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**NEW EXCLUSIVE SPACES: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN  
BENGALURU, INDIA**

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## ABSTRACT

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were introduced in India post 1991, which was the year of liberalization of the country's economy. However, about 65% of the SEZs that have been introduced post the SEZ Act of 2005 belong to the Information Technology (IT)/ Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector. It must be noted that the IT/ITES sector only employs skilled people with higher education. This indicates that in a country where only 4.5% people have graduate degrees (NDTV, 2015), the IT sector provides employment only to a small percent of the population. However, this population enjoys the benefits of high incomes, and the additional advantages of state subsidies have resulted in SEZs transforming into exclusive spaces that are accessible only to high-income groups. This paper studies the phenomenon of 'Zones of Exclusion' through the example of the ITPL SEZ in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

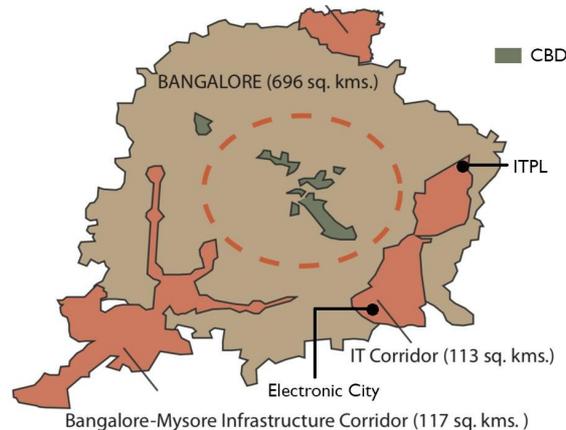
**Keywords:** Special Economic Zones, IT/ITES, Bengaluru, Zones of Exclusion, ITPL

## TRANSFORMING BENGALURU INTO A GLOBAL CITY

In 2006, Bengaluru was situated on an area of 224 sq.km, which was largely centred around the Central Business District (CBD) (Goldman, 2011). The initial IT boom had resulted in a large number of companies investing in the CBD area. However, with time, rental costs in the CBD began rising due to an increased demand for space. With this began a process of the IT sector relocating to peripheral areas of the city, in order to access space that was more cost-efficient. The current concentration of the IT sector in the city can be mapped to the stretch that lies between the eastern and southern parts. This growth can be attributed to two main reasons. The first one was the development of Electronic City in the south in 1978 (Idiculla, 2015). E-City, as it is commonly known, is home to some of the largest IT companies in the country, including Wipro and Infosys. The second trigger for growth was the development of ITPL (Information Technology Park Limited) in the Pattandur Agrahara area of the eastern part of the city in 1994. These peripheral urban triggers resulted in the expansion of the boundaries of the city through conversions of rural land into urban areas. In 2006 the city expanded into an area of about 700 sq.km, with a plan to expand further up to 7000 sq.km in the future (ibid.).

The overnight fame that Bengaluru received due to the IT boom resulted in accelerated population and urban growth in a very short period of time (Nair, 2005), which resulted in a huge demand for infrastructure (Gore & Gopakumar, 2016). The significant position of the city in the global IT market incentivized authorities to look beyond the sub-continent for solutions

Figure 1: Expansion of IT Corridor in Bengaluru  
 Source: (Goldman, 2011), Edited by Author



to the immense urbanization that was occurring in Bengaluru. The most significant of these approaches was the declaration by the then chief minister Mr. S.M Krishna, who wanted to create a new Singapore in Bengaluru (Goldman, 2011). In order to replicate the island city-state, Mr. Krishna appointed a new task force called BATF (Bangalore Agenda Task Force) in 1999 whose agenda was to develop Bengaluru into a model city within five years (Ghosh, 2005). The idea was to transform the city into a ‘world class’ one, which was based on a notion that the tag can be achieved only through a culture of cosmopolitanization and the construction of tall office buildings, which was typical of a neoliberal growth model (Pete, 2011). The influence of the IT sector in determining aspects of urbanization and infrastructure allocation in the city can be assessed from the fact that the BATF was headed by Mr. Nandan Nilekani, the then CEO of Infosys, which is one of India’s largest IT companies (ibid.). The obsession to replicate the glossy facades that were the face of cities like Singapore and Hong Kong took precedence over the basic infrastructural needs of the citizens (ibid.). The images of manicured gardens and polished apartments from IT parks dominated global advertisements as the face of Bengaluru but was a representation of the city that was far from reality (Aranya, 2003).

