

Critical Evaluation of Slums in Bangalore

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Abstract

Karnataka's relative economic status, compared to other states, has steadily improved overtime. From being a "middle-ranking" Indian State, whose per capita income was below the national average in the early years of planning, it is now recognized as a "fast growing" state. The average growth rate of the Karnataka State Domestic Product (SDP) has been faster than the national average during the period 1981-2000 and the gap has widened after 1995. During the second half of the 1990s, Karnataka was the only state to have experienced a growth rate of more than 8 per cent. The bio-technology industry in Karnataka grew by a phenomenal 35 per cent during 2003-06 and Bangalore in fact houses 92 of the total 180 bio-tech companies in the country. Similarly the number of software export companies in Karnataka grew from 13 to 1154 during 1991-2003 and software exports grew from Rs.5.6 crores to Rs.12,350 crores during these years.

Keywords: *Karnataka State Domestic Product, FDI, urban poverty, unorganized sector, employment market, growing city*

Introduction

Karnataka also emerged as a leader in attracting foreign investment, being among the largest recipients of FDI among Indian States. These positive developments are however, accompanied by certain features that are disquieting: lack of growth in employment, deepening urban poverty, erosion of organized sector and the addition of large numbers to the unorganized sector of the workforce.

The above statement is not a general it is also more specific with respect to Bangalore, because it is one of the fastest growing city not only in India but also in Asia and in the globe. We could see everyday people coming to Bangalore in search of Job. Because it is one of the potential employment market could access not only the skilled workers but also major unskilled population to work in the city infrastructure development like construction of roads, flyovers, apartments, besides by securing easy jobs in garment units.

As a result of the above it is very difficult to accommodate every working population in the city like Bangalore. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that slums are created and the number of people are concentrated in slums. With this background, the present paper seeks to examine the following aspects, Viz.,

- Economic Development of Bangalore;
- Poverty and Lack of civic Amenities;
- Slums in Karnataka;
- Slums in Bangalore

Economic Development of Bangalore City

Unlike cities such as Ahmedabad and Bombay, Bangalore did not have a strong industrial base before India's independence in 1947. There were few mills, including a major textile unit, a flourishing silk industry, and an aircraft factory established during the Second World War. Industrial employment, however, was limited, while the service sector dominated (Gowda, 1977:298-9). A major employer in the cantonment area was the British army which had a huge establishment there. Bangalore was then described as 'a pensioner's paradise' and indeed seemed to attract quite a few retired British colonials, not the least for its salubrious climate.

Industrial development started basically after India's independence, when a sizeable number of large scale modern public sector undertakings were established in Bangalore-such as the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Hindustan Machine Tools, Indian Telephone Industries, Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharath Heavy Electricity Limited. There is a marked correlation between industrial development and accelerated population growth. The number of jobs in the organized sector increased from 46,000 in 1951 to 1,06,000 in 1971 (Gowda, 1977:301) while the population almost doubled during these 20 years.

A more recent factor though less visible in terms of jobs, has been the rapid growth of the software and 'computer industry'. Yet, it is this development which marks Bangalore's rapid industrial growth today and earns it the sobriquet, 'The Silicon Valley of India'. Indeed Bangalore has become a magnet for software developers from all over India, and even abroad.

Apart from this high-tech industry, and the numerous specialized small scale workshops which service it (Holmstrom, 1994), there are also other major economic activities including trade and public services. Thus an increasing share of the incoming migrants find employment in a wide range of workshops, many of which are categorized as being part of the so-called 'informal sector', and in the expanding construction industry.

Recent Prosperity of Bangalore

The presence of a sizeable 'modern' industrial sector, as well as that of the Indian army is what has brought prosperity to the city in recent years and given its central areas a cosmopolitan and mixed Indian-Western outlook. Industrial and military cadre have been drawn from all over India as indeed the 'whiz kids' and 'yuppies; of the software industry who flock to Bangalore. Hence, a quantitatively strong visible, modern middle class has emerged in Bangalore - as evident by the number of expensive boutiques, supermarkets, shopping plaza's trendy restaurants and pubs, profusion of scooter and car drivers, and other signs of purchasing power in the context of a 'Westernized life style'.

A similar indicator of prosperity is the boom in the construction industry both for commercial and luxury residential housing. Real estate developers are active all over the city and prices of real estate have risen astronomically. Already in the 1970s, Gowda, (1977:303) observed:..’ how the vast compounds are being subdivided to form new residential and commercial plots’.

While Bangalore may thus pass off as a prosperous and modern Indian city, this may be a misleading picture. At least two more characteristics need to be added to portray the city in a more realistic manner: extreme poverty for the majority of its citizens, and the breakdown of civic amenities.

