5

Relentless Stretching

Urban Transformation and Educational Inequality

*Shivali Tukdeo**

> We were promised a small park adjacent to the colony where our children could play. What we got instead is a patch that can best be called a parking lot, which is now being used as a garbage dump. We met P in Metro Colony-I. He showed us around, organised a late evening meeting with the residents and shared numerous details of the mega urban project that now housed resettled families. The narrow strip of land he pointed out was at the back of the housing colony, separated by a wire fence and full of overgrown shrubs, weeds and scattered plastic. With his wry humour, sharp tongue and organising skills, P had become the go-to person for residents who had been moved from their previous neighbourhood[1] in Basaveshwara Nagara to Sunkadakatte (Sri Gandada Kavulu) as part of the resettlement process following the construction of the Bangalore Metro rail.[2]

Soon after the project was announced in 2007, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL)[3] began putting together plans to acquire land. Unsurprisingly, a number of middle-class and wealthy neighbourhoods refused to move in order to make way for the construction.[4] Two working-class neighbourhoods, densely populated and centrally located, entered the arduous process of negotiating with the BMRCL. As they were in close proximity to the Central Majestic bus station and railway station, the two neighbourhoods – Basaveshwara Nagara and Jai Bhim Nagara – were also well connected to the other

* The fieldwork in the initial phase was carried out with Amar Mali and Nitesh Anchan. I am thankful for their work and input.

parts of the city.[5] Unlike illegal settlements that are often evicted brutally, the two neighbourhoods were offered the chance of consultation and options once they had vacated their homes.[6] Relocation to the metro resettlement colony that was being built farther away from the city centre or monetary compensation in the form of a one-off lump sum was offered as options. The resettlement housing was to be built on the same model as metro staff quarters. The promise of duplex flats, play areas and other recreational facilities painted a picture of the affluent urban preference for gated communities. Amenities and a leisurely lifestyle would make up for the inconvenience of being further from the city centre. The negotiations with the BMRCL also emphasised the lure of speculation: 'The outskirts of the city will soon become a hub and the price of housing will shoot up. In the course of time there will be shops, markets and schools.' P went on to narrate in detail the negotiations, offers, the court order and the residents' eventual move to Sunkadakatte:

> It has been constant back-and-forth discussions even after we moved. We were told an *anganwadi* [government-run programme that provides health, education and nutritional support to young children (0–6 years) and new mothers] will be set up right after we move here. We wrote several letters and reminders, and they continued to stall. After a rather harsh exchange, we received a formal response indicating their inability to provide help in setting up the *anganwadi* in the colony or close by.

Not too close to Metro Colony-I lies the second resettlement colony that we shall call Metro Colony-II. Located near the Peenya industrial estate, it does not appear to be cut off entirely from the city, although it is still far away from the main parts of Bengaluru. On Sunday afternoons, the residents with their utensils and large drums wait for the water tanker. Once the tanker is parked, everyone rushes to get in line to fill up their containers with as much water as they can. Having no piped water for eight years after moving into the colony has been a major source of concern, and they feel that they have 'no option but to adjust' to it.[7]

The two resettlement colonies are constructed in a similar way, with smaller housing clusters and common spaces between them, and all painted in the same colours. In many ways, the residents of the resettlement colonies have fared better than many other people who are evicted by force.[8] While direct crackdowns on people living in non-notified neighbourhoods continue to take place, the two neighbourhoods that were offered resettlement were older, well established and legalised *basti*s, which offered the residents some level of protection.[9]

The strategies for urban reform, efficiency and regeneration in the developing world have largely emerged due to complex linkages between agencies and institutions at the national, supranational and local levels, in association with a close-knit web of governmental, civic and corporate entities. Indian cities have witnessed a peculiar kind of transformation in the last three decades. In a shift away from the colonial urban metropolis (Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Delhi), the nodes of development have been cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad. A flurry of schemes and missions dedicated to world-class cities, smart cities and global cities have worked to make urban India attractive for global business investments. As the government creates spaces of exception, the urban development strategy includes three socio-spatial technologies: slum evictions, the creation of special economic zones and the construction of peri-urban towns. The title of this chapter reflects the ways in which urban landscapes have witnessed an expansion, adding newer forms of living, work and neighbourhoods. The spatial politics of the peri-urban areas merits attention, especially in the context of those who are moved there, provisions of education and availability of public services.

There are a number of other processes at work that have contributed to a sustained change in the last three decades. The transition from agricultural to non-agricultural sectors has affected rural as well as urban landscapes. The unsustainability of agricultural employment has led to a large number of people migrating, often seasonally, to urban areas. The construction industry and domestic work offer the new migrants of Bangalore the chance to earn their livelihood. Urban public spaces – including pavements, streets, signal stops and bus stops – become places of work for the poor, although their presence in these places is often described in terms of encroachment and illegal operations. Disruption, eviction, displacement and movement are recurrent episodes in the life of the poor and the working classes in the city. Regardless of the time they spend in a locality, they are often vulnerable to their belongings being confiscated, their homes being demolished and eventually being resettled with little control over the process.

Given that urban space is a crucial resource, it has led to fierce competitive politics built around access and claims. Spatial restructuring in cities has a different impetus and takes forms such as beautification, road widening, the building of exclusive commercial and residential towers, and the development of business, to name a few. Eviction, restricted or prohibited access, loss of livelihoods and land transactions have been some of the ramifications of restructuring. Pushing non-productive and non-remunerative projects from the city centres to the periphery

and repurposing peri-urban land have been two major strategies directing the expansion and reordering of the city.

