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An Analysis of the Social and Economic Status of Labours of Daily Commute from Mandya Taluk to Bangalore

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Abstract:

This study analyzes the social and economic conditions of daily commuting labourers from Mandya Taluk to Bangalore. Using primary and secondary data, it examines their income, working conditions, living standards, and access to basic services. The findings show that most workers are engaged in low-paid, insecure informal jobs and face challenges such as long travel hours, high transportation costs, and limited access to social security and healthcare. The study emphasizes the need for policy interventions to improve wages, transport facilities, and welfare support to enhance their overall quality of life.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, Daily commuting labours, Bengaluru, Mandya

Introduction

The phenomenon of daily labour commuting between Mandya and Bangalore highlights a growing trend of intercity labour mobility that is largely driven by socio-economic disparities between rural and urban regions. Mandya, a predominantly agrarian district in Karnataka, offers limited industrial growth and very few opportunities for stable, formal employment. As a result, many residents are compelled to travel daily in search of better livelihood opportunities in Bangalore, a major

metropolitan city widely known as India's Silicon Valley. Bangalore attracts these workers by providing comparatively higher wages and a wide range of employment options, especially in construction work, domestic services, factory-related labour, and other labour-intensive sectors. However, the reality of this daily commute is extremely challenging. Labourers often travel approximately 100 kilometres each way, which leads to severe physical fatigue, mental stress, rising transportation expenses, and a significant reduction in

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their overall quality of life. Long hours spent commuting also limit their ability to spend quality time with their families and participate in community and social activities. Despite these difficulties, many workers continue this routine in the hope of achieving better economic security and upward social mobility.

This study aims to analyse in detail the social and economic status of these daily commuting labourers by focusing on their income levels, nature of employment, working conditions, access to healthcare, education, housing, and social security services, as well as the overall impact of long-distance travel on their physical and psychological well-being. The research intends to highlight not only the hardships faced by these workers but also their aspirations and coping strategies. Through this analysis, the study seeks to provide meaningful and actionable insights for policymakers, planners, and other stakeholders to address the root causes of labour migration and to design effective interventions for improving the living and working conditions of daily commuters.

Furthermore, the study addresses critical research questions related to the socio-economic profiles of these labourers, the transportation and health challenges they face, the impact of daily commuting on their family life and social integration, and the possible measures that can be taken to enhance their quality of life and reduce the necessity for long-distance commuting. The study is significant as it sheds light on deep-rooted

socio-economic inequalities within the region and offers a conceptual framework for understanding intercity labour mobility and its broader implications for sustainable development in Karnataka.

Daily labour commuting refers to the regular and routine travel undertaken by individuals, particularly low-income workers, from one place of residence (Mandya) to a workplace located in another region (Bangalore) in order to earn a livelihood. This phenomenon arises due to regional economic imbalances, where rural areas provide limited employment opportunities, while urban centres offer higher wages and more diversified job options.

Labour migration, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), refers to the movement of people from one geographical area to another primarily for the purpose of employment, influenced by economic, social, and sometimes political factors. Commuting refers to the regular movement between one's place of residence and place of work, usually carried out on a daily basis, and in this context, it specifically refers to the approximately 100-kilometre journey undertaken by labourers travelling from Mandya to Bangalore. Socio-economic status (SES) is a composite measure that includes factors such as income, education, occupation, and standard of living, and it determines the social positioning of individuals or groups within a society.

Literature Reviews

The study of labour migration and daily commuting in India has been extensively documented in various contexts, reflecting socio-economic disparities, urbanization, and regional labour market dynamics. Below are key findings from Indian literature related to labour migration, daily commuting, and intercity mobility:

Kundu and Sarangi (2007) Examined internal migration patterns in India, noting that rural-to-urban migration is largely driven by economic disparities and limited employment opportunities in rural areas. The study highlights the challenges faced by migrants, including inadequate housing, poor working conditions, and lack of social security. Deshingkar and Akter (2009) Focused on seasonal and circular migration in India, emphasizing that a significant proportion of migrants engage in temporary jobs in urban centers. These migrants often face precarious conditions and limited access to social welfare schemes. Sharma (2011) Investigated the impact of migration on the economic status of labourers and their families, finding that while migration improves income levels, it often disrupts family structures and social ties.

