

PERIURBANISATION AND LIVELIHOOD PRACTICES: EXPLORING EVERYDAY LIFE AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES IN A CHANGING AGRARIAN ECONOMY

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Abstract: Global phenomena such as urbanisation interact with the peripheries of cities by mediating through markets of land, labour, and agriculture, impacting livelihood practices of diverse communities. Through the lens of glocalisation, this paper examines the transitions in livelihood practices by examining how people mediate and negotiate with the forces of periurbanisation in their everyday life. It also examines how people construct and narrate these experiences across intersectional contexts of class, caste, gender, and age. The study region is located in the peripheries of the global city Bangalore¹. It draws from interviews conducted between September 2019 and March 2020, that capture practices, experiences, resource access, and changing context. While the study region witnessed a progressive linking of agriculture, labour, and land markets that spanned across regional and global levels, these markets interacted with each other resulting in a decline and localised agriculture system. People engaged with these changing markets based on their capacities of access to resources, while these engagements are also subject to interactions with state, non-state, and social institutions. However, since social groups across caste, gender, and age have skewed access to land and education that are critical for an engagement with a declining agrarian economy, the periurban process also has skewed implications resulting in persistent inequities.

Keywords: Bangalore, market integration, periurbanisation, resource access, social groups.

INTRODUCTION

This paper examines how urbanisation as a global phenomenon interacts with the everyday practices of rural com-

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munities located at the peripheries of a metropolitan city in India. Urbanisation and the shift to an urban workforce are now part of significant “geographical restructuring” processes (Swyngedouw 2004), which have gained far greater momentum in nations like India after the liberalisation of its economy in the 1990s. Consequently, there has been an expansion of cities beyond their official boundaries, also known as periurbanisation or urban sprawl, where the population in peripheries of large metropolises grew faster than that in the city core (Shaw 2005). The urban agglomeration² of Bangalore that consists of the city, its immediate towns and rural outgrowths, for instance, increased in area from 276.4 sq km in 1991 to 784.42 sq km in 2011 with a corresponding doubling of population from 41 lakh to 85 lakh (Eswar 2017). Such processes have shaped gradual but immanent transformations in the socio-economic fabric of societies located in urban villages³ as well as in the periurban areas of cities. These transformations are intense in peripheries of global cities like Bangalore that host airports, resorts, international schools, and golf courses in its peripheries.

Peripheries witness transitions in their economies from agriculture-oriented practices to urban labour oriented livelihoods, a transition that rests upon a change in resource use such as land, commons, and water sources. There exists a tendency to examine agriculture practices in the peripheries as being oriented only towards the urban city when studies depict agriculture land use as a function of distance from the city (Patil et al. 2018), particularly high crop intensity practices of growing irrigated commercial crops of fruits, vegetables (Gowda et al. 2012; World Bank 2013; Patil et al. 2019) and high dairying practices (Gowda et al. 2012; World Bank 2013) present closer to cities. Only a few studies view the peri urban as two-way urban-rural flows/linkages (Tacoli 1998; Narain, Nischal 2007) and depict the inability of the peri urban to link with urban agriculture markets due to lack of water sources at the regional level (Narain, Nischal 2007; Patil et al. 2018). However, there is no adequate understanding of whether these peripheries also link to regions beyond the immediate urban and how this has changed over time. Studies also depict

a decline in agriculture practices due to land acquisition (Narain 2009; Mallik, Sen 2011; Vij 2014) and emerging urban land markets (Narain, Nischal 2007). But the nature of land markets (Benjamin 2008; Goldman 2011) is not as well understood as that of markets for agricultural produce. Thus, on aspects of agriculture produce and agricultural land, there is a need to understand how the peripheries link with the immediate urban and beyond. There is also a need to recognise the role of institutions in facilitating such transitions since farmers negotiate with institutions of the state, political, as well as the non-state (Benjamin 2008; Balakrishnan 2013) to engage with these changing markets of produce and land.

