

CHAPTER - V

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND,
ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORK
AND ABSENTEEISM

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to present and analyse the data regarding the personal, socio-economic background of the respondents and their attitude towards their work. While doing so, comparison between 'absentee' and 'regular' workers is made. An attempt is made to find out the factors/variables influencing the absentee behaviour. At the end of the chapter, various suggestions to reduce the absenteeism are also given.

5.2 BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The variables in terms of which the analysis of social background has been made are selective. In general, the variables which tend to have bearing upon the absentee behaviour are selected. The data regarding some much variables relating to personal, family and rural-urban background of the respondents are presented and analysed below.

(A) PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1) Sex -

All the respondents belonging to both the groups of 'absentee' and 'regular' workers were men; hence we are not in a position to find out any relationship between sex and absentee behaviour.

2) Age -

The data on this aspect are presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1
RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR AGE

Age-group	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee workers	Percentage to the total	Regular workers	Percentage to the total
26 - 35	14	35.00	03	15
36 - 45	23	57.50	15	75
46 - 55	03	07.50	02	10
Total	40	100.00	20	100

The table 5.1 shows that, the majority (37 or 92.50 per cent) of the 'absentee' workers belonging to the relatively younger age-group of 45 or less years of age. However, majority of the 'regular' workers also belong to the same group.

Thus, the data do not indicate any definite relation between age and absentee behaviour.

However, the scholars like Durganand Sinha and Paramjit Singh have noted that, though not statistically established, absentee workers tended to be younger and less "stable" with regard to their employer.¹ Again Durganand Sinha observes that, on the whole there is a gradual decrease in number of days absent as we proceed from younger to older age groups. That is, the younger workers tend to be absent more frequently than older ones.² However, S.A.S. Murthy comments "It is yet not easy to say whether a young or an

old worker is more regular, even though a young worker may be said to be generally less responsible and more easy-going and given more to other diversions, when compared with the latter.¹¹³

3) Marital Status -

All the respondents belonging to both the groups of 'absentee' and 'regular' workers were married; and the data thus indicate that absentee behaviour is not significantly associated with marital status. Durganand Sinha in his study also found that, the relationship between marriage and absence was not significant.⁴

4) Education -

The data regarding educational level attained by the respondents is presented in the Table 5.2 below:

Table 5.2

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR EDUCATION

Educational Qualifications	No. of respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
Illiterate	1	2.50	-	-
Upto 7th Std.	8	20.00	2	10.00
Upto S.S.C.	23	57.50	7	35.00
Upto H.S.C.	4	10.00	1	5.00
Upto B.A., B.Com., B.Sc.	3	7.50	7	35.00
Post-graduates	-	-	1	5.00
Technical Education	1	2.50	2	10.00
	40	100.00	20	100.00

The Table 5.2 shows that, the educational level of the respondents is having definite relationship with the absentee behaviour. The table clearly shows that, absentee behaviour declines with the higher level of education.

For instance, there are 80 per cent respondents having education upto S.S.C. among the absentee workers and the proportion of respondents having more than high-school education was very low (17.50 per cent). As against this, majority (45 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers were having high-school or more education to their credit. Thus, it can be concluded that, the higher level of absenteeism is associated with the lower level of education and vice-versa.

Michael v.d. Bogaert and N.C.Das also note, "A low level of education or illiteracy has a negative effect on the attendance behaviour of workers. In their study, education was found to be significantly related with absenteeism."⁵

5) Place of Residence -

11 (or 27.50 per cent) respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers and 10 (or 50 per cent) respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers were staying in the factory quarters. The data thus suggest that, providing accomodation in the factory quarters does help to reduce absentee behaviour. However, 27.50 per cent respondents belonging to two group of 'absentee' workers were

staying in the factory quarters suggests that, providing accomodation in factory quarters does not solve the problem of labour absenteeism completely.

However, the distance between the place of residence and place of work can be said to be an important factor influencing absentee behaviour. The table 5.3 below respondents the data regarding respondents place of residence.

