are vital for safeguarding the well-being of employees, who often endure challenging and hazardous working conditions. These protections help keep the workforce safe from health and financial risks. Health insurance helps maintain a workforce's overall well-being through access to necessary medical care for injuries or illnesses that might be related to accidents on the job, exposure to chemicals, or other forms of repetitive strain injury. This not only serves the purpose of immediate recovery but also helps prevent long-term health complications, thus helping create a more sustainable workforce.

Apart from the health benefits, factory workers in sugarcane also receive compensation for an employee who gets injured in the performance of duty, which, in this case, is very probable, considering the nature of the business. Workers' compensation assures an injured worker of receiving nothing less than financial well-being in life, either because he will receive half-pay wages until he is all well again, or his injury medical care, provided the employee gets injuries on his job: retirement benefits form yet another aspect of social security in the sugarcane mills. The work being physically strenuous, the need to ensure monetary stability for employees post-retirement is critical. Pensions mean that workers, having served for long years, can retire with dignity and with economic stability, more so in regions where other types of retirement savings are prohibited.

Unemployment insurance is a vital tool for sugarcane workers during periods of seasonal unemployment. Sugarcane processing is generally seasonal; therefore, unemployment benefits give temporary financial aid, helping workers meet their basic needs during off-seasons or plant closures.²³

Social security benefits in sugarcane factories also extend to family support, including maternity and paternity leave, childcare assistance, and survivor benefits. These provisions recognise the broader social responsibilities of workers and ensure that their families are supported in times of need. Survivor benefits, in particular, offer financial assistance to the families of workers who lose their lives due to work-related accidents, preventing their dependents from falling into financial hardship.

Sugarcane mill workers are entitled to various social security benefits under laws such as the Workmen Compensation Act, 1923; the Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous

²³ Jayanti Kumari and V. Pathak, *Relevance of Welfare Facilities in Sugar Industry*, (2016) *Remarking V. II*, Iss. X

Provisions Act, 1952; the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; and the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. However, benefits under the Employee State Insurance Act, 1948, are not available to sugar mill workers, as this law does not apply to seasonal factories, and sugar mills operate seasonally.²⁴

Hence, social security benefits in sugarcane factories are essential for protecting the health, financial stability, and overall well-being of workers. These benefits provide vital support in times of injury, illness, unemployment, and retirement, helping to create a more secure and equitable working environment. By ensuring that workers are protected from the inherent risks of their jobs, social security benefits contribute to the sustainability and resilience of both the workforce and the sugarcane industry.

V. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Despite the existence of comprehensive policies aimed at ensuring social security for workers in the sugarcane industry, significant gaps persist between these policies and their actual implementation. These gaps manifest in several critical areas, including wage payments, access to benefits under social security schemes, working hours, gratuity entitlements and maternity/paternity benefits. The disparity between policy provisions and the lived experiences of sugarcane workers highlights the need for a detailed examination of these issues.

a. Gender Disparities in the Sugarcane Industries in Uttar Pradesh

Problem: Gender disparities in the sugarcane industry continue to be a pressing issue, particularly concerning the treatment and opportunities afforded to women workers. Despite contributing significantly to the workforce, women in the sugarcane industry face challenges such as unequal pay, poor working conditions, lack of access to social security benefits, and limited upward mobility. Additionally, socio-cultural factors, such as traditional gender roles and discrimination, exacerbate these challenges, often leaving women more vulnerable to exploitation and exclusion from formal labour protections.

Research Focus: The proposed research will examine the gender-based inequalities prevalent in the sugarcane industry, with a specific focus on wage disparities, working conditions, access to social security, and gender-based discrimination. It will also explore the role of existing labour laws and policies in addressing these issues, identifying key gaps in their

²⁴ Ashutosh Gupta and Gurpreet Randhawa, *Social Security Practices in Co-Operative and Private Sugar Mills of Punjab: A Comparative Study* (2018) v. 38

implementation. Furthermore, the research will seek to develop recommendations for improving gender equity in the industry by enhancing awareness, promoting fair wages, and ensuring better working conditions for women.

b. Bridging the Gaps in the Social Security Code, 2020: Ensuring Access to Health and Medical Benefits for Vulnerable Workers

Problem: The Social Security Code of 2020 aimed to improve social security for workers in various industries, but still faces gaps such as inadequate coverage, difficult compliance requirements, and a lack of understanding among beneficiaries. These issues are particularly pronounced for disadvantaged workers in the sugarcane business, who often face regulatory hurdles, incorrect documentation, and insufficient coverage, making it difficult for them to access these benefits.

Research Focus: The research aims to examine the implementation challenges of the Social Security Code, 2020, and the gaps in accessing medical and health benefits for workers. It will focus on coverage and compliance across organized and unorganized sectors, identifying systemic barriers that hinder the effective realization of its objectives, especially for unorganized and gig workers. The study will also analyse the availability and accessibility of social security benefits for sugarcane workers, assessing their barriers such as bureaucratic hurdles and lack of awareness.

c. Wage Disparities and Delays in the Sugarcane Industries in Uttar Pradesh

Problem: Although minimum wage laws and fair wage practices are mandated by law, sugarcane workers often receive payments below the stipulated rates. Delays in wage payments and inconsistencies in record-keeping exacerbate this issue, leading to financial insecurity among workers.

Research Focus: Observe the extent to which wage payments align with legal requirements and the reasons for any discrepancies.

d. Gratuity Compliance and Awareness Under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972

Problem: The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 provides for a lump-sum payment to workers as a token of gratitude for their service. However, there is often a lack of clarity and awareness

among sugarcane workers regarding their entitlement to gratuity, resulting in many workers not receiving this benefit.

Research Focus: Examine the awareness and implementation of this Act in the sugarcane industry and identify any obstacles to workers receiving their gratuity.

e. Maternity and Paternity Benefits in the Sugarcane Industries in Uttar Pradesh

Problem: Maternity and paternity benefits are crucial for supporting workers during the critical periods of childbirth and early parenthood. However, in the sugarcane industry, these benefits are often overlooked or inadequately provided, leaving workers, particularly women, without the necessary support.