A decline in agriculture is associated with increased integration with labour markets in the periphery. People take up non-agriculture activities such as self-employment, and formal as well as informal labour (Hillyer et al. 2002; Narain, Nischal 2007; Narain 2009; Mallik, Sen 2011). Such transitions in livelihoods are often subject to access to land (Narain 2009; Mallik, Sen 2011; Tuyen et al. 2014; Patil et al. 2019) and education (Mallik, Sen 2011); due to which processes such as urbanisation interfaces differently with class-caste actors often resulting in inequities (Narain 2009; Mallik, Sen 2011; Vij 2014). However, the peri urban has diverse actors including women (Hillyer et al. 2002; Vij 2014; Thara 2016) and the elderly/young (Hillyer et al. 2002), who could perceive and interact with local institutions and global forces in different ways (Swyngedouw 2004; Thara 2016). Thus, in transitioning agriculture economies, there is a need to capture the nuances of how people located at the intersection of social positions of caste, gender, and age; interact with institutions of the state, non-state, and culture (Balakrishnan 2013; Vij 2014; Thara 2016) to engage with the changing context.

Whilst recognising the importance of global forces, a bottom-up understanding is also required to locate the “global” in the “local”. This is similar to a shift from the “geography of labour” perspective that focuses on capital to that of “labour geography” which focuses on labour; to provide meaningful insights on how structures and practices shape “local capital” and “forms of worker resistance” that are embedded within

such processes (Padmanabhan 2012). Thus, to understand how global processes such as urbanisation are embedded in the peripheries, one needs to place the periphery at the centre and examine the changing economies of this region with relation to other regions and how diverse people located in the peripheries interact with these changes by negotiating with institutions of state and society. A suitable approach that paves way for such an understanding and reflection would be the lens of “glocalisation”, a critique of the hegemonising of global in global-local distancing (Robertson 1994) and extreme focus on global scales of economies in globalisation (Swyngedouw 2004). Synthesising the global and local (Robertson 1994) and rescaling of economies to both the regional and transnational level that is bound by institutions (Swyngedouw 2004) are two key aspects of glocalisation which when adopted to the peri urban process will help locate the changing and multi-region oriented economies of the peri urban and its interface with diverse population interacting with multiple institutions in the peripheries.

It is through the lens of glocalisation, this paper examines the transitions in the livelihood practices of rural communities situated at the peripheries of Bangalore city in India. This paper recognises the relevance of studying the dynamics at the glocal by examining how people mediate and negotiate with the forces of periurbanisation in their everyday life, and how they construct and narrate these experiences across intersectional contexts of class, caste, gender, and age. The theoretical assumption guiding such an approach is that we could unearth the deeper meaning and impacts of urbanisation by closely studying the interaction between global forces and local contexts, and consequently arriving at new meanings on the “micro” (De Haan, Zoomers 2003). In this paper, spaces in the periphery of cities act as sites of peri urban processes where diverse actors interact and interface with the glocal, a context where conversion of land to urban forms and diversification of livelihoods is prominent. Such interactions are largely mediated through the markets that engage with land, labour, and agriculture (Bryant et al. 1982). The guiding questions are: what is the nature of market linkages in agriculture, labour, and re-

sources of the periphery and how has this changed over the years? How do intersectional actors mediate and negotiate with these markets that are bound by state and social institutions while shaping their lives?

STUDYING THE GLOCAL THROUGH EVERYDAY PRACTICES

The “everyday” as a concept helps bridge the particular with the general, the agency with structure, resistance with power (Highmore 2002a: 5), and likewise global with the local. It forms the basis of sociological studies that focus on the “routine” as well as on events (Lefebvre in Ebrey, 2016: 161) that may be spread across hours, days, weeks, or years (Lefebvre in Highmore 2002b:128). The everyday activities of people can be captured through their activities of labour and leisure that are embedded in one’s historical, geographical and social setting (Elias in Perulli, 2016: 126). The comprehensiveness of this concept is captured in the definition of everyday by Sheringham (in Bou, 2015: 175):

The everyday is a zone of opposition, intersection, or interconnection – of the accidental and the permanent, imagination and affect, the personal and the social. It is constituted by sequences of individual actions (dressing, eating, shopping, walking), but within a context of relations and interactions where the individual is actor as well as agent. The *quotidien* involves continuity but also change, repetition but also variation and evolution. It is made up of routines, but major events (often long anticipated or long remembered) are also part of its fabric as are festive moments, “mini-fetes”. It is universal (through its link to the human condition in general) but also variable, inflected by climate, class, and gender. It is both independent of and marked by history.

