

An Assessment of Socio-Economic Causes of Commuting of Constructional Workers: A Case Study of Moradabad City

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to assess the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of constructional workers who commute to Moradabad city. The main focus of the study has been on investigating the causes which derive the constructional workers to commute to city. For accomplishment this objective, a field survey has been conducted in Moradabad city on daily labour markets and the major constructional sites to collect the data by using a well-structured questionnaire in month of April-May, 2017 by following the simple random sampling method. The 25% constructional workers consisting 627 respondents were sampled from each daily labor markets of Moradabad city. The data obtained through the survey has been analysed by simple percentage and average method. Overall analysis reveals that most of workers are either small farmers or farm labourer and most of them were compelled to commute to city due to their declining size of landholding, and increasing landlessness which results in losing the potential to sustain their livelihoods. Besides irregularity of work, seasonal and arduous nature of work were also other significant factors responsible for commuting. The study also suggests pertinent suggestions to reduce the rate of commuting of daily wage earners by making them economically sound and socially sustained in their place of domicile.

KEYWORDS: *Commuting, Constructional Workers, Socio-Economic Causes, Moradabad City*

INTRODUCTION

India is moving ahead on the fast lane of economic development making sustainable progress towards a developed economy over recent decades, yet the pace of development has not been even rather it is unevenly distributed among the regions as well as among the various social groups of country. The living condition of deprived and impoverished sections of the society particularly belonging to rural area is more pathetic where mechanization in agriculture, heavy stress of growing population and irregularity of work on landholding has diminished demand of agricultural labor and thus contributed in declining the employment opportunities. Consequently, being unable to satisfy the basic necessities of their dear ones, the small, marginal and daily wage labourers start moving towards cities in order to seek the work where the development related projects in cities like constructions of buildings, bridges, quadrilateral projects of roads, national and state highways, manufacturing industries, etc. demand human labour at cheap cost. But due to high cost land and unaffordable housing, they do not shift their residence rather retain the same, thus they become the part of daily circulation between the place of residence and place of work. This has given rise to emergence of daily journey to work known as commuting which has been accelerating over the time with the transformations in socio-economic structure and advancement in industrialization, urbanization, mechanization and transportation.

In this regard, the presents study makes an attempt to analyse the causes which drive the workforce to commute for doing the constructional work. The study on the factors of commuting of constructional workers is very significant from various points of views such as construction is a large sector which provides the largest opportunities after agriculture in which about 31 million working population of nation is engaged. For most of these workers, the construction industry is their "principal" source of employment. India is the ninth- largest construction market, with a share of 3.3 percent in the global construction market and is set to become the third-largest construction market by 2020 (Global Construction 2013, 2020). The sector is extremely diverse. While a sizeable part of the construction activity is very small scale, and is in the unorganized sector, larger scale construction activity is organized by firms in the private and public sector. Most of the construction activity is organized in sites in the form of projects (Srivastava, R., & Sutradhar, R., 2016).

The workers engaged in construction works are socially and economically backward and so that they are unable to organize themselves in pursuit of their common interest. This is because of certain constraints like casual nature of employment, ignorance, illiteracy, lack of mobility, poverty, small scattered size of establishment and lack of co-operation among the workers. Consequently, construction

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workers face a lot of problems such as lack of work security, low wage, more hours of work, and lack of social and medical welfare facilities. Generally, construction workers face financial problems, health problems, diseases, mishaps and even loss of life. Moreover, lack of social welfare measures and social security and medical benefits affect the construction workers (Prasanna, p. and Bhardwaj, A., 2016). Their condition is getting more pathetic when they have the residential and working locations separately.

As they just to get a job not only cover a distance between the place of residence and place of workers but also, they invest a lot of their time and money in their daily travel to work. Thus, it takes a heavy toll on their physical and psychological health well-being. The daily wage workers are least able to improve their socio-economic condition after spending a lot of money in transportation but on account of various socio-economic causes in their locality they are compelled to commuter on regular basis. Therefore, it becomes imperative to find out the reasons of commuting of manual job workers responsible so that some remedial measures may be suggested to overcome various socio-economic problems.