Poverty and Lack of Civic Amenities

Public authorities in the city appear unable to cope with its rapid growth resulting in the breakdown of basic civic amenities such as potable water, liquid and solid waste disposal (Huysman and Velu, 1994), and provision of shelter to those dependent on Government support for their basic needs. These deficiencies are compounded by the every growing number of urban poor. Hence, the contrast between rich and poor is dramatically visible in many parts of the city and this feature is likely to get worse.

Unlike in other Indian cities, the number of urban dwellers living in huts and hut-like dwelling without private or public infrastructural facilities is relatively small in Bangalore. In most other large Indian cities at least 25 to 35 per cent of the population lives in such areas. In 1981, not more than 10 per cent of Bangalore’s population lived in ‘slums’ - about 3,00,000 people. By 1991, the absolute number of slum dwellers had increased to an estimated 8,00,000 to one million, i.e., it had tripled in absolute terms within ten years, and the share of slum dwellers to the total urban population rose to 20 per cent.

Whereas, Bangalore attracts middle classes and professionals from all over the country, its poor immigrants come from almost all the neighboring rural districts of Karnataka and from the adjoining states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In absolute numbers, they are easily more numerous than the middle classes and professionals who contribute to the ‘high profile’ of the city. Many households of predominantly landless agricultural labourers and marginal farmers, pushed out of their native villages by poverty, move into Bangalore, to find employment either in the ‘informal’ economic sectors or in the booming construction industry as unskilled labourers. They do not so easily find shelter, lower; so they increasingly squat in the urban fringe.

Slums in Karnataka

With a population of 52.73 million, Karnataka state consists of 27 districts (Government of India, 2001). Sharing 5.13 per cent of country’s population it ranks the 9th position. Although the area of the state had not changed as compared to 1991, there was an increase in the density of population i.e., from 235 persons per sq. km. in 1991 to 275

persons per sq. km in 2001. Among the districts, Bangalore has the highest population (6.5 per cent). Further, the district with its smallest area of 2190 sq. km has the highest population density of around 2979 persons per sq. km. Increased commercial and economic activities have led to increased population density, besides some of the districts in the state are also witnessing an increase in the number of slums.

According to the available statistics with Slum Clearance Board Bangalore, there were 2491 slums with a total population around 31 lakhs in 2004 (Table 1). Among the districts, the city of Bangalore (Bangalore Urban) has the highest (19 per cent) number of slums, accounting for 32 per cent of total slum population in the state. Since the city is known for its commercial openings, it has attracted a large number of people from the neighbor districts as well as from the Southern States in India particularly from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Karnataka, Bangalore city (19 per cent) stands first having the more number of slums followed by Shimoga (7 per cent), Bellary, Gulbarga (each 6 per cent) and Hassan (5 per cent) respectively.

Table 1 Slums in the Districts of Karnataka¹

Name of the City	No. of Slums	Percentage	Total Population	Percentage
Bangalore City	473	18.99	989000	32.11
Bangalore rural	77	3.09	58773	1.91
Bagalkote	93	3.73	40760	1.32
Bellary	149	5.98	152318	4.95
Belgaum	98	3.93	107943	3.50
Bidar	71	2.85	76528	2.48
Bijapur	67	2.69	240520	7.81
Chikkamagalore	60	2.41	49977	1.62
Chitradurga	58	2.33	70819	2.30
Chamrajanagar	54	2.17	41552	1.35
Davangere	80	3.21	71472	2.32
Dharwad	87	3.49	129173	4.19
Mangalore	28	1.12	17309	0.56
Gadag	72	2.89	36610	1.19
Gulbarga	144	5.78	176207	5.72
Hassan	113	4.54	144986	4.71
Haveri	60	2.41	38162	1.24
Kodagu	7	0.28	3681	0.12
Kolar	78	3.13	73068	2.37
Koppal	56	2.25	62231	2.02
Mandya	64	2.57	43982	1.43
Mysore	98	3.93	79834	2.59
Raichur	60	2.41	101413	3.29
Shimoga	162	6.50	144419	4.69
Tumkur	97	3.89	84652	2.75
Uttara Kannada	58	2.33	27473	0.89
Udupi	27	1.08	17368	0.56
Total	2491	100.00	3080230	100.00

Source: Govt. of Karnataka, 'Slum Clearance Board', as on 2004.

Bangalore City and Shimoga are the two important districts contributing to the state's economic development. The wide range of commercial activities has been the main reason for the increased number of slums in these two districts. In particular, Bangalore which has recently grown as an important 'IT hub of Asia' has witnessed tremendous growth in its population. However, the city has not been very successful in providing the infrastructure and services necessary for smooth functioning of the IT sector. Along with other problems, the city is also witnessing an increase in the growth of slums. However, for a longtime the slums in Bangalore had neither caught the attention of the policy-makers nor the city planners. Thus, the city provides an appropriate setting to carry out a study like the present one.