The focus should thus be on the livelihood activities of people if one has to apply this understanding to capture the glocal in a periurbanisation context. A focus on other everyday activities as well will help capture the everyday lives of women engaged in non-monetary tasks such as caregiving and

support in agriculture work. In the case of farmers, the everyday spans across the year since their routine follows an annual crop cycle which is subject to climate and market vagaries. Further, the experiences, aspirations, and perceptions of people will not only throw light on the role of past events such as the establishment of industries and migratory events, but it will also capture the intersectional position of people and how they negotiate with a changing context. Thus, an examination of the context (global and local), experiences, and activities of people, help in understanding how the actions of people contain global processes, thereby giving them existence.

This paper is an outcome of qualitative research that examined the political economy of resource use and livelihood transitions in a periurban region south of Bangalore. Bangalore city expanded geographically from 28.85 sq. km in 1901 (Ravindra 1996) to 709.96 sq. km in 2007 (Census of India 2011), absorbing more than 200 villages in this process. With currently about one crore population, its urban agglomeration had witnessed high exponential growth rates of 3.22 and 4.02 between 1991-2001 and 2001-2011 respectively (Eswar and Roy 2018). This expansion was primarily influenced by the establishment of private hardware electronics and information technology/services post-1980s (Heitzman 2004; Nair 2007) when it got recognised as a global city. The establishment of IT industries boosted allied sectors of housing, education, hotels, transport, and the recreational sector, all of which emerged in the periphery and impacted its land, labour, and agriculture practices.

The study region located in the peripheries south of Bangalore (outside its municipal corporation limits, under rural administration: refer figure 1) has a mixed land use where people are engaged in agriculture and non-agriculture based livelihoods. Nearly half of the 1,200 households present in the village are migrant households, who have settled here for the last twenty years. Initial migrants were from the low economic profile and only since the last five years, migrants from a higher economic profile have also settled in the emerging layouts. Among the local community, the upper caste Reddy households are numerically dominant and a prominent landholding



Fig. 1. Location of study area to the south of Bangalore.

Source: Wikimedia Commons and Wikimedia Maps. Maps are resized and text inserted. Maps not to scale.

community. Scheduled Castes (SC) are also present, and they own small parcels of land or are landless. Very few of these local households practice agriculture. Many households, both local and migrants, are engaged in non-agriculture work - mostly self-employed running petty shops and businesses as well as vending agriculture produce. Many are engaged in housekeeping and domestic work with a few people in the gig economy of cab and food delivery services.

Data was collected through interviews and observations conducted between September 2019 and March 2020. The initial months of data collection focused on capturing the village profile and changing context concerning agriculture and livelihoods through key informants such as local government officials and few residents. Later, other key informants such as the dairy secretary and elderly residents were also included; all of whom provided information specific to the region such as agriculture practices, land use changes, changes in education, and aspects of governance. Semi-structured interviews with

select households based on profiles of their livelihood, caste, gender, age, and schooling in one case, was conducted during the latter half of the study while residing in the village. These interviews captured the household profile, their access to resources and amenities, activities of people, and their experiences. For this paper, only select interviews (thirteen semi-structured and eight key informants) that capture the changing context, and interaction of people with the land, labour, and agriculture markets were examined. Excerpts from these interviews that capture the everyday of people's routines (e.g. when they wake up, travel, and eating habits), activities of income generation, and other tasks they engage in are considered here. People's perceptions, reflections from the past (instances such as the implementation of government programs, property division or sale of land, childbearing), and their aspirations are also considered.

PERIURBANISATION AND EVERYDAY TRANSITIONS IN AGRARIAN ECONOMY

A longitudinal approach to understanding agriculture practices in the study region depicts changing dynamics in its link to regional agriculture markets. More than three decades ago, the study region had predominant dryland agriculture with smaller lake irrigated areas that supported paddy and sugarcane cultivation. Yet, agriculture was the dominant market through which the region was connected to the urban when it supplied grains and vegetables to the city. With people moving to non-agriculture occupation post-1990 and conversion of land to urban use post-2000, agriculture has declined with only a few farmers growing commercial crops such as vegetables, flowers, and lawn to cater to the IT companies and schools that have emerged in the vicinity. The few people who practice irrigated agriculture, perceive the fluctuating price of vegetables as a risk. One female upper caste respondent who grew flowers and vegetables on their entire plot the previous year, left these crops unharvested since they did not have any remunerative prices in the market. The respondent

recalls, “all the crates [used for picking and storing] are lying in the room just like that”. They now grow maize (an irrigated crop) on a part of their land, as fodder for their cows. Declining groundwater levels is also a risk. Another upper caste female respondent mentions:

growing these crops – vegetables, flowers, is not easy. We need a borewell [...]. If one has to drill a borewell, get a motor, and electricity connected, they will have to spend at least five lakhs. When will the farmer earn this money? And water is also not easily available – the borewells may fail. Will he be able to drill another borewell?