Review of Literature

Rashidian and Pourrostaum (2016) have reviewed the literature regarding the causes and consequences of stress among the constructional workers from 2000 to onwards in which they have found that work overload, job security, poor working environment, and inadequate salary are the most important causes that lead to job stress among the constructional workers. In addition, the findings show that stress is one of the root causes of low efficiency of construction sites workers. Moreover, workers have more stress at home than at working sites and all these factors exert the negative impact on their health and efficiency at work environment.

Solanki and Zankharia (2015) have studied the socio-economic condition of migrant construction workers in Surat city of Gujarat. The analysis of the study reveals that most of the constructional workers have migrated from few states such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. The findings also indicate towards the miserable socio-economic condition of constructional workers in Surat city.

Poongodi (2012) has conducted a study on the socio-economic condition of female workers in Tiruchilapalli district of Tamil Nadu. The finding discloses that most of female workers are unskilled working on very low wages. They also face various problems such as uncertainty of getting work, wage discrimination insecurity, etc. There has also been found the absent of implementation of labours' security act.

Dilip Kumar (2013) have raised some inimitable issues of constructional workers by conducting the study in Pune city of Maharashtra on socio-economic status of constructional workers. The overall result indicates very deplorable condition of workers in terms of their wages, working hours, housing, basic amenities and facilities, health and medical facilities availed by them.

Rajand Singh (2017) assessed the demographic and socio-economic profile of the workers engaged in construction work in Varanasi City, India which has been based on primary data collected from the targeted population using multi-stage convenience sampling method. It was found that more than half of the workers were from the age group of 20–35 and most of them belonged to local SC or OBC category. The average household size of labourers was found to be 6.92 per cent, which was more than the national average. More than 86 per cent of the workers in the city do not have a permanent house to live in. The monthly income of the labourers had been estimated only Rs. 10278. This paper also recommends an urgent need to pay attention on government policies to improve the overall socio-economic and working conditions of the construction workers.