### **SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN INDIA**

The history of SEZs can be traced back to EPZs (Export Promotion Zones), which was the first type of zone that was introduced during industrialization in India. It was used as a tool to promote manufacturing and exports, with Kandla in Gujarat being the first EPZ in the country (Jenkins, et al., 2015). It was only in the post liberalization period, in 2005, that the government introduced SEZs in India. The major difference between the two types of zones is that while EPZs were run by the government and public sector undertakings, SEZs encouraged private investment, with the role of the state being reduced to that of a land acquirer (Ananthanarayanan, 2008). This shift in policy was a major indicator that development in India in the future was going to be led by the private sector, and the role of the state was shifting to one of a mere regulator (Goldman, 2011). The SEZ Act 2005 stated that investors would receive 100% tax benefits for the first 5 years, 50% exemption for the next 5 years, and 50% exemption on prorated export profits for the following 5 years, which adds up to 15 years of tax exemption (Aggarwal, 2006). Additionally, companies would also receive 100% income tax exemption for a 10-year period within the first 15 years of existence, thus making SEZs a very attractive option for investment (ibid.). An estimate of the loss to government revenue based on these numbers was calculated to be about Rs. 23,475 million per annum (approx. 340 million USD), which was about 6.7% of the central government’s revenue in 2005-06 (ibid.).

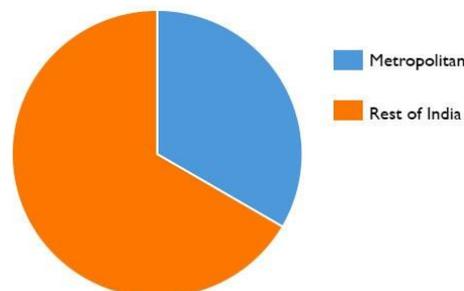
Since land is a state-level portfolio in the country, state governments were directed to assist

investors in land acquisition. This was done using the colonial Land Acquisition Act which allowed governments to acquire land for ‘public utilities’, which could then be handed over to private companies at very low prices (Ananthanarayanan, 2008; Idiculla, 2015). State governments were also required to provide water, electricity, roads and other infrastructure at subsidized rates for SEZs to be established in their territories (Goldman, 2011). However, only 25-50% of the land (depending on the project) needed to be utilized for the purpose of production, and the remaining land could be used for other real estate activities (ibid.). This regulatory mechanism resulted in SEZs being converted into townships, with the additional land being developed for housing and commercial purposes to be sold at market rates, which generated high levels of profits (Aggarwal, 2006). The high-class infrastructure that was developed inside these zones, due to its high pricing, became inaccessible to people beyond those in the upper income bracket (Goldman, 2011). This development, it can be argued, was achieved at the cost of displacement of small farmers and land holders (Ananthanarayanan, 2008), who were also unable to access the resulting infrastructure.

