

Socio-Economic Status of Farmers after the Alteration of Croplands for Urban Expansion in Delhi



Tejbir Singh Rana

Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Geography,
Shivaji College,
University of Delhi,
Raja Garden, New Delhi, India

Abstract

The geographical advantage of nodality and continental geo-strategic location of Delhi supported the increased carrying capacity of Delhi. Therefore, it developed the urban infrastructure which cumulatively increased the employment opportunities in city and become magnet for large number of immigrants especially after independence. Subsequently, city registered its horizontal expansion in all directions which engulfed the vast fertile croplands. The native farmers forced to alter their agricultural fields to meet the urban needs which are the basis of their economic survival and essence of social fabric.

The study deals with the socio-economic implications of cropland diversification of the native farming communities. It applies the deductive approach with empirical methodology involving structured questionnaire. The loss of ancestral cropland which was their main source of livelihood forced to switch over to alternate sources of livelihood. The study enquires the demographic components as fertility rate, joint family break-down, women education and empowerment and evolution of alternate modes of income of the farming communities who lost their croplands to expanding urbanization. It established the linkages of dismantling the traditional rudimentary feudal social ethos and resistance in accepting the contemporary social values. The study also identified the changing nature of habitations from native villages to urban settlements. The women employment and sources of livelihood brought significant changes in native farmer's families. Rental income and self-employment in varied urban need based services and transport become the major sources of livelihood among the native farming communities.

Keywords: Kohi Region, LBZ (Lutyens Bungalow Zone), Section 4 of land acquisition act, Geriatrics, Ancillary Industries, Social-Inertia, Laldora, Total Fertility Rate (TFR).

Introduction

The nodal location, sustainable resource base, access to trade routes and traditionally rich human response to natural environment altogether supports Delhi city to expand its population and physical extent at faster rate. The historical-inertia further enhanced in developing the trade, commerce and transport related economic activities which attracted people from entire South Asia. The perennial in-migration of skilled and semi-skilled people further allowed to start need based small and ancillary industries and generated the variety of employment activities in Delhi.

Broadly, Delhi city's growth can be analyzed on the basis of four temporal phases. Firstly, pre-Mughal Delhi with the evolution of Sarai's (shelter homes for travellers) in dispersed order. Secondly, during Mughal period when the urban nucleus evolved within walled city and developed the roads, canals, market (chowks, baradari, kucha's etc), fort, palace and religious shrines. Thirdly, British period Delhi, when a planned city was framed with straight roads, civil lines, mall roads, cantonment, connaught place, parliament, president's house, university, railway and airways network. Britisher's developed the city is also known as LBZ (Lutyens Bungalow Zone) which is now occupied by central government employee's residences and officers. Fourthly, the post-independence period Delhi, which is partially planned and largely unplanned for human settlement, Industrial zones, recreation grounds, hospitals, educational institutes, administrative offices, local markets and unorganized expansion of road transport network developed in accordance to levels of technology and human needs.

In the process of rapid urbanization and to meet the needs of people for housing, recreation, industries, official complexes, warehouses, farmhouses and various services sectors, the city registered horizontal expansion in all four direction of the city. The physical expansion of city forced the farmers to alter or diversify their fertile farmland into urban concrete land. In the beginning of 19th century, Delhi urban area was spread over around 40 square km. area which increased tremendously and became more than 1100 square km. after a century.

Aim of the Study

Cropland diversification and livelihood of farmers: Traditionally, the farming communities are skilled in localized primary economic activities i.e. raising crops, horticulture and rearing livestock etc. In the process of farming, all the members of family including women folks, geriatric persons and children are occupied in plethora of farm-related activities round the year. All the farmers, give training to their children related to farming activities therefore, the younger generation finds difficulty in switching to alternate tertiary economic activities. The families find utter shocks after the diversification of croplands as entire family becomes unemployed suddenly.

Simultaneously, families got compensation money of cropland which is spent (not investment) on reconstruction of native-ancestral residential houses, marriage of their children and purchase of passenger vehicles. Since, the money is not invested for recurring return, and then alternate economic avenues are explored for survival as transport and taxi-service, sale-purchase of land brokers, building material suppliers and renting out their left out properties in residential and non-residential premises.

Table1: Trends of population size and inhabited urban area of Delhi city.