Research Focus: Explore the availability and adequacy of maternity and paternity benefits in the sugarcane industry and the challenges faced by workers in accessing these benefits.

f. Challenges in Bonus Distribution in Sugar Factories in Uttar Pradesh

Problem: While annual bonuses are a common practice in many industries to incentivize and reward employees, the distribution of these bonuses in the sugarcane industry is not uniform. The survey reveals that 25% of the workers are deprived of an annual bonus, which may reveal a pattern of differences in firm policies or insufficient finances in payment for workers.

Research Focus: Examine the bonus spreading across various sugar mills and explain why the distribution is differential. The study should emphasize factors such as the financial fitness of the mills, the ambiguity of bonus policies, and its implementation and how labour unions negotiation may affect the share of bonuses. The target is to determine the reasons behind the fact that so few of the workers receive any form of bonuses and if these exclusions are demographically, economically, or geographically related to the particular regional industry.

The gap between policy and practice in the sugarcane industry reflects wider issues about workers' rights and social justice. Infact, solving such gaps needs stronger implementation of the already available law in addition to workers' education and empowerment. Through this research, the aim is to provide actionable insights that can help bridge these gaps and improve the living and working conditions of sugarcane workers.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Investigate how effectively social security policies, such as wage payments, health benefits, and gratuity, are implemented for sugarcane workers, highlighting any discrepancies between policy and practice.
- Evaluate the level of awareness among sugarcane workers about their social security entitlements and identify the barriers they face in accessing these benefits, including challenges related to health insurance, maternity/paternity benefits, and other protections.

VII. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Books

- **R.P. Yadav** in his book *Social Security in India*, examines social security as vital protection against risks like illness, unemployment, and old age. He distinguishes between protective measures for the organized sector and promotional measures for the unorganized sector, highlighting that India's informal workforce (93%) requires a broader approach. Yadav emphasizes social security's role in reducing poverty and deprivation.
- **Bagchi K's** book on *Social Security for Unorganized Workers in India: Issues and Concerns* addresses the critical challenges faced by unorganized sector workers regarding social security. The book combines theoretical insights and case studies with policy discussions, highlighting the need for effective measures to protect this vulnerable workforce in India.
- **Hitesh Bhatia's** book *Introduction to Social Security – With Special Reference to India* explores the evolution of social security, from historical welfare schemes to contemporary socio-economic support. It reviews significant research, examines India's labour market structure, and analyzes the current social security system, aiming to inform students, scholars, and policymakers alike.

b. Articles

- **Ashutosh Gupta & Gurpreet Randhawa's** Article on *Social Security Practices in co-operative and Private Sugar Mills of Punjab: A Comparative Study*, highlights varied mechanisms for different industries, focusing on employee benefits such as compensation, provident funds, and pension schemes. Studies have demonstrated disparities in social security provisions between organized sectors, with private

employers often offering fewer comprehensive benefits compared to co-operatives. The sugar industry, despite legal provisions, faces challenges, especially in seasonal employment contexts.

- **Pradeep M. D. and Kalicharan M. L.** have discussed the social security structure in India by tracing back the evolution of ancient texts, Manusmriti to modern statutory measures. Communal support systems and present national programs concerning poverty alleviation with benefit flows like Provident Funds, medical insurance have been a high priority, emphasizing improved delivery systems for inclusive growth.

c. Reports

- **The 2023-24 Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour & Employment** outlines the social security framework in India, with limited coverage to organised workers. The report highlights key legislation, administrative roles, and funding mechanisms for programs like the Employees' State Insurance and Provident Fund, aiming to ensure compliance and enhance worker welfare.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach combining doctrinal and non-doctrinal methods. The doctrinal research involves analyzing relevant legal frameworks, judicial precedents, and scholarly literature to identify gaps in social security laws. The non-doctrinal research employs an empirical approach, utilizing field surveys conducted in 10 sugarcane factories across seven districts in Uttar Pradesh, covering 330 workers. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on workers' access to social security benefits, wage sufficiency, awareness of legal rights, and gender disparities. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

a. Citation Style

The research followed the OSCOLA 4th edition citation style to maintain consistency and academic rigour, ensuring proper attribution of all referenced materials.

b. Sampling Method

This research adopted stratified random sampling method to gather responses. The researcher visited sugar plants across various districts in Uttar Pradesh. This allowed us to

gather information from a diverse group of workers and gain a comprehensive picture of the situation throughout the state.

c. Data Collection Methods

For this research, a field survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire to gather data. The survey involved visiting various sugar factories across different districts in Uttar Pradesh. The questionnaire was designed to gather comprehensive information regarding the workers' access to social security benefits, including medical insurance, health insurance, provident fund (PF), and access to medical dispensaries.

The field survey approach ensured that direct interaction with the workers was possible, thus ensuring that the data collected would be relevant and reflect the current conditions within the sugar industry. The visit to various locations was intended to provide a broad and accurate assessment of the distribution and accessibility of social security benefits in the different regions.

The use of a standardized questionnaire helped ensure that there was a uniform process in data gathering, thereby making it possible to compare the various districts and sugar mills. It was therefore possible to identify gaps in the provision of social security benefits in the industry and understand, to some extent, the impact it had on the workforce.

We faced severe problems during data collection for this research work. Although we had letters from our department, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, the sugar mills would not allow us on the premises of their respective factories. Therefore, in this case, we are faced with many problems in collecting data outside the facilities and during shift changes when access was possible to the workforce for information.

d. Method of Data Analysis

The main statistical data were processed using a personal computer (PC) with the assistance of spreadsheet application software, for example, Microsoft Excel. I have used this software to arrange, analyze, and present the data by developing several tables, charts, and graphs. These illustrations help to summarize and interpret data effectively and thus understand the statistical findings more clearly.