Understanding the centrality of space and location, this chapter explores the connections between displacement, city/periphery and education. Under the imperatives of urban reforms and development, the city space is routinely freed up for capital. What happens to public services? When people are on the move, what place does education hold? In particular, we look at the changing city spaces, disconnected peri-urban spaces and familial spaces as significant starting points for an investigation of educational access and experience. Our initial interest stemmed from a desire to understand the relative silence in the scholarship surrounding the metro and Bengaluru's restructuring.[10] Similarly, less than adequate research on peri-urban spaces by scholars of education also played a role in our wish to understand the complex connections between urban and social restructuring and public education by following the case of Bengaluru metro.[11]

In 2018, we conducted fieldwork in the rehabilitation colonies, meeting the residents on different occasions, both inside and outside the colonies. Regular presence and observation, semi-structured interviews and participation in meetings organised on the premises were instrumental in allowing us space and access to the social life of the colonies. Early in our fieldwork, we became aware of the separate and unequal sharing of space between the metro colony and metro staff quarters. The distinctions that these two types of housing produced were a recurrent topic of conversation among the residents of resettlement colonies. The employees living in staff quarters, we were told, were not thrilled to be next door to the resettled families. While the flats in staff quarters were earned under the terms of a legitimate contract, the metro colony housing was perceived as something that was 'given' to the people living there.

We begin by providing a larger context for educational expansion in Bengaluru, framing the expansion of private schools and intra-city mobility within the conceptual discussions of urban reforms and education. As the information industry is a prominent feature of Bengaluru and has moved from being an economic strategy to becoming a marker of Bengaluru's emergence as a globally attractive city, we proceed to present a reading of Bengaluru's transformation in the next section. In our discussion of the resettled colonies, we focus on the process of resettling in peri-urban areas, the possibilities of earning a living and gaining access to schooling in order to understand the movement and resettlement of the two communities.

Education and the City: Public Places and Private Enclaves

From its formation six centuries ago, Bengaluru experienced several shifts in administrative and political regimes as it developed into a prominent urban centre. A long trajectory of migration, trade and economic circuits has been crucial to the city's urban form. The growth of Bangalore's *pete* (market) system, the establishment of the cantonment and the presence of a fortified military station continue to influence present-day Bengaluru in many ways. The east–west zonation between the *pete* in the west, which had five centuries of history behind it, and the cantonment in the east, which represented Britain's encounter with the city in the early nineteenth century, led to the distinct development of temples, bazaars, taverns, churches and places of recreation. The influence of the cantonment also resulted in the establishment of a wide range of institutions, including schools. Started with the intention of providing a cultural space for the British, the schools run by the missionaries grew in size and reach. From teaching etiquette, manners and a Western sense of dressing to opening institutions for the poor, these educational institutions performed numerous functions. Training centres, schools and colleges became important for the industrialising city, and they continued to have close connections with the various phases of Bengaluru after independence. Developed around diverse industries and services – including textiles, space, defence, automotive, aviation and banking – Bengaluru's educational expansion after 1947 included a state university with a large number of affiliated colleges, professional colleges that were run by the government exclusively as well as through the grant-in-aid mode, and a growing number of scientific research institutions.

The history of educational institutions and their expansion after independence is closely connected to the ideology of nationalism and intimately tied to caste, class and gender relations. As education was understood to be one of the primary means of nation-building, progressive political struggles since the nineteenth century had also identified public education as critical to social justice and to the realisation of a plural, democratic society. A network of government schools, along with grant-in-aid schools, was built in the early decades of independence and was crucial in opening up spaces for marginalised communities. While government schools acquired a mass base, the heterogeneity of the schools decreased as the provision of private schooling began to rise steadily. The expansion of private schools on the one hand and a decline in interest in restoring the quality of government schools on the other affected enrolments. Over the years, government schools endured decreasing enrolment, uneven funding, contractual employment

and several interventions focusing on accountability. The schooling landscape of Bengaluru comprises a broad range of institutions, including government and aided schools; low-fee private or budget schools; alternative schools drawing on the ideas and methods of Montessori, Gandhi and J. Krishnamurti; and international schools.[12]

Covering an area of 741 kilometres, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), or Greater Bengaluru City Corporation, was formed in 2007 by merging the previous local body with the Bengaluru City Corporation. Eight neighbouring councils and 111 villages were merged to make the BBMP the single civic administrative body responsible for Bengaluru's affairs. Bruhat/greater Bengaluru is made up of two districts: Bangalore Rural and Bangalore Urban, each comprising four *taluk*s (district subdivisions). The educational index for all the *taluk*s is low, suggesting a difference between urban and peri-urban locations.[13]

In 2018–2019, Bangalore Urban had 1,403 government schools with 1.8 lakh students, while there were 3,426 private schools with almost 11 lakh students. The consistent growth of private schooling over the decades has occurred alongside the city's expansion. From low-fee and budget schools that mostly enrol students from poor families to the international schools that exclusively enrol elite students, the category of private schools is both broad and complex, serving different purposes and working under varied conditions. It is important to note the factors that have shaped the landscape of schooling in Bengaluru over the last few years. Shifts in the economic orientation of the city have led to the production of needs in terms of skilled staff, institutional support and infrastructure. The establishment of public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the 1970s resulted in large-scale migration to Bengaluru, as a number of small and medium industrial units opened up opportunities for employment. Several townships were built in the vicinity of the industrial area and included housing for the employees and schools that were managed by the Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) system.[14]

Soon after the shift towards information technology (IT) and allied services in the late 1980s, private schooling underwent an expansion as well as diversification. The expansion of IT and Bengaluru's emergence as the IT city further led to the production of a narrative of school choice for international communities living in the city, Indian returnees from the West and the local elite. Government schools that had been gradually weakened over the last few decades experienced a greater decline in the last two decades. In the interest of reducing operating costs, the government has merged public schools that do not have adequate enrolments. The merger of schools has often led to school closures, and, as a

result, the shrinking space of public schools in an expanding city like Bengaluru has reinforced the idea of ubiquitous, low-fee private schools.