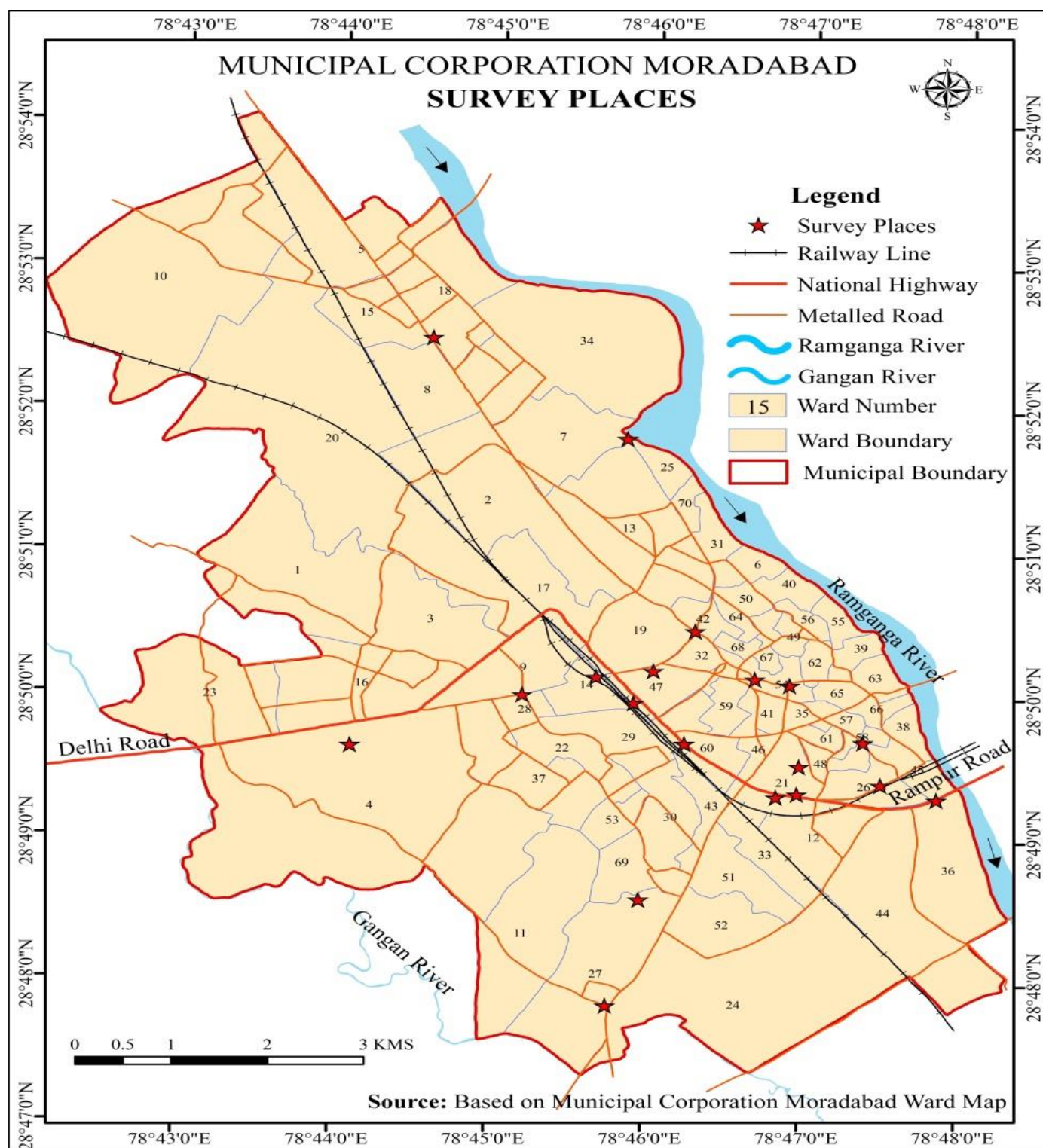
Sahu et al (2018) made an attempt to examine the socio-economic status of construction workers in India, current scenario, and the problems and challenges faced by construction workers in India as well as Odisha by using primary and secondary sources of data. The study exposes that these construction workers are predominantly young people who migrate due to poverty, face poor living and working conditions and lack of education and skills, they lack proper identity and representation. They, thus, remain excluded from public services, protection and opportunities for advancement in a growing economy.

Aims & Objectives

- To assess the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of commuting constructional workers.
- To find out the driving forces of commuting of constructional workers to Moradabad city.

