

Gendered Exclusions in the Work Spaces of Peri-urban Areas in a Neoliberal Environment: Learning from the Experiences of Large Metropolitan Cities in India

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Abstract

The peri-urban areas of large metropolises have, in recent years, become favoured sites for private investments inflows and are consequently experiencing rapid land transfers from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector. There have been concerns that such land transfers have not yielded gainful employment uniformly for those facing livelihood displacements. The overarching question that this article addresses is that, given the larger contexts of deceleration of women's work participation rates in the country and the transient nature of the peri-urban spaces, does the urban-centric growth process in the peri-urban areas offer women with better opportunities emerging out of the process of urbanization, or does it expose them to new vulnerabilities not observed in other regions? The article, by and large, confirms the latter hypothesis and concludes that in spite of evidences of economic spillover effects from the urban core to these spaces, the benefits get distributed unevenly in terms of employment, particularly when seen through a gendered lens.

新自由主义环境下城郊区域工作空间的性别排斥：借鉴印度特大城市的经验

近年来特大城市的近郊地区成为私人投资流入的热点地区，并因此经历着土地从农业快速转移到非农业用途的过程。已经有人担心这样的土地转让并没有给那些面临生计变化的人们提供同样的有酬就业岗位。本文探讨的主要问题是，在全国妇女参加工作的比例降低和城郊空间具有临时性这样一个大背景下，试问城郊地区的城市向心生长过程是否为妇女提供了更好的在城市化进程中出现的机会，还是把她们暴露在其他地区没有发现的新隐患中？总的来说，本文证实了后一项假设，并得出结论，尽管有证据表明经济效益从城市核心溢出到了上述城郊空间，但在就业方面带来的好处分布不均，特别是考虑到性别差异的时候。

Keywords

Peri-urban areas, gender, employment, large metropolitan centres, urban-centric growth, India

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Introduction

In the recent years, peri-urban areas of developing countries have shown a great dynamism in terms of rapid land use changes that stems from accelerated urban-centric growth processes that impact the people living in these areas in a number of ways. It is expected that such changes would yield new and diversified opportunities for work around the large urban centres in India, which in turn, is supposed make for what one may term as 'inclusive growth' (The World Bank, 2009). The World Development Report 2009 entitled *Reshaping Economic Geography* argues that the initial regional inequalities (between rural and urban areas on the one hand and large urban and small urban centres, on the other) are only to be expected when the large urban centres expand. However, over time jobs would be available in such locations for people, who belong to the left-behind regions, migrating into these cities and its surroundings.

Evidence suggests that investment inflows in India, particularly from private and often international sources have been higher around the large metropolitan centres in the post-reform period, with the edges of these centres distinctly finding favour compared to the cores of these centres, which are stagnating in terms of investment inflows (Chakraborty, 2000). These investments have led to land-use changes *around* the metropolitan cities in the post-globalization era involving "high-end" infrastructure, new industrial and service activities, and the construction of new housing colonies and commercial ventures catering primarily to upper income-groups (Kennedy, 2007).

However, India's experience does not demonstrate a clear connect between such urban-centric growth and at least, women's work. Women's work participation has fallen consistently for the last quarter of a century in India, the same time the growth figures of the economy saw a respectable performance (Abraham, 2013; Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2013). Notwithstanding the reasons offered to explain such a trend, the fact that one of the important indicators of women's empowerment and contribution to the economy has been experiencing a stubborn downward trend is a matter of genuine concern. Notably, the urban female work participation rates have shown a lower level of decline compared to that of the rural trends, albeit fraught with greater volatility (Chandrasekhar & Ghosh, 2013).