While analysing the growth of SEZs across India, it can be observed that there has been a concentration of SEZs in urban pockets in the country - Hyderabad (Telangana, previously Andhra Pradesh), Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) in the south, Pune (Maharashtra) in the west, and NOIDA (Uttar Pradesh) and Gurgaon (Haryana) in the north – which have all developed as IT hubs (Aranya, 2003). This can be attributed to the fact that with the tax advantages provided under the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) policy coming to an end, the IT sector expressed great interest in investing in SEZs (Palit, 2009). The official government website for SEZs state that of the 416 SEZs that exist/have been approved, about 65% are of the IT (Information Technology) /ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) category (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2019). Since the IT sector requires advanced infrastructure and highly skilled labour, characteristics that are typical of metropolitan urban locations, the growth of SEZs have also been located within these developed areas. This concentration of growth in urban areas has resulted in increased infrastructure demand in these locations, which local authorities are largely unprepared for (Sivaramakrishnan, 2009). Despite these challenges, SEZs continue to be approved for urban locations, through a justification that these zones promote growth. However, SEZs only promote growth that is concentrated within privatized enclaves, which results in increased inequalities in metropolitan cities that are already facing infrastructure deficiencies (Banerjee-Guha, 2008).

Figure 2: Distribution of SEZs in Metropolitan Areas of Bengaluru, Gurgaon, Noida, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad, and the Rest of India

Source: Image generated by Author, Data Source: <http://sezindia.nic.in/>



As the IT capital of the country, this shift in policy from STPI to the SEZ Act had a significant impact on Bengaluru. In 2009 the Karnataka state government established an SEZ policy, with the major objective being stated as the development of multi-product SEZs in districts other than Urban Bengaluru, to encourage distributed growth (Mody, 2014). This was to be conducted under the leadership of the recently established KIADB (Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board), which would develop SEZ’s individually and also in partnership with

private investors. However, it has been observed that as of 15 March 2019, out of the 62 SEZs that exist/have been approved in Karnataka, 40 are located in Bengaluru, of which 38 are IT/ITES SEZs (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2019). The numbers clearly indicate that the urban metropolis of Bengaluru dominates in the SEZ category, and most zones belong to the IT/ITES sector. Since the IT sector requires high grades of infrastructure and incentives to attract young employees (such as movie theatres, pubs, shopping malls etc.), SEZs in Karnataka have mainly been located in Bengaluru, as opposed to the earlier plan of the state government to push for distributed growth across the state.

Figure 3: Sector-wise Distribution of SEZs in Bengaluru

Source: Image generated by Author, Data Source: <http://sezindia.nic.in/>

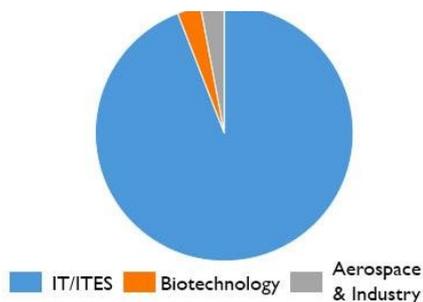
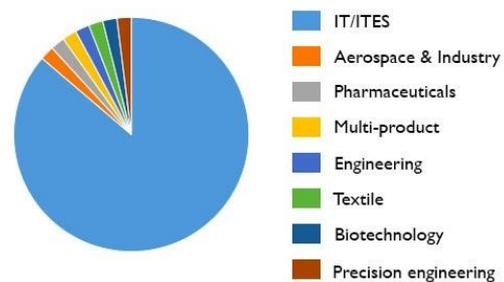


Figure 4: Sector-wise Distribution of SEZs in Karnataka

Source: Image generated by Author, Data Source: <http://sezindia.nic.in/>



The proliferation of IT/ITES SEZs in the city have resulted in a large amount of land, infrastructure and other facilities being allocated to the development of these private enclaves (Goldman, 2011). The accumulation of wealth and resources within zones has resulted in increased inequalities in the city, as infrastructure allocation has been prioritized for SEZs (Nair, 2005; Harvey, 2007). This is due to a form of ‘speculative urbanism’ occurring in the city, wherein the needs of global financial investors are being prioritized over the requirements of the citizens (Goldman, 2011; Speculative Urbanism, 2019). This form of urbanism has resulted in a city that is fragmented, where growth occurs within privatized enclaves that are becoming increasingly disconnected from the city. In order to understand the nature of exclusivity of SEZs, and its impact on the neighbourhood, this paper takes the case of ITPL, which was the first IT/ITES SEZ in Bengaluru.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PARK LIMITED – CASE STUDY