IX. SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS ACROSS DISTRICTS

The survey covered different districts in Uttar Pradesh, such as Moradabad, Sambhal, Shahjahanpur, Lakhimpur, Sitapur, Hardoi, and Gonda. Each district provided diverse demographic features, thus presenting a balanced view of the social and economic conditions prevailing there. The data was drawn from 10 sugar mills spread over 7 districts, and the sample covered 330 respondents. The response to the survey showed extreme gender disparity, with 326 male respondents and only 4 females. This could mean a female workforce is underrepresented in the population or industry under study, and therefore further analysis is needed. More importantly, it reflects the significant gap in awareness regarding the Social Security Code, 2020, amongst the respondents, particularly the male, where outreach and education programs might be necessary.

a. Gender Disparities in the Sugarcane Industries in Uttar Pradesh

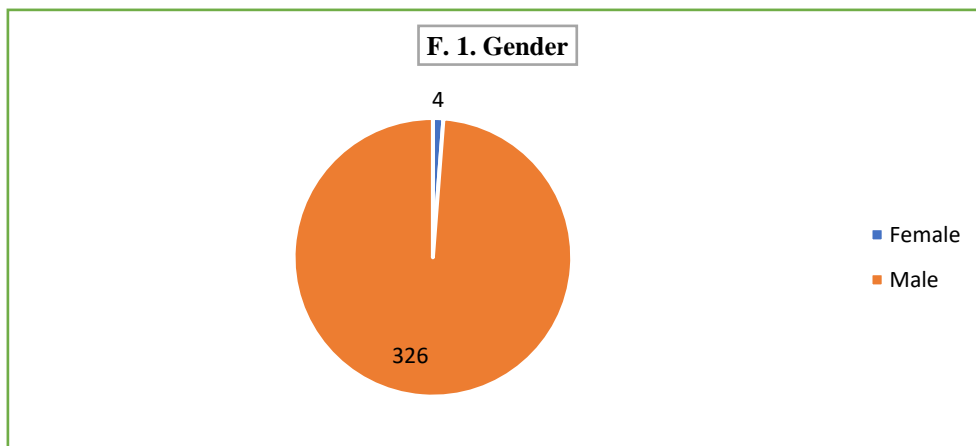


Figure No. 1 represents the results of a survey conducted among workers from various sugar mills to assess the gender distribution within the workforce. Out of 330 respondents, the survey highlights a notable gender imbalance, with the majority of workers being male. The detailed findings are as follows:

Table No. 1: This table represents Gender Disparities in the Sugarcane Industries

| Gender | Number of Workers | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| Male | 326 | 98.79 % |
| Female | 04 | 1.21 % |
| Total | 330 | - |

Figure 1: Gender Disparities in the Sugarcane Industries
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Analysis

The survey data reveals a stark gender disparity in the sugarcane industry workforce. Out of 330 workers surveyed, **98.79% (326 respondents)** are male, while only **1.21% (4 respondents)** are female. This overwhelming male dominance in the workforce underscores the significant gender imbalance in the industry.

This disparity suggests that women face considerable barriers to entry into the sugarcane sector, which may be influenced by several socio-economic, cultural, and structural factors. Traditional gender roles, limited access to resources, and a lack of targeted policies or social security provisions for women likely contribute to their underrepresentation. Additionally, the labour-intensive and physically demanding nature of sugarcane work, combined with the absence of gender-specific support systems (such as childcare, maternity benefits, or safer working conditions), may further discourage female participation.

The findings call for an urgent review of existing labour policies in the sugarcane industry, highlighting the need for gender-sensitive reforms to ensure greater inclusivity and support for women workers. Addressing these disparities will not only promote gender equity but also enhance the overall social and economic well-being of the workforce in this crucial sector.

b. Implementation Gaps in Social Security Provisions

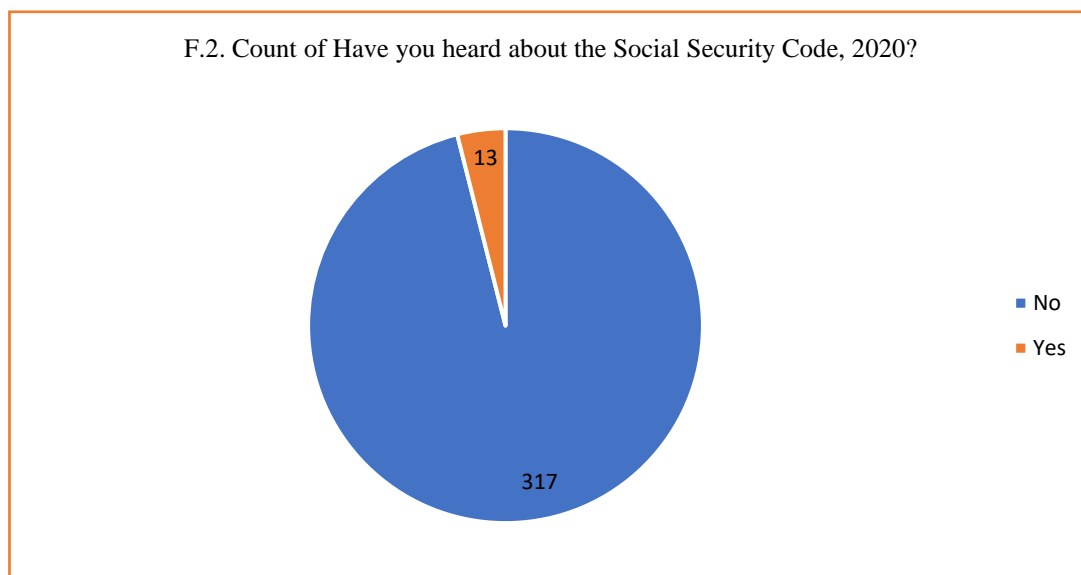


Figure 2 Have you heard about the Social Security Code, 2020?
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure No. 2 represents a survey conducted among workers from various sugar mills to assess the implementation of Gaps in Social Security Provisions and the awareness of the Social Security Code, 2020. The survey included 330 responses, with the following findings:

Table No 2: This table represents Implementation Gaps in Social Security Provisions

| Familiar with the Social Security Code, 2020 | Number of Workers | Percentage % |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
| Yes | 13 | 3.94% |
| No | 317 | 96.06% |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: The survey of 330 individuals highlights a substantial deficit in awareness regarding the Social Security Code, 2020. The data reveals that a mere 3.94% of respondents 13 individuals, were familiar with the code, whereas an overwhelming 96.06%, or 317 respondents, lacked awareness of this legislative measure designed to bolster workers' social security. This stark discrepancy underscores a critical need for focused educational and outreach efforts to close the knowledge gap and enable effective implementation of the Social Security Code, 2020.