The peri-urban areas of large metropolises are, in fact, exposed to multi-faceted vulnerabilities and have often been excluded from the obvious opportunities that are expected to be associated with urbanization (Dupont, 2007). These areas experience rapid changes from rural to urban land uses, making high demands on the rural population to transition fairly rapidly from agricultural to non-farm livelihoods (Chadha, Sen & Sharma, 2004). Second, these areas, in spite of often having production dynamism, are stagnant in terms of governance and basic provisions, as they are 'invisible' from the point of view of both urban and rural public authorities. Third, the population living in regions adjoining to the large cities typically increases rapidly and becomes home for at least three identifiable sets of people moving in here: the urban rich, the urban poor and the rural poor, making these spaces of unequal access and aspirations (Kundu, Schenk & Dash, 2002).

The peri-urban areas represent a spatial platform that enables us to capture the larger processes of globalization operating in the country at large since the nature of interaction between the rural and the urban and its outcomes are visible more clearly in these spaces. The overarching question that this article asks is that, given the transient nature of the peri-urban spaces that necessitates adjustments, and given the larger context of deceleration of women's work participation rates in the country, does the growth in the peri-urban areas offer women with better opportunities emerging out of the process of urbanization, or expose them to new vulnerabilities not observed in other regions? More specifically, the article deals with gender differences in work participation and its barriers, wage differentials and the nature of jobs.

Data Base

This study extensively uses unit level data from the Employment-Unemployment rounds of 2004–2005 (61st round) and 2011–2012 (68th round) of the National Sample Survey Organization for the most part. The Population Census 2001 and 2011 was also used to provide background information on urbanization in India.

The study covers six largest metropolitan centres of India, namely, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. Each city is broken into three spatial units, urban core, peri-urban and the respective residual states. The peri-urban areas have been represented by the district around the metropolises (Figure 1). For the peri-urban areas and the residual states, employment characteristics of both rural and urban areas have been analyzed from NSSO unit-level data, with a total sample size of 80,984 individuals