Bengaluru has some highly selective public institutions of higher education that have made their mark nationally and internationally. Institutional ranking, student and faculty migration from other institutions and countries, and a specialised research ambience are features of these institutions. Higher educational institutions help to produce the much-celebrated image of Bengaluru as a city of science, innovation and entrepreneurialism. Through schools and extra-schooling activities such as study abroad programmes, science clubs and the institutionalisation of programmes focusing on 'gifted' students, a number of educational engagements in the city reproduce Bengaluru's brand-building exercise. At the same time, the public purpose of education and attention to exclusion highlights the politics of resources as well as possible transformative pedagogies in the shrinking public institutions.

Few things reveal how entrenched the nexus is between class and caste in schooling more than the operationalisation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in Indian cities in 2009. In addition to its primary aim of universalising primary education, the act includes some regulatory and norm-setting aspects. According to section 12(1) of the RTE Act, all private schools are required to reserve 25 per cent of their seats for students from economically weaker sections of the population. This provision was resisted in numerous ways by private schools. Examining the implementation of the RTE norms in schools in Bengaluru and Delhi, Archana Mehendale, Rahul Mukhopadhyay and Annie Namala (2015) state that most private schools viewed inclusion under this law as a 'problem' and found ways to sidestep the requirement on admissions. The act was far from prescribing equality in substantive terms; yet it brought out the deeply marked lines of class and caste in schooling. In an unbelievably blatant strategy of discrimination through differentiation, a school in Bengaluru resorted to cutting the hair of students who were enrolled under the RTE provisions.

The Urban and Education: Possible Interactions

How can we foreground the entanglements of education and the urban? As research in these areas illustrates, a great deal of common ground exists between urban studies and education; yet there are questions of perspective and focus that lie outside the intersections. Discussions of urban schools, especially in the Global North, were long locked in a diagnosis of failure and poverty on the one hand and interventions of target drive reforms on the other. In India, urban education carried different signifiers. In the popular imagination, schools

in cities were considered to be better equipped and of a higher standard than their counterparts in the villages. Given that the first universities and education-related employment historically developed in urban areas, cities were identified mainly as avenues for opportunities in higher education or the service sectors. In the last few decades, there has been a considerable growth and diversification of schools in urban India as high-fee charging, international schools establish themselves firmly in Indian cities, lead to a further homogenisation of elite schools and promote intense competition between private school bodies, thus strengthening schooling-related consumption.

It is useful to recall *The Urban Question* by Manuel Castells (1997), in which he puts forward a theoretical framework for understanding urban agglomeration. Seeing the urban as part of social formations, Castells draws attention to the social structuring of space, organisations, institutions, politics, state intervention and resistance. Castells's work has resonated especially with scholars of education because it discusses how contemporary cities display numerous contradictions of capital, the ubiquity of consumption and the central tension between the unbridled capital and welfare provision. In a deeply reflective piece drawing attention to critical intersectional possibilities between education and urban engagements, Gerald Grace (2007) calls for a move away from the science policy and engineering that influence urban educational practice. Instead, he suggests, we should turn our attention to

> theorizing the nature of the urban and establishing a coherent rationale for urban education study; recovering a sense of the historical in the study of urban schooling; confronting the political and the economic in a more radical way; engaging with a wider range of cultural and pedagogic theory and attempting to situate empirical inquiries in relation to these wider frameworks. (Grace 2007, 32–33)

The small yet significant body of scholarship on education and urban studies in India chooses to go beyond the urban as a locational detail. Instead, it is invested in processes, historical trajectories and transformations. Geetha B. Nambissan (2017) offers an example of this when she writes about how the history of education and its evolution are related to developments in urban studies. The independent Indian state focused on agrarian reforms, national integration and the policies of economic and social redistribution. Planning and developing a strong public sector, heavy industries and agricultural output became priorities. The growth of towns and commercial centres at this time was connected to their

proximity to hubs of heavy industry that housed townships and agriculturally rich regions.

> The post 1990s saw a significant shift in the economic policies of the Indian state leading to the implementation of major economic reforms – structural adjustment programmes and liberalisation. Though some welfare measures continued from the earlier era, a neoliberal regime was put into place resulting in liberalization, deregulation and an increasing integration with the global economy. A new service economy is now becoming predominant with information technology, software and services including education, emerging as key areas for high economic growth opening up for foreign investment. Economic reforms have been accompanied by new forms of governance in urban areas that in turn are leading to privatization of formerly state-provided services, public–private partnerships, and a restructuring of urban spaces. (Nambissan 2017, 306)

The changes brought on by city-driven policies after liberalisation produced aspirational categories such as global cities, world-class cities and smart cities – each requiring a specific kind of focus in urban policy. At around the same time, global schools/world-class universities and smart schools entered the field of the quickly growing and resource-intensive private schools and became spaces for the greater concentration of elite interests and practices. Recently, cities have become significant for developments in education in other ways. First, international student mobility has been on the rise in the last few years with India in second place on the list of countries that send students abroad for higher education. Cities have become significant in mobilising education-driven migration through a range of preparatory activities such as coaching centres, visa assistance and tie-ups with international campuses. Second, cities have become cultural enclaves in which the elite can manage the chances to advantage their children.