c. Wage Payments to Workers in the Sugarcane Industry in Uttar Pradesh

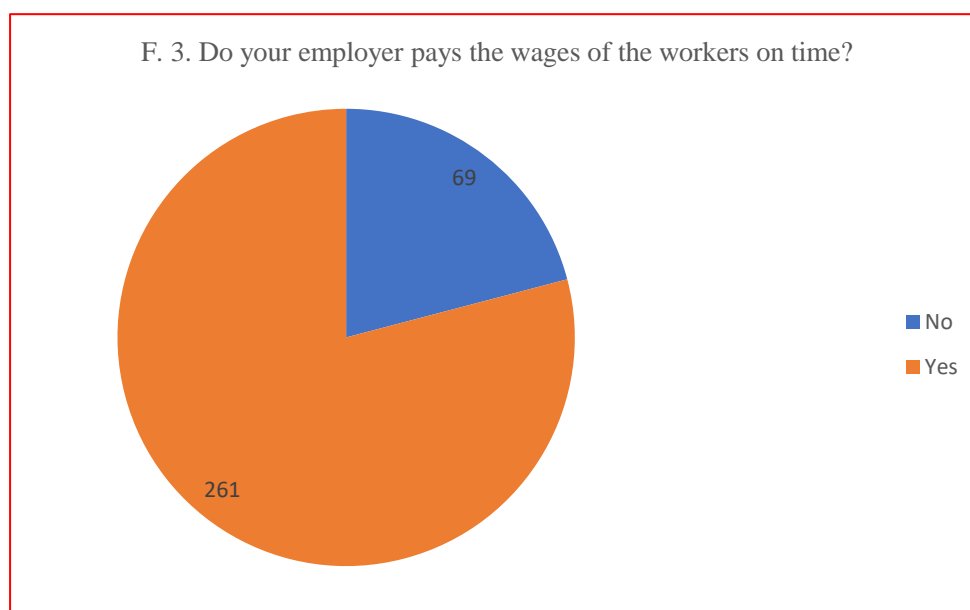


Figure 3: Do your employer pays the wages of the workers on time?
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure No. 3 represents a survey conducted among workers from various sugar mills to assess the punctuality of wage payments. The survey included 330 responses, with the following findings:

Table 3 Survey Results: This table wage payment received by the workers of the sugarcane industries in Uttar Pradesh (India)

| Wages Paid on Time | Number of Workers | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Yes | 261 | 79.09% |
| No | 69 | 20.91% |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: A substantial majority of respondents, 79.09%, reported receiving their wages on time, indicating a strong adherence to wage payment schedules in the surveyed sugar mills. This reflects positively on the overall compliance with wage payment standards, contributing to worker satisfaction and financial stability. However, the fact that 20.91% of respondents indicated delays in wage payments reveals a significant concern. This issue affects nearly one-fifth of the workforce, suggesting that while the overall situation is encouraging, there are still notable instances where timely payments are not being made. Ensuring the punctual payment of wages is essential for maintaining a motivated and financially secure workforce. Although most workers in the surveyed sugar mills receive their wages on time, the concerns of the 20.91% who face delays must be urgently addressed. By strengthening enforcement, holding employers accountable, and implementing robust support systems, efforts can be made to achieve 100% compliance with timely wage payments, ensuring fairness and reliability in wage distribution.

d. Wages Received by the workers of the sugar factories of Uttar Pradesh are sufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family or not?

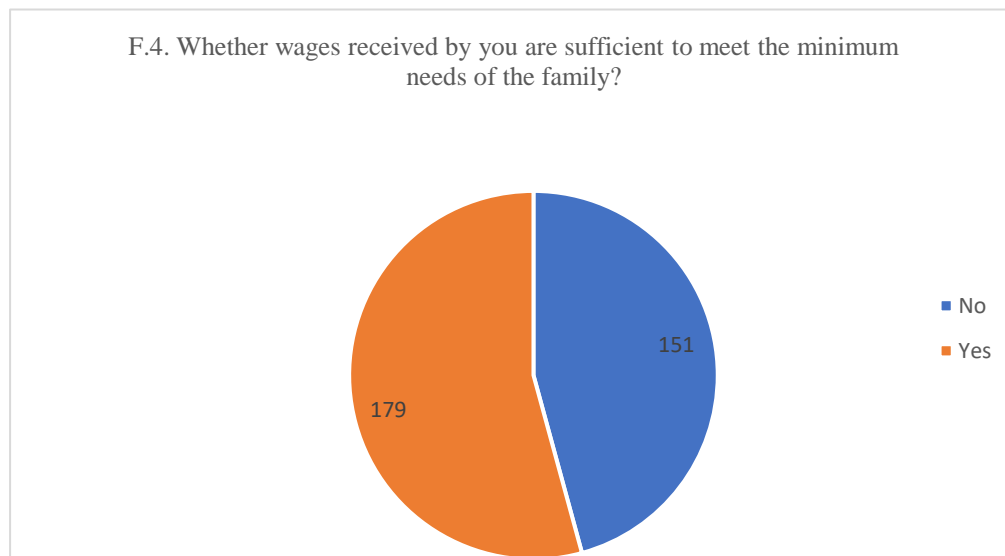


Figure 4: Whether wages received by you are sufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family?
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure No. 4 represents a survey conducted among workers from various sugar mills aimed to whether received wages are sufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family.

Table No 4 Survey Results: This table represents wages received by the workers sufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family or not.

| Received wages sufficient or not | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 179 | 54% |
| No | 151 | 46% |
| Total Respondent | 330 | - |

Analysis: In the survey conducted with 330 workers, a key question asked was whether the wages they received were sufficient to meet the minimum needs of their families. The results revealed a nearly even split in responses: 179 workers (approximately 54%) responded positively, indicating that their wages were sufficient, while 151 workers (around 46%) indicated that their wages were not adequate to meet their family's minimum needs.

This data suggests that while a slight majority of workers feel their wages are sufficient, a significant portion still struggles to meet basic household needs. The close margin between the two groups highlights the ongoing challenges faced by a substantial number of workers,

raising concerns about wage adequacy and its implications for worker welfare. This finding points to the necessity of further investigation into the factors contributing to wage insufficiency and the exploration of potential policy interventions to address this issue.

e. Benefits Under the Social Security Scheme (Medical, Health Insurance, etc.)

