

City of Shadows

Alongside debates over rising inequalities, the stubborn persistence of urban poverty, globally, has emerged as a major academic and policy concern, typically framed by the paradigms of basic services and welfare. In the backdrop of Bangalore's evolution into India's Silicon Valley, *City of Shadows* presents research spanning old, inner-city slums, new migrant settlements in urban peripheries, slum development projects, and garment export and construction workers. This research highlights that, inter-generationally, the urban poor remain tied to traditional, low-income occupations, or get incorporated into new urban growth channels, such as export industries and low-end services, under highly unfavourable terms and conditions. Debates on the developmental state, democracy and the urban poor's political agency are used to problematise the complex relationship of informal work to contemporary theories of class. Using the concepts of the old poor and the new poor to explore channels of urban inclusion and exclusion, *City of Shadows* demonstrates that the poor's vulnerabilities vary profoundly under different regimes of informal economies actively constructed by both the state and the market.

Supriya RoyChowdhury is currently Visiting Professor with the Urban and Mobility Studies Program at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. She was earlier Professor of Political Science at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru.

City of Shadows

Slums and Informal Work in Bangalore

Supriya RoyChowdhury



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-83936-5 — City of Shadows
 Supriya RoyChowdhury
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot No.3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108839365

© Supriya RoyChowdhury 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

Printed in India

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Roychowdhury, Supriya, author.

Title: City of shadows : slums and informal work in Bangalore /
 Supriya RoyChowdhury.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021017217 (print) | LCCN 2021017218 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108839365 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108989930 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Urban poor--India--Bangalore. | Slums--India--Bangalore. | Informal sector (Economics)--India--Bangalore. | Bangalore (India)--Social conditions--21st century. | Bangalore (India) | Economic conditions--21st century. | BISAC: POLITICAL SCIENCE / Political Economy | POLITICAL SCIENCE / Political Economy

Classification: LCC HV4140.B36 R69 2021 (print) | LCC HV4140.B36 (ebook) | DDC 362.509173/2095487--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021017217>
 LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021017218>

ISBN 978-1-108-83936-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
1. Introduction	1
2. Welfare and Work: State Autonomy Revisited	22
3. Urban Poverty and Informal Work	42
4. A Political Economy Overview: Karnataka and Bangalore	66
5. New Slums: Migration, Livelihoods and Living	96
6. Old Slums	122
7. Impact of Slum Housing Policies: Bangalore’s New Ghettos	149
8. Women Workers in Bangalore’s Garment Export Companies	176
9. Conclusion	201
<i>Index</i>	220

Tables

3.1	Sectoral share (in per cent)/absolute numbers (in lakhs) in employment	48
3.2	Average annual growth rate from 2004–05 to 2011–12	49
3.3	Percentage distribution of urban workers by working status	53
3.4	Percentage of workers (15–64 years) in poverty in urban areas from 1983 to 2009–10	54
3.5	Percentage of workers (15–64 years) in poverty by selected industries in urban areas from 1983 to 2009–10	54
3.6	Percentage of workers (15–64 years) by activity status and industry in urban areas, 2009–10	55
4.1	Percentage of population below poverty line in Karnataka and other southern states, 2011–12	67
4.2	Ranking in HDI and other indicators in Karnataka and southern states, 2011–12	68
4.3	District-level income disparity	69
4.4	HDI across the districts of Karnataka, 2012	70
4.5	District-wise per capita education/health expenditure and education/health development index	70
4.6	Urbanisation within Karnataka, 2011	71
4.7	Incidence of poverty by divisions in Karnataka	71
4.8	Social sector expenditure (SSE) as percentage of GSDP in southern states	73
4.9	Percentage of urban to total population in top four urbanised districts in Karnataka	74
4.10	Karnataka: Sectoral share in GSDP (in percentage)	76
4.11a	Share of industry in GSDP, selected states (in percentage)	76
4.11b	Share of manufacturing in GSDP, selected states (in percentage)	76
4.12	Percentage distribution of workers by category of employment in urban areas	78
4.13	Decline in poverty in Karnataka	80
4.14	Urban poverty, selected states (in percentage)	80
4.15	Sectoral share in GDDP, Bangalore (in percentage)	87
4.16	Sector-wise percentage of employment in Bangalore, 2011–12	88

Tables viii

4.17	Distribution of workforce according to usual principal activity status in Bangalore Urban area (in percentage)	88
4.18	Distribution of workforce (different categories) in Bangalore Urban area and Urban India (in percentage)	89
5.1	Place of origin of migrants	100
5.2	Education patterns of migrants (first migrant or head of the household)	100
5.3	Current occupational structure	101
5.4	Work and wages	102
5.5	Number of working adults and dependents in slums	104
5.6	Information on children aged 6–14	106
6.1	Growth of slums in Bangalore	125
6.2	Growth of slum population in Bangalore	125
6.3	Major occupations and average incomes found in six slums in J. C. Road.	129
6.4	Percentages of households dependent on different occupations	129
6.5	Work and earnings through rag picking in Cement Huts slum	138
6A.1	Consumer price index for industrial workers (CPI-IW)	145
6A.2	Consumer price index for agricultural labourers (CPI-AL)	145
8.1	Minimum wages (in rupees)	181
8.2	Wages received (in rupees)	183
8.3	Frequency distribution of number of years working in current garment factory	184
8.4	Worked in another garment company	184
8.5	Reasons for shifting to other factories or out of the industry	185