Reading Bengaluru through Transformations

As scholars of Indian social transformation have pointed out, Indian cities were rarely the focus of social research post-independence. While rural and agrarian issues were at the centre of most social science research in the 1960s and 1970s, urban issues appeared to be largely confined to the four metropolitan cities. Despite their long history and transformations during the twentieth century, the other cities were rarely the object of scholarly investment. New urban industrial towns, the establishment of higher educational institutions and the

expansion of public sector–based employment led to large-scale labour flow towards urban areas. Cities also offered chances, albeit limited, to escape the caste-ridden structures and practices that defined rural India. In the decades following independence, housing for low- and middle-income urban residents became part of city planning; however, the elite and government employees were the primary beneficiaries of subsidised housing. Nambissan (2017) writes: 'An increasing proportion of the urban poor were forced to live in unauthorized, unplanned settlements – slums and shanties that lacked the most basic amenities and conveniences'.

The emergence and establishment of the information industry has been the primary marker of contemporary Bengaluru, significantly altering the city's landscape. With the coming of IT, Bengaluru was plugged into the network of cities as well as an information economy that primarily operated transnationally. The impact of IT on the city has received scholarly attention especially in terms of changing social relations, new forms of labour and new practices of consumption.

The transformation of Bengaluru, however, has occurred within a particular historical context and under certain conditions. Narendar Pani, Tara Anand and Vinod Vyasulu (1985) read Bengaluru's transformation as taking place in three phases: the colonial administration securing the economic and military establishment of the city, the formation of the garment industry after independence and its expansion following the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) of the 1970s,[15] and the sector-specific specialisation in information technology of the 1990s.

Focusing on urban Bangalore after independence, Janaki Nair (2005) contextualises it in three phases: the establishment of industrial townships (1947–1960), the leapfrogging of various institutional setups (1960s–1980s) and enclave-driven urbanism that started in the 1980s. As IT and IT-enabled sectors became defining features of the city, they shaped work, leisure and consumption.[35] Planning became the significant force driving the new information-centred urban form to thrive. Amassing strategic power to determine the course to be taken by the city and establishing rigid land-use controls, the planning enterprise attracted more funding, gained access to state and corporate powers and attained legitimacy in crafting the vision of global Bengaluru. In their reading of Bengaluru's transformation, H. S. Sudhira, T. V. Ramachandra and M. H. Bala Subrahmanya (2017) pay attention to a number of processes, including an increase in the migrant population, changes in the dynamics of the land market over the last few decades and the fate of many economic activities outside

the IT sector that provide livelihoods for many people, but are not supported by national or state policy.

The contemporary restructuring of Bengaluru, much like that of many other cities, has taken place in the context of larger economic changes. Policies of economic liberalisation severely affected the industrial sector in cities. The loss of employment, the shutting down or handing over of industrial units and more informal work practices were the direct result of the policies of liberalisation. The economic and social reorientation was closely connected to spatial restructuring. As emptied-out industrial tracts were made available for private investment, real estate in urban areas expanded a great deal, both in a real and a speculative sense. Urban restructuring through planning, redevelopment and beautification projects brought key economic enterprises into urban governance. Reordering and gentrification are part of Indian megacities, where slum evictions, the clearing of people and economic activities from public spaces such as roads and footpaths, and the constant relocation of housing for the poor are mechanisms commonly used to control access and movement.

> From the perspective of political economy of urbanization, the state sponsored urban restructuring process can be problematized in two differing and yet interrelated ways: firstly, there is an overwhelming evidence of corporate and private sector influence on policy; secondly, the increasing role of PPP (public– private partnership) in urban redevelopment projects to recoup finances (which does not fully acknowledge the efforts towards demographic and social segregation) has eventually socio-economically and politically marginalized the urban poor in the city. (Smitha 2016: 194)

While BBMP is the nodal agency for matters in general, there are a number of parastatal bodies that have gained prominence in the last few years. The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) is one such agency closely involved in land use, regulation and zoning. The precedence of unelected parastatal bodies, which are often composed of international development agencies, corporations and local government, over the locally elected body is reflected in the planning and administration of the city.

In a shift after 2000, the policies and practices of urban development largely revolved around infrastructure, speculation and entrepreneurialism. In a move away from housing, natural resources and sanitation, urban reforms focused on flyovers, airports, roads and buildings. Infrastructure-driven visions of the cities in India were invested in the future, in parallel with other cities, such as Shanghai and Singapore. Infrastructural regimes significantly affected the spatial

contours of the city – even when they were suspended or failed – and they created newer aesthetics and modes of access. Speculative urbanism, as researchers Michael Goldman (2011) and others state, became explicitly connected with the financialisation of urban services and projects. In addition to privatising services and introducing public–private models of delivery, the story of speculative urbanism is essentially about asset-making. A decisive step towards pro-growth policies through a number of urban development strategies is often described as 'entrepreneurial urbanism'. Fostering competitive strategies and attracting new forms of capital have been the features of entrepreneurial activities that create new economic places in the city.