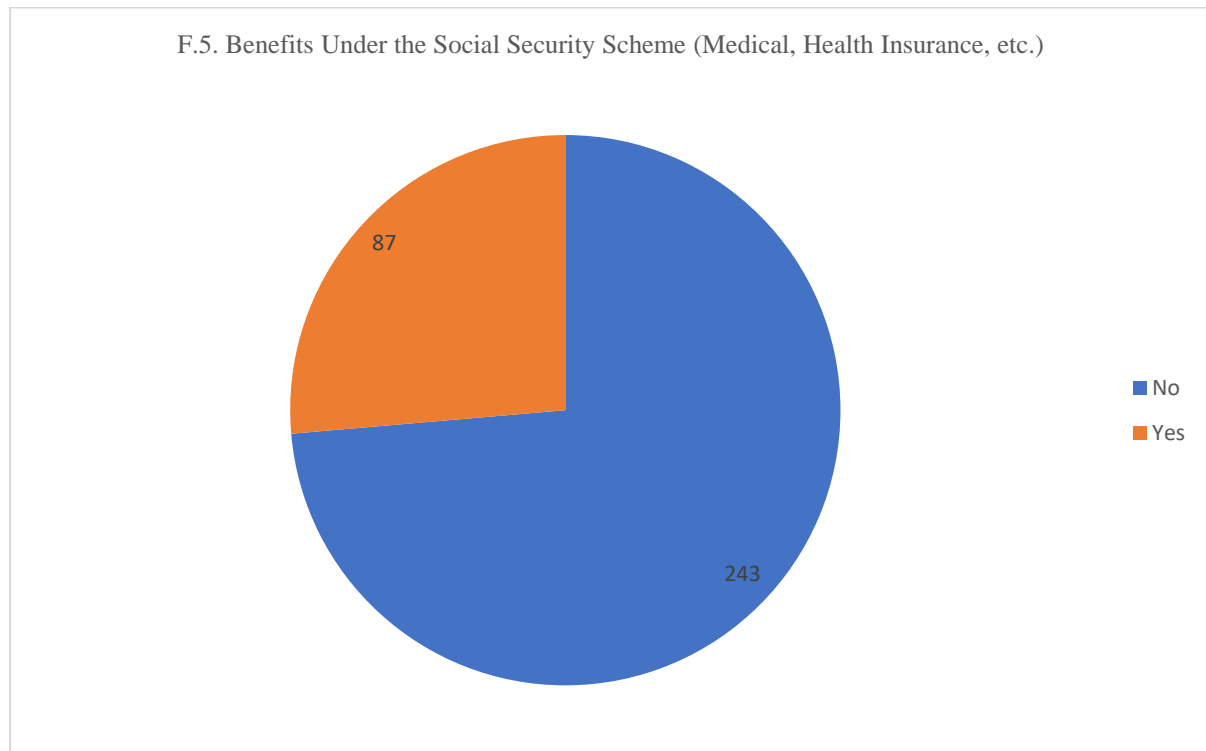


Figure 5 Benefits Under the Social Security Scheme (Medical, Health Insurance, etc.)

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure 5 represents a survey conducted to evaluate the extent to which workers in the sugarcane industry are receiving benefits under the Social Security scheme, including medical insurance, health insurance, provident fund (PF), and access to medical dispensaries. The survey included 330 workers from various sugar mills and districts, and the results were as follows:

Table 5 Survey Results: This table represents benefits received by the workers of the sugar factories in Uttar Pradesh.

| Benefits Received by the Workers | Total Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 87 | 26.36% |
| No | 243 | 73.64% |

| | | |
|-------|-----|---|
| Total | 330 | - |
|-------|-----|---|

Analysis

The survey revealed that only 26.36% of respondents reported receiving social security benefits such as insurance, provident fund (PF), and access to medical dispensaries. This indicates that a small segment of the workforce is accessing these critical social security measures.

A significant 73.64% of workers reported not receiving social security benefits, highlighting major gaps in access to essential services like insurance and medical care. Factors such as administrative challenges and lack of awareness contribute to this issue, leaving workers more vulnerable to financial and health risks. These findings underscore the urgent need for improved social security provisions to support the majority of workers in the sugarcane industry.

To rectify this issue, there is a need for enhanced outreach efforts, streamlined administration, targeted awareness campaigns, and effective monitoring to ensure that all workers receive the benefits they are entitled to, thereby improving their health, financial stability, and overall well-being.

f. Working Hours of Sugarcane Factory Workers in Uttar Pradesh

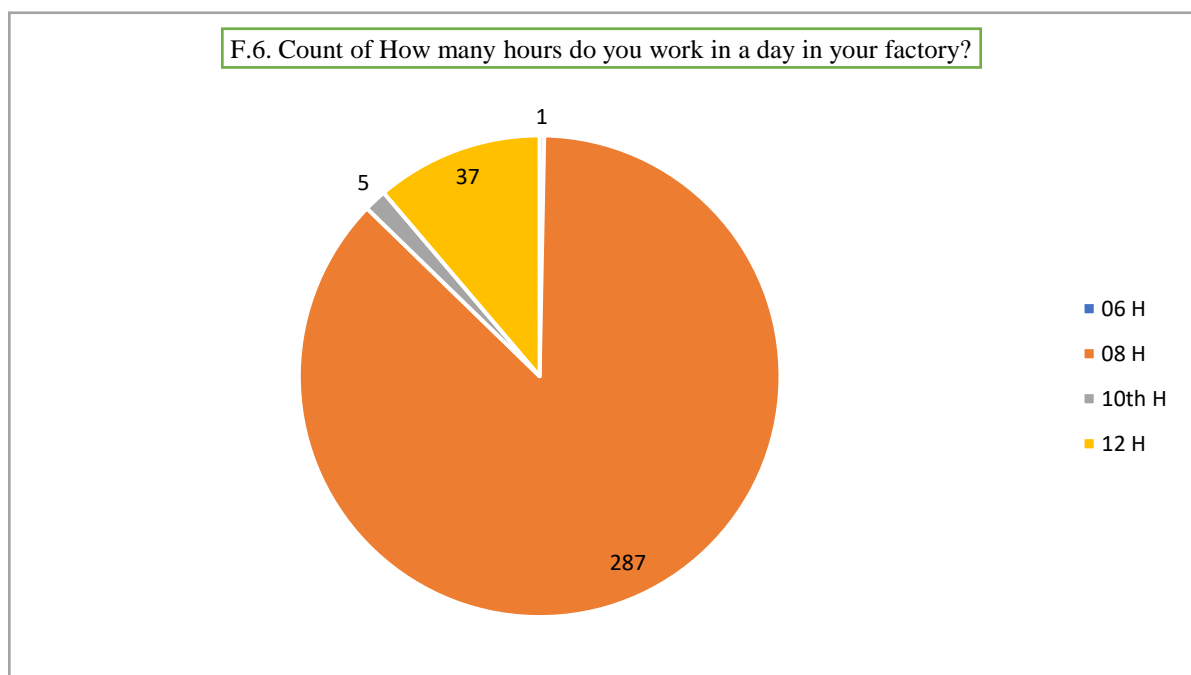


Figure 6 How many hours do you work in a day in your factory?
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure 6 represents a survey conducted to assess the daily working hours of sugarcane factory workers. Data was gathered from 330 workers across various factories and districts, fielding the following results:

