

**SUBURBANISATION AND GENTRIFICATION IN SATHANURU SATELLITE
TOWNSHIP, BENGALURU-AN ULTIMATE DILEMMA**

Priyadarshini Sen

Department of Geography, Dum Dum Motijheel College, Kolkata, India

ABSTRACT

The creation of new settlements in the vicinity of any Metropolis to accommodate a sizeable population of the core city remains to be a common practice. While pursuing the research that there is a hiatus between the planners and urban managers on one hand and the people on the other, scope for the generation of a dilemma always comes into the picture. Planning is usually done in public interest, but often the people who are affected by it, are rarely consulted. Gentrification is a shift in an urban community toward wealthier residents and this leads to steady rise in property values. It is typically the result of investment in a community by real estate development businesses, local government, or community activists. It can trigger economic development; attract business, and lower crime rates. In addition to these potential benefits, gentrification can lead to population migration, which involves poorer residents being displaced by wealthier newcomers. Objective of this paper is to highlight such issue, where gentrification leads to the displacement of the local people with Sathanuru Satellite Township in the periphery of Bengaluru as a case study.

KEYWORDS: Satellite Township, Metropolis, Gentrification, Suburbs, Land Use

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gentrification is defined as the process by which wealthier (mostly middle-income) people move into, renovate, and restore housing and sometimes businesses in inner cities or other deteriorated areas formerly home to poorer people. As such, gentrification affects an area's overall demographic pattern because such settling down of the middle income individuals and families often results in an overall decline in racial minorities. Additionally, household size decreases because low income big size families are replaced by young couples desiring to be closer to their jobs and activities in the urban core. The real estate market also changes when gentrification occurs because increases in rents and home prices increase evictions. Once this happens rental units are often switched to condominiums or luxury housing available for purchase. As real estate changes, land use is also

altered. Prior to gentrification these areas usually consisted of low income housing and sometimes light industry. After this, housing activities though continue but is usually high ended, along with offices, retail, restaurants, and other forms of entertainment. Finally, because of these changes, gentrification significantly affects an area's culture and character, making gentrification a controversial process. Re-orienting the growth of Bengaluru, the State government in recent times focuses its efforts on developing the City's western and southern suburb. Such activities had resulted the natural and obvious outcome of gentrification taking place, though silently, in these areas.

1.1 HISTORY AND CAUSES OF GENTRIFICATION

Although gentrification has been under discussion more recently, the term was actually coined in 1964 by sociologist Ruth Glass. She came up with it to explain the replacement of working or lower class people by middle class individuals in London. Since Glass came up with the term, there have been numerous attempts to explain why gentrification occurs. Some of the earliest attempts to explain it are through the production- and consumption-side theories. Production-side theory is generally associated with a geographer, Neil Smith, who explains gentrification based on the relationship between money and production. Smith said that low rents in suburban areas after World War II led to a movement of capital into those areas as opposed to inner cities. As a result, urban areas were abandoned and land value there decreased while land value in the suburbs increased. Likewise, as suburbs become desired destination for the growing population of any city, they loose their sustained use of land with combination of agricultural fields, forested areas, natural water bodies, and rural settlements.

2.0 AREA OF STUDY

Kanakapura is a town and the head quarter of Kanakapura Taluk in the Ramanagara district in the state of Karnataka, India. Situated near the city of Bengaluru, this town is famous for the production of silk and granite. Reportedly, there are 43 village panchayats in the taluk. A major industry of this region is mining of granite in quarries. Other activities include silk production, power looms, brick production, bamboo production, village pottery and other rural industries. Agriculture is the main source of income for people. The Bee keeping industry has covered 38 villages and there are 150 bee keepers who maintain 300 bee colonies. The State Government provides training facilities to rural people to encourage bee keeping in rural area. The taluk has geographical area of 1,59,426 hectares consists of 6 hoblis, namely:

- a) Kasaba b) Harohalli c) Maralawadi d) Kodihalli e) Sathanur f) Uyyamballi

Sathanur is often termed as a 'sleepy village' located in the rain shadow of the Madeshwara hill range. Rainfall is scanty here and the terrain abounds in cacti. The local populace comprising at least 25 to 30% of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who did not have any steady occupation as such. Lately, due to its vicinity to the city of Bengaluru, the urban planners chose this hobli including 10 villages and two forested areas to be developed as a New town with each and possibly every amenities of urban living.