As the poster child of post-2000 reforms, the metro project fits well within Bengaluru's urban strategy. On the one hand, it clearly shows how private land was transferred from low-income, working-class *basti*s to massive transportation-driven multi-agency interests. While the residents moved eventually, moving has always been how the poor communities respond to mega changes in the city.[39]

Despite the fact that Bengaluru's Metro project has been in the making for more than two decades and that it has changed the city's spatial and economic contours, the metro has not been addressed sufficiently by scholars. In one of the early responses, K. C. Smitha (2016) foregrounds spatial changes in Bengaluru within the larger context of entrepreneurial urbanism in India. Acting mainly as nodes of networks and linkages in the mobility of capital, Indian cities, Smitha states, are changing the structure and organisation of urban governance.

> Underlying the twin process of institutional and spatial changes, are cities particularly in the global south, creating new economic spaces in the context of ascendance of information technology, global operation of firms, corporate and service sectors and in the process recasting work and labour relations ... extolling place-based features and associated imaginaries. (Smitha 2016: 194)

Building on two decades of urban redevelopment plans, the second generation of urban reforms is driven by specific goals centred on economic growth. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (n.d.), for instance, contextualises the rationale of urban policy after 2000 thus: 'For Indian cities to become growth-oriented and productive, it is essential to achieve a world class urban system. This in turn depends on attaining efficiency and equity in the delivery and financing of urban infrastructure.' Postulating a higher rate of urbanisation by 2020, the policy considerations saw cities as 'engines of growth' for the economy. In this view, urban areas were to contribute significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP). In order to achieve this, infrastructure services such as roads, power,

transportation, water supply and sanitation became the areas of intervention. Partnership with private investment agencies and chargeable service fees became associated with infrastructure development in cities. The intra-city metro project began its early operations in Delhi, Kolkata and Bengaluru, before gradually moving to other cities. Part of a global venture, the metro was initiated under the terms of bilateral agreements and multi-country partnerships in finance and technology. Government (central and state) funding provides 59 per cent of its running costs, while the remaining 41 per cent is generated from international financial institutions and bilateral contract agreements.

Bengaluru's classification as a city in need of transport reforms was connected to its expansion over the last few decades, a dramatic increase in the number of vehicles on its streets (25 per cent every year) and a growing consumer base. 'In the past decade, more than 500 multinational corporations have established office parks, call centres, and luxury hotels … Bengaluru is now recognized as a "global" city and a preferred choice of many global corporations to set up their businesses' (Smitha and Pal 2018). In 2005, the earlier Bangalore Mass Rapid Transit Limited was dissolved and the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) was set up to construct and run the metro train in the city, in order to meet the growing demand for efficient city transport. The BMRCL has been the main operating agency since 2005.

The metro plan was to cover the city in two phases and in two corridors: east–west bound and north–south bound. The initial projection of land required by the BMRCL, made in a survey, was 230 acres for the first phase. According to the survey, affected people include the following: (*a*) directly affected households, (*b*) those households adjacent to the railway line and (*c*) the general public/commuters (BMRCL 2003).

The Politics of Educational Access

Like shopping malls, multiplex cinemas and expensive coffee shops, the metro also offers an 'experience' as a commodity. Influencing cultural geography and consumption practices, the metro brought world-class transportation to the cities of the developing world. As the capital-intensive project has shaped up in Bengaluru over recent decades, it has also meant long-standing arbitrary construction activity on busy roads, delays in completing the planned phases of metro lines and contract staff working on the construction sites in hazardous conditions. As it created consumption, new aesthetics and different ways to access the city, the globally produced metro project also resulted in constricted access and the reproduction of inequality. The resettlement colonies, by their

actual movement, became part of the new margins of the city, turning into an abject space.[45]

> [A]n abject space is constituted; an excluded site, a zone of uninhabitability and, therefore, a specter that is threatening to the production of subjectivity . . . These unlivable spaces, these abject modes of existence, these shameful zones and territories house egos that are neither employable nor educable but that do serve as a boundary to circumscribe and define the territory of subjectivity. It is important to clarify that these feelings of shame and denial are not necessarily experienced by those who live in the shantytown. The notion of abjection as employed here refers to the possibility of evidencing a connection between the positions of those who live in the shantytown and those who live outside. (Grinberg 2011: 162)

Sylvia Grinberg's (2011) work on schooling in clusters of extreme urban poverty in Buenos Aires looks at the production of undesirable, expendable neighbourhoods and their relationship with, and claims on, the civic administration. India's urban policy and expansion produce the peri-urban/periphery to serve a number of functions. First, 'peri-urban' is a descriptor for the transitioning rural areas adjoining large cities. The conversion of agricultural land into roads and real estate has marked the peri-urban towns as they shift and expand. It is also a strategic space into which the vulnerable and expendable can be moved from the city. The peripheralisation of the urban poor is evident in the way that new fringes and boundaries are created as the old peripheries are accommodated over time. Analysing the urban expansion and the expulsion of the poor, Gautam Bhan and Swati Shivananad (2013: 55) discuss the process of 'un-settling' in the city: 'It is a process of settlement that is never complete, one in which the poor are constantly (un)settled regardless of how many years they may have lived in the city, and one that in turn, constantly produces and maintains the contemporary Indian city itself as unsettled.'

The metro colonies are part of the expanding fringe of Bengaluru. For Metro Colony-I, the busy stretch of Magadi Road takes off to Sunkadakatte town, which is now a buzzing place with street markets and shops. Further off, in a sparsely populated neighbourhood, the metro colony and staff quarter have been built.