Table 6 Survey Results: This table represents working hours in sugar factories in Uttar Pradesh.

| Working Hours Per Day | Number of Workers | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 8 Hours | 287 | 86.97% |
| 12 Hours | 37 | 11.21% |
| 10Hours | 5 | 1.52% |
| 6 Hours | 1 | 0.30% |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: The majority of respondents, 86.97%, reported working 8 hours a day, which is consistent with the standard workday and suggests that most sugarcane factories comply with typical working hour regulations. However, 11.21% of workers reported working 12 hours a day, which is significantly longer than the standard 8-hour workday. This extended working time raises concerns about potential worker fatigue, health issues, and possible violations of labour laws.

A small percentage of workers reported working 10 hours (1.52%) or 6 hours (0.30%) per day, reflecting some inconsistencies in work schedules across different factories or roles. While the majority adhere to the standard 8-hour workday, a notable portion works extended hours, raising concerns about compliance with labour laws. Prolonged work hours can lead to health issues, reduced productivity, and an increased risk of workplace injuries, emphasizing the need for stricter monitoring and enforcement of labour regulations.

To address these challenges, it is essential to standardize work hours across the industry. Ensuring regulated and consistent work schedules will promote worker safety and well-being. Overall, more robust oversight and targeted initiatives are needed to create a fairer and healthier working environment in the sugarcane sector.

g. Gratuity Under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972

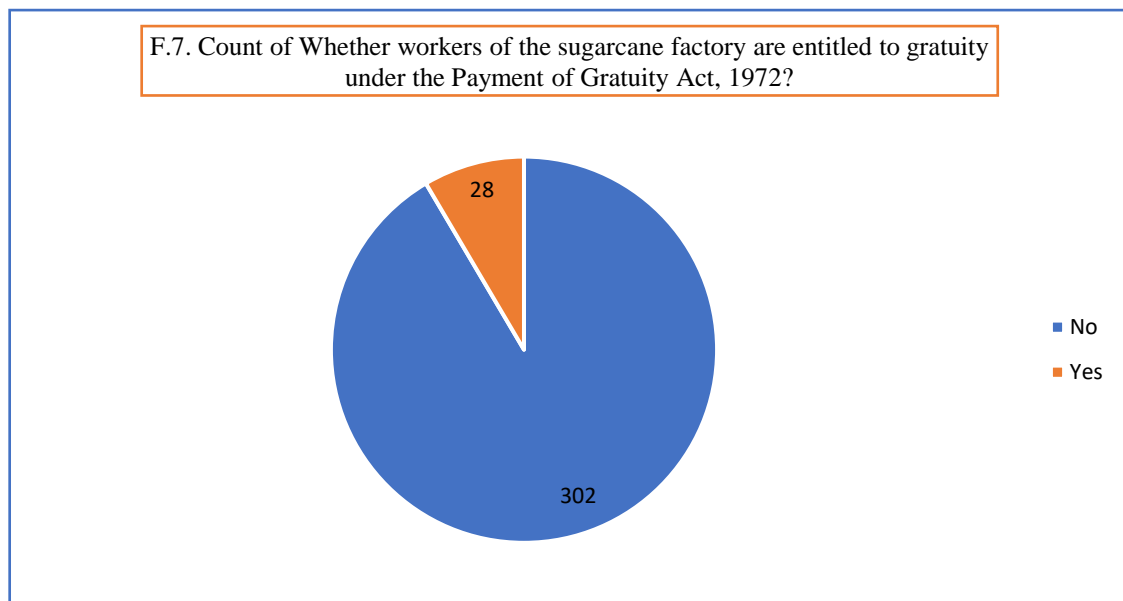


Figure 7 Whether workers of the sugarcane factory are entitled to gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972?

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure 7 represents a survey conducted to evaluate sugarcane factory workers' awareness and entitlement to gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. Responses from 330 workers across various factories and districts were analyzed, yielding the following results:

Table 7 Survey Results: This Paper represents entitlement of gratuity under the Gratuity Act, 1972.

| Entitlement of Gratuity | Total respondent | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 28 | 8.48% |
| No | 302 | 91.52% |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: The survey reveals that only 8.48% of respondents are aware of their entitlement to gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. This low percentage suggests a significant gap in either the awareness of or adherence to gratuity entitlements among sugarcane factory workers.

A substantial majority, 91.52%, reported that they are not entitled to gratuity. This indicates the Payment of Gratuity Act is not being properly enforced among sugarcane factory workers,

leading to concerns about potential non-compliance and a lack of awareness about their rights. The majority of workers are not receiving gratuity, indicating a potential lack of financial security upon retirement or termination. Additionally, a significant number of workers are unaware of their entitlement to gratuity, preventing them from claiming their legally entitled benefits. To address this issue, there is a need for increased intervention from factory management and regulatory authorities, focusing on ensuring compliance with the Act and educating workers about their rights. The survey highlights a critical gap in the awareness and implementation of gratuity entitlements among workers, requiring stronger regulatory enforcement, targeted awareness campaigns, and improved management practices.