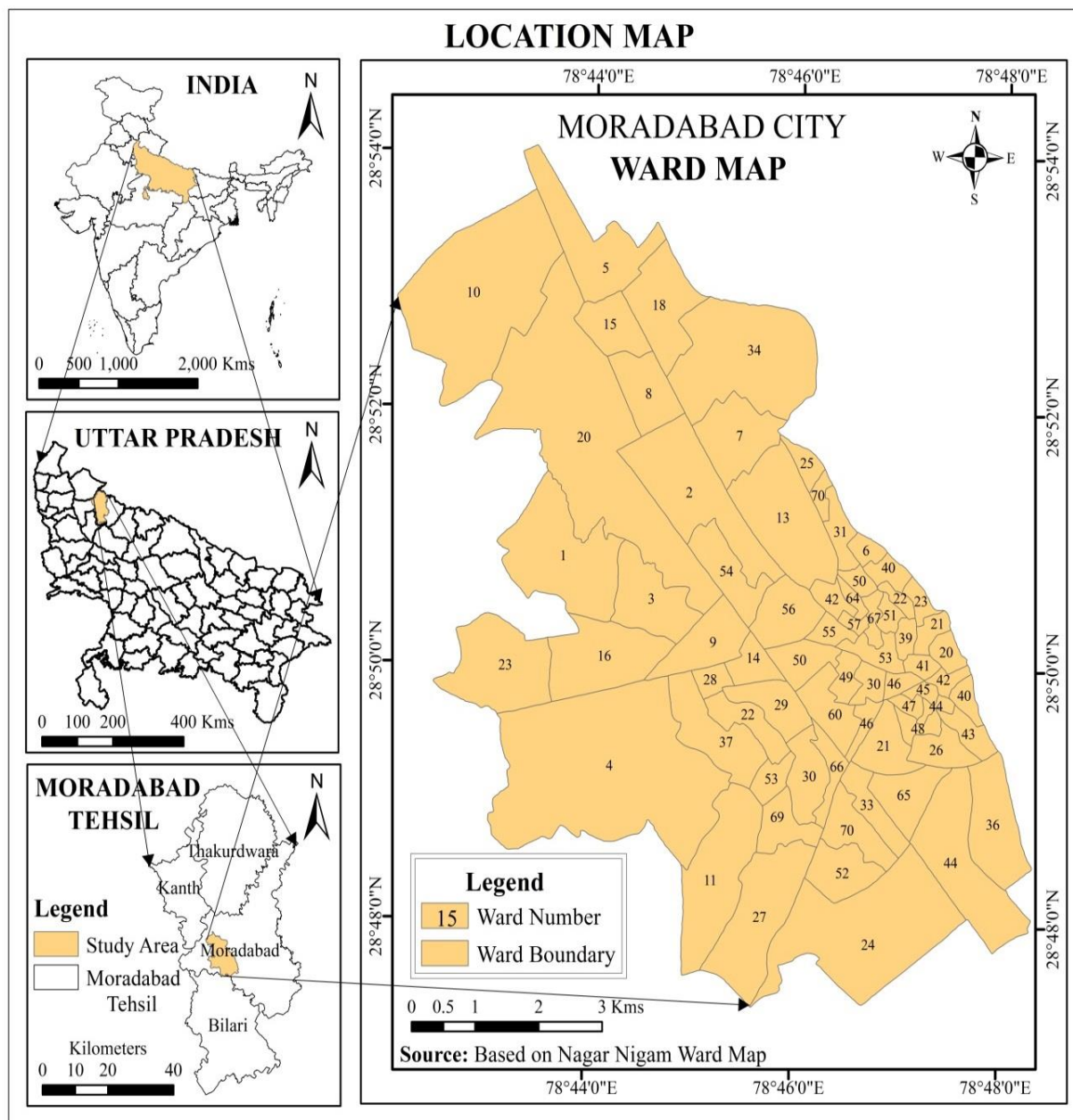
Data base & Methodology

The present study is entirely based on primary sources of data generated through comprehensive field survey conducted in Moradabad city during the months of April and May, 2017. The data has been collected through the direct interview method to the respondents by using the well-structured questionnaires pertaining the information about the demographic, socio-economic characteristics of commuters, causes of their commuting and the distance covered by them. Since the commuters' residence are located out of their administrative boundary of working place in Moradabad city, an in-commuter has been taken as the a commuters household which is taken as smallest unit of data collection while the municipal boundary of Moradabad city has been considered as administrative unit for the collection of data. The survey has been held on various daily labour markets and construction sites of commuters. Prior to field survey, a pilot survey has been held in Moradabad city at the places of commuters' arrival in order to identify and to know number of commuters constructional workers. On the basis of estimation made during the pilot survey, it was planned to select 30% commuters of all in-commuters. Finally, the twenty five percent (25%) of total commuters have been sampled from each working site of city on the basis of simple random sampling method. Thus the survey is consisted of 627 individual commuters while the total surveyed commuters households are comprised of 606.