As we discovered in our interaction, conditions had not changed much after eight years. Water leaking through cracks in the roofs during the rains is very common and plumbing issues persist. When writing to the BMRCL did not result in any action, the residents contributed towards the cost of roof repairs, as it would be very difficult to live there during the monsoon. There is no provision

for garbage collection at the colonies. While the metro staff quarters have water, electricity and better buildings, the housing projects adjacent to them lack basic facilities.

The selective provisions of basic housing remain a source of anger among the residents of the metro colony who were quite upfront about it when they recounted: 'The staff quarters have regular water supply, but they won't give [it to] us! Their requests for repair are addressed in considerable time but we can't request BMRCL to repair our houses. We know they [BMRCL] do not want to hear or see us because we will always be slum-dwellers to them.' Another source of anxiety among the residents is valid papers. In an act of open defiance, a resident tried to immolate himself in front of Vidhana Soudha as some of the residents were denied the rehabilitation package on account of incomplete documentation.[48] Some residents continue to worry about having the right papers after the rehabilitation, and whether they can be evicted, as some documents are pending from the BMRCL. Some worry about whether they could be evicted on 'technical grounds', especially if they speak up against the conditions in which they live. The most important issue for the resettled families is their need to have valid papers from the government, stating that the houses are in their name. This is something that was promised, but for a number of residents it has not happened and is a serious concern.

Work

Living further away from the city has affected chances of employment for the residents of the metro colony, especially in Sunkadkatte. The move has been hard for the many women who were sanitary workers in one of the major hospitals in the city or in large departmental stores or earned money doing domestic work. Focusing on gender and its connection with the rehabilitated colonies, K.C. Smitha and Baru Pal (2018) state that older women have been disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of employment opportunities as

> they could not travel the long distance to the core city area and afford the cost of travelling. In the labour market, new jobs are often not offered to these women due to their advancing years. As a result, their contribution to the family's income has drastically reduced. Similarly, those women who were employed as construction coolies or daily wage labourers could not afford to continue with their jobs for the obvious reason that they were now far away from the core city area. With the long commuting time and the associated

> travel cost involved, it did not make economic sense for them to continue with their old jobs. (Smith and Pal 2018: 73)

Loss of employment for women also figured prominently in our interactions with the residents. For a number of women we spoke to, lack of childcare facilities and poor transport to the city affect their job opportunities. Many women who previously did domestic work such as cooking and cleaning in people's homes lost their jobs as their employers preferred someone who lived nearby. In order to continue working in the same line, the women of metro colonies now need to spend long hours in the city to cover the cost of transport. Given that there are no functioning *anganwadi*s nearby, long absences are difficult for parents with young children. The distance between their place of residence and possible job opportunities is 6–8 kilometres; and for residents of Sunkadakatte, access to public transport is 2 kilometres away. Men who work as daily wage labourers find it hard to cope with the unpredictability of daily wage work. Those who are economically better off find alternative means of transport to take them closer to the city, such as used and shared two-wheelers, but in the absence of regular work, such investments become a financial burden on families. Residents of Peenya have greater chances of work as there are small-scale industrial units nearby. Yet, except for a few residents, most others need to access other parts of the city to find work. Some residents of the colony have secured work in Malleshwaram's Mantri Square Mall, which now stands where their neighbourhood was once.

Schooling

'Sometimes our children are scared to go to school because they are punished there. Perhaps because they come from this colony.' A parent began talking about her child who had enrolled in, and dropped out of, two schools before finding her current school, where she was happy. Students from marginalised locations often shoulder the burdens of deep systemic prejudices against them that are visible throughout their schooling. The sense of place continues to be the primary marker of their success or failure at school. In a city like Bengaluru, with its spatial reordering and layers of fringes, the resettlement colonies are easily constructed as places of inadequacy and instability, and hence not conducive to learning. In her work on schooling and the disadvantaged communities in Delhi, Anita Rampal (2017) brings out the profound dissonance faced by urban poor children, living in slums with a chronic water shortage while having civic conservation lessons that insist on the need to turn off taps, something directed

at children living in middle-class homes with a piped water supply. Pointing out how the civilising agenda of school is tirelessly pushed onto poor children by the government as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Rampal states that the poor are there

> to be rescued from the abyss, where the discipline of school is meant to be contrasted with the chaos and squalor in their homes. In fact, the disdain faced by the urban poor in our city schools is reminiscent of nineteenth century England, where the Compulsory Education Act of 1870 gave state sanction to the purported maintenance of 'order' through often oppressive measures. (Rampal 2017: 288)

Unlike parts of Bengaluru, the metro colonies do not have many schools in their vicinity. The absence of public services marks the transitioning peri-urban in obvious ways. Educational expansion and the surge in different types of schools and after-school programmes in the city have occurred alongside the shrinking, closure and mergers of government schools. Securing admission in schools from class 1 is a recurring topic of conversation, and a number of strategies are employed by parents. In addition to the aided and nearest available government school, low-fee private schools and mid-range private schools are explored. Given that most private schools now require some preschooling experience, parents have no choice but to enrol their children in preschools. The privately run preschools are expensive, charging up to 30,000 rupees a year. While this is a high sum for a number of families, the preschool is thought of as an essential requirement for subsequent classes in other schools. Towards this end, parents apply to a number of schools as part of the affirmative action provision, which secures 25 per cent of places for economically disadvantaged communities.