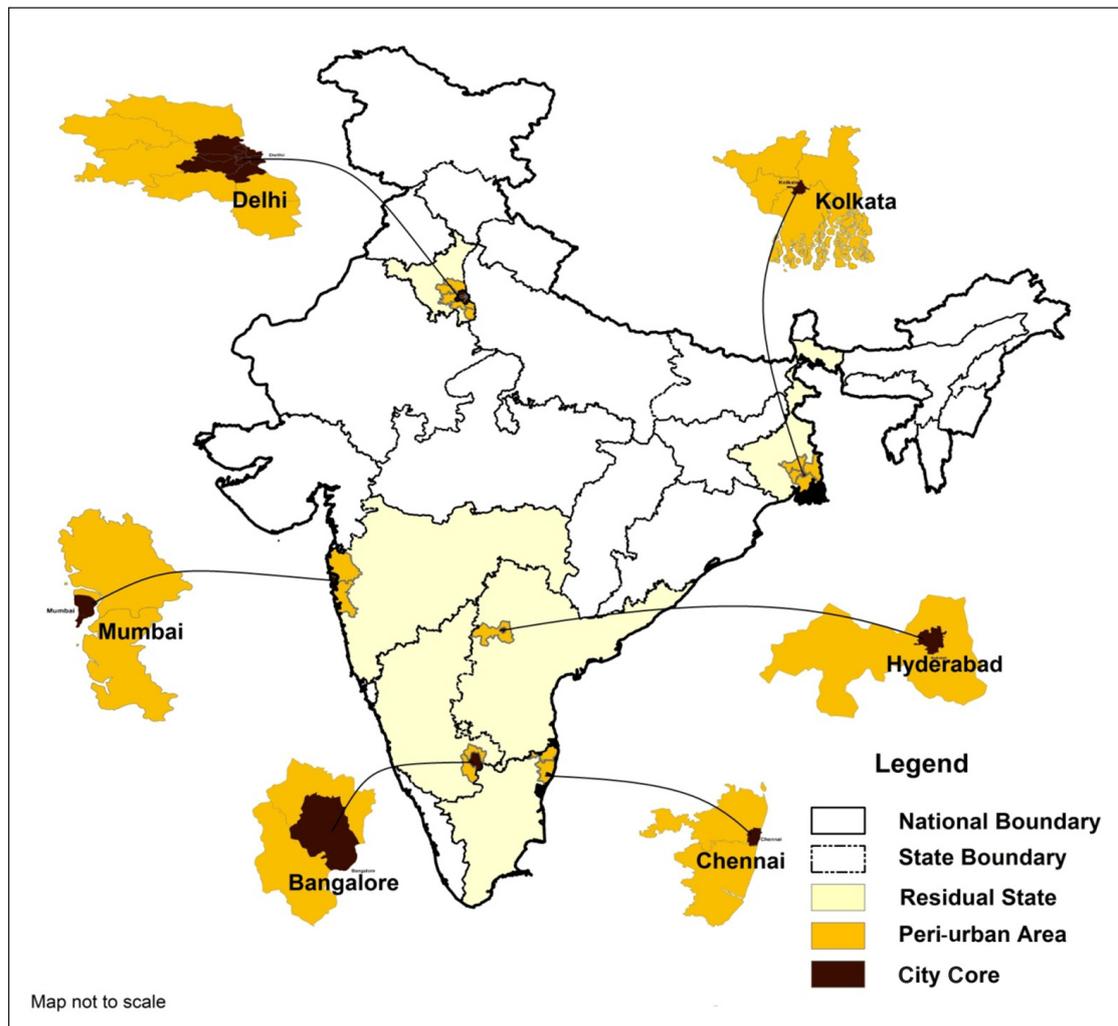


Figure 1. Study Area: Six Major Metropolitan Cities in India and Their Hinterland

(41,459 and 39,525 males and females respectively) for 2004–2005 and 66,837 individuals (34,197 and 32,640 males and females respectively) for 2011–2012.

One of the limitations that the study suffers from is the way peri-urban areas have been defined due to data limitations. Districts are often too large a spatial unit to represent peri-urban areas. Also, peri-urban areas are dynamic in nature and shift outward over time. However, since the NSSO data provide a break-up only up to the district level, such static aggregations were unavoidable. Also, a temporal analysis covering the period before 2004–2005 could not be attempted, as Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai were not recognized as districts before that. Additionally, information about work in the principal and subsidiary statuses of work¹ was not available before 2004–2005, and these divisions have strong gender implications.

Demographic and Economic Effects of Urbanization and Implications for Gendered Nature of Work in Peri-urban Areas of Large Metropolises

Between 2001 and 2011, there has been a clear stagnation of population in the cores of the large metropolitan centres, accompanied a very rapid population growth in districts around the metropolitan cities, Bangalore being the only exception out of the metropolises considered for this study (Kundu, 2011 and Table 1). This trend gets explained by lower levels of rural to urban migration to these cities, a phenomenon that has been explained by the process of ‘elite capture’ of large cities, coming out from a policy of ‘sanitizing’ these cities (Kundu & Saraswati, 2012). Thus, though such cities have experienced an increase in income levels and better basic provisions, such benefits, have, in fact been exclusionary, through processes that have been contradictory and contentious, and not consensual, as some of the vision documents of the local bodies have projected (Kennedy & Zérah, 2008; Kohli, 2006). Such processes have given rise to not only the crowding of the hinterlands, but also led to the creation of what has been termed as ‘degenerated peripheries’, which have links with informalization of labour possibly leading to increased subsidiarization of work. However, the potential opportunities of getting higher wage rates emerging out of the expansion of non-agricultural activities for the households in the peri-urban areas works side by side (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Peri-urban Areas vis-à-vis Urban Cores and Residual States

Location	Spatial Unit	Demographic Characteristics			Economic Characteristics				
		Population Growth Rate (2011 Over 2011)	Household Size	Sex Ratio (Working Age Group)	MPCE*	Wage/Daily Earning	% of		% in
						Non-workers	Principal Status Workers	Organized Sector	
Rural	Peri-urban	0.35	5.36	953	1584	231	41.20	38.80	10.10
	Residual State	0.74	5.19	996	1481	210	37.70	46.80	8.50
Urban	Urban Core	1.51	4.99	900	3357	480	47.80	50.70	15.80
	Peri-urban	4.86	4.82	940	2847	438	48.70	47.40	15.20
	Residual State	2.98	4.90	1004	2101	337	48.40	48.00	11.20

Source: Calculated from Census 2001, 2011 and NSSO 2011–2012.