Study Area

Moradabad city has been selected for the present study which lies in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. Moradabad has been servicing as an industrial, commerce, educational and administrative city since a long of period for employment attraction as well as for the movement for various purposes. Above of all, it has immense popularity because of the locations of brass manufacturing industries all over the world and consequently widely known as Brass city or Peetal Nagari. The geographical location of city lies between the parallel of $28^{\circ} 16'$ to $28^{\circ} 21'$ north latitude and meridians of $78^{\circ} 46'$ to 79° east longitude. It is situated at a distance of 167 km from the national capital New Delhi on the banks of the Rāmgangā river, a tributary of Ganga river passing to the north-east of the city. The city occupies an area of 75 sq. km. Administratively, Moradabad City has been given the status of class first town by clearing all the criteria. With respect of its demographic characteristic, Moradabad city has a population of 887871 inhabitants in which male and female constitute 464580 and 423290 respectively. The total literacy rate is 68.75% whereas the male and female literacy is 72.22 percent and 64.95 percent respectively.



The study area, as mentioned in above discussion enjoys the distinction of having various activities as culture, education, commerce, industry and above all it provides facilities for the movement of people. Besides this, being an industrial city of western Uttar Pradesh, it provides the significant opportunities of employment and thus helping in better economic status for poor rural people. Consequently, the city has attracted the heavy influx of people from its nearby surrounding areas be it rural or urban for various purposes such as business, Services, work, recreation, education, shopping, begging, etc. Moreover, its well-developed road and railways connectivity and accessibility of modes of transportation have enabled the people living in its surrounding towns and villages to move to the city for various purposes and return back to home on daily basis. All these factors cumulatively motivated to the circular movements to or from the city and this type of movement known as commuting is emerging rapidly in the city on account these factors leaving a number of issues to be studied by researchers, demographers, policy makers, development schemes planer. Besides, Moradabad city has been included in list of smart city in 2015. As per policies and programmes built for making various progress work encompassing the building of hospitals, colleges, fly over, roads etc. are under progress in city. Therefore, Moradabad city has been rightly selected to analyse the socio-economic status of commuters. In this research work an attempt to examine the cause and consequences of commuting and the problems faced by commuter in Moradabad city and the measures to overcome those problems has been made.

Result & Discussion

Profile of the Respondents:

The assessment of the profile of constructional workers exposes the facts that the commuting constructional workers in the city were dominantly male as out of total surveyed respondents 98.19 percent were males whereas the females constituted only 1.81 percent. As regard of age-structure, it has been observed from the data that more than forty percent of the respondents belonged to age-groups 30-44 whereas the workers who belong to 15-29 age-groups comprised of about 30 percent. The percentage ratio of the workers in age-groups 45-59 and above of 60 was 20.73 and 5.60 percent respectively. Thus, it indicates that the phenomenon of commuting is dominated by working age commuters. The workers aged below 15 years accounted the lowest percentage which was only 1.44 percent.

An examination of literacy level of the respondent discloses the facts that the ratio of literate workers was much higher than the illiterates and corresponding percentages were 61.05 percent and 38.95 percent respectively. As respect of marital-status, the data exhibits that about fourth-fifth of constructional were married, about 18 percent unmarried while widower accounted for 3.2 percent.

An analysis of settlement status on place of origin reveals that about 77 percent of constructional workers were commuting from rural areas whereas the workers commuting from urban areas shared nearly 22 percent. This finding exhibits the general fact that a huge mass of the poor, labour and small farmers being unable to sustain their livelihood in rural areas on account of declining size of landholding, mechanization and liberalization are resulting in unemployment, are compelled to move towards the prosperous urban areas.