Table 5.3
RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR
PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Place of Residence	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Worker	Percentage to the total
In Halkarni	18	45	12	60
Outside Halkarni	22	55	8	40
Total	40	100	20	100

The Table 5.3 shows that, majority (55 per cent) of the respondents belonging to a group of 'absentee' workers were staying outside the Halkarni village and were daily commuters. Whereas, majority (60 per cent) of the respondents belonging to a group of 'regular' workers were staying in the Halkarni village where the factory is located. The data also indicate that, the place of residence is a

factor influencing absentee behaviour. Durganand Sinha's study also indicates that, workers coming from the distant villages had a higher rate of absence than those from town itself. 'The general belief that the greater the distance, the greater is the rate of absenteeism is substantiated by the S.A.S. Murthy's investigation also.'⁷

6) Mode of Conveyance -

The data on this aspect are presented in Table 5.4 below -

Table 5.4

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR MODE
OF CONVEYANCE

Conveyance	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	regular Workers	Percentage to the total
By Walk	11	27.50	10	50
Bicycles	10	25.00	2	10
Motor-Cycles	03	7.50	3	15
S.T. Bus	16	40.00	5	25
	40	100.00	20	100

The table 5.4 shows that, the proportion of respondents who were staying in the factory quarters and going upto the place of work by walk was more (50 per cent) among the 'regular' workers as compared the 'absentee' workers (27.50 per cent). The remaining respondents were attending

their job by using bicycles, motor-cycles and S.T.bus. The table also indicates that, proportion of those travelling by S.T.buses was more (40 per cent) among 'absentee' workers than the 'regular' workers (25 per cent). The data thus suggest that, various difficulties in the transportation do influence absentee behaviour.

Dinanath Dube's study also indicated the same.⁸

7) Recruitment Patterns-

A question was asked to the respondents, 'how could you get job in this factory?' The responses are presented in the Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5

HOW DID RESPONDENTS GET JOB IN THE FACTORY ?

	No. of Respondents			
	Absen- tee workers	Percen- tage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
"Through employment exchange and due to performance in the interview"	11	27.50	12	60.00
"Could get permanent job because I am working for the factory since the construction of the factory"	1	2.50	2	10.00
"Due to the help and influence of chairman of the factory, political leaders, friends and relatives"	28	70.00	6	30.00
Total	40	100.00	20	100.00

It can be seen from the table 5.5 that, majority (60 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers were appointed on the basis of their qualifications and performance in the interview, whereas the proportion of such workers was low among the 'absentee' workers (27.50 per cent). A large majority (70 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers could get their job in the factory due to the help and influence of authorities in the factory, political leaders, friends and relatives. The data thus indicate that, the recruitment pattern does influence the regularity work behaviour; those appointed on the basis of assistance, and influence of the factory authorities, friends and relatives, tend to frequently remain absent and those appointed on the basis of merit tend to remain regular.

8) Length of employment experience -

The data on this aspect are presented in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Length of employment experience	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
Upto 9 years	1	2.50	1	5.00
10 to 19 years	-	-	-	-
20 and above years	39	97.50	19	95.00
Total	40	100.00	20	100.00

It can be clearly seen from the table 5.6 that, the data of the present study do not indicate any definite relationship between length of employment, experience and absentee behaviour. Majority (97.50 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers had employment experience between 10 to 19 years and with little variation the same can be observed in case of group of 'regular' workers (90 per cent had employment experience between 10 to 19 years.). However, regarding the relationship between length of service and absence, Durganand Sinha notes, "On the whole, workers who had put in fewer years of service had a higher record of absence".⁹

(B) FAMILY BACKGROUND

After having considered the relationship between absenteeism and various personal factors, it will be worthwhile to examine the relationship between absenteeism and some variables relating to various aspects of family background of the respondents.

1) Type of family-

The data on this aspect are presented in the table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF
FAMILY TO WHICH THEY BELONG

Nature of family	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Worker	Percentage to the total
Joint Family	14	35	9	45
Nuclear Family	26	65	11	55
Total	40	100	20	100

The table 5.7 shows that, majority (65 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers were having nuclear family background and remaining (35 per cent) had joint family background. Similarly majority (55 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers were having nuclear family background and remaining (45 per cent) had joint family background. Though, there is some difference the data do not indicate any significant relationship between family structure and absentee behaviour. Michael v.d. Bogaert and N.C. Das also note that the type of family to which the worker belonged- nuclear or joint was not significantly related to absenteeism for the sample as a whole.¹⁰

2) Size of the family -

The size of the family is considered in terms of the total number of family numbers. The data regarding the family size of the respondents is presented in the table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR FAMILY SIZE

Size of the family (No. of family members)	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers group	Percentage to the total	Absentee Workers group	Percentage to the total
Upto 7 members	31	77.50	15	75.00
8 or more members	9	22.50	5	25.00
Total	40	100.00	20	100.00

As the data presented in table 5.8 indicate, no definite relationship between absenteeism and size of the family was found in the present study.