Datta (2012) Highlighted the impact of rapid urbanization on intercity commuting, particularly in states like Karnataka. The study pointed out the strain on transportation systems and the physical toll on labourers who commute

daily to urban centers for work. Bhat and Sreedharan (2013) Analyzed the commuting patterns of workers in Bangalore and its satellite towns. They found that workers from nearby districts like Mandya and Tumkur commute to Bangalore due to the concentration of industries and service-sector jobs. Ravi and Roy (2014) Discussed the emergence of Bangalore as a hub for informal labour, attracting workers from nearby rural areas. The study noted that these workers often face long commutes, poor working conditions, and lack of social mobility despite higher wages.

Mitra and Mehta (2017) Explored the socio-economic outcomes of commuting for low-income labourers in India. The study found that while commuting enables access to better-paying jobs, it often leads to health issues, reduced family time, and limited opportunities for personal development. Mukherjee (2019) Examined the gendered dimensions of labour commuting in India, highlighting that women labourers face additional challenges, such as safety concerns during travel and balancing work with household responsibilities. Kumar and Nair (2021) Analyzed intercity commuting patterns in Karnataka, with a focus on the Mandya-Bangalore corridor. The study revealed that high transportation costs, time constraints, and lack of proper infrastructure are significant barriers for daily labourers.

The NITI Aayog (2017) reported on emerging urban-rural migration trends

and stressed the importance of promoting regional employment generation in semi-urban and rural areas to reduce excessive dependence on metropolitan centres. Similarly, Indian Railways (2020) emphasized the critical role of transportation infrastructure in facilitating efficient daily commuting and recommended the strengthening of public transport systems to better support labour mobility. Furthermore, the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (2021) addressed the growing challenges of urban commuting in Bangalore and proposed measures to enhance bus connectivity to satellite towns, including Mandya, in order to improve accessibility, reduce travel time, and support the socio-economic well-being of daily commuting workers.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this study on the social and economic status of labourers commuting daily from Mandya to Bangalore are as follows:

1. To analyse the socio-economic profiles of daily labour commuters, including their income levels, education, occupation, and living conditions.
2. To identify the key challenges faced by these labourers, such as transportation difficulties, health impacts, and work-life balance issues.
3. To explore the reasons behind their choice to commute daily instead of relocating or seeking employment locally.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the social and economic conditions of daily commuting labourers from Mandya to Bangalore. Primary data were collected through structured survey questionnaires administered to 50 labourers who regularly commute between Mandya and Bangalore, along with focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with small groups of workers to explore their shared experiences, challenges, and suggested solutions. Secondary data were gathered through a systematic review of government reports, census data, and policy documents related to labour migration and urban-rural disparities in Karnataka, as well as academic articles, transportation studies, and socio-economic surveys. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that the respondents selected were regular daily commuters, thereby enhancing the relevance and reliability of the data. The final sample size for the study consisted of 50 respondents who participated in interviews and survey-based data collection.

Data Analysis, Study Area and Limitations

The data analysis for this study integrates both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the findings. Quantitative

data were analysed using descriptive statistics to examine demographic characteristics, income levels, and commuting patterns of the respondents, while inferential statistical methods, including correlation analysis, were applied to explore the relationship between commuting-related challenges and socio-economic outcomes. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and focus group discussions were analysed through thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns, key themes, and dominant narratives in the lived experiences of the labourers. In addition, comparative analysis was undertaken to understand variations in experiences across different demographic groups such as age and gender.

The study area focuses on the Mandya–Bangalore commuting corridor, covering key locations such as Mandya town, major transportation hubs, and important employment centres within Bangalore. This corridor was selected due to its high volume of daily labour movement and its significance in understanding intercity commuting dynamics in Karnataka.

However, the study has certain limitations. It relies primarily on self-reported data, which may be subject to recall errors and personal bias. Furthermore, the geographical scope of the research is confined to the Mandya–Bangalore corridor, which limits the generalisability of the findings to other

regions with different socio-economic and infrastructural conditions.

Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis and interpretation of data in this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the social and economic status of labourers who commute daily from Mandya to Bangalore. By using both quantitative and qualitative data, the study brings out clear patterns, key challenges, and the broader impact of daily commuting on the lives of these labourers. The quantitative analysis of the demographic profile reveals that the majority of daily commuters fall within the economically productive age groups. Specifically, 15% of the respondents belong to the 18–25 years age group, 45% are between 26–35 years, 35% fall within the 36–45 years category, and only 5% are aged 46 years and above. This age distribution indicates that daily commuting is largely undertaken by young and middle-aged adults who bear significant family and financial responsibilities. The comparatively low proportion of older workers suggests that the physically demanding nature of labour-intensive occupations, combined with the strain of long-distance daily travel, may limit the participation of older individuals in such work.

Gender Breakdown

The gender-wise distribution of the respondents shows that 80% of the daily commuting labourers are male, while only 20% are female. This indicates a

predominantly male workforce in intercity labour commuting between Mandya and Bangalore. The lower participation of women in daily commuting can be attributed to prevailing social and cultural norms, household responsibilities, safety concerns, and limited access to suitable transportation and workplace facilities. This pattern reflects the gendered nature of labour migration, where men are more likely to take up physically demanding and travel-intensive jobs, while women's mobility is often constrained by family and caregiving roles.

Income Levels

The analysis of monthly income levels reveals that 40% of the commuting labourers earn above ₹10,000 per month, while 35% earn between ₹15,001 and ₹20,000, 20% earn between ₹20,001 and ₹30,000, and only 5% earn above ₹30,000 per month. These figures indicate that a large proportion of workers earn less than ₹20,000 per month, highlighting their economic vulnerability despite working in a metropolitan labour market that is generally perceived to offer higher wages. The very small proportion of workers earning above ₹30,000 further suggests that opportunities for higher-income employment remain limited and that most labourers continue to remain confined to low-paid, informal, and insecure occupations.

Commuting Patterns

The analysis of commuting patterns shows that public transportation is the

dominant mode of travel among daily commuting labourers, with 97% relying on trains and only 3% using buses. This heavy dependence on trains reflects the economic constraints faced by these workers, as rail travel is generally more affordable than other transport options. At the same time, such reliance indicates challenges related to overcrowding, travel comfort, schedule reliability, and personal safety. In terms of travel time, 10% of the labourers spend less than three hours on a round trip, 60% spend between three to five hours, and 30% travel for more than five hours daily. These prolonged commuting hours contribute significantly to physical and mental fatigue, reduce work efficiency and productivity, and leave very little time for rest, family interaction, and personal development, thereby negatively affecting their overall quality of life.

Challenges Faced

The study reveals that daily commuting labourers face multiple and overlapping challenges that significantly affect their quality of life. Transportation-related problems are the most prominent, with 70% of respondents reporting issues related to punctuality and reliability of services, frequent delays, and overcrowding. Additionally, 50% of the labourers identified the high cost of daily travel as a major burden on their limited income, while 40% expressed serious concerns about comfort and safety during their journeys. Safety concerns are particularly acute for female commuters,

further increasing the difficulties of daily travel.

Health-related impacts are also substantial. About 35% of the labourers suffer from physical strain, including musculoskeletal problems, which are largely attributed to long hours of standing, overcrowded travel conditions, and physically demanding work. Mental stress, including fatigue and anxiety, was reported by 50% of the respondents, indicating the heavy psychological toll of daily long-distance commuting. Only 20% reported having adequate access to health services, which further aggravates their physical and mental well-being.

Work-life balance is another critical area of concern. Nearly 65% of the labourers stated that their long commuting hours leave them with very limited time to spend with their families, while 45% reported that they are unable to engage in activities related to personal skill development, education, or self-improvement. These limitations negatively affect family relationships, social participation, and long-term personal and professional growth, reinforcing the cycle of socio-economic vulnerability.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis of interviews and focus group discussions revealed several recurring themes that reflect the lived experiences of daily commuting labourers. A dominant theme that emerged was economic necessity, where most

participants expressed that commuting was essential for sustaining their families due to the lack of adequate employment opportunities in Mandya. Many respondents emphasized that the comparatively higher wages in Bangalore were their primary source of financial stability. Another key theme was health and well-being, as labourers frequently reported physical exhaustion and mental fatigue caused by long and overcrowded journeys, leading to inadequate rest and declining overall health.