The high cost of agriculture labour has also led to a decline in area under ragi, the dry land staple food crop of the region, due to which people are now increasingly purchasing food grains from the market. Other than crops, plantations of eucalyptus are also present. When introduced during the 1970s-80s, it supplied wood to industries located in other parts of the state. With a decline in demand from state-level markets and an increase in local demand for wood in the construction sector, these plantations now have a prominent local market. Thus, agriculture markets have transitioned from having strong agriculture ties with the urban (at the regional and sub-national level) to a weak and localised one. Fluctuating prices of vegetables, depleting groundwater levels and high labour cost deters people from growing irrigated as well as dry-land crops leading to a more market-dependent food system.

Catering to the needs of a growing periurban, dairying has emerged as a significant contributor to the everyday economy of the village. Dairy co-operatives play an essential role in enabling farmers to supply dairy products to urban markets. It facilitates milk collection from villages (in the morning and evening) that is later processed and dispatched to markets in Bangalore. Further, due to an increase in residential apartments in the vicinity, direct markets have also emerged in dairying. While this market fetches a higher price than the dairy co-operative, it also requires additional work and building of customer relations. One respondent (a young male) from the SC community has taken to dairying on leased land

and delivers approximately sixty litres of milk (collected from other dairy farmers as well) directly to people living in the high rise apartments. His day starts at four in the morning to milk the cows, and by the time he delivers milk and returns home, it is half-past ten in the night. He narrates the difficulties in providing direct services to customers,

you have to climb the stairs with the can, you have to follow correct timing, and you can't miss a day. Having good relations with customers is also essential to have a thriving business. Once you start with a few [houses], then they refer you to other houses. Only if you provide good service then people will refer to you.

This respondent, in particular, aspires to increase his cow stock and develop this into a dairy farm despite the difficulties involved and the lack of access to land. He perceives a sense of ownership unlike the gig economy that he was earlier part of. In his own words, “now we have 30 cows. I want to increase this to 100. Dairy work is your ‘own’ work. You work as per your ease – you work when required and you can take leave when you want to. It is our ‘own’ work”. Though dairying constitutes a crucial component in the everyday livelihood practices of elderly people and women, in particular, a few young male members also see this as an alternative option when integration with the urban labour economy is difficult. A young male upper caste who worked in a manufacturing industry for eight years that paid Rs. 10,000/- per month, quit his job to take up dairying. Due to high expenses incurred on food, travel, and clothing, income from formal employment is perceived to be minuscule. The need to present oneself in a specific attire when working in an industrial setting is considered an additional expense. His mother mentions,

I asked him not to go. There was not much that he was earning in the factory. My son's expenses were more. He would spend Rs. 3,000/- on food, Rs. 3,000/- on petrol, and Rs. 1,000/- on his clothes. When one goes to the factory, they have to dress up “tip-top”. They also have to apply cream and other things. This all adds to the expenses, and what will you earn. He would leave at 7:30 in the morning and come back at 9:00 in the night. Instead, it is best they work

in the fields. You will save on petrol. We have cows, and he can look after the cows.

A key observation is that it is mainly the landed upper caste households that connect to the urban agriculture markets. When agriculture was dominant in the past, it was mostly the Reddy households that owned land in the command areas of lakes who were able to grow crops such as paddy and supply to the urban markets. Though a few SC households also owned land in these areas and grew commercial crops, they are minuscule when compared to the Reddy community. Even now, dairying is mainly practiced by upper caste landed households, since it requires access to land – agriculture land to grow fodder and homestead land for cowsheds. Access to water is an additional benefit since one can grow maize as fodder that sustains cows during the summers when less vegetation is available for grazing. Thus, only a few SC households have taken up dairying, as they are either landless or hold small parcels of land. The few who practice dairying, lease in the land to grow ragi as dry fodder for their cows. One such household is practising dairying on leased dry land for 15 years. The respondent's father sold their land due to poverty in the family. The respondent owns only a small homestead land inside the village settlement, due to which he built his cowshed⁴ on the leased land located outside the settlement. Two of his cows were stolen in the last three years since his cows were unattended to during the night. He has now set up a shelter with mattresses on the leased land, to watch over his cows at night:

people don't even spare the cows. They steal the cows because they are jealous. During the night, I used to leave the cows in the shed in the field. That was when they got stolen. So, I started to sleep in the fields at night, which is why we have a temporary structure in the field – with mattresses. Most of the time we [family] are in the field and go home only to have food. [...] then we come back and I stay in the field itself at night, while the others go home.

His income from dairying is relatively less than an irrigated dairy farmer since he has to purchase fodder to feed his

cows during summer. So, he plans to stay in this occupation only till his children (one daughter and one son) get married, since cows serve as collateral for loans (for marriage expenses) in the informal financial system. He mentions: “Only if I have cows, will someone give a loan. If I don’t have cows, then no one will give me a loan. After their [children’s] marriage, I will sell a few cows, and keep only two. That will be enough for us”.

Moreover, the dairy farmers are also apprehensive of the global forces that could act as a deterrent to their newfound economic opportunities. Though they have a robust system such as the dairy cooperative that links the rural with urban markets and also provides stable milk prices, there is resistance to open up the milk market to the global. Farmers perceive the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) proposed during 2019, which sought to import dairy products from Australia and New Zealand, as a threat to their livelihoods. The head of the village cooperative unit attended meetings in the city to register their protest since they do not want the existing markets disturbed as it sustains their livelihoods. Integration of agriculture with external markets will force one to reduce prices to compete with highly subsidised international markets leading to its extinction, as in the case of edible oil in India (Dhanagare 2003). However, the irony is that this sector still provides economic opportunities for the privileged upper caste landholding families and not the less privileged landless scheduled caste communities. Thus, the forces of glocal act in such a way that it widens the social and economic disparities in the local village peripheries of the city. These aspects are further explored in the next section, in the context of emerging labour and land markets.

THRIVING INEQUITIES AND RESOURCES USE TRANSITIONS IN A GLOCAL ECONOMY

The region, which was predominantly agriculture-based, first integrated with the non-agriculture labour market during 1980-90 when manufacturing industries were set up in the periphery of south Bangalore. One of the reasons⁵ this region

was preferred due to its “backwardness” in terms of its dry land status, and industries would provide work opportunities to rural people (KEONICS 1979). Since agriculture was not very profitable, many young men from the upper caste took to factory work in the 1990s. Employment in industries improved their economic status to such an extent, that these workers coming from farming households assigned the title “providers of food” (which is generally associated with farmers) to the industries themselves. Many such “first generation” factory workers who are middle-aged now, have taken up other occupations; a transition facilitated by the savings and skills they acquired during their stint at the factory. One such middle-aged resident who worked in fabrication industries for 20 years, set up his fabrication unit in the village with his provident fund.

In addition to being engaged with the formal employment system, few privileged farmers have diversified their business opportunities by selling huge volumes of water from their borewells to the urban consumers. Due to inadequate water supply in the nearby urban areas, farmers sell their water to tanker suppliers, who assure them of a regular daily income. These processes have in turn commercialised natural resources that were otherwise available to the rural population. The land itself has now become a commercial resource, due to its demand for urban uses such as residential spaces and industries. Of significance, are transformations of land to urban use with the flow of global capital into townships that are “developed and governed by real estate and construction firms from other world cities” (Goldman 2011: 574) and unauthorised developments that take place when “local occupants negotiated with smaller developers via the bureaucratic-political system” (Benjamin 2008: 722).

Land development in the study village is contrary to the phenomenon of global capital flows and more in line with “local development”, due to its “green belt” status that prohibits conversion of land to urban use under the land use regulation of the 1960s. But due to discrepancies in implementation, there has been a rampant unauthorised conversion of agricultural land to layouts post-2000. Since many of the upper caste

households have already moved away from agriculture and taken to non-agriculture-based occupations, they prefer to put their land to urban use, by either constructing houses for rent, by converting their land into sites with the help of small developers⁶, or by selling their land given the high land prices. These households thus build upon their economic position in a transitioning land market. Only a few of the marginalised SC community who own small parcels of land have sold their land to improvise their house from a tiled roof to a mould house.

