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Socio-Economic Profile of Sugarcane Producing Farmers in Pandharpur Tahsil of Solapur District

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Abstract:

Sugarcane is one of the most important commercial crops in India and plays a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic structure of rural communities. This study examines the socio-economic profile of sugarcane producing farmers in the Pandharpur tahsil of Solapur district, Maharashtra. Sugarcane is a vital commercial crop in the district, significantly contributing to the local rural economy by generating income and employment. The research, utilizing primary data from a random selection of 100 farmers across 10 villages during the year 2024-25, aimed to detail the social and economic characteristics of these farmers.

Key findings reveal that a majority of the farmers have a primary or secondary level of education (Up to 7th Standard: 45%; 8th to 12th Standard: 41%) and belong to medium-sized families (6 to 10 members). Their main occupation is diversified, with 57% engaging in Farming and Animal Husbandry. Economically, over half (55%) fall into the medium annual income group (₹100,00,1 to ₹5,00,000), and a majority (56%) live in Pucca houses, reflecting improved living standards facilitated by sugarcane cultivation. Vehicle ownership is common, with 58% owning only a two-wheeler. The study underscores the important role of sugarcane and the four local sugar industries in driving socio-economic transformation in Pandharpur tahsil.

Keywords: Development, Farmers, Sugarcane and Economic

Introduction:

Sugarcane is one of the most important commercial crops in India and plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of rural communities. It serves as a major source of raw material for the sugar industry, which is among the largest agro-based industries in the country. The cultivation and processing of sugarcane not only contribute significantly to India's agricultural economy but also provide direct and indirect employment to millions of farmers and laborers. About 7 million sugarcane farmers and large number of agricultural labourers are involved in sugar cane cultivation and ancillary activities. Apart from this, the sugar industry provides employment to 5 lakh skilled and semi-skilled workers in rural areas in India. (NABARD, Mumbai, 2010)

Sugarcane is most important commercial crop of Solapur district as like India and tropical countries. Sugarcane occupies important place in the economy of the district. The district accounts 18.25% of the cane crushed in the state during 2020-21. Sugarcane is grown all over the district due to favorable climatic and soil condition except rainfall. The tahsil Pandharpur and Pandharpur occupies the largest area under sugarcane in Solapur district. Sugarcane plays a very important role in the rural economy of Solapur district. It provides income for farmer and employment to the workers sections of the society. (Dr. M.R. Nangare and Dr. Patil R.R, 2020)

Hence, the present study titled "Socio-Economic Profile of Sugarcane Producing Farmers in Pandharpur Tahsil of Solapur District" aims to examine the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of farmers engaged in sugarcane cultivation. It seeks to highlight the role of sugarcane farming in transforming rural society and to provide insights for planning future agricultural and rural development strategies in the region.

Study Region:

Pandharpur is a tahsil of Solapur district of Maharashtra. Geographical Extensions is 17°30'00"N to 18°05'00"N latitude & 75°05'00"E to 75°35'00"E Longitude, which cover 1303.6 Sq Km area. The Tahsil lies on the Deccan plateau (the basaltic trap region) and has relatively flat to undulating terrain.

The major river draining through is the Bhima River (locally sometimes called the Chandrabhaga). The temperature is high in summer season. The tahsil has hot and dry climate, with an average annual rainfall of 463.4 mm. The total population of Pandharpur is 402707 (2001 Census), out of this, 9605 are Scheduled Tribes (STs) and 62209 are Scheduled Caste (SC) & the sex ratio is 917. According to the Department of Tehsil Structure for Solapur District, Pandharpur Tahsil has 9 circles, 54 "sajjas" (sub-units) and covers 95 villages.

Objective:

The main objectives of this paper are as following.

1. To study the social profile of sugarcane producing farmer in Pandharpur tahsil of Solapur district.
2. To study the economic profile of sugarcane producing farmer in Pandharpur tahsil of Solapur district.

Database and Methodology:

The study was conducted in Pandharpur tahsil of Solapur district in Maharashtra state. For the purpose of the study, both primary and secondary information was collected from different sources. Data regarded to social parameters and economic parameters of sugarcane producing farmers are collected based on the Primary sources

Table No. 01

Socio-Economic Parameters of sugarcane producing farmer in Pandharpur tahsil

Sr. No.	Parameters	Sugarcane Framers (Percentage)
01	Education	
	Uneducated	05
	Up to 7 th Standard	45
	08 th to 12 th standard	41
	Graduate and Post Graduate	09
02	Size of Family	
	Small Size (up to 5 person)	31
	Medium Size (6 to 10 Person)	59
	Large Size (more than 10 Persons)	12
03	Occupations	
	Only Farming	27
	Farming and Animal Husbandry	57
	Farming, Animal Husbandry & other	16
04	Caste	
	Open	39
	OBC	22
	N.T.	31
05	Other	10
	Social Participation	
	No Membership	80
	Membership in one organization	11
	Membership in more than one organization	09

06	Income	
	Low Income (up to 1 lakh)	35
	Medium Income (100001 to 5 lakh)	55
	High Income (more than 5 lakh)	10

used for the year of 2024-25. For which special questionnaires were designed and field survey has been made to obtain primary data. During the field survey, 10 villages were selected randomly (Takli, Nematwadi, Magarwadi, Kanhapuri, Kasegaon, Chale, Gursale, Degaon, Isbavi and Tungar). 10 farmers were selected from each village. The secondary data like cropped area and geographical information collected through Agriculture Department, District statistical Department of Solapur and socio-economic abstract of Solapur district in 2020-21. The collected data were compiled, tabulated and analyzed to interpret the results. The descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were used for the investigation.