2.3 EMERGENCE OF SATHANURU AS A SATELLITE TOWNSHIP

About few years ago, that is around the year 2006, with the initiative of the Development Commissioner, Karnataka, a hand weaving centre was set up at Sathanur for training of the backward women in this area. Officials predicted that Sathanur would be an area of watershed in the empowerment process of women of the backward communities. The selected women trainees were fired up with enthusiasm at the prospect of a better life at the end of the training and picked up every aspect of training with remarkable speed and it appeared that they could stand on their own. Probably this paved the way for the Urban planners to think of building a Township project here at Sathanur ,not only to relocate some population of spilling Bengaluru, but also to develop it as a Growth Centre for hand weaving industry that would give an impetus to the backward area for sustainable urbanisation and development of the local people in situ. The mega infrastructure projects as discussed above would give opportunities for generation of employment and establishment of number of industries in and around this region. There would be more demand for construction/ building materials and service activities. The demand for construction materials viz, steel, cement, sand, jelly etc., and service trades viz., carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrician etc., had been predicted to be increased. Advantages of the project are as follows;

The future influx into Bengaluru city could be arrested and the aim to decentralise it could be achieved.

The project of Township would increase the population almost tenfold in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region.

Many industrial units including projects at macro level ensuring employment opportunities would be relocated from the central city to this township. Two ring routes would provide ring route connectivity to the Taluks of the Bengaluru Rural District and also to its urban part.

2.2 SATHANURU TOWNSHIP-ITS PLANNING COMPONENTS

The Mega Plan at Sathanuru also proposes a network of 8-lane or 6-lane as of now with 734 kilometres. road length comprising 284 kilometres of Satellite Towns Ring Road (STRR), 188 kilometres Intermediate Ring Road (IRR) and 262 kilometres of Radial Roads, to improve connectivity to all the taluks of Bengaluru Rural District. The existing Bengaluru –Dindigal Road which passes through the Kanakapura Taluk has been upgraded to National Highway (NH 209) by the National Highway Authority of India and this generated enough potentialities for investment in industry and tourism related projects. The upcoming Bengaluru International Airport is about 75 kilometres from Kanakapura and when completed, it is likely to provide a vital link to international destinations enhancing the overall economic development of Bengaluru suburbs including Sathanuru. The Township would suffice the scope for commercial exploitation of biotechnology.

2.4 GENTRIFICATION OF URBAN PLANNING?

Sathanuru within Kanakapura Taluk is also known for Granite quarrying and processing and the products do have export potential. Overall Bengaluru Rural District is covered under Agri Export Zone (AEZ) for gherkins, rose, onion and flowers. The climate here is suited for cultivation of these commodities. This region ranks third in milk production in the overall Karnataka State. Continuous market availability for milk products in urban Bengaluru is Kanakapura Taluk and its Hoblis or villages .Radials and ring highways have expanded while congestion has risen following the addition of a flyover through the city centre. This allows highways to cut through historical neighborhoods, impeding residents' quality of life and allowing those with motor vehicles to bypass these neighborhoods. This both decreases connectivity among residents of the city and hurts local economies. Politically speaking, this constituency, which is close to Bengaluru city, makes for an interesting sociological and economic study on the impact of urbanisation on the traditional occupations. Large tracts of agricultural land are continuously being converted into housing sites. Farmers are lured by real-estate businessmen from cities to sell their lands. This area, which lacks any major irrigation facility, makes significant contribution to the production of mango and betel leaves in addition to the rain-fed ragi varieties. However, this region has an identity of its own as silk production, wooden toys and lacquer ware which had made this area a well known place not only in the country, but in several parts of the world. However, with steady urbanisation this region suffers from identity crisis today. The problems here are far from over as silk industry, which provides direct and indirect employment to thousands, and several filatures and reeling units are

closed. Even the traditional toy industry remains in a mess because of Economic Recession that bear a global impact and shortage of timber.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