Table-1 Socio-Economic Profile of Commuting Constructional workers in Moradabad City, 2017

Sex-Composition	Percentage
Male	98.19
Female	01.81
Age-groups	
Below 15	1.44
15-29	29.55
30-44	42.68
45-59	20.73
60 and above	05.60
Total	100.00
Literacy Level	
Illiterate	38.95
Literate	61.05
Total	100.00
Marital Status	
Married	79.18
Unmarried	17.62
Widower	03.2
Total	100.00
Settlement Status	
Rural	77.19
Urban	22.81
Total	100.00

Sources: The calculation is based on primary survey by author.

Socio-Economic Causes of Commuting: The driving forces of commuting of constructional workers examined on the basis of age-groups, settlement status, and distance have been discussed in detail.

The data regarding the causes of commuting of constructional workers has been given in table-1. An examination of the data reveals that the highest proportion of commuters has been compelled to commute to city by small size of landholding which shared about 24 percent. The next largest proportion of commuters has been assessed being forced for commuting by unemployment followed by landlessness, irregular work, low wages and arduous nature of work where they respectively constituted 16.82 percent, 15.6 percent and 13.66 percent, 7.09 percent and 6.58 percent. The workers who were inspired to commute by seasonal nature of work constituted about 5.39 percent and pushed by poverty and getting more income they accounted for 5.36 percent and 3.17 percent respectively whereas the natural calamities like floods causing the great havoc to their crops amounted about one percent. The remaining has been witnessed commuting to city for other causes such as shyness of work, family conflicts regarding the farm landholding or other related household business etc.

Table-2 Percentage Distribution of Causes of Commuting in Moradabad City, 2017

Causes	Percentage
Landlessness	13.66
Small size of landholding	23.9
Low wages	7.09
Irregular work	15.6
Seasonal nature of work	5.39
Unemployment	16.82
Arduous nature of work	6.58
Natural calamities	0.97
Poverty	5.36
To get more income	3.17
Others (Shyness of the work)	1.46
All	100.00

Source: Calculation is based on sample survey by author.

The data regarding the determinants of commuting of the constructional workers categorized on the basis of their age-composition has been provided in table-3 which clearly shows that workers pushed out by landlessness to commute constituted the largest share in age-group 60 and above and the lowest in age-groups 15-29 years where they respectively comprised of nearly 34.78 percent and 7.43 percent, whereas, the maximum share of commuters (27 percent) who were forced to commute by their small size of landholding has been the observed in age-group 45-59 and except age-groups of 60 and above and it has been found substantially decreasing with declining ages of commuters. The condition is just opposite in causes of low wages and unemployment where the percentage share of commuters have been witnessed significantly decreasing with the increase in their ages as the highest of commuters pushed out by these reasons were recorded in age-groups 15-29 when they comprised 7.48 percent and 25.61 percent respectively. The lowest percentages of respondents commuting for these reasons have been recorded in age-group of 60 and above and their corresponding figures are 4.34 percent and 4.35 percent. In addition, the percentage of commuters who were derived to commute by poverty and arduous nature of work has been noted highest in juvenile age-group i.e. age-group of below 15 and their proportion has been the recorded to be 50 percent and 16.67 percent respectively. Moreover, nature of work as a cause of commuting has been found to be the highest in age-group 30-44.

Table-3 Percentage Distribution of Causes of Commuting of Constructional Workers by their Age-Composition, 2017

Causes	Age-Groups					
	Below 15	15-29	30-44	45-59	60 and above	All
Landlessness	-	7.43	14.28	16.47	34.78	13.66
Small size of landholding	-	20.66	26.28	27.05	17.39	23.9
Low wages	-	7.48	7.47	7.05	4.34	7.09
Irregular work	-	15.7	16.01	17.64	8.69	15.6
Seasonal nature of work	-	3.3	7.42	4.7	4.39	5.39
Unemployment	-	25.61	14.85	12.94	4.35	16.82
Arduous nature of work	16.67	9.09	7.42	1.18	4.34	6.58
Natural calamities	-	1.65	1.14	-	-	0.97
Poverty	50.00	4.13	2.28	8.23	13.04	5.36
Shyness of the work	-	4.95	2.85	2.39	-	3.17
Others	33.33	-	-	2.35	8.69	1.46
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculation is based on sample survey by author.