Securing school admission through the RTE Act is very unpredictable, so multiple options have to be kept open. The RTE admission process includes spending money, as it has its own economic circuits. Those who secured admissions through the RTE Act told us that 'even though there are no fees charged, the school administration asked us [to pay] rupees 20,000 towards school-related expenses such as uniforms, shoes, bags and books and another 10,000 towards transport. Paying this much is hard'. A number of families have begun taking short-term loans in order to pay the initial amounts that are needed once an admission is secured. It is, however, a concern as to how they would manage if similar 'additional expenses' were to be demanded by the school next year. Since the school admission process through the RTE Act has been put online, it is

hard for the families who do not have access to the internet. In most cases, these families have established connections with cybercafes, where the employees help them out with the applications for school places.

It is worth noting the importance that 'good schools' hold for parents. The preference for getting into schools such as KVs or private schools through RTE provisions, despite significant additional financial concerns, needs to be analysed. There has been a considerable amount of research on parental preference for English as medium of instruction and the growing influence of private schools. It is important to tease out what lies behind the notion of 'good schools'. Discipline, communication with parents and keeping children on track with their progress are some of the elements that define good schools. Coaching, especially in English, is one of the main ways in which families attempt to create the 'supportive home-background' expected by schools. In what ways do the private schools and English-medium schools merge? Given that there are a number of private schools that do not meet the expected standards but are expensive, how do we make sense of the preference? As schools become financial stressors for families who are in a precarious position to start with, it is important to understand the notion of choice in greater detail.

The two resettlement colonies highlight the contradictions of infrastructure-driven development. Those displaced in favour of infrastructure development and efficient urban transport do not themselves have access to good housing infrastructure or transport. While the consultative process of eviction and resettlement protects the residents' rights to secure housing titles, the discourse of community participation and community-driven resettlement is hollow in practice. The two colonies also show what it means to be parenting under conditions of precarity. In her work *Ghetto Schooling* (1997), Jean Anyon articulates a historical relationship between cities and their underclasses. Given that the narratives of urban renewal and reform in the United States are closely connected to educational reforms that emphasise strict learning outcomes and short-term results, Anyon proposes a move away from urban/educational reform and towards urban/educational politics: '[U]ntil the economic and political systems in which the cities are enmeshed are themselves transformed so they may be more democratic and productive for urban residents, educational reformers have little chance of effecting long- lasting educational changes in city schools' (Anyon 1997: 42). As educational access is reduced to gross enrolment ratio (GER), the call to take the politics of access seriously merits attention.

Conclusion

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of India announced a national lockdown on 25 March 2020. Soon after the lockdown, even as all economic activities were suspended and roads were cordoned off, a record number of people left for their hometowns. There was a massive exodus of workers, many with children, who undertook long journeys by any available means of transport in response to precarity at their places of work.[16] While uncertainty of various kinds and the absence of basic social security triggered this intense distress migration, it also revealed the connections between places of safety, places of residence and mobility. While migrant workforces contribute significantly to the growth of Indian cities, urban areas are transitory and unstable for a majority of workers. While a staggering number of people move between far and near regions to earn their livelihoods, social security provisions are of most benefit to those who have been in a place for a considerable time. Education manifests the stark difference between the migrant and settled populations. While mobility has become central to the workforce in a number of sectors, including agriculture and construction, schools continue to be stationary and rarely move with people.

Research on peri-urban places has highlighted the ways in which these sites are understood as auxiliary, underdeveloped and unproductive. The complete absence of basic facilities in the peri-urban regions indicates that these regions are left for private interests to develop. While the various types of educational schemes have been crucial in facilitating greater access to education and improving its quality in rural and Adivasi regions, peri-urban areas have not yet found space in education policy.

The resettlement sites and the peri-urban areas highlight the crisis of education and the crisis of urban growth and city formation. Under the current uneven conditions, the right to the city and the right to education, in their substantive articulations, are essential for transformative and equitable social life and education.

Notes

1. This chapter uses the terms 'neighbourhood', 'working-class neighbourhood' and *basti* for what is often called a slum.
2. The names of the two displaced neighbourhoods have been retained, as have been the names of the areas where the resettled colonies were set up. Pseudonyms have been used for all the individuals.
3. The city is known as Bengaluru (the official name currently) and Bangalore (formerly). I have used both names interchangeably in this chapter. The

inclusion of both names of the city is intentional as it underscores that places are not singular and fixed, but plural and constantly evolving. In everyday connections, in official and unofficial dealings, and in memory, cities are referred to by different names.