The Information Technology Park Limited (ITPL) SEZ is located in Pattandur Agrahara in the eastern part of Bengaluru. It was the first IT/ITES SEZ in the city. It is located on 10.879 ha of land (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 2019), and is part of the larger International Tech Park Bengaluru (ITPB) campus which is located on 28 ha of land (ibid.). The park was constructed with Ratan Tata (of the Tata Group) as its head. The Government of Singapore owns 40% stake, Government of India owns 35%, and the State Government of Karnataka owns the remaining 25%, with the KIADB as their representatives through its contribution of land for the project (Benjamin, et al., 2008). The SEZ currently consists of 4 buildings, with one more under construction. In the fiscal year 2017-18, ITPL SEZ had exports worth Rs. 4983.40 crores (approx. 715 million USD) (Office of the Development Commissioner, 2019).

## Analysis of Exclusivity within ITPL

There are 3 entrances to ITPL, 2 main gates and one pedestrian walkway, which is located inside the adjacent shopping mall owned by the same company (Ascendas). In order to enter, a person must have an ID card that has been issued by the concerned authorities. Every vehicle that enters the campus is checked by security guards at two consecutive points at the entrance. If traveling by vehicle, a metal detector is used to check for security threats, and the boot of the car is scanned thoroughly. Only upon completion of these processes is one allowed to enter the campus. A security guard is placed at the pedestrian entrance inside the shopping mall, who shall check IDs and complete security scanning in order to permit one to enter the park. In case

Figure 5: Security Check at Gate  
Source: Author



one does not have an authorized ID card they can enter the space by depositing a government issued ID card that can be collected while exiting the campus, provided that the person one is going to meet authorises the entry (Interview, 2019). The SEZ, as can be seen in the map, is located towards the central part of the ITPB campus. Upon reaching closer to this area, more boards can be seen which state that entry into the ITPL SEZ is limited to those who have ID cards issued by the Development Commissioner of the zone. In order to enter the zone, one has to cross another security check point where your ID card is checked once again. According to Sayantika, an employee of company A at ITPL SEZ, the security policy at

ITPL is both an advantage and disadvantage to her (Interview with Sayantika Mondal, ITPL Employee, 20 July 2019. pers. comm.). While she feels that the constant checking and strict mandates to wear ID cards keeps the space safe, even family members are not allowed to visit employees without obtaining prior permission (ibid.). Sayantika feels this is one of the few disadvantages posed by ITPL, as her husband is allowed to take their daughter into his workspace without any hassle whereas she is not (ibid.).

Through an observation of the space over a period of time, a certain anomaly was observed in the behaviour of security guards to people who looked like they belonged to low-income groups. The author observed that while entering on foot, people who were dressed in formal clothes were allowed to enter without much scrutiny. Some people belonging to this category had ID cards on display, while some did not. However, the amount of security checks they were subjected to were similar in nature. Contrary to this, people who were dressed in visibly less expensive clothes, and were wearing slippers rather than formal shoes, were being subjected to a lot more scrutiny, despite holding ID cards. In order to test this hypothesis, the author, dressed in formal clothes, decided to enter to space without an ID card. By pretending to be familiar with the space, the author was allowed to enter without being subjected to a security check or being asked for their ID card. This helped confirm the hypothesis that it is members of the middle and high-income groups that are able to enter the space seamlessly, while low-income groups are subjected to higher levels of scrutiny and are denied entry if they do not hold ID cards.