3) Average monthly income-

The data regarding average monthly family income (drawn from all sources) are presented in the table 5.9 below.

Table 5.9
RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE AVERAGE
MONTHLY INCOME OF THEIR FAMILIES

Monthly family income (Rs.)	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
1501 - 2000	3	7.50	-	-
2001 - 2500	14	35.00	5	25.00
2501 - 3000	16	40.00	6	30.00
3001 - 3500	7	17.50	5	25.00
3501 - 4000	-	-	3	15.00
4001 and above	-	-	1	5.00
Total	40	100.00	20	100.00

It can be seen from the table 5.9 that, the data of the present study do not indicate any definite relationship between average monthly income of the respondents' families and absentee behaviour.

4) Subjective class Identification

The respondents were asked to rate their families by taking into account the socio-economic status of their families. The data on this aspect are presented in the table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY : RESPONDENTS
PERCEPTIONS

Status	No. of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
Upper Class	2	5	4	20
Middle Class	14	35	13	65
Lower Class	24	60	3	15
Total	40	100	20	100

The table 5.10 shows that, majority (60 per cent) of the respondents who identified themselves with the lower class belonged to the group of 'absentee' workers whereas majority (65 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers have identified themselves with the middle class. In fact the inference based upon their occupational status (that of factory worker) suggests that they belong to working class. Hence, it can be said that those who identify themselves with the middle class tend to show regularity in work behaviour.

(C) RURAL-URBAN BACKGROUND

The information was collected regarding respondents native places where they were born and brought up. The data revealed that, all the respondents were from rural areas.

Hence we are not in a position to find out any relationship between rural-urban background and absentee behaviour.

(D) CASTE

The distribution of respondents according to their caste is presented in the table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11

RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR CASTE

Castes	No.of Respondents			
	Absentee Workers	Percentage to the total	Regular Workers	Percentage to the total
Hindu-Maratha	29	72.50	20	100.00
B.C.	7	17.50	-	-
O.B.C.	4	10.00	-	-
Total	40	100.00	20	100.00

As the table 5.11 shows, majority (72.50 per cent) of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers were Marathas. While all the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers were Marathas. However, there were some respondents belonging to B.C.s (17.50 per cent) and O.B.C.s (10 per cent) in the group of 'absentee' workers. Thus on the basis of this data definite relationship between caste background and absentee behaviour can not be established.

(E) RELIGION

The data on this aspect revealed that, all the respondents belonging to both the groups of 'absentee' and 'regular' workers were Hindus; hence we are not in a position to find out any relationship between religion and absentee behaviour.

(F) INDEBTEDNESS

It has been noted that, an important contributor to absenteeism. It has been observed that many a time the two go together. A worker may be indebted for some obvious reasons (marriages of self and family members, sickness in the family, death in the family and so on and so forth) and may take loans from unscrupulous creditors at exorbitant rates of interest. And then the creditors may start threatening him. And he may be compelled to stay away from work for a few days (after pay day) to avoid these creditors. And because of his absence he may get less salary and may not be able to repay the loan. Thus he enters a vicious circle from which he cannot get out on his own.¹¹

The data of the present study on this aspect revealed that all the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers had taken loan for various domestic purposes, while 65 per cent of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers also had loan liabilities. The data thus tend to suggest that indebtedness may be one factor contributing to absentee behaviour but to it still needs to be investigated.

(G) RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR JOB

One's attitude towards his/her job is an important aspect of one's occupational life.

Scott defines the term 'attitude' in the following words:

"An orientation toward certain objects (including persons- others or oneself) or situations that is emotionally toned and relatively persistent..... An attitude involves a positive or negative evaluation and a readiness to respond to related objects or situation in a characteristics and predictable manner. A tendency to act in a consistent manner toward certain related objects and situations. This more operationlized definition is preferred by some writers on the grounds that attitudes can be inferred only from observed behaviour, even though the attitude precedes the behaviour. Most attitude studies, however, deal with verbal responses rather than observations of behaviour. It should be recognised, though that many behaviourists regard varbal response as a form of behaviour".¹²

Bhatia notes "Of all the variables that have been related to absenteeism, the most consistent results have occured with attitudinal predictors. Highly consistant results have occured in studies that related overall job satisfaction to absenteeism. In most studies overall job satisfaction has been found to be negatively related to absenteeism."¹³

Some questions were asked to the respondents of the present study in order to elicit their responses which indicate their general attitude towards their job. The data on this aspect are presented in the table 5.12 below.