Year	Population Size (Lakhs)	Decadal Growth Rate (%)	Urbanised Area (km ²)
1901	4.05	----	----
1911	4.14	01.98	43.25
1921	4.89	18.03	168.09
1931	6.36	30.26	169.44
1941	9.18	44.27	174.31
1951	17.44	90.00	195.54
1961	26.59	52.44	326.34
1971	40.66	52.93	446.30
1981	62.20	53.00	591.90
1991	94.21	51.45	685.3
2001	138.51	47.02	N.A.
2011	167.88	21.21	1113.65
2018	289.80	(estimated)	N.A.

Source: Delhi Statistical Handbook, Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

Farmer's Dilemma

In order to meet the urban demand of space for housing and allied services, the farmers of immediate fringe of urban margins forced to alter their respective farmlands. The diversification of agricultural croplands, village common land for pastures including uncultivated land for common use of villagers has been taken place by two different

processes. One is by the local administration by imposing and notifying the section 4 of land acquisition policy and taking possession under section 6 without even acknowledging the consent of farmers. The farmlands of the native farmers have been acquired by the local revenue department of administration in the name of urban expansion on very meager remuneration. Such compensatory disbursement cost of farmers cropland always remained much less than the prevailing market rates. Secondly, since the extremely low cost of farmlands fixed by urban developmental agencies (local administration) forced the farmers to alter or sell out their farmlands to private developers before the acquisition notification under section 4 comes. The private developer's make the payment on competitive market rates to the farmers which always remained many times higher than governmental agencies.

In the process of farmland diversification for urban expansion, two different types of urban habitations evolved. One is planned urban area by the urban development agency of Delhi (DDA) which is largely inhabited by rich people. On the other hand, unplanned, illegal, and haphazard settlements within the city which developed the low cost houses for poor immigrants. These illegal clusters are developed by the private developers who purchased the farmlands on higher prices than developmental agencies from the farmers. Whereas, the native farmers preferred to live in their ancestral villages with social-inertia. A few farmers' families choose to shift in newly developed urban habitations around their native villages.

Cropland Diversification and Livelihood of Farmers

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Methodology and Study Area

The study is concentrated on the enquiry of socio-economic condition of farmers and their families who altered their croplands for urban expansion. An organized questionnaire is prepared to procure the real time data from the affected section of society. Various demographic indicators, education, habitation, sources of livelihood and female status

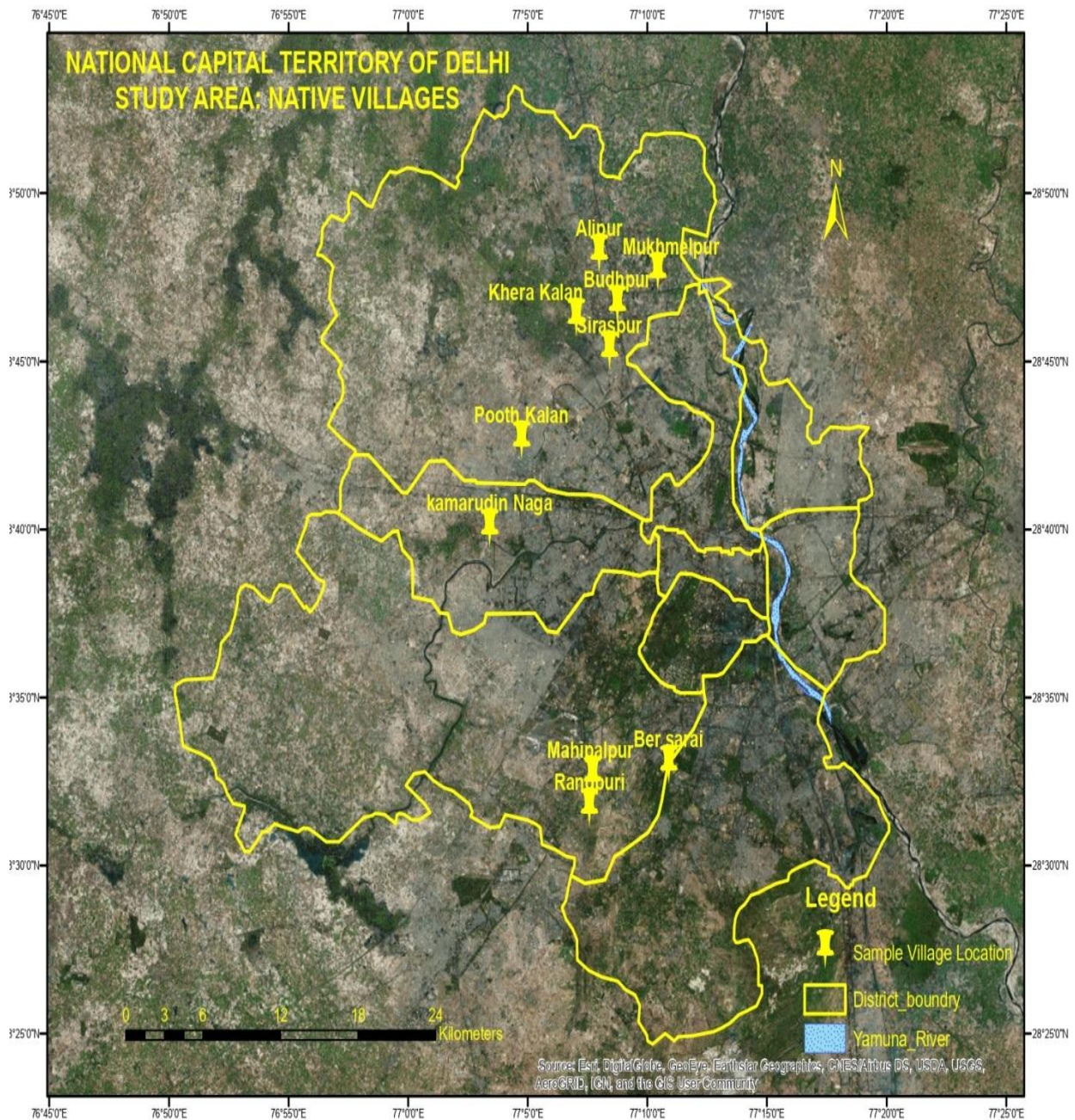
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related basic data obtained through personal interaction. Subsequently, tabulation and analysis of data has been done correlating the various indicators. The changing trends of demography and alternate sources of livelihood are being analyzed. The secondary data base is also utilized to establish the changing trends of urbanization in spatial and temporal perspective.