Note: The figures in bold and italics are significantly different from those of their counterparts.

* MPCE—Monthly per capita consumption expenditure.

The peri-urban regions represent an economic continuum as a space between the urban core and residual states with respect to a large number of economic indicators, like the monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE), wage earnings and percentage of workers employed in the organized sector (Table 1). By and large, it would be fair to suggest that the peri-urban areas enjoy the urban effects in terms of economic benefits. The demographic characteristics of urban part of the peri-urban areas, however, are shaped by the nature of economic dynamism in these areas and results in demographic dis-continuums when compared to the other two spatial platforms (Table 1). The population growth rates in the peri urban areas of the other five metropolises have been far higher not only compared to the city cores and but also the residual states.² Correspondingly, the household size in the peri-urban regions is smaller than either the urban core or the residual states. Additionally, the sex ratio for the working-age group is the highest in the residual states, followed by the peri-urban regions, and the lowest in the core. It may be reasonable to conclude from the above facts that first, the peri-urban regions have attracted more migrants than the city cores over the past decade; and second, going by the working-age group sex ratio, this migration has been less male-selective over the years, compared to that in the city cores, where more women have accompanied the male members of their families. This has resulted in smaller household sizes in the peri-urban areas compared to its other two spatial counterparts because of higher incidence of native population in case of the latter cases.

The net land outflow from agriculture to non-agricultural activities is likely to impact the native population, particularly those living in the rural areas, and the households that were engaged in agriculture as well as those dependent primarily on agricultural wage-work. It may be expected that the male members from both the migrant households as well as those affected by land outflows from agriculture are likely to be part of a transient working population, who may be engaged more than one short-term work or commuting to urban cores for work. This is somewhat supported by the share of principal status workers being the lowest in the peri-urban areas, indicating that steady job opportunities are more limited here compared to the other two spatial counterparts (Table 1). This would have implications for the women of these households, who either may not be able to participate in the job markets or be able to take up only subsidiary and part-time occupations, having to handle the burden of the household in an alien environment without the social support of the extended family or being a part of a household where the earning members may be adjusting to new occupations, or both.

Gender Context of Changing Livelihoods in Peri-urban Areas

Though literature with respect to gender and work in the context of peri-urban expansions is limited, there are a few key observations about specificities of characteristics of economic development in India in particular and the developing part of the world in general that can inform the analysis being undertaken in this study. First, new forms of post-Fordist production that is characterized by a process of vertical disintegration of firms has seen the emergence of new economic spaces around large cities in the developing world. These spaces are aiming to not only lower costs by employment of skilled and unskilled cheap labour, but seeking out destinations that provide a complex of factors like quality infrastructure, specialized services as well as markets (Kennedy & Zérah 2008). Such developments have created opportunities of diversified employment opportunities, and are often associated with wage rates higher than in the pre-existing economic landscape. The spatial clustering of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in the peri-urban areas, at times, have been observed in some cases to be even advantageous for women, who are then able to join the labour market more easily (Hart, 1996). However, there are some evidences suggesting that women have by and large been excluded from enjoying the benefits of these expanded economic opportunities in the Indian context (Paul & Raju, 2014). Women

are often known to stay back in agriculture in the rural peri-urban zones while the male migrants commute or migrate to join the labour pool in the urban centres (Iaquinta & Drescher, 2000; Tacoli, 1998). For those that join the urban labour market, gender discriminations in wages have been observed, the markets offering women the ‘flexibility’ of divisible short term work that comes with the new form of production, often in the form of home-based work (Jatav and Sen 2013, Raju 2013b, Lu and Song 2006). However, brighter prospects for women have been noted in Hangzhou, in China, where wage differential in the while-collar jobs, have worked in favour of women, though the same is not true at the lower orders of work (Webster et al., 2003).