The percentage distribution of commuters by socio-economic determinants of commuter based on their settlement status has been given in table-4. An analysis of the data exposes the fact that the causes of commuting which derive the rural dwellers to commute differ from those of responsible for commuting of urban commuters as the small size of landholding (32.45 percent) has been the most dominant push factor among the rural workers followed by landlessness (18.54 percent), unemployment (12.58 percent), irregular work (9.27 percent), seasonal nature of work (6.95 percent), arduous nature of work (4.96 percent), low wages (4.64 percent) and poverty (4.63 percent). On the other hand, among the urban commuters, lack of regular work has the highest share as a reason of commuting of urban commuters arrived in Moradabad city which is 28.7 percent. The second most factor pushing the urban natives for commuting is the lack of employment opportunities which accounts for 28.7 percent followed by low wages (13.88 percent), arduous nature of work (11.11 percent), poverty (7.4 percent), shyness of work (2.77 percent) and others (2.77 percent).

With regard of comparative assessment of the causes of rural and urban commuters, it has been examined that landlessness and small size of landholding as the two major determinants of commuting have been noticed only among the rural commuter while not a single urban commuter has been recorded commuting to city forced by these important factors. Besides, urban commuters who were found commuting due to low wages they attain at their place of work constituted more than three times larger than the rural commuters.

Table-4 Percentage Distribution of the Causes of Commuting based on settlement Status, 2017

Causes	Settlement Status		
	Rural	Urban	All
Landlessness	18.54	-	13.66
Small size of landholding	32.45	-	23.9
Low wages	4.64	13.88	7.09
Irregular work	9.27	33.33	15.6
Seasonal nature of work	6.95	0.96	5.39
Unemployment	12.58	28.7	16.82
Arduous nature of work	4.96	11.11	6.58
Natural calamities	1.32	-	0.97
Poverty	4.63	7.4	5.36
Shyness of the work	3.31	2.77	3.17
Others	1.35	1.85	1.46
All	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculation is based on sample survey by author.

Table-5 presents the data about the percentage distribution of determinants of commuting based on distance category. It can be seen from the data that the causes of commuting vary significantly with variations in the length of commuting distance between place of work and place of residence. The factors like landlessness, low wages, and seasonal nature of work, poverty and shyness of the work have motivated the workers to commute to city from shorter distance whereas the determinants such as small size of landholding, irregular work, unemployment, and arduous nature of work pushed out the workers to commute from longer distance. Within distance of 10kms the landlessness had been the most dominant factor while in distance 11-25 kms, and 26-50 kms, small size of landholding had played the most important role. Above distance of 50 kms, the largest contribution in commuting of constructional workers had been of lack of employment.

A detailed analysis of the table-5 highlights the facts that landlessness as the reason of commuting is the most dominant cause within distance 10 kms where it contributed 20.23 percent of all commuter who compelled to commute due to same reason it substantially started to decline with the increase in distance, thus it exhibits the inverse relationship. Contrary to it, the percentage of commuters who were forced to commute due to small size of landholding has been witnessed notably increasing with the increase in distance and the largest share of commuters has been recorded in distance category of 26-50 kms by accounting for 27.34 percent, though after 50 kms, their volume became the lowest being 16.67 percent. The constructional workers who were commuting under the considerations of low wages were observed constantly declining with the increase in their distance to travel and their percentage share in distance within 10 kms, 11-25 kms, 26-50 kms and above 50 kms has been registered 8.33 percent, 7.77 percent, 6.25 percent and not a single commuter after the distance of 50 kms. The same trend has been experienced among the persons who were commuting for the reasons of seasonal nature of work where and their corresponding figures for distance of within 10 kms, 11-25 kms, and 26-50 kms are 7.14 percent, 6.11 percent, and about 4 percent. Likewise, the commuters forced by abject poverty have been found inversely related to distance between their residence and work places. It has been 8.36 in distance within 10 kms, 6.11 percent in 11-25 kms of distance and 3.12 percent in 26-50 kms of distance. While the motivations of commuting like irregular work and unemployment have experienced the fluctuating trends. The lack of employment opportunities forced the workforce for commuting from a longer distance as it constituted the largest 33.33 percent in distance category of above 50 kms.