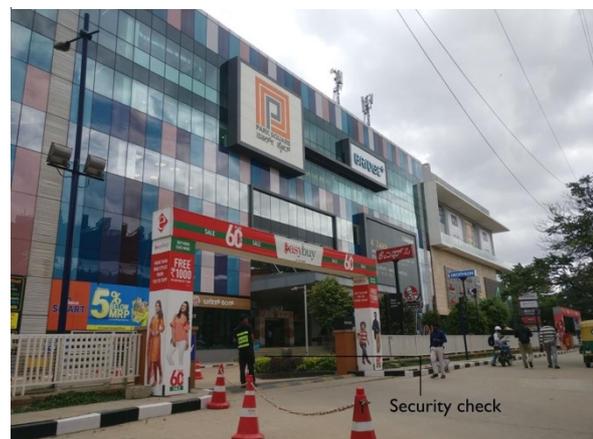
The lack of permeability of the space to outsiders is particularly concerning to Saswati, who works at company B at the ITPL SEZ. Saswati travels to work in shared-taxis and auto-rickshaws; however, these modes of transports are not permitted inside the campus. This becomes problematic to her as her office is located well inside the campus, and walking this

distance becomes difficult, particularly when she is ill. What Saswati's experience helps us analyse is that there is a conscious effort within the SEZ to develop the space as one that is exclusive and appealing to citizens belonging to high-income groups (Interview with Saswati Halder, ITPL Employee, 17 July 2019. pers. comm). The prohibited entry of auto-rickshaws and shared cabs appeals to the Indian upper-class mentality that success is depicted through the ownership of vehicles rather than the use of public transportation (Wessel, 2004). While Saswati has only been working at ITPL for 1.5 years, Sayantika, who has been employed in the SEZ for almost 15 years shares a private vehicle with her husband that they use to commute to work (Interview with Sayantika Mondal, ITPL Employee, 20 July 2019. pers. comm.). This can be indicative of the fact that as incomes grow, the middle and high-income IT workers prefer to purchase personal vehicles rather than depending on modes of public transport. The large number of private vehicles in ITPL is evident from the multi-level car parking space that has been constructed in the zone. Through a survey of 14 ITPL employees, it was observed that none of the respondents used public transportation.

Upon entering the SEZ, the first thing that captures one's attention is the large green space located at the centre of the 3 main buildings in the area. As this observation was conducted during lunch hours, the space was occupied by a large number of employees who were enjoying the pleasant July weather. The space holds significant importance in the study of Bengaluru, which has lost its large number of open and green spaces to the high rate of urbanisation (Nagendra, et al., 2012). The presence of this key piece of infrastructure within a space that is largely inaccessible to low-income groups further adds to the hypothesis of exclusivity in SEZs. Adding to this exclusivity is the presence of Taj Vivanta, a luxury hotel, and Park Square, a luxury shopping mall (operated by the same Ascendas group), both of which are located inside the ITPB campus. The presence of these high-class amenities creates an environment that is appealing to high-income groups and can be arguably intimidating for lower income groups. According to an online booking website, a night's stay at Taj Vivanta costs about Rs.8000 (approx. 110 USD) (Booking.com, 2019), and a cup of coffee at Park Square Mall costs about Rs.120 (approx. 2 USD) (Field Research, 2019). In order to compare these costs, it can be estimated that an average IT worker in Bengaluru earns a starting salary of Rs.50,000 a month (approx. 720 USD) (Payscale.com, 2019) and a family in a slum earns an average of about Rs.3500 in a month (approx. 50 USD) (Roy, et al., 2018). These costs can help us analyse the exclusivity of the services being provided inside ITPB/ITPL.

A number of additional cafes and eateries are provided within the SEZ, which saves employees from having to exit the space and re-enter in order to even get a cup of coffee. According to Sayantika, one of the biggest advantages of working inside ITPL is that most amenities, including an ATM, a shopping mall, and other commercial establishments exist within the campus, which means that there is hardly any need to go out of the space during working hours (Interview with Sayantika Mondal, ITPL Employee, 20 July 2019. pers. comm.). She says that she visits places outside the campus only once or twice a year for team lunches or other group activities. In terms of infrastructure, she believes that ITPL provides a high grade of services, which may not have been the situation if her company had been situated in an individual building (ibid.). Saswati feels that ITPL has a great deal of advantages to offer, as there is a

