

Bangalore: Globalisation and Fragmentation in India's Hightech-Capital

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Summary

The meteoric rise of the South Indian megacity of Bangalore (alias Bengaluru) to a globally integrated location of software development and other modern service industries produces profound changes in the metropolitan social map, creating aggravating disparities and a highly fragmented and polarised urban society. Bangalore is becoming what is called a multiply divided city where both social and geographical barriers are reinforced. While a relatively tiny stratum of an affluent urban elite takes benefit from these transformations, the urban poor are further marginalised.

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1 Introduction

During the 1990s, the emerging megacity of Bangalore (re-named as Bengaluru in 2006) with its six million inhabitants developed into one of the hot new tech cities worldwide. Currently the metropolis absorbs about four billion US-Dollar in foreign direct investments and its per capita income is the highest of any Indian city. For many supporters of a deregulated and liberalised global economy, the city, which has been labelled the 'Electronics Capital of India' and 'India's Silicon Valley', represents one particularly positive showcase of the new opportunities for Newly Industrialising Countries to benefit from recent trends in economic globalisation. In order to augment this optimistic perspective with a more sceptical point of view, this paper focuses on the risks and negative effects of globalisation on the metropolitan social map. The central objective is to analyse the interrelations between globalisation, metropolitan restructuring and the capabilities of the most vulnerable urban dwellers to secure their livelihoods in a sustainable manner.

2 Bangalore's Meteoric Rise to a Globally Integrated 'E-Region'

Bangalore, the state capital of Karnataka, is located on the southern part of the Deccan Plateau near the border of two other South Indian states, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and not far from the third, Kerala. At an elevation of about 900m, it is