The study area is confined to 10 villages of Delhi, which are either declared as urban villages or diversified their croplands for various non-agricultural activities. Total 70 farmers are the respondents of the study who altered their croplands to meet the urban need of space for its horizontal expansion. Study area is spread over in different geographical regions of

Delhi as Kohi region of Aravalli hills, bangar region of west Delhi and khadar region of north Delhi near river Yamuna. Respondents included who altered their cropland forcefully to the development agencies or volunteered to private developers or both. Respondents included who diversified their croplands in 1960's onward in different time span.

This is the unique and specific study which enquired the socio-economic condition of farmers and their rehabilitation process in India. The work is purely based on empirical field survey and no such work has been done earlier. The process and forces of cropland alteration and economic rehabilitation are linked together where occupational and habitation transition has taken place in rural urban fringe of Delhi.



Cropland Alteration and Changing Demography

Alteration of crop lands into non-agricultural uses brought-significant changes in economy and demography of rural Delhi. It diversified the sources of livelihood into rural generated/oriented urban services as building material supply from rural to urban areas, real-estate property transactions, truck tempo and taxi services etc. Subsequently it further changed the demography of erstwhile farmer's families. As per table 2, out of the total 70 surveyed families have 316 persons and 76.58% i.e. 242 person falls in the category of age 25-60 year. Out of the total number

(242) of family members in earning age group of 25-60 years, only 126 members i.e. 52.06% are occupied in variety of earning activities. Almost half of the total family members in earning age group are unemployed. Subsequently, in same age group the share of employed women is only 39.65% while employed men's share is 63.49%. Though, out of 70 families surveyed, 34 families have at least one working/employed woman which constitutes 48.47% share. Further, 10 families (14.28%) have two or more than two employed or formal-working women.

Table 2: Demographic Indicators of Farmers Who Lost their Cropland to Urbanization

S.No.	Demographic Components	Number	%
1.	Total No. of families surveyed	70	100%
2.	Total No. of family members	316	100%
3.	Total No. of members in age group 25-60 years	242	76.58%
4.	Total No. of earning members in age group 25-60 years	126	52.06%
5.	Total No. of females in age group 25-60 years	116	47.93%
6.	Total No. of employed women	46	39.65%
7.	Total No. of employed men	80	63.49%

Source: Based on field survey

During the farming/cultivation of crops before the urban expansion, agriculture was the main economic source of livelihood, women involvement in formal employment was quite minimal. Once the croplands are altered for non-farming activities, joint-family system also broke-down, where women involvement in various economic activities registered convincing increase. With the increased women economic empowerment, the average number of children per married couple after the completed family size also decreased from 5.74 of previous generation to only 2.34 children of present generation. It means the current generation has drastically reduced the total fertility rate (TFR) in comparison to their previous (parent's) generation. The deviation from labour oriented subsistence farming to variety of tertiary/services related economic activities reduced the fertility rate and brought women into economic mainstream and empowerment.