Figure 6: Ascendas Park Square Mall  
Source: Author



mall within the ITPB campus, and the green spaces located around the office areas act as communal meeting points, with various activities being held in them from time to time (Interview with Saswati Halder, ITPL Employee, 17 July 2019. pers. comm). What can be analysed through these viewpoints is that while the provision of amenities within the space can be seen as convenience on one hand, it can also be argued that this creates a secluded environment, one that is completely cut-off from its neighbourhoods. This form of seclusion is evident from survey results provided in the following figures:

Figure 7: Frequency of ITPL Employees Visiting Park Square Mall  
 Source: Data obtained from Primary Survey, Image Generated by Author

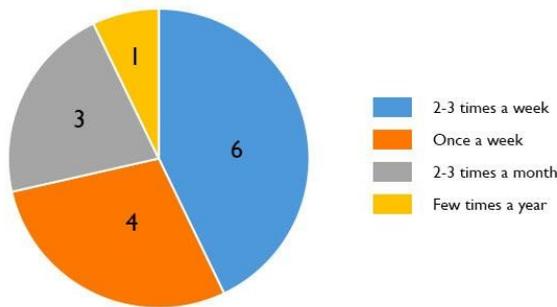
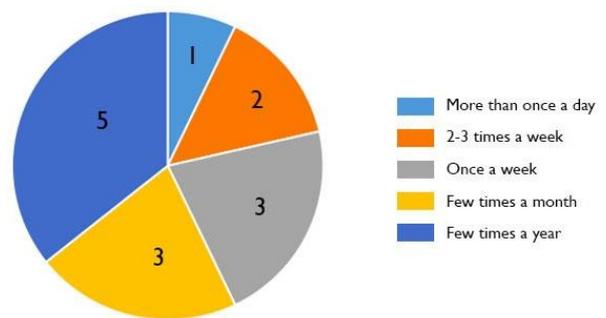


Figure 8: Number of Times that ITPL Employees Step Out of the Campus  
 Source: Data obtained from Primary Survey, Image Generated by Author



### Analysing Exclusivity in the Areas Surrounding ITPL

The serene and highly secure environment of ITPB spreads to the area outside its boundaries too; however, there are certain informal ‘fractures’ that can be observed in this largely formal space. One example of this phenomenon of fracturing of the urban pattern is that of small informal shops operating outside the boundary walls of ITPB. These include tea stalls, puncture repair shops, shoe repair stalls, fruit stalls, amidst others. These smaller shops cater to the lower income groups of workers engaged in work inside the zone, and also to people employed in gig economies, such as parcel delivery workers or taxi drivers. While IT workers may earn an upwards of Rs.50,000 a month (approx. 720 USD) (Payscale.com, 2019) and are able to afford the services provided inside the zone, the informal settings that can be observed outside the zone is indicative of the lack of infrastructure for the people in low-income categories who are also employed in the zone, or in parallel gig/informal economies. This was

Figure 9: Tea Stall on Footpath  
 Source: Author



evident through an interview with Chikkana, who works at company C inside ITPL as an office assistant. Belonging to the lower-income class of workers at ITPL, Chikkana stated that he left the campus at least 4-5 times a day, as opposed to the average of a few times a month that was observed during the survey with high-income employees (refer Figure 23), in order to run errands and to drink tea in the mornings and the evenings (Interview with Chikkana Bedasur, ITPL Employee, 1 August 2019. pers. comm). Chandan, who runs a tea shop outside the ITPL campus, stated that most of his customers belong to the low-income category of ITPL workers, apart from food delivery workers, cab drivers, and other gig economy workers (Interview with