The Gendered Nature of Work Participation

Table 2 provides information about work participation rates of males and females over the last seven years. It can be observed that across the board, while the male work participation rates (WPR) have remained stable, the female rates have gone down visibly between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012. Second, while the male overall (principal and subsidiary status) WPR is only slightly higher than their WPR at the principal status, the corresponding differences among the females are very high, indicating a higher level of subsidiarization.

Table 2. Comparison of Male and Female Work Participation Rates, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012

Spatial Units	61st Round: 2004–2005					
	Principal and Subsidiary Status			Principal Status		
	Male WPR (%)	Female WPR (%)	Ratio of Female to Male WPR	Male WPR (%)	Female WPR (%)	Ratio of Female to Male WPR
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Rural			
Peri-urban	87.3	39.2	0.45	85.6	25.7	0.30
Residual State	87.6	61.2	0.70	86.4	53.3	0.62
			Urban			
Urban Core	80.9	21.3	0.26	79.8	19.2	0.24
Peri-urban	82.5	24.3	0.29	80.8	17.9	0.22
Residual State	80.8	30.3	0.38	80.0	26.8	0.34
			68th Round: 2011–2012			
			Rural			
Peri-urban	87.1	35.9	0.41	85.3	19.0	0.22
Residual State	87.4	47.6	0.54	84.9	39.3	0.46
			Urban			
Urban Core	79.1	22.7	0.29	78.5	21.4	0.27
Peri-urban	83.5	21.8	0.26	80.5	17.8	0.22
Residual State	78.8	24.6	0.31	78.4	22.0	0.28

Source: Calculated from Employment–Unemployment Rounds, NSSO, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

Table 3. Change in Composition of Work of Females

Spatial Units		2004–2005					2011–2012				
		Own Account Worker (%)	Employer (%)	Unpaid Family Work (%)	Regular Salaried (%)	Casual Wage Worker (%)	Own Account Worker (%)	Employer (%)	Unpaid Family Work (%)	Regular Salaried (%)	Casual Wage Worker (%)
Rural	Peri-urban	20.6	0.0	32.6	7.2	39.5	16.4	1.7	18.3	19.8	43.9
	Residual State	11.7	0.3	34.2	4.9	48.9	11.7	0.2	32.9	6.7	48.5
Urban	Urban Core	13.4	1.5	7.2	72.1	5.7	14.9	1.1	9.2	70.6	4.1
	Peri-urban	18.5	0.5	14.1	56.3	10.6	23.3	0.0	5.0	62.0	9.7
	Residual State	21.1	0.6	21.9	33.3	23.1	23.9	0.2	14.7	40.5	20.8

Source: Calculated from Employment–Unemployment Rounds, NSSO, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

In rural areas, the peri-urban WPRs of females are lower than that of the residual states, and this gap has been maintained over time, particularly with respect to WPR in the principal status. Consequently, the disparities of WPR between men and women in the peri-urban areas remain higher over time compared to the residual states (columns 4 and 7 of Table 2). In the urban areas, though the gender disparities represented a continuum in 2004–2005 in the overall WPR (principal and subsidiary status), with the urban core showing the most disparity, and the residual states, the least, in 2011–2012, the gender disparities became the highest in the peri-urban areas. This indicates that over time, women in the urban part of peri-urban areas have had less access to the kind of jobs that they seek, and as a result of this, their overall WPR is falling in relation to men, and in relation to urban core and the residual states. This observation is further strengthened by an analysis of work composition of women. This reveals that the quality of work in both rural and urban peri-urban and residual states have improved, with the share of unpaid family work in family enterprises going down and that of the regular salaried going up (Table 3). These changes are sharper in the peri-urban areas than the residual states. The trends suggest that women in both the urban fringe and also to some extent in the urban residual states are holding out from the work domain, unless they are offered regular and stable jobs.