Result and Discussion:

Pandharpur tahsil is one of the leading sugarcane producing tahsil of Solapur district. Most of the farmers of Pandharpur tahsil have engaged in sugarcane farming activity due to Soil, Irrigational water and development of sugar industry. There are four sugarcane industries in Pandharpur tahsil, which play a significant role in transformation of socio-economic condition of farmer. Following table no. 01 shows that social and economic profile of sugarcane producing farmer in Pandharpur tahsil.

07	Type of House	
	Pucca House	56
	Semi Pucca House	29
	katcha House	15
08	Vehicle	
	No Vehicle	15
	Only Two wheeler	54
	Tow wheeler and Four Tractor	26
	Tow Wheeler, Tractor and Four Wheeler	05

Source: Fieldwork, December 2025

1. Education Level

Education plays an important role in improving agricultural productivity and awareness among farmers. Uneducated (5%) .A small portion of sugarcane farmers have no formal education. This group tends to rely on traditional knowledge and experiences rather than scientific methods. Up to 7th Standard (45%). Nearly half of the farmers have primary-level education. This group can read and write, but may have limited exposure to modern farming practices. 8th to 12th Standard (41%). A large segment of farmers has completed secondary education, making them more adaptable to new agricultural technologies and government schemes. Graduate and Post Graduate (9%). A minor but significant group; their higher education enables better record-keeping, farm management, and decision-making.

2. Size of Family

Family size affects labor availability and economic responsibilities in farming households. The above table indicated that majority of the sugarcane farmers belonged to the middle-sized families' i.e. 6 to 10 members (63%), while 27 per cent of them belonged to small sized families having up to 5 members and only 12 per cent of the sugarcane farmers belonged to large sized families having more than 10 members. Such households have high dependency ratios but can handle large-scale agricultural work collectively.

3. Occupation

The main and subsidiary occupations reveal the level of diversification among farmers. The occupation of a person is an important indicator to determine the economic status of the person in the society. The table no. 01 indicates that most of the sugarcane producing farmer (57%) are doing farming and animal husbandry occupations. Only Farming (27%) A small proportion depends solely on sugarcane cultivation as their livelihood. The 16 percent sugarcane producing farmer doing farming, Animal Husbandry & Other. These farmers also engage in trade, labor, or service sectors, indicating economic diversification and better stability.

Categories: -

Table no. 01 shows that, 39 per cent of the sugarcane producing farmers are belonged from open categories, mostly dominated by Maratha caste. Nomadic tribe (N.T.) has 31 percent,

followed by 20 percent has from other backward class (OBC), whereas other castes like S.C, S.T. and S.B.C. have only 10 percent from all respondent of study region.

Social Participation

This parameter measures farmers' involvement in cooperative or community organizations. It is clear from the table no. 01, more than 80 % of the respondent had no membership in any organization. A vast majority are not part of any organization, limiting their exposure to collective decision-making and institutional support, followed by 11 per cent had membership in one organization and very little i.e. 09 per cent of sugarcane producing farmers had membership in more than one organization. These farmers are socially active and likely to benefit from multiple development schemes. It is clear from above discussion, only 20 percent sugarcane production farmers want to do something for our Society.

Income

Income level indicates the economic condition and standard of living of the farmers. Economic status reveals that more than fifty five percent (55 %) of the sugarcane producing farmers belonged to medium level of annual income group (100001 to 500000). The majority fall here, earning stable but moderate incomes from sugarcane and allied activities, whereas slightly more than one-third (35 %) are from low level of income (up to 100000 Rupees). There are only 10 percent farmers having their income more than 500000 rupees. Sugarcane crop has valuable hale to increase annual income of respondent farmer in Pandharpur tahsil.

Type of House

Housing condition is an important indicator of living standards. The table no. 01 indicates that most of the sugarcane producing farmers lives in pucca house (56%). Most farmers live in well-constructed permanent houses, showing improved economic conditions. Out of the total sugarcane producing farmer 29 percent farmers live in semi pucca house and only 15 percent farmer live in katcha house. Only a few farmers live in temporary structures, showing economic challenges.

Vehicle

The Vehicle ownership reflects mobility, farm mechanization, and financial status. Motor

vehicle is one of the most significant parameters of economic status of a person. It is clear from the table no. 01 around 54 % of the sugarcane producing farmers have only two-wheeler vehicle, whereas 26 percent farmers have tow wheeler and Tractor. Only 5 percent farmer has two-wheeler, Tractor and four-wheeler vehicles. This group has economically well-off farmers with high mechanization and better connectivity. There are 15 percent sugarcane producing farmer have no any vehicle. A small group without personal transportation means.

Conclusion and suggestion:

The study highlights that sugarcane cultivation significantly contributes to the socio-economic development of farmers in Pandharpur Tahsil of Solapur District. A significant majority of farmers (86%) have formal education up to the 7th standard (45%), making them adaptable to new agricultural technologies. The dominant family structure is the medium size (6-10 persons) at 63%, which can collectively handle large-scale agricultural work. Most farmers (57%) have a diversified livelihood through Farming and Animal Husbandry, providing better economic stability. In term of Standard of Living, Pucca houses are the most common dwelling type (56%), demonstrating improved economic conditions, while only 15% live in *katcha* houses. Only 27% rely solely on farming, which enhance their livelihood security. Nevertheless, low levels of higher education and social participation reflect areas needing policy intervention. Strengthening educational facilities, promoting cooperative participation, and diversifying income sources could further improve the socio-economic profile of sugarcane farmers. The empirical results suggest that, there is positive impact of sugarcane farming on socio-economic development of sugarcane producing farmer and also large scope for further improvement in educational and social participation status, which ultimately lead to agriculture development of study region. In essence, these measures aim to improve education, income, water efficiency, and cooperative strength, fostering a sustainable and equitable socio-economic development of sugarcane farmers in Pandharpur Tahsil.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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