Table 5.12

RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR JOB

Questions Asked	Response Categories				
	Absentee: Workers :	Total :	Regular: Workers:	Total :	
Do you like your present Job ?	"Yes"	30 (75.00)	40 (100.00)	17 (85.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	10 (25.00)		3 (15.00)	
Are you satisfied with your present job ?	"Yes"	28 (70.00)	40 (100.00)	19 (95.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	12 (30.00)		1 (5.00)	
Do you enjoy satisfaction derived from the work itself ?	"Yes"	18 (45.00)	40 (100.00)	19 (95.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	22 (55.00)		1 (5.00)	
Do you feel that your present work is prestigious ?	"Yes"	17 (42.50)	40 (100.00)	14 (70.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	23 (57.50)		6 (30.00)	
Do you feel that your work is challenging ?	"Yes"	19 (47.50)	40 (100.00)	13 (65.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	21 (52.50)		7 (35.00)	
Do you feel that your work is tiresome ?	"Yes"	36 (90.00)	40 (100.00)	2 (10.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	4 (10.00)		18 (90.00)	
If so required, would you like to work elsewhere ?	"Yes"	39 (97.50)	40 (100.00)	2 (10.00)	20 (100.00)
	"No"	1 (2.50)		18 (90.00)	

The table 5.12 shows that, majority of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers reportedly like their present job (75 per cent), are satisfied with their job (70 per cent) however, they do not enjoy satisfaction derived from the work itself (55 per cent), do not think that their present work is prestigious (57.50 per cent), challenging (52.50 per cent), utilises their full efficiency (77.50 per cent) and they feel that their work is tiresome (90 per cent), and perhaps therefore, if so required they would like to work elsewhere (97.50 per cent). Whereas, majority of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers like their present job (85 per cent), are satisfied with their job (95 per cent), enjoy satisfaction derived from the work itself (95 per cent), feel that their present work is prestigious (70 per cent), challenging (65 per cent), which fully utilises their efficiency (65 per cent) and they do not feel that their work is tiresome (90 per cent), and they would not like to work elsewhere (90 per cent). As the data reveal, the attitude of the majority of the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers can be described as negative. Whereas the attitude of the majority of the respondents belonging to the group of 'regular' workers can be described as positive. The personal observation of the researcher also indicated the same. The data of the present study thus indicate that workers negative attitude towards his job is a factor associated with absentee behaviour. However, a systematic study involving use of

attitude and job satisfaction scales is needed to establish the relation between the two. The negative attitude of the 'absentee' workers was also reflected during informal discussions with them. Some of the 'absentee' workers were engaged in some other gainful activities such as trading. When enquired about their absentee behaviour some of them argued that, income from factory job was not sufficient to meet the family requirements.

(H) THE CAUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR ABSENTEE BEHAVIOUR OF THE RESPONDENTS

An attempt was made in this study to find out some other causes responsible for absentee behaviour. A question was asked in this connection to the respondents belonging to the group of 'absentee' workers. The absentee workers reported various causes responsible for their absentee behaviour such as illness, agricultural activities, family responsibilities etc. However, the information on this aspect was also collected from other workers and Labour Officer of the factory. The information thus collected revealed some other important causes. The main causes included alcoholism attending religious ceremonies and fairs (Yatras) such as 'Modage' village Yatra, Yallamma Yatra at Soundatti village, attending funerals of near and distant relatives, indebtedness, enjoyment after pay-day, attending, entertainment programmes such as cinema, drama's video films etc. and lack of interest in the work. The researcher feels that conducting case studies of absentee workers of

'absentee' workers will be helpful for in-depth understanding of the problem of absenteeism.

(I) SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM

After having studied the problem of labour absenteeism in Daulat Shetkari Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd; Halkarni we would like to suggest following measures to reduce the absenteeism.

- 1) Provision of special awards/cash prizes for those who regularly attend their jobs.
- 2) Provision of accommodation to all the workers of the factory in factory quarters.
- 3) Provision of well equipped hospital in the premises of the factory.
- 4) Provision of treatment and counselling facilities in case of workers addicted to wine/alcohol.
- 5) To provide loan facilities for purchasing vehicles like Motor-cycle, Scotters etc. to the workers.
- 6) To implement "Workers' Education Scheme" in the factory.
- 7) Provision of recreation facilities for the workers.
- 8) Provision of all the "welfare facilities" for the workers.

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