4. This is a fairly common practice that the middle classes routinely engage in, using the strategies of mobilising their social capital and social solidarity.
5. The affected neighbourhoods are named after two anti-caste thinkers. Basaveshwara, a twelfth-century philosopher and poet, wrote extensively against the caste-ridden Hindu religion. The second neighbourhood, Jai Bhim Nagar, alludes to B. R. Ambedkar, scholar and one of the most prolific critics of the caste system. The names of these neighbourhoods indicate the subalternity of caste and class.
6. The existence of a consultative process in urban restructuring is unusual, especially when the affected neighbourhoods are non-elite. The residents of Jai Bhim Nagar went to court against the potential evictions when the BMRCL started acquiring land, and they were resettled near the Peenya industrial area.
7. There was no provision of piped water in either of the colonies when the residents moved in. Metro Colony-I in Sunkadakatte managed to get the water supply going after following up with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).
8. Eviction of poor people from public spaces as well as from their places of residence has been a common strategy for controlling urban landscapes. In 2013, the BBMP demolished the housing for economically weaker sections (EWSs) in Ejipura and subsequently provided resettlement housing in Sulikunte village.
9. Legally notified neighbourhoods are normally protected against evictions. The residents of older neighbourhoods often include second-generation migrants who have networks in the city. The BMRCL developed the consultative aspect of the resettlement process after a court order. Regardless, the process adopted by the BMRCL can be seen as part of the relatively new urban development strategy built around the vocabulary of community-led resettlement and stakeholder consultation.
10. There have been newspaper reports and follow-ups of various aspects of Bengaluru's metro rail. Gautam Sonti and Usha Rao's film *Our Metropolis* (2014) looks at the initial years of the metro project in Bengaluru.
11. The peri-urban has been researched in terms of issues pertaining to water, housing and electricity. See Narain, Banerji and Ananad (2014) and Shaw (2005).

12. There are a number of other schooling arrangements that are outside the broad typology discussed. In particular, there is an increase in the number of private prep schools that are unaided in structure, charge high fees and help students prepare for competitive entrance tests.
13. Karnataka received 18 per cent of the total rural-to-urban migration in 2011, and Bengaluru was the destination for the majority of migrants.
14. The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act, manages central schools in India and abroad.
15. The Multifibre Arrangement (MFA) was a bilateral arrangement that was formalised in 1974. It set up fixed quotas for garment export from developing countries. Significantly impacting the textile and garment industries, it led to the practices of contractual and low-wage labour in the garment sector.
16. There have been a number of useful reports on distress migration of 2020 since the announcement of the national lockdown in March after the COVID-19 outbreak. For an in-depth analysis, see the Migrant Workers Solidarity Network (2020).

References

Anyon, J. 1997. *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). n.d. *Bangalore Bruhat Municipal Corporation*. http://www.bbmp.gov.in/en/web/guest/aboutus. Accessed 8 January 2021.

Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL). 2003. *Bengaluru Metro (Phase I): Environmental Impact Assessment Studies and Management Plans*, vol. 5. Bangalore: BMRCL.

Bhan, G., and S. Shivananad. 2013. 'Un-Settling the City: Analyzing Displacement in Delhi from 1990 to 2007'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 48(13): 54–61.

Castells, M. 1997. *The Urban Question*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Grace, G. 2007. 'Urban Education Theory Revisited'. In *International Handbook of Urban Education*, pt 2, edited by W. T. Pink and G. W. Noblit, 959–978. Dordrecht: Springer.

Goldman, M. 2011. 'Speculating on the Next World City'. In *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global*, edited by A. Roy and A. Ong, 229–258. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Grinberg, S. M. 2011. 'Territories of Schooling and Schooling Territories in Contexts of Extreme Urban Poverty in Argentina: Between Management and Abjection'. *Emotion, Space and Society* 4(3): 160–171.

Mehendale, A., R. Mukhopadhyay and A. Namala. 2015. 'Right to Education and Inclusion in Private Unaided Schools: An Exploratory Study in Bengaluru and Delhi'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 50(7): 43–57.

Migrant Workers Solidarity Network. 2020. 'Citizens and the Sovereign: Stories from the Largest Human Exodus in Contemporary Indian History'. https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/citizens-and-the-sovereign-stories-from-the-largest-human-exodus-in-contemporary-indian-history. Accessed 9 January 2025.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. n.d. 'Urban Reforms'. http://mohua.gov.in/cms/urban-reforms.php. Accessed 15 March 2021.

Nair, J. 2005. *The Promise of the Metropolis: Bangalore's 20th Century*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Nambissan, G. B. 2017. 'The Urban and Education in India: Section Editor's Introduction'. In *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*, vol. 1, edited by W. T. Pink and G. W. Noblit, 299–318. Cham: Springer.

Narain, V., P. Banerji and P. Anand. 2014. 'Peri-Urban Interface of Indian Cities: Growth, Governance and Local Initiatives'. East-West Center Working Papers, January (3), 1–34.

Pani, N., T. Anand and V. Vyasulu. 1985. 'Impact of Colonialism on the Economic Structure of Indian Cities: 1800–1900'. In *Essays on Bangalore*, edited by V. Vyasalu and R. Amulya, 1–34. Bangalore: Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology.

Pink, W. T., and G. T. Noblit. 2017. *Second International Handbook of Urban Education*. Cham: Springer.

Rampal, A. 2017. 'Ducked or Bulldozed? Education of Deprived Urban Children in India'. In *International Handbook of Urban Education*, pt 1, edited by W. T. Pink and G. Boblit, 285–304. Dordrecht: Springer.

Shaw, A. 2005. 'Peri-Urban Interface of Indian Cities: Growth, Governance and Local Initiatives'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(2): 8-14.

Smitha, K. C. 2016. 'Spatial Reproduction of Urban Poverty in Entrepreneurial City: Bengaluru, India'. In *Entrepreneurial Urbanism in India*, edited by K. C. Smitha, 193–220. Singapore: Springer.

Smitha, K. C., and B. D. Pal. 2018. 'Spatial Reproduction of Urban Poverty in Global City: Gender, Informality and Mobility in Bengaluru'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 53(3): 67–76.

Sudhira, H. S., T. V. Ramachandra and M. H. Bala Subrahmanya. 2017. 'City Profile: Bangalore'. *Cities* 24(5): 379–390.