h. Maternity/Paternity Benefits in the Sugarcane Industry in Uttar Pradesh

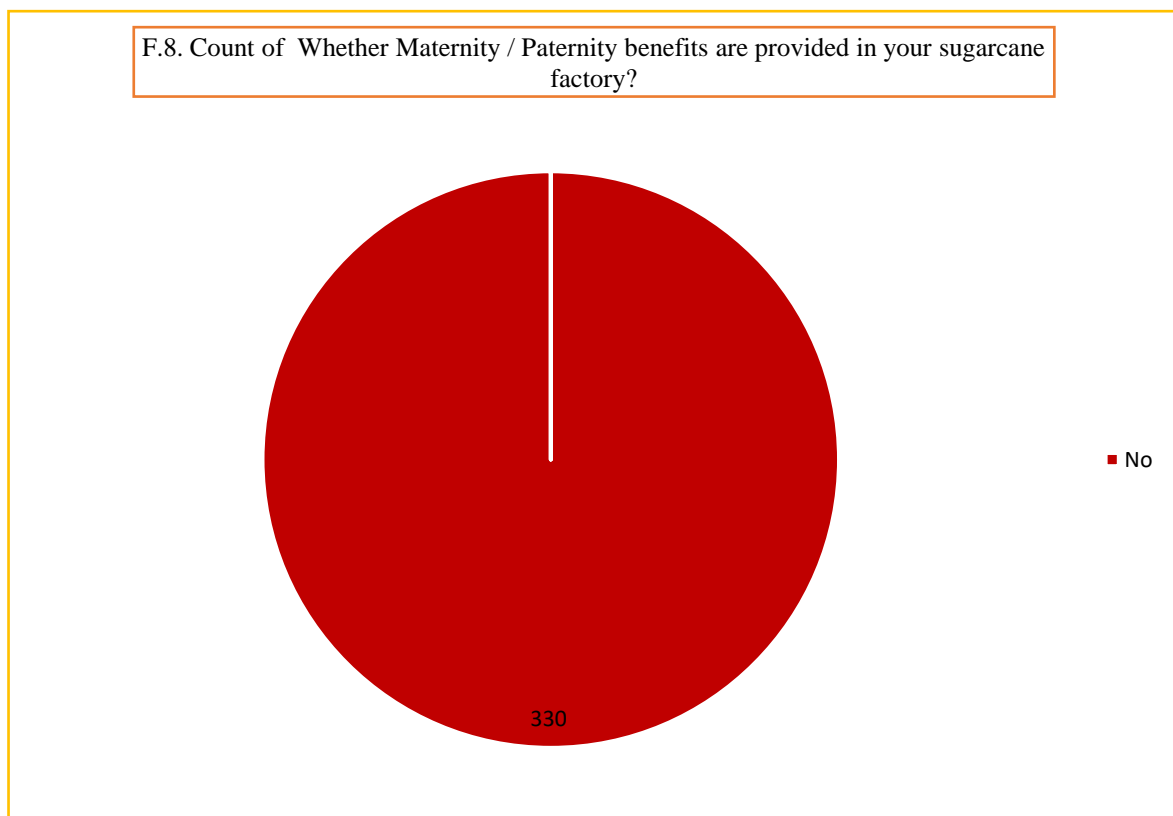


Figure 8 Maternity and Paternity Benefits in the Sugarcane Industries in Uttar Pradesh
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure No. 8 represents survey conducted among workers in various sugarcane factories to evaluate the availability of maternity and paternity benefits. The survey gathered responses from 330 workers, all of whom reported that such benefits are not provided. The results are as follows:

Table 8 Survey Results: This table represents the availability of maternity and paternity benefits.

| The availability of maternity and paternity benefits. | Total Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 0 | 0% |
| No | 330 | 100 |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: The fact that every respondent (100%) reported a lack of maternity and paternity benefits indicates an important issue in the surveyed sugarcane factories. The absence of these benefits is an important issue in worker welfare and adherence to family and medical leave regulations.

This absence of maternity and paternity benefits is either an indicator of a failure to observe labour laws or an implementation and enforcement problem. Such a gap affects the physical and emotional well-being of workers, especially new parents, and adversely affects their productivity and quality of life in general.

It would demand an immediate measure to provide maternity and paternity benefits. It is very important not only to comply with the law but also to care for the health and well-being of the workers and their families. In this case, the challenge calls for industries, governments, and communities to join hands and provide the workers with support.

i. Bonus in Sugar Factories in Uttar Pradesh

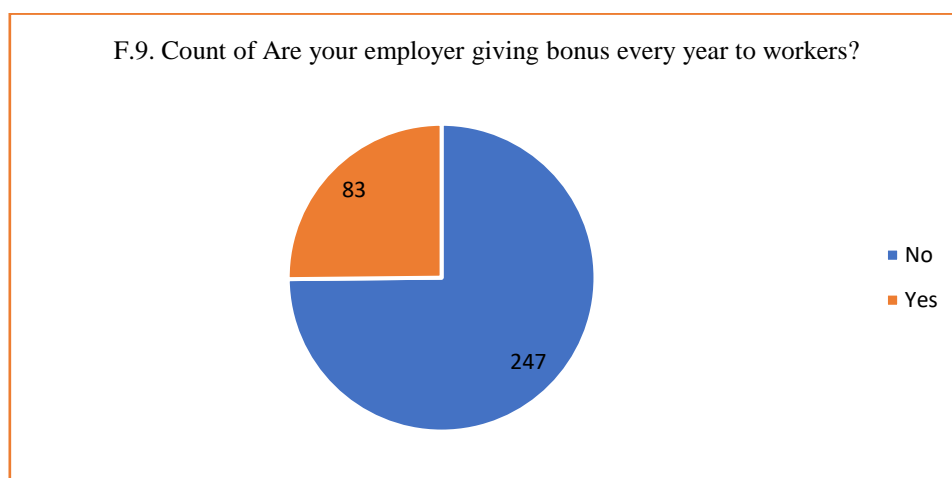


Figure 9 Bonus in Sugar Factories in Uttar Pradesh
Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Figure 9 represents survey conducted to evaluate bonuses provided by the sugarcane industries. Responses from 330 workers across various factories and districts were analyzed, and the following results:

Table 9 Survey Results: This table number represents the Bonus Received by the workers of the Sugar Factories in Uttar Pradesh.

| Bonus Received by the workers | Total Respondent | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 247 | 74.85% |
| No | 83 | 25.15% |
| Total | 330 | - |

Analysis: The survey data presented in the table provides a clear picture of the distribution of annual bonuses among workers in sugar factories. Out of 330 workers surveyed, a substantial majority, 247 workers (approximately 74.85%), confirmed receiving an annual bonus from their employers. This indicates that giving bonuses is relatively common within the surveyed sugar factories. However, a significant minority, 83 workers (about 25.15%), reported not receiving any annual bonuses.