Bangalore has an estimate metropolitan population of 6.1 million (2006), making it India's third-largest city in league with other mega-cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi and Chennai, each of which has a population of over ten millions (Census of India, 2001).

Table 2: Number of In-migrants by Last Residence (duration 0-9 years) into Important Urban Agglomerations: 2001 Census

Name of the UA	2001 Population	In-migrants			Total in migrants	Per cent of in-migrants to total population.
		From within the state	From other states	From other countries		
INDIA (Urban)	286,119,689	24,974,372	11,157,574	348,060	36,480,006	12.7
Greater Mumbai UA	16,434,386,	892,706	1,571,181	25,665	2,489,552	15.1
Delhi UA	12,877,470	77,663	1,988,314	46,386	2,112,363	16.4
Chennai UA	6,560,242	334,972	94,964	5,684	435,620	6.6
Kolkata UA	13,205,697	470,601	297,279	54,509	822,389	6.2
Hyderabad UA	5,742,036	407,861	88,216	2,406	498,483	8.7
Bangalore UA	5,701,446	401,932	353,156	6,397	761,485	13.4

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Among the important Urban Agglomerations (UAs), Delhi UA registered the highest share of migrants in total population (16.4 per cent), followed by Greater Mumbai (15.1 per cent). Bangalore was in the third position with about 13.4 per cent of in-migrants in the total population. This indicates clearly that migration, to a certain extent, was responsible for the increase in the density of population in the city. A segregation of migrants to these UAs, based on their last residence, for the last 10 years, and their changing share in the

aggregate UA population, provides important insights into the extent and nature of migration.

Bangalore draws poor migrants from various neighbouring rural districts of Karnataka and from the neighboring states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In addition, both middle classes and professionals from all over the country are attracted to the city (Schenk, 2001). Primarily, migrants have been agricultural-labourers and marginal farmers who are forced to move out of their native villages owing to poverty to Bangalore city for employment. The growth of private sector activities, particularly, the IT sector and its ancillary sectors in the late 80s had attracted people to look for opportunities in the city. However, the city does not seem to have succeeded in providing the required infrastructure and service for the growing population. Particularly, lack of affordable housing in the city has been forcing poor migrants to settle down in squatter settlements or in the slums. As a consequence, Bangalore has been witnessing a rise in its slum population over the last one decade.

Slums in Bangalore

According to studies on slums in the mega cities, Mumbai, the commercial capital of India, has the highest slum population (48.9 per cent) followed by Kolkata with 32.5 per cent. This increase in slum population in Kolkata is attributed to migration from the neighbouring states of Bihar and UP as also across the border from Bangladesh. Similarly, crop failure in several districts of Tamil Nadu has contributed to a rise in the slum population of Chennai (17.7 per cent) which is in the third place. Hyderabad (17.4 per cent) is in fourth place, followed by Delhi (18.9 per cent). Bangalore with 8 per cent of slum population is in the fifth place (Census of India, 2001).

Slums in Bangalore are under the jurisdiction of three different governing bodies, i.e., Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB), Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and Bangalore City Corporation (BCC), presently known as Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). In addition to these three agencies, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage Board have few assignments given by the BCC, BDA and SCB. The Karnataka Slum Clearance Board was constituted in July 1975 under the provisions of the Karnataka Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act 1973. The main aims of the slum clearance board are: i) to identify and declare the slum areas in accordance with the provision of KSA (I&C) Act 1973 ii) and to take up socio-economic survey in the slums in order to improve socio economic conditions of the slum dwellers. The KSCB is mandated to cover all the declared slum areas in the jurisdiction of the City Corporations and Town Panchayats. The main task of the Board as per KSCB Act 1973 is to provide basic amenities, viz., housing, drinking water, street light, community latrines, community bathrooms, drains, roads and drains with storm water, etc.

Besides, the Board is also mandated to check unauthorized constructions in the slum under its jurisdiction. Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is the new administrative body responsible for the civic and infrastructural assets of the city of Bangalore the BDA's main concern is the overall land use planning for the entire metropolitan area and had to develop land house beyond municipal border. Thus, these three agencies BDA, BBMP and SCB are individually accountable for a certain number of declared slums. The slums which are spread all over the urban agglomeration are managed by SCB; those within the municipal corporation by BBMP and BDA are responsible for those slum located in the zone around municipal boundaries. However, each of these agencies has their own aim and thereby works accordingly without any co-ordination (Schenk, 2001).