Urbanisation and Education of Native Farming Communities

The native farmers who lost their croplands in the process of urban expansion prudently shifted their modes of livelihood. The versatile aptitude faded the gender biased social ethos upto large extent. There are 312 persons in the age group of 20+ years out of the total 70 surveyed families. Out of 312 persons, there are 192 persons (61.14%) are graduates or diploma holders or enrolled in higher education. Subsequently, out of total 20+ years of age, 312 members, 168 (53.84%) are women (including married daughters) where 110 women i.e. 65.47% are graduate or diploma holders or enrolled in any of the course in pursuing the higher education. Whereas, in the same age group males are 144 (46.16%) and their share of graduate or equivalent or enrolled is 56.94% which is much less than female's higher education. Out of the total graduate/enrolled persons in higher education (192), the share of male persons are only 82 i.e. 42.70%.

Table 3: Various Parameters Related to Higher Education of Farmers Who Lost their Cropland to Urbanization in Delhi

S.No.	Parameters	Numbers	%
1.	Total No. of family members in age group 20+ years.	312	100%
2.	Total No. of graduates or equivalents (including enrolled) both MALE and FEMALE	192	61.53%
3.	Total No. of FEMALE members in age group 20+ years (including married daughters)	168	53.84%
4.	Total No. of FEMALE graduates or equivalent education	110	65.47%
5.	Total No. of MALE family member in age group 20+ years	144	46.15%
6.	Total No. of MALE graduates or equivalent education	82	56.94%
7.	Total No. of FEMALE graduates or equivalent education out of their total (192) population.	110	57.29%

Source: Field survey based study.

With the deviation of economic livelihood from agrarian practices to urban need based tertiary/services related activities, the level of higher education have increased upto 61.53%. The women share in higher education registered tremendous increase. The break-down of joint family into nuclear family, decline in total fertility rate (TFR) or completed

family size, shift from agrarian women labour force to urban oriented economy and involvement of women folk in economic activities are the factors for increased share of women in higher education among native (erstwhile) farmers families. The delayed marriageable age of women, availability and accessibility of institutes for higher education and gradually

dismantling the rudimentary cultural taboo's proved to be the factors for higher education of women.

Deviation from Farming and Habitation

In the process of horizontal expansion of urbanization, vast croplands are diversified for urban habitations and allied purposes. In this process, the social order of inter-dependency of inter-castes and intra-caste system broken down. Social co-operation, economic dependency, requirement of skill based

Table 4: Nature of Habitation of Farmers Who Lost their Cropland Due to Urbanization in Delhi

S. No.	Nature of habitation of erstwhile farmers	% of families surveyed
1.	Native Village	54.28%
2.	Planned colony – Own house	14.28%
3.	Planned colony – Rented house	8.57%
4.	Illegal/unauthorised colony – Own house	11.42%
5.	Illegal/unauthorised colony – Rented house	2.85%
	All categories of accommodation	100%

Source: Based on field survey.

The younger generation with economic flow and women empowerment preferred to shift their habitation from unorganized, unplanned and haphazardly evolved urbanized villages. In these native villages movement of vehicles is not possible, building are old and dilapidated and difficult to make livable along with though the social inertia of rudimentary feudal characters still prevails. During the field study, 54.28% respondents are living/residing in native villages with modern luxury lifestyles while 14.28% respondents of native farmers families shifted their habitation in well-planned development authority developed colonies in their purchased own house. Substantial number of respondents also preferred to shift into rented accommodation in planned colonies. Though, all the farmers families have native habitations/houses which are either rented out or lying vacant. Almost, 11.42% respondents preferred to shift in unplanned and illegally developed high density residential colonies but in own-houses. The share of rented housing accommodation is comparatively low as the monetary flow is very high among these families.