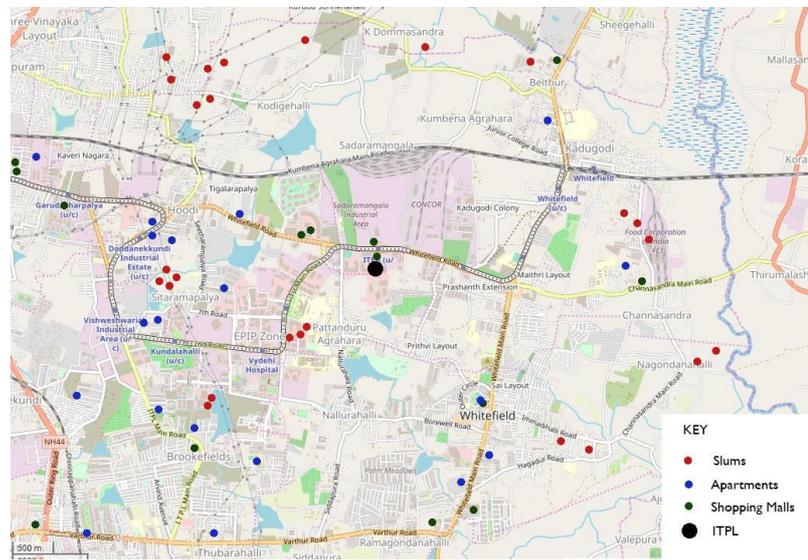
Chandan Kumar, Tea Stall Owner, 1 August 2019. pers. comm.). Chandan and other informal entrepreneurs who work in the vicinity use available infrastructure such as stones, parapet walls and trees to set up temporary shops. What this indicates is that the lack of availability of infrastructure for low-income groups in expensive areas around places like ITPL is being met through informal insurgencies (Bremner, 2013), that use available materials to provide efficient services. However, due to the informal nature of the business, these shop owners, who provide services that are essential for low-income workers, are subjected to constant harassment by authorities and have to pay large sums of money to the police as bribes in order to continue their business (Interview with Chandan Kumar, Tea Stall Owner, 1 August 2019. pers. comm.).

### Analysing Exclusivity in the ITPL Neighbourhood

A brief mapping of the areas surrounding ITPL reveals that there are a large number of high-class amenities within the neighbourhood. The value of real estate due to the presence of ITPL and other IT companies has increased considerably, leading to the development of a large number of luxurious apartments in the vicinity that cater to the IT sector employees at ITPL and other SEZs/ IT Parks (Rao, 2014). While conducting interviews, both Sayantika and Saswati stated that they live 2km and 3km away from ITPL respectively (Interview with Saswati Halder, ITPL

Figure 10: Mapping of ITPL Neighbourhood

Source: Base Map sourced from <https://www.openstreetmap.org/search?query=ITPL#map=17/12.98463/77.73635>, Edited by Author



Employee, 17 July 2019. pers. comm; Interview with Sayantika Mondal, ITPL Employee, 20 July 2019. pers. comm). The reason Saswati chose to stay in the vicinity is because the IT sector is very prominent in the area, and hence it would be unlikely that she would have to shift her home even if she decided to switch jobs (ibid.). Saswati and Sayantika agree that all amenities are available within the area, hence moving out of the space is not generally required (ibid.). With high-class amenities, housing and work-spaces being available in the neighbourhood, the area surrounding ITPL has developed into an exclusive one, that is accessible and affordable only to high-income groups (Mahadevia, 2013). However, a second layer of mapping of the area revealed that there are also a number of slums and low-income communities that co-exist in the neighbourhood<sup>2</sup>. What can be observed here is that even though there is a large concentration of wealth and world-class infrastructure at ITPL, there are a number of slums and informal settlements that exist in the area. During the interview, Chikkana stated that he lives in an informal settlement in the nearby area of Whitefield (Interview with Chikkana Bedasur, ITPL Employee, 1 August 2019. pers. comm) and Chandan lives in an area that is at a walkable

<sup>2</sup> It must be noted that this data may not be an accurate representation as government data on slums in Bengaluru is outdated.

distance from ITPL (Interview with Chandan Kumar, Tea Stall Owner, 1 August 2019. pers. comm.). These are indications of a need for housing and other infrastructure for lower income workers who are employed at ITPL, or in parallel economies. As can be observed in the mapping of the neighbourhood, the development of low-income communities in the peripheral area of the zone is an indication that while the larger area is a very well developed one, there are fractures in the formality of the space, which are created due to needs of low-income groups. These needs have led to the development of infrastructure such as slums and squatter settlements that can be categorized as insurgent architecture, which have risen in response to the requirements of those at the bottom of the income structure (Bremner, 2013).