The region demarcated for the Satellite Township gets its name from the major village included in it that is Sathanuru that houses maximum population as far as Census of India Statistics (2011) are concerned. Besides there are nine more villages which are included in the project area, out of which Kachavanahlli and Kamasagara belong to the higher side of population concerned. The remaining villages record lower to scanty population which provides better scope of urban expansion and planned development for settling the high income but low family sized population of the core city. But there remains a question on the fact that in the years to come, would the original inhabitants could continue living here with the same ease they earlier used to be. Probably they would face the ultimate dilemma of coping to the changing character of their own villages, where living would be solely determined by not only non-primary occupations as unskilled labourers, may be. Financial factors would also rein their decisions, and what would follow, should be nothing but geographical marginalisation of them once again at the cost of development and economic dominance. Moreover this region also includes two forested areas namely, Kabbalu and Tailuru which are rich in timber products (Figure 1). Their inclusion in the Township plan would no doubt mean a great deal of deforestation activities that would put the existence of timber industry under dilemma. The survival of the local people, who in one way or the other depend upon the forest as a source of income, would be at stake. And above all, such change in land use would be entirely unsustainable and against environment protection issues. Also, as far as the family size is concerned, the villages include large number of family members; say a size at least of 5-6 members. However, when they get displaced what would occupy is small nuclear families with two to three members. A change of such pattern would typically bring into post-modern lifestyles of Urban India.

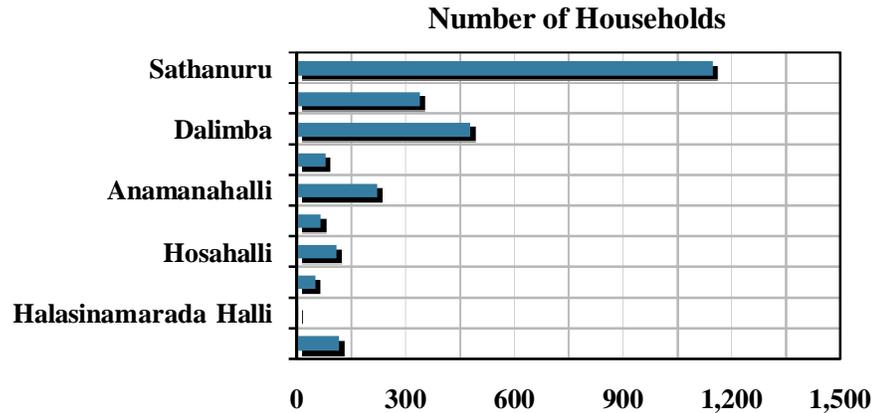
Table 1 Distribution of population in different villages under Sathanuru Township Project (2011)

Taluk or Block	Hobli	Villages	Male	Female	Total
Kanakapura	Sathanur	Sathanuru	2731	2554	5285
		Dalimba	739	740	1479
		Kachavanahalli	1081	1100	2181
		Hosahalli	198	171	369
		Kamasagara	549	523	1072
		Alur	177	169	346
		Maradevanahalli	311	272	583
		Halasinamarada Halli	158	149	307
		Naripura	8	5	13
		Anamanahalli	290	263	553
		Kabbalu Forest	-	-	-
		Tailuru Forest	-	-	-

Data Source: District Census Handbook, Karnataka (2011)

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Figure 1 Distribution of Households in the Villages to be covered under Sathanuru Satellite Township Project



3.1 PLANS FOR SATHANURU AREA AS A RURAL UNIT

As far as the existing inhabitants of the villages are concerned, they are covered under many state and centre initiated schemes including Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana(SGSY). It is a holistic programme that (in effect from 1.4.1999), covers all aspects of self-employment such as organisation of the poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs), training, credit, technology, infrastructure, insurance and marketing. The focus and objective of SGSY had been to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaris) above the poverty line in following years by providing them income-generating assets through bank credit and Government subsidy. Under the programme, the Government had already identified viable activities such as dairy farming, sheep, goat rearing, lift irrigation, garment manufacturing, and other related activities etc., both under group lending as well as individual lending. Scheme of Karnataka State Minorities Development Corporation (KMDC) ,under the Swavalambana scheme, identifies each year a set of eligible persons who are financially assisted for improving business, starting small-scale industries, services, agriculture, etc. However as soon as the areas to be covered under the New Town project were identified ,confusions cropped up regarding the schemes; whether the people who were initially covered under rural development schemes ,would be shifted under the domain of urban welfare activities since the urbanisation process would be ‘planned’ to roll down here. If this remains true then what would be the future of the local people in the transition stage when the Satellite Town is yet to begin its functions and the