Acknowledgements

This book is based on the findings of research projects that were carried out at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bangalore, over several years. A grant from the 'Globalization and the Indian State' project, led by Neera Chandok and Pratap Bhanu Mehta, had enabled me to make the first survey of 16 slums in Bangalore. Between 2009 and 2013, the Planning Department of the Government of Karnataka supported a research project on 'Migration, Informal Work and Welfare: A Policy Perspective on Karnataka's Cities'. This project made it possible for me to do a study of peripheral as well as inner-city slums in Bangalore. Finally, a research grant from the Indian Council of Social Sciences on a project entitled 'India's Changing City Scapes: Work, Migration and Livelihoods' during 2017–19, which was collaboratively undertaken by ISEC and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, enabled me to revisit the slums, update the information and hold a fresh set of qualitative discussions. Research on the ready-made garment industry in Bangalore has been supported through seed money grants by ISEC. A small grant by the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, during 2017–18 in collaboration with the International Labour Organization's 'Work in Freedom Project' made it possible to update the information on this sector and hold a set of interviews with migrant women workers. I am grateful to each of these agencies for supporting my research.

The research in various phases was conducted with the help of several city non-governmental organisations and trade unions. I would like to thank Mr Lakshapati of APSA, M. Nagraj of Pragati Charitable Trust, Ms Kathyayini Chamraj of CIVIC, Mr Pakri Sami of the National Centre for Labour, Mr Jayram and Pratibha of the Garments and Textile Workers Union (GATWU) and Mohan Mani of the New Trade Union Initiative for their help in carrying out the field research as well as for sharing their valuable insights. A special word of thanks to Mr Gopinath of Civil Initiatives for Development, as over the years we became fellow travellers in the journey to understand women's work in global supply chains. Several corporators, legislators and bureaucrats gave generously of their time, and I am grateful to them all. There are no appropriate words to thank the many men and women in low-income and under-served neighborhoods across the city and in construction work sites who shared their time and provided a window to a universe hitherto unknown to me.

At ISEC, my colleagues Professor K. S. James, who is currently Director of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, B. P. Vani and Dr N. Sivanna were my collaborators in the 'Migration' project, and I would like to thank

Acknowledgements x

them as well as the current Director, Professor S. Madheswaran, Professor Krishnaraj and Professor G. Karanth for their friendship and collegiality through the many years. I am grateful to former Director of ISEC, Professor R. S. Deshpande, who provided a great deal of support to the 'Migration' project and remained interested in my work. ISEC's large and awe-inspiring library is one of the best places in Bangalore to spend time in, and I am grateful to the library staff, particularly to the current Librarian, Dr B. B. Chand, for his ready help in providing me with some of the material used in this book, especially during the dark days of the Covid-19-related lockdown. Thanks also to the Research Associates who worked in my projects at different times, particularly Archana Raj, Dr K. C. Smitha, Anitha and, most recently, Visakha Warriar and Pragati Tiwari. I am grateful to my former student Dr Neil Tannon, who helped with the analysis of the secondary data on Bangalore. Some of the chapters in this book have been presented in seminars and conferences, at the South Asia Centre, Oxford University; the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; NIAS, Bangalore; the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai and the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi. I am grateful to my hosts on these occasions, where I had received very useful comments and suggestions.

Aparna Sundar, Ramachandra Guha and Smriti Srinivas never lost faith in this book, even though it took so long that they lost track of what it was about. Many thanks to them. Carol Upadhyaya of NIAS has been a valued collaborator on recent projects. I am grateful to Professor Barbara Harriss-White of Oxford University for her interest in my work. I would like to thank Dwaipayan Bhattacharjee of JNU, Michael Goldman of the University of Minnesota, A. R. Vasavi, formerly of NIAS, and Chandan Gowda of Azim Premji University for their interest in my research, as also for many years of friendship and support. A special word of thanks to Atul Kohli of Princeton University for remaining a very valued mentor and friend over the past many years.

A chance meeting at the annual Labour Conference in Mumbai in 2018 with Anwesha Rana of Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, led me to restart thinking about this book. I am very grateful to Anwesha for her interest in my work and for enabling the journey of the manuscript through different phases. Two anonymous referees for Cambridge University Press provided very constructive criticism which helped strengthen the theoretical frame of the work. I am particularly grateful to Aniruddha De of the Cambridge University Press for his meticulous and excellent editing of the manuscript.

My daughter, Lavanya, maintained a strict vigil; her gloomily voiced question from across the seas every other day, 'So are you finishing it or not?' kept me going. This book is for her, as she now embarks on her own journey as a researcher in the social sciences.

Supriya RoyChowdhury