Alternate Livelihood of Agrarian Communities

The social groups who owned the croplands and belonged to dominant-castes of the villages proved to be versatile and gregarious in switching over the sources of economic livelihood. They were bestowed with monetary advantages, substantially large native houses, adaptable work force and awareness about the needs of urbanization. The farmers after losing their croplands gradually developed alternate sources of livelihood with varied scale of economy.

The habitation of native villages within the *aladora* (outline of inhabited area) requires no building plan approval from civic authorities. On the other hand development agencies failed to provide the low-cost houses as per increased requirements for the poor skilled and unskilled labour force. Whereas, farmers families are bestowed with large sized built-up and vacant plots in native villages and majority of them constructed those houses and plots in order to meet the residential needs of poor people for rental purpose. Therefore, rental income becomes the important source of their livelihood. Only 52% of

artisans and labour force are no more required in native villages. The behavior of society become alienated from native inhabitants which developed the alternate need based social circle out the traditional societies. Subsequently, break down of joint-family system and evolution of contrasting economic units among the families forced the native farmer's families to shift at more amicable locations for habitations.

the total family members in age group 25-60 years are the earning/employed members among all the respondents (Table 2). Even after almost half of the workable population is unemployed and non-earning, still the livelihood and lifestyle is highly expensive. The rental income is the source of their good quality lifestyle even after the higher rate of unemployment.

Broadly, the native farmers after losing their croplands switched to three main alternate sources of livelihood. These are 1. Salaried class (employed in govt., semi-govt. and private sectors). 2. Self-employed (occupied in series of urban need based services, goods supply chain, trade and transport) 3. Rental income (leasing the native land and buildings left with farmers for residential and warehousing purposes). Owing to certain logistic support and enterprising aptitude, majority of 68.59% respondents/families have more than one source of livelihood. Almost 31.41% families are economically dependent on only one of the either sources of livelihoods as salary, self-employed or rental income.

Table 5: Sources of Livelihood of Farmers Who Lost their Cropland for Urban Expansion

S. No.	Various sources of livelihood	% of families surveyed
1.	Salary	8.57%
2.	Self-employed	5.71%
3.	Marginal laborers	2.85%
4.	Salary and Rent (Both)	37.14%
5.	Self-employed and Rent	25.71%
6.	Rent (only one source)	14.28%
7.	Rent, Salary and Self-employed	5.71%
	All Seven Categories	100%

Source: Based on field survey.

Rental income by leasing residential housing units, warehouses, shop and commercial buildings and even the vacant plots is the single largest source of livelihood. Only 14.28% families are dependent on rental income as sole source of earning. Whereas, 82.84% families are dependent on rental income in isolation or with other sources of income, 51.52% families are dependent on salaries alongwith other parallel sources of income and 37.13% families are dependent on self-employment with other sources of income. Salary and rental income combined both is

the major source of income of 37.14% families. Self-employment and rental income constitute 25.71% families as their source of income. 8.57% families are solely dependent on salaried income from both the government and private sector jobs.

Conclusion

The study is oriented to trace the socio-economic fall out of deviation from agrarian mode of livelihood to tertiary economic activities. Large number of native farmers altered their croplands for urban expansion. Therefore, study is empirical and followed deductive approach. It deals with processes and forces of cropland diversification and shifting of economic dependency from primary to tertiary economic activities. The urbanization led forces not only changed the land use dynamics but brought significant changes in demographic and economic parameters of native farming communities. It brought major change in women empowerment through greater involvement in higher education. Subsequently, the women employment ratio has increased tremendously with tertiary sector based economies.

Economic dependency dismantled the joint family system into nuclear families which resulted into the significant decline in total fertility rate in last two generations. The share of women in higher education exceeded the share of men's higher education. Overall more than 61% population in the age group 20+ years attained higher education i.e. graduates or equivalent with substantially higher ratio of women folks.

Cropland alteration brought economic dependency which resulted into large number of native family's exodus from native villages to urban areas. Almost 54% respondents are residing in native village even after losing their croplands which was the main source of livelihood and 46% respondent families shifted to urban habitation and majority of them in their purchased own houses. Urbanization offered plethora of economic activities and farmer's

families were highly receptive to economic opportunities. Therefore, majority of farmers have more than one source of income. Salaried class, self-employed and rental income are the major sources of livelihood. Almost half of the population in age group 25-60 years are non-earning and even after that the lifestyle of all the farmers is highly luxurious as most of them have rental income from their inherited ancestral property.

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