The theme of social and family impact highlighted the emotional strain faced by the commuters, with many participants sharing that they often miss important family moments, children's daily activities, and community participation due to their tight schedules. Transportation challenges also emerged strongly, with respondents describing frequent delays, unreliable services, overcrowding, and long waiting times that disrupted their work routines and increased daily stress. Safety concerns were particularly significant among female labourers, who reported heightened feelings of vulnerability and fear during late-night travel. Despite these difficulties, a notable theme of adaptation and resilience was observed, as many labourers described developing personal coping strategies, such as resting during travel, listening to music, or mentally preparing themselves for daily hardships, which helped them endure the demands of their commuting routines.

Major Findings

The integrated analysis reveals that economic necessity is the primary driver of daily commuting, as labourers continue to travel long distances despite high costs and severe challenges in order to earn higher incomes and support their families in Mandya. The findings also highlight significant negative impacts on health and well-being, with many workers experiencing persistent physical fatigue, mental stress, and related health problems due to prolonged travel and demanding work conditions. Inadequate and unreliable transportation infrastructure further intensifies these difficulties by causing delays, overcrowding, and uncertainty, which in turn reduce productivity and increase daily stress levels.

The study also finds that the demanding nature of daily commuting places considerable strain on family life and social relationships, leading to emotional and psychological stress among labourers who are unable to participate fully in family and community activities. Gender-specific challenges were found to be particularly acute for female labourers, who face additional safety risks and social pressures during travel, underscoring the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies and interventions. At the same time, the research highlights the remarkable resilience of these workers, as many have developed personal coping strategies to manage their routines, which, while admirable, also point to critical areas

where institutional and social support systems are needed to improve their overall quality of life.

Recommendations

The study suggests a comprehensive set of recommendations to address the challenges faced by daily commuting labourers from Mandya to Bangalore. Strengthening local employment opportunities in Mandya is crucial and can be achieved through rural development initiatives such as establishing small-scale industries, promoting agricultural diversification, and providing vocational training programmes, which would reduce the need for long-distance labour migration and enhance local economic stability. Improving public transportation infrastructure is equally important, with a focus on upgrading bus and train services to ensure greater reliability, safety, and affordability, as well as introducing labourer-friendly transport services during peak hours to reduce overcrowding and commuting stress.

Addressing the health and well-being of labourers requires the expansion of accessible healthcare services near major transportation hubs and employment centres, along with awareness programmes that focus on managing both physical and mental health challenges associated with long commutes. Special attention must be given to the safety of female commuters by implementing gender-sensitive measures such as women-only compartments, improved

lighting at bus stops, and stricter enforcement of anti-harassment laws, which would encourage safer and more inclusive participation of women in the workforce. Financial support mechanisms, including subsidised travel passes for low-income workers and incentives for employers to assist commuting labourers, would help reduce the economic burden of daily travel.

Furthermore, time management and skill development should be prioritized by organizing skill enhancement programmes in Mandya, enabling labourers to access better-paying employment opportunities either locally or in Bangalore. The effective use of travel time can be encouraged through mobile learning initiatives. At the policy level, there is a need to develop regional labour policies that promote the equitable distribution of employment opportunities and the sustainable development of rural areas, supported by proper monitoring mechanisms to track the well-being of daily commuters. Finally, strengthening community and social support systems through the formation of support groups and community-based organisations can provide emotional and practical assistance to labourers, while creating platforms for them to voice their concerns and actively participate in decision-making processes, ultimately improving their overall quality of life.

Conclusion

The study on the social and economic status of labourers commuting daily from

Mandya to Bangalore highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by this population. While commuting offers economic benefits through access to higher-paying jobs in Bangalore, it also imposes significant costs on labourers' health, well-being, and family life. The reliance on inadequate public transportation and the absence of local employment opportunities exacerbate their socio-economic vulnerabilities.

Key findings reveal the urgent need for policy interventions to improve transportation infrastructure, enhance local employment prospects, and address health and safety concerns, particularly for female labourers. The study underscores the resilience of these workers, but also the necessity of systemic changes to mitigate the hardships they face.

By implementing the recommendations proposed, stakeholders can reduce the dependency on long commutes, enhance the quality of life for labourers, and promote balanced regional development. This will not only benefit the labourers themselves but also contribute to a more equitable and sustainable socio-economic framework in Karnataka.

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