Unauthorised sites in the “green belt” also have a demand despite the lack of amenities, since they cost cheaper than the authorised ones. But many of these layouts remain underdeveloped since it is speculation that drives these land sales, where people from high income as well as low-income groups purchase land in such regions. Thus, the flow of “local capital” in a local land market becomes prevalent in a region where legislation discourages international developers to invest⁷. Due to this suppressed development of land, this legislation is highly contested in the study region, where many residents prefer opening up of land markets which they perceive will lead to “development” of the region. All this stems from the fact that agriculture is no longer the mainstay of people as they have shifted to non-agriculture based occupations. One real estate agent perceives this legislation to be discriminatory as it does not give farmers a fair chance to “improve” their lands like people elsewhere in Bangalore.

This area will improve only when the green belt is removed. Why should farmers always remain as farmers and die a farmer – like how my father died. Agriculture is difficult to do now. If they remove the green belt, then we can also make some money. We will sell only part of our land and get some money and “improve”. Should only people living in Bangalore develop their lands? We can also give our land to apartments, and there will be more transactions. That is how I built this house, by selling land.

Only a few farmers, those in dairy and few elderly people, perceive that the green belt status needs to be maintained as it protects their land from being “grabbed”, and that agriculture practices can continue. Thus, many people who are not de-

pendent on agriculture want land opened to the markets, which is unlike the dairy farmers who do not prefer opening up to the global. Preferences for specific markets are thus primarily shaped by the perceived impact it has on the individuals and their intersectional social positions. For instance, most of the migrants engaged in non-agriculture employment such as housekeeping staff, the gig economy, and informal work such as construction and vending, come from economically poor backgrounds. For women, in particular, cultural notions of assigning a household's status to their women working in an urban setting, as well the household's economic status, decide their engagement with the urban workforce. Many local women from upper caste households residing in the village are not engaged with the urban workforce and attribute this to the cultural notion that women are not required to "go out and earn for a living" when the household's economic status is good. They nevertheless engage in agriculture labour and dairy practices thereby contributing significantly to the household's income. But womenfolk from economically marginalised households largely from the backward castes with inadequate access to land often have to negotiate with cultural institutions concerning women's engagement with urban workforce, when they need to earn and make ends meet. They also manage work with domestic chores, childcare, and caregiving for the elderly. A young female migrant from the SC community who vends fruits and vegetables narrates how ownership of small landholdings in their village drove their entire family into migration: "if we had land, why would we have come here. We would have done some agriculture".

All her family members are now self-employed – vending fruits, vegetables, flowers, and also take up welding and other odd jobs. When she first migrated, she worked at a food outlet for six months. She took to vending after she had a child since she could not manage the fixed timings of formal employment. While she attends the cart, her child plays in the streets all day through. The respondent perceives education to be essential to get a job and aspires her child to be in formal employment. "It would have been good if I was more educated. I would have at least got a job. But that was not possible. My parents

could not let me study further [...]. I want my daughter to become a police officer”.

However, the quality of public-funded education is very poor, and neither can they afford private schooling for their children. Yet, a few poor households strive to send their children to private schools with the perception that education is a gateway to good employment. They finance these costs through wages and loans, often impoverishing their economic conditions. One return migrant from the SC community who had taken a loan for his children’s education had to shift them from private to government school since they were unable to pay its fee. The mother laments:

It is possible to send children to private school, only when there are two earning members in the family. One member’s wage will go in paying the school fee, and the other will be enough for the house expenditure. If only one member is earning – like in my house – then the children can’t go to private school. When the household is doing good (earning income), then the people don’t think twice and send them to private school. But what happens when the household goes through a bad phase, and are not doing as good. Then the school fees itself become a burden. The school also keeps increasing its fee every year. [...]. Why do we have to earn so hard, take a loan, and put all this money in the mouths of the private schools? It is only they who are benefitting from this. Let my children study how much they can. We can’t die in the process of sending our children to private schools.