The fact that over a quarter of the surveyed workers do not receive bonuses suggests a discrepancy in the implementation of bonus policies across different sugar factories. This variation may be influenced by factors such as the financial stability of the factories, differing management practices, or varying interpretations of labour laws pertaining to bonuses.

The distribution of bonuses can have broader implications for worker satisfaction, retention, and motivation. Bonuses are often viewed as a reflection of appreciation for employees' hard work and can significantly impact their financial well-being, especially in industries like sugarcane processing where wages may be on the lower side.

X. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The study reveals significant gaps in the implementation of social security benefits for sugarcane factory workers in Uttar Pradesh. Key findings are as follows:

Gender Disparities in the Sugarcane Industry: A significant gender imbalance exists in the sugarcane workforce, with an overwhelming majority (98.79%) of workers being male. Only 1.21% of the workforce consists of female workers, indicating considerable barriers for women

in this sector. Traditional gender roles, limited access to resources, and the physically demanding nature of sugarcane work contribute to this disparity, underscoring the urgent need for gender-sensitive reforms in labour policies to promote inclusivity and support for women.

Wage Payments: While a majority (79.09%) of workers reported timely wage payments, 20.91% experienced delays. Furthermore, 46% of workers indicated that their wages were insufficient to meet their family's basic needs, highlighting wage inadequacy as a serious issue.

Access to Social Security Benefits: Only 26.36% of workers received benefits such as health insurance, provident fund (PF), and access to medical care. The majority (73.64%) lacked access to these critical social security provisions, underscoring a significant gap in benefit coverage.

Gratuity Entitlement: Awareness of gratuity benefits under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 was alarmingly low, with only 8.48% of workers aware of their entitlement. Most (91.52%) did not receive gratuity, pointing to non-compliance and lack of awareness.

Maternity/Paternity Benefits: None of the surveyed workers reported access to maternity or paternity benefits, signalling a critical lack of support for families and non-compliance with labour laws related to parental leave.

These findings indicate the need for stronger enforcement of social security laws, improved worker awareness, and streamlined administrative processes to ensure that sugarcane factory workers receive the benefits they are legally entitled to.

XI. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research paper emphasizes the critical need to address the rampant social security discrimination faced by unorganized workers in the sugarcane industries of Uttar Pradesh, India. Despite the huge role these workers play in sustaining the economy of the state and the country, they are marginalized in terms of receiving adequate social security benefits. Several key issues have emerged from this research, such as inadequate wages, unawareness of legal entitlements, delayed payments, and lack of access to healthcare, retirement benefits, and other social protections.

The field survey results show that most workers of the sugarcane industry remain unaware of their rights under the Social Security Code, 2020, and are deprived of vital benefits such as health insurance and provident funds. Gender inequality in the workforce deepens the problem

further and challenges women more in receiving wages on par with men, along with safe working conditions and benefits of maternity. Seasonal employment in the industry further increases the vulnerability of workers, leaving many without income security in off-seasons. The exclusion of sugarcane factory workers from core social security laws and lack of enforcement of existing labour laws identify a broader failure to protect workers' rights.

In research findings, almost half reported being paid wage inadequate in quantity. Therefore, to overcome some sort of delay in payments further weakens people financially. Again, as well, not receiving gratuity increases dissatisfaction toward an employer or government agencies, which require an end but the multifaceted change at policy level such as stringent laws enforcement with higher understanding levels towards social security among workforce; in addition to proper services given toward benefits entitlements will better correct things. Collaboration between the government, employers, and labour unions is crucial to ensure all sugarcane workers, regardless of seasonal employment status, have access to healthcare, unemployment benefits, retirement pensions, and other essential protections.

In addition, specific focus needs to be directed towards gender imbalances in the industry. The female workforce should be empowered through fair remunerations, safe working conditions, and maternity benefits, which is not only a matter of justice but also a way to enhance productivity and welfare in the workforce.

Thus, the rampant social security discrimination against unorganized workers in the sugarcane industries of Uttar Pradesh reflects a broader failure of policy implementation and enforcement. While the legal framework exists to protect these workers, the reality on the ground is one of exclusion and neglect. This research calls for immediate and concerted efforts to rectify these issues, ensuring that all workers in the sugarcane industry can lead lives of dignity, security, and well-being. By addressing these challenges, the industry can move toward a more sustainable and equitable future, where the rights and welfare of its workers are upheld as a fundamental priority.

XII. SUGGESTIONS

In light of the above analysis of various issues like wages, social security, working hours, bonus gratuity and maternity benefits as well as paternity benefits of the workers of the sugarcane factories of Uttar Pradesh, the following suggestions are made to provide effective protections and benefits to the workers of the sugarcane factories during their jobs:

1. To establish a dedicated women's workforce development program in the sugarcane industry to provide training, mentorship, and support for female workers to overcome barriers of their entry and promote gender equity.
2. The sugarcane industries should ensure timely payment of wages to workers. This will foster not only compliance with labour laws but also enhance worker morale and productivity, ultimately contributing to the industry's sustainable growth.
3. These industries should ensure the provision of social security benefits to the workers like medical health insurance, provident fund, and other essential protections, to promote workers' welfare and long-term industry sustainability.
4. The survey reveals that only 8.48% of respondents are aware of their entitlement to gratuity under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. This low awareness highlights a critical gap in adherence to gratuity provisions. Therefore, sugarcane industries should implement mandatory measures to ensure workers' entitlement to gratuity, safeguarding their financial security and future well-being.
5. A survey conducted among 330 sugarcane factory workers revealed that none received maternity or paternity benefits. To address this gap, sugarcane factories should strictly implement both maternity and paternity benefits across all plants, ensuring compliance with labour laws and supporting workers' family welfare.
6. Encourage the formation of trade unions to give employees a platform to discuss issues and better working conditions and benefits.
7. Set up childcare facilities within the factory premises to support working parent mothers.
8. Set up digital systems to keep track of workers' wages, benefits, and work hours. On time.
9. Sugarcane factories should ensure the provision of annual bonuses to all workers, promoting fair compensation practices and enhancing worker motivation and retention.