Slums in Bangalore are categorized into 'declared' and 'undeclared slums', based on their legal status. In order to ensure service delivery and prevent eviction from the locality, the slum has to be declared. Therefore, the main concern of the slum dwellers is to get their locality to be declared as 'slum' (Karanth, 2003). Once the slum is declared, eviction of people is not possible without exercising the executive and judicial powers of the state. Moreover, the state has to ensure proper resettlement, if the slum is to be evicted for developmental purposes. Apart from the above two categories, which have purely legal connotation, on the basis of language spoke, ethnicity (caste/tribe/religion), place of origin (native place) and occupation pursued by them, slums can be divided into 'homogenous slum' and 'heterogeneous slum'. For example, there are slums inhabited by certain specific occupational groups (like the rag pickers) or certain religious groups (Muslim or Christian) or linguistic groups (Tamil or Telugu).

There is lack of documentation of the exact number of slums in Bangalore, as it had not caught the attention of the concerned department till the last decade. Hence, no single government department has the complete profile of slums in Bangalore. There are different estimates at different points of time. According to Rao and Tiwari, there were 159 declared slums in the year 1972, with a slum population of 1.3 lakhs. The number of slums increased to 287 in the decade ending 1982 with the slum population reaching 3 lakhs (Hanumappa, 1991). As per a survey conducted in 1994 by KSCB, there were 473 slum areas in Bangalore City; among them, 209 were declared under the Slum Clearance Board Act (I&C) 1973), whereas the remaining were undeclared. In the year 1998, Bangalore City Literacy Committee Mission carried out a survey which revealed that there were 778 slums in city, with 18.5 lakhs slum population. This accounted for 26 per cent (or more) of Bangalore population. According to the census of India (2001) 8 per cent of Bangaloreans live in slums (see Appendix - 1 for List of Slums in Bangalore).

There were 159 declared slums in Bangalore at the time of the survey by Prakasa Rao and Tewari in the early 1990s and officially figured was 401. Apart from that the 'declared' slums and 'undeclared' slums also existed, where the probable number was 50 - 100. The main difference between declared and undeclared slums is that the former

category is in principle eligible for slum improvement measures (provided the land slum dwellers occupy is owned by a government agency), while the latter is not. Moreover, clearance of declared slums requires concerted action by the executive and the judicial powers of the state, while undeclared slums can be removed at will. Slums are thus frequently cleared, especially when they are perceived as being objectionable or having nuisance value. Even when improvements are made in declared slum-areas, slum dwellers are not necessarily more secure. The basic illegal characteristic of dwellers living on illegally occupied land remains.

A clear cut and visible distinction between 'legal' housing areas and 'illegal' settlements is not always made. Some of the older, more centrally located slums can hardly be distinguished from adjacent non-slums, and within the category or 'slums' there can be wide variations in terms of age, size, physical appearance, available amenities, etc., exists. Among older slums (3 out of every 10 slums in Bangalore have existed for over 40 years) incremental house improvements have transformed huts into dwellings made of durable materials, and thus de facto security of tenure is said to be higher. A few slums even have private water and sewerage connections. Despite all this, the majority of slum dwellers is, however, much worse off today.

Manor (1993:38) observed that in 1981: Only 38 of the 93 (officially recognized) slums had any form of latrine. The disposal of human waste from many of these occurred through open drains. Only 25 of the 93 slums had paved roads running through them.

Conditions have certainly not improved in the 1990s; while the magnitude of the problem has dramatically increased, compounded than by the extreme insecurity of tenure in most slums, even in the most barren tracks of land. A slum improvement in Bangalore does not include transfer of land ownership to hut-dwellers, unlike in several other Indian cities.

An increasing number of slums are located on private land. Ramachandran, (n.d.:p.85) mentions that for the year 1972, 57 out of the 159 declared slums in the city were located on private land, while for 1982 this number had increased to 143 out of a total number of 287. Apparently new slums tend to squat on private land, frequently, in very small areas- private courtyards often appear to be densely built-up by rented out barrack-type dwelling units, almost invisible from public roads.

Most slums are not big in size counting on an average 1500 to 2000 inhabitants, and most dwellers on public land own the hut in which they live. A sizeable number of tenants also rent part of a hut, or a full hut from existing landlords (Hartog and Poort, 1991).

Compared to other Indian metropolises, such as Madras, Bangalore might be considered as a city with fewer problems. Madras, for instance, has a higher percentage of dwellers in slum areas. At least a third of the urban population of Madras lives in slums which are generally worse in terms of habitat compared to the slums in Bangalore which house a fifth of its urban population. But, it has already mentioned above, these

discrepancies show up more in Bangalore, due to the very visible presence of an economically strong middle class. A second reason may be the negative attitude and the stubborn refusal of state and local authorities to recognize 'slums' as entities in the city's urban socio-spatial structure.

Conclusion

Although other government agencies, such as the Bangalore City Corporation (BCC) and the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), are also involved in improvements and clearances of slums in the city, only the Board is full-time in charge of these activities. Moreover, it has the largest number of slums in Bangalore under its authority: 473, against 64 for the BCC and the BDA each. Obviously, the activities of the Board are crucial for a substantial majority of Bangalore's slum dwellers.

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