Thus, the everyday aspirations of poor people in the city periphery are caught up in a web of lack of access to resources and thriving social and economic inequities. Also, with an industry preference for young workers, the elderly find it difficult to engage with urban labour. Landless elderly originally from this village who earlier worked as agriculture labourers, seek industrial work now due to a decline in demand for agriculture workers. One elderly woman from the SC community wants to work as a housekeeping staff in factories or schools. She expresses concern that industries do not prefer to hire the elderly, which makes it difficult for them to find work leading to old age insecurity, “I can clean and wipe the glass, but no

one will take me. The companies tell me that I am old. But if I have to eat, I have to earn, and if there is not much agriculture around, then I need to go for factory work”.

Yet, many less privileged households of the traditional rural economy consider the shift in the periurban economy as an opportunity for their social and economic mobility. They embrace the urban and believe that there is a “trickle-down” effect to the urbanisation processes and justifies its benefits. In the words of an elderly female, whose children are all employed in the city spaces,

there needs to be development, the city is very useful to us. This is where we find jobs. If not, where would I go for a living? If people like you go to work, then you will not be able to do any housework. So, we will do the housework, it will be of help to you, and we will also earn money.

Thus, the lives of urban residents are supported by the many workers engaged in the informal sector. Such workers are always engaged in activities throughout the day, with no leisure. However, a prolonged engagement with the urban labour force may not change the relative economic position of a household. One family from a backward caste migrated to the city during its initial tryst with industrialisation in the 1950s. The respondent’s family (elderly female referred to as grandmother) migrated to the city since her father did not inherit any agricultural land when their property rights were allocated. The respondent worked as a domestic help in Bangalore and moved to the periphery only ten years back since it was here that the government allocated land to the poor. Theirs is a single room sheet roof house shared by five members, and they use fuelwood for cooking. They plan to expand this house one step at a time from the wages they earn. The daughter-in-law mentions, “we are waiting to accumulate money to buy stones and sand to construct the house”. The respondent’s son and grandson are also in the informal sector, working as “*maestri*” (mason). The grandson was unable to join the formal labour market due to a lack of computer training. He prefers to learn construction skills from his father by training under him.

Now that he [son] is becoming old, and has some health issues, his son [the grandson] is assisting him. The grandson is getting trained in this now. He is also learning the work...The grandson supervises the workers now...he is getting “practice”. For any other work, the grandson has to go for computer training. The training centres are far to travel. Now that he has started with this work, he cannot get himself to do other work. He does not have the “mind” to do other work, since he is “set” in this work.

Despite having engaged with the informal urban work-force for all these years, the family is still struggling to expand their one-room house from the savings of all their wages. The daughter-in-law reflects on how they have always remained in the lower strata, “we have always stayed in the lower strata; we never moved up”. This sense of persisting inequalities in this economic system is agreed to by a few upper castes as well. One respondent who identifies with the middle class, claims that they can neither accumulate money like the rich nor stay “aloof” like the poor, which is why the inequities remain. Though they imply inherent differences in access to resources such as land while referring to the different class categories, they nevertheless attribute inequities to the “mindset” of people coming from different class categories:

The situation is such that the rich have remained rich, and the poor have remained poor. The rich can lead their lives, they have money, they build rented houses and from the rent they get they build another house and go on. The poor are the ones who earn day-to-day. A wife and husband earn Rs. 500/- per person per day. Of the Rs. 1,000/- the earn, they may spend Rs. 500/- per day on daily needs and the rest of the money the man may spend it all on drinking the next day. They are not concerned about saving. They just work/earn when they need money. It is the “middle class” who do not fall in place. Neither can they live the luxurious life of the rich, nor can they live an aloof life like the poor. They don’t know how to lead their lives. They are stuck in between.

CONCLUSIONS

The periurban process in a changing agrarian economy is characterised by dynamic and interacting markets of agriculture, land, and labour. Unlike the bidirectional periphery-urban linkages of markets (Narain, Nischal 2007; Gowda et al. 2012; World Bank 2013; Patil et al. 2018; Patil et al. 2019), a glocalisation approach that places the periphery at the centre depicts that market linkages of peripheries in agriculture, land, and labour are not limited to the urban, but span across regional and local levels and changes over time. A progressive linking and interaction between these markets have resulted in a contraction of agriculture markets, a prevalent local but informal land market, and a large informal wage and self-employed labour market. People exhibit a preference for specific market linkages based on the perceived influence it would have on their livelihoods. In agriculture, dairy farmers do not prefer links to global markets while many landed households want an opening up of the land market. Actors accordingly resist or engage with these markets by negotiating with state and non-state institutions (Benjamin 2008; Balakrishnan 2013).