Notably, there is a rural-urban difference in the change of women's work composition that co-exist with the above pattern. In rural areas, there is a decline in the share of self-employed workers and an increase in casual work among women. This translates into women cultivators being converted into either agricultural or non-farm workers. Typically, one would expect a reverse pattern, since women stay behind in agriculture as men close to urban centre move away from the sector in search of urban jobs. A decline in land-based activity and a shift to casual jobs is in all probability a reflection of land loss from agriculture and the consequent pauperization of even the women peasantry.

Though this study does not explore further the relationship between income groups and change in work patterns, it appears that there is a class nature of the work composition shifts of women. It seems that while women from richer households hold out from paid jobs till they get regular salaried work in the peri-urban areas, in the rural part of the fringe, the poorer women are probably forced to move into casualized jobs from own farm based livelihoods.

The above analysis indicates that the barriers to women's participation in work is of a higher order relative to men, possibly both in terms of their magnitude and nature. These barriers also seem to be more restrictive in the peri-urban areas than both the urban core and residual states in recent times,

irrespective of whether the women are located in the rural or urban areas. Two of the plausible explanations of women's vulnerability in the peri-urban areas with respect to the job market are the transient status of work of men of their household and smaller household sizes. The hypotheses of prosperity induced withdrawal of women (Himanshu, 2011; IGAS, 2012; Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010) from the workforce cannot explain why the gender disparities of WPR should remain higher in the peri-urban regions compared to the urban cores, given that the latter region's consumption expenditure and wage rates are higher than the peri-urban regions.

Figures 2 to 5 show the age-wise work participation rates for women in the usual (principal and subsidiary) status over the two periods under consideration.³ The rural areas of peri-urban areas have experienced withdrawal in two age groups, in the age group 15–20, potentially due to increased participation in higher education, and in the age group of 41–50, who have gone into domestic and extra-domestic activities (Figure 2). The urban trend of female WPR in peri-urban areas is similar, except that the

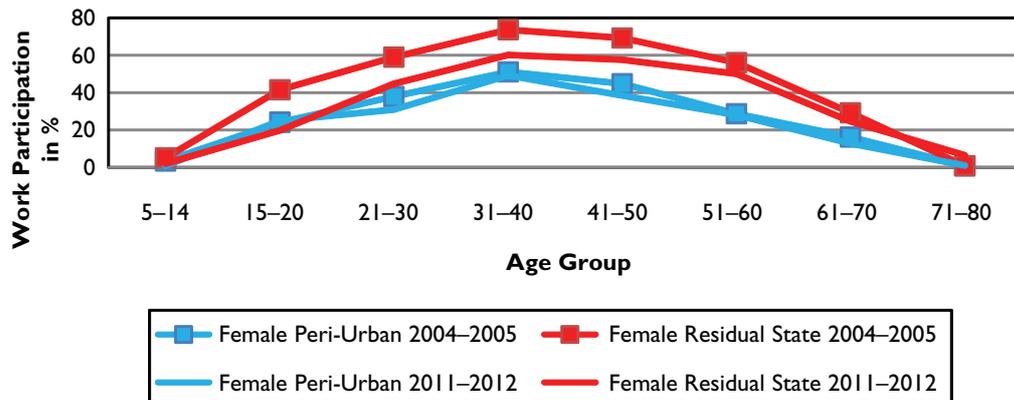


Figure 2. Change in Rural Female Work Participation across Age Groups

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment round, National Sample Survey Organization, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