Table-5 Percentage Distribution of Causes of Commuting on the basis of Distance Category, 2017

Causes	Distance (in Kilometers)				
	Within 10	11-25	26-50	above 50	All
Landlessness	20.23	14.44	9.37	5.56	13.66
Small size of landholding	19.05	24.44	27.34	16.67	23.9
Low wages	8.33	7.77	6.25	-	7.09
Irregular work	15.47	13.88	18.75	11.11	15.6
Seasonal nature of work	7.14	6.11	3.9	-	5.39
Unemployment	11.9	17.79	16.44	33.33	16.82
Arduous nature of work	3.57	4.47	9.37	22.22	6.58
Natural calamities	-	1.11	1.56	-	0.97
Poverty	8.36	6.11	3.12	-	5.36
Shyness of the work	4.76	3.33	2.34	-	3.17
Others (familial conflicts)	1.19	0.55	1.56	11.11	1.46
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculation is based on primary survey by author.

Major Findings

The findings drawn from above discussion are of considerable importance and enable to generalize some findings which have been discussed as follows:

- The most common profile of commuter constructional workers is that they come from a poor family, possessing either very small size of landholding or no land, being a main earning hand of household, is adult, married literate but less educated and do not know and technical know-how or skill.
- The greatest share of rural commuters has been commuting because of small size of landholding, landlessness, irregular work where they combinely constituted 57.94 percent while among the urban commuters by accounting for 75.91 percent has been recorded to be the larger than the rural commuters who were compelled to commute on account of low wages, irregular work and unemployment.
- Most of constructional workers were forced for commuting towards the city due to constant declining size of landholding in rural areas enabling the small

farmers and marginal farmers to earn insufficient amount to satisfy the basic necessities of their families. Commuters from urban areas were compelled to commute and thus engaged in construction by unavailability of regular work, increasing level of unemployment and low wages at their place of origin.

- Majority of commuters of juvenile age-group (below 15 years) have commuted because of arduous nature of work and poverty whereas the people belonging to adult age-group (15-59) had been more than that of both the juvenile and senile age-groups to commute on account of irregular work, seasonal nature of work and unemployment.
- The volume of commuters forced to commute by the landlessness, low wages, poverty and shyness of the work has been seen decreasing sufficiently with the increase in distance while the commuting stimulated by the factors like lack of employment opportunities and arduous nature of work continue to increase considerably with the increase in commuting distance.

Conclusions

Since commuting is an economic phenomenon, hence the economic factors of commuting have emerged as the dominant factors which contributes to limited job opportunities in rural where the declining size of landholding and pressure of population on agriculture resulting in unemployment is considerably causing the movement of rural workforce towards cities while irregular work and work available at low wages forcing the urban laborers to commute to the cities are the major reasons of urban commuters. It may also be concluded if the responsible causes of commuting are not mitigated, the rate of commuting Moradabad city presently would continue to increase with large extent, it may exert tremendous risk for the environmental and socio-economic structure of Moradabad city, and therefore there is urgent need to moderate the volume of commuters of Moradabad city. However, the complete check of the flow of commuters towards the Moradabad city is not rationally assumed as commuting is essential for the economic development of the city by supplying the cheap, skilled and efficient labour demanded by the industrialized centers, thus it contribute as a whole to the entire economic growth of country

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