### **INEQUALITY AND REPERCUSSIONS IN THE CITY**

About 25-35% of the population of the city of Bengaluru lives in slums (Roy, et al., 2018). As has been observed in the case of ITPL, development in the city has largely been restricted within zones. While a certain number of high-class amenities have developed in the neighbouring areas, there is a significant number of slums and low-income communities, which indicates the lopsided nature of the growth. The high rate of increase in the number of slums in the city from 159 in 1971 to over 2000 in 2015 (ibid.) is indicative of the fact that inequality in the city has only increased in the era of globalization and implementation of neoliberal policy.

It must also be noted that a large percentage of the population works for the multi-sectoral informal economy, which includes industries such as textiles, apparels, food processing etc. and also in casual sectors as street vendors, drivers, maids, etc, and it is this informal sector that generates between 55-75% of the GDP of Bengaluru (Benjamin, 2000a; 2000b; Benjamin et.al, 2008; Goldman, 2011). “Yet, world-city projects, with their large appetites for undervalued/capitalized land, tend to undermine these small and medium-sized enterprises, as the [informal sector’s] political clout has diminished by comparison [to the IT sector]” (Goldman, 2011, p. 567). The significant contribution of the informal sector to the local economy is sidelined during budget allocation <sup>3</sup> (ibid.), a large proportion of which is dedicated to the development of infrastructure catering to the IT sector (ibid.). However, only 4-7% of the workforce belongs to this category of workers (Narayana, 2011; Carlson, 2018), which indicates that the larger budget allocation occurs for a minority of citizens employed in a sector that only generates employment for people who can access and afford higher education.

### **CONCLUSION**

In a country where there is a prominent history of spatial exclusivity based on race and class, it can be argued that SEZs are manifestations of new forms of imperialism, one that is based on a system of economic and social status (Ananthanarayanan, 2008). As can be seen in the case of ITPL, SEZs have developed into zones of exclusion, where high levels of infrastructure and amenities are provided but are accessible only to a very limited percentage of the population (Banerjee-Guha, 2008). Additionally, it has been observed that 65% of SEZs belong to the IT/ITES sector whose previous benefits were scheduled to end in 2011 (Ramanathan, 2013). The movement of the IT sector into the category of SEZs indicates that the shift has occurred in order to continue receiving state subsidies, which is an occurrence of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, a phenomenon Harvey (2007) argues ensures the concentration of wealth in the hands of the wealthy minority. This is an indication of a phenomenon of concentrated growth and infrastructure development in privatized enclaves that is a form of socio-spatial segregation based on economic status, and is largely inaccessible, both physically and economically, to

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<sup>3</sup> There is very little official data available on the number of informal workers in the city. While this makes analysis of inequality in the city difficult for the author, the lack of data is a critical part of the issue too.

people outside high-income groups. As Sassen (2001; 2006) has stated, “(...) global cities [are producing] (...) unique spatial configurations [that generate] socio-spatial dynamics geared toward extending and reproducing the power and authority of transnational elite social and corporate networks” (Goldman, 2011, p. 556). With 1% of the population owning 73% of the wealth in the country (Business Today, 2019), India is one of the most unequal countries in the world. In this context, it is matter of concern that a large number of state subsidies continue to be provided to SEZs, through which concentration of wealth occurs in spatially segregated areas. The result of the proliferation of SEZs are fragmented cities, where a large number of slums in abysmal conditions co-exist with world-class private enclaves. This is indicative of the inequalities that are a result of concentration of growth and investment within segregated spaces such as Special Economic Zones.

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