Even within emerging labour markets, only certain privileged communities tend to engage with both the urban and agriculture markets. Particular cases indicate the preference of young from both privileged and backward classes to engage with agriculture when an engagement with the urban is unfavourable (due to perceptions of inadequate income and notions of ownership). However, certain other communities with inadequate access to land can integrate with only urban labour markets for a subsistence living. This study reiterates the importance of access to resources such as land (Narain 2009; Mallik, Sen 2011; Vij 2014; Patil et al. 2019) and education (Mallik, Sen 2011) in an urbanising process, as it forms the basis of rising inequalities across class-caste factions in an urbanising context. Nevertheless, it also recognises the presence of intersectional actors across caste, gender, and age groups thereby focussing on women and the elderly among the economically marginalised communities. Women's engagement

with the urban labour market is not only subject to access to education, transport and childcare facilities at workspaces (see Sen 2016); but in transitioning peri urban spaces they also need to negotiate with social institutions of household status assigned to working women (Hillyer et al. 2002). Intersectionality of caste and gender plays out here, where it is mainly economically marginalised women from backward castes who engage in informal labour (Chatterjee et al. 2018). Similarly, elderly from marginalised communities often have to interface with industry practices of preference for the young. Such an engagement for these groups is crucial not only for subsistence living but also to ensure an adequate education for their children most preferably in private schools to realise aspirations of entering a formal labour force.

While few studies have pointed to the importance of state and political institutions in the peri urban process (Benjamin 2008; Balakrishnan 2013), this study recognises the many institutions of the state, society, and non-state which people interface with while engaging with the changing context. State institutions not only determine the nature of markets around the land, but its welfare measures on housing and education are very crucial to sustain marginalised communities that lack access to adequate land and education. Social institutions tend to constrain the engagement of women with the urban labour force. Many non-state institutions are also important, such as dairy cooperatives that enable links to the urban, lack of quality public education combined with expensive private schools that make education inaccessible to the marginalised, certain industry practices such as a preference for young workers is constraining the elderly who seek employment. Thus, an understanding of peri urban processes will not be complete without recognising the role of various institutions in enabling or constraining the interactions of actors with market forces.

This study highlights how people constantly integrate with changing economies, without perceiving the urban as being hegemonic. It also points to the changing nature of peri urban linkages with other regions and how in a changing economy diverse communities interact with various institutions based on their capacities of resource access. It depicts a

particular case of a periphery located in the “green belt” of the global city Bangalore, a predominantly dry region that is undergoing periurbanisation due to urban sprawl. But the ensuing dynamics of changing economies concerning agriculture, land, and labour in other peripheries will depend on the nature of state intervention (land acquisition, industrialisation, urban sprawl, change in the jurisdiction of existing cities), the nature of city a periphery is associated with, regional characteristics such as the presence of water sources, as well as the presence of other institutions such as co-operatives and industry practices. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise the presence of diverse actors across caste, gender, and age groups who not only have differentiated access to resources but also interact with different institutions that may enable or constrain their engagement with these processes. Despite the particularising nature of these interfaces, there exists a generalising tendency of increasing inequalities; which underlines the importance of a welfare state in an urbanising context.

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NOTES

¹ Officially known as Bengaluru since 2014.

² Urban agglomeration is a census classification of a contiguous urban area that consists of a city and its neighbouring towns and rural areas that depict urban characteristics. It is an indicator of urban sprawl.

³ Urban villages refer to rural spaces engulfed by cities. Peripheries on the other hand are spaces outside the city that still retain certain rural characteristics such as the presence of agricultural land and livelihoods.

⁴ Cowsheds are usually built on homestead land – either located within the village settlement or on agricultural land.

⁵ This area was declared as an industrial area in 1977 for multiple reasons – it would compete with industries in Tamil Nadu (Hosur) and prevent more industries from moving to Tamil Nadu, it would ease the pressure on the growth of Bangalore,



and these would complement the requirements of industries in Electronic City (KEONICS 1979).

⁶ Many landowners have also turned into real estate agents, as they have information about site availability in the village.

⁷ The legislation only acts as a deterrent for developers to invest in the green belt. It may however not prevent them from occupying such “spaces restricted for development”, since they manage to get permissions to do so (Goldman 2020).

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