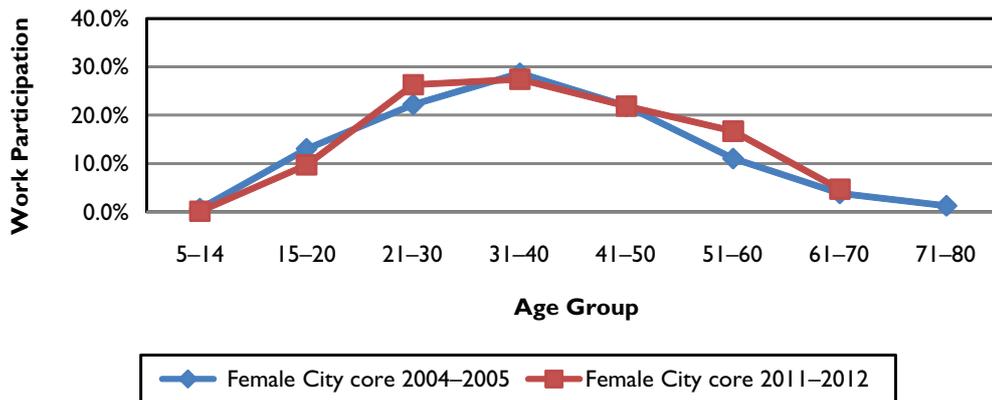


Figure 3. Change in Female Urban Work Participation in Metropolitan City Cores across Age Groups

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment round, National Sample Survey Organization, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

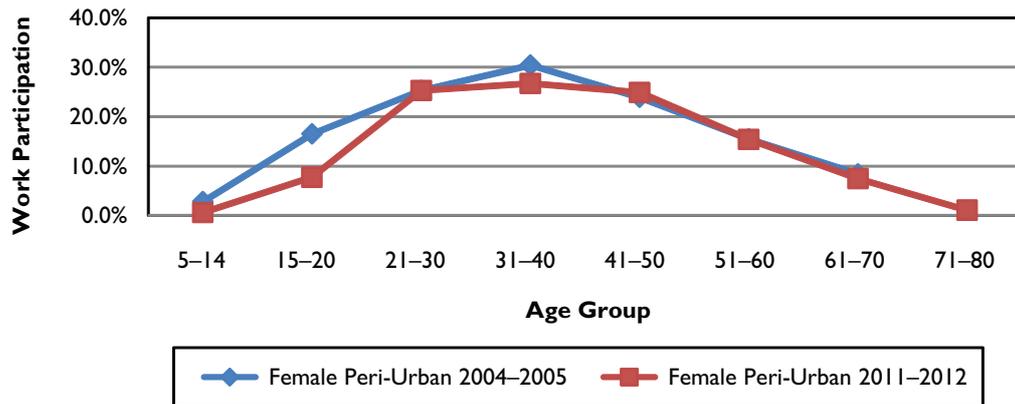


Figure 4. Change in Female Urban Work Participation Rates in Metropolitan Peri-urban Areas

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment round, National Sample Survey Organization, 2004-05 and 2011-12.

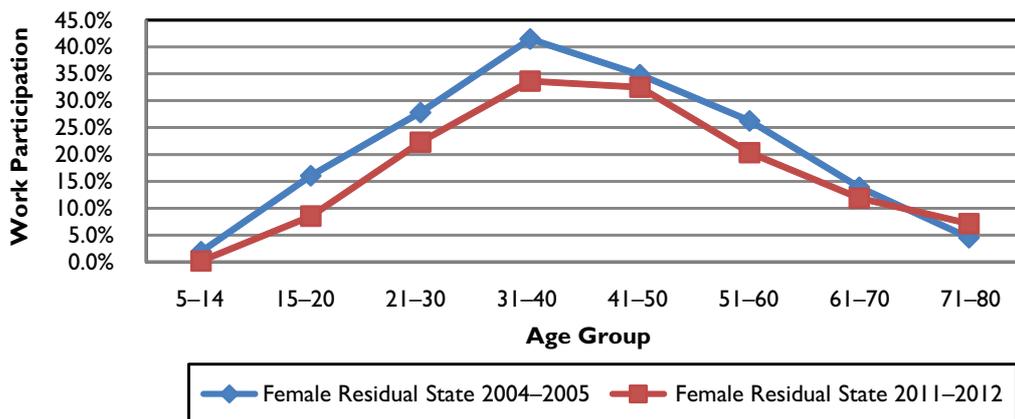


Figure 5. Change in Female Urban Work Participation in the Residual State/s

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment round, National Sample Survey Organization, 2004-2005 and 2011-2012.