area has already lost its rural characteristics including land and forest. The source of employment generation would be at stake for this people and hence the evils of gentrification crop up. Also, as it happens, officials change and the initial fervour tends to die. And it happened in this case too. Nobody came forward to arrange for finances for the trained women to purchase their looms and commence the promised new life. They refused to surrender silently to become victims of false promises of better living and employment in the silk industry that is yet to come in Sathanuru after even eight years of Town planning.

4.0 SUGGESTIONS

Planners view the issue of gentrification with more importance in recent times thankfully. While drafting some urban renewal plans, a comprehensive roadmap for future changes in the city and its suburbs are attempted. The issue also came up when the city made a concentrated effort to improve the neighbourhood in the peripheries of Mumbai, a long-neglected part of town with a diverse ethnic population, mostly homeowners. The challenge lies with all of this is how to balance neighbourhood improvements and urban expansion. Polish Urban Planner Armstrong says, “by virtue of making those investments, they(here suburbs) become more attractive places to live.” As neighbourhoods improve and experience an influx of newcomers, there could be a generation of “second wave” of change, when longstanding residents sense the neighbourhood is no longer right for them. But such approach is only theoretical and much dependent upon the people’s perception of city living. Bengaluru which was once called the “Garden City,” both for the city’s gentle climate and abundant greenery, but also because of its numerous public parks and the relaxed, convivial way in which people interacted with each other.

Increasing motorisation of places has threatened this peaceful image. By re-orienting urban development around people – not cars – Bengaluru could grow and thrive while improving liveability. As regions grow and sprawl into a network of economically interdependent jurisdictions, the abandoned or disinvested communities become attractive to both residents and developers. Workers who tire of commuting long distances and wish to be closer to effective mass transit systems look to move back towards the core. In an effort to shore up haemorrhaging municipal budgets, public officials promote regional developments that would draw people back to the core for shopping or entertainment. Because the initial abandonment and disinvestment was spurred by segregationist practices such as "white-flight," mortgage preferences and redlining by banks and insurance companies, the new influx of people and capital has a distinct racial impact when displacement begins to occur. Whatever, be the situation, the gentrification could be arrested, to a certain extent only by adopting sectoral approach with micro level planning procedures. Urban

decision makers suggest for promoting the concept of Urban Village in this cases where the suburbs could be developed as Villages and not Towns with community feelings to sustain and usual land uses could be retained even with areas demarcated for industrial activities.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Problem of the urban community multiply with the increasing complexity through ages. The physical expansion of cities runs out of control to further worsen the situation indeed. The practical limitations of the pyramidal formation of cities had forced decentralisation. As the people, buildings and traffic pile up high, the upper crust slides down the sides and outwards to the suburbs. When the weight of congestion at the core becomes unbearable, the inner layers slip out from under. An appropriate form for the future city has not yet emerged but serious attention needs to be directed to the nature of the modern city in two major areas: the internal urban structure or redevelopment and planned decentralisation or the birthing of New Towns. Rabiundra Nath Tagore once mentioned that there unfortunately exists a system that makes the chosen few in towns the privileged class enjoying all the modern amenities of life. Sathanuru no doubt give Bengaluru a scope to decentralise its growing population, but raise the ultimate dilemma what could be done to those few who were the residents actually of these places? Sathanuru houses as many as 11,000 people and provisions for them may be anything ranging from financial packages, some low cost housing opportunities and may be employment to some extent. But the lands would be lost, the forests would be depleted and those marginalised would be the worst sufferers.

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