withdrawal is in the 31-40 age group, which could be overlap somewhat with the new migrants (Figure 4). The residual states in comparison, has experienced a reduction in all age groups consistently (Figure 5). Thus, education related withdrawal can only partially explain the withdrawal of women from work over time and the explanation for the post-education age withdrawal of female workforce in both the peri-urban and residual states requires a deeper investigation.

In sum, the two most common causes stated by scholars explaining reduced women's overall work participation rates, namely withdrawal due to increased income and participation in higher education are not adequate in explaining the depressed trends in the peri-urban areas. To the contrary, the distress seems to be particularly acute among the women belonging to the rural poor; whether land dispossession in the peri-urban areas explain the entirety of such trends needs to be explored further.

Table 4. Non-working Women's Willingness to Take-up Home-based Work

Spatial Units	% Willing to Accept Job if it was Home-based	Type of Job Acceptable			
		Regular Full-time (%)	Regular Part-time (%)	Occasional Full-time (%)	Occasional Part-time (%)
Rural Peri-urban	20	18.6	76.9	1.6	2.8
Residual State	27.9	24.1	71.7	1.3	2.9
Urban Urban Core	20.7	29.4	65.3	1.2	4.0
Peri-urban	25.6	24.2	71.3	.9	3.6
Residual State	27.0	28.5	67.8	1.1	2.6

Source: Calculated from Employment–Unemployment Round, NSSO, 2011–2012.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that there are growing constraints of women being able to join the labour market, and though these appear to be higher in the urban areas of residual states across all age groups (Figure 5), the effect of urbanization has not been able to halt the withdrawal completely in the peri-urban areas in the higher age groups. A third to a fifth of the non-working women depending on their location, are willing to work from home, and this share is higher in the peri-urban areas in rural locations than the residual states, and higher in urban locations as one moves away from the city core (Table 4). Most of the women who are willing to work if it was made available at home favour part-time regular work, followed by full-time regular work. Notably, the share of non-working women willing to work in part-time regular work is higher in the peri-urban areas than the other locations, for both rural and urban areas. This is revealing because it indicates the inability of women residing in the fringe area in getting engaged in full-time work, in all probability due to reasons like greater care burden of their households related to their migrant status, small household size or as a result of taking over farm work from men in the rural areas.

Determinants Explaining Men's and Women's WPR

Table 5 reveals that along with location, there are other factors that explain workforce participation of males and females differently.⁴ As far as location is concerned, controlling for other factors, while the men have a higher probability of participating in work in the urban core followed by the peri-urban areas (higher by 28 per cent and 5 per cent compared to residual states respectively), the corresponding probability is the lowest in peri-urban areas for women, followed by urban core (lower by 49 per cent and 8 per cent to residual states respectively). Thus while the process of urbanization provides relative opportunities to men as expected, which translates into highest WPR in the urban core and lowest in the residual state, this is not the case for women, who are the most vulnerable in the peri-urban areas.

Education too, impacts men's and women's work participation differently. The probability of men's work participation increases with lower levels of education. Men are looked on as the main bread earners of the household and enter the labour market irrespective of their educational background, and this entry is smoother in the lower end of the job spectrum. In contrast, the probability of women joining the labour force is lower in the middle and secondary levels of education compared to the higher secondary levels and above. Below the level of middle school, the probability increases with lower

Table 5. Determinants of Work Participation of Men and Women: Results of Logit Analysis

Variables	Male		Females	
	β	Exp(β)	β	Exp(β)
Categorical Variables:				
Location (Reference: Residual States)				
Urban Core	0.247	1.281	-0.076	0.927
Peri-urban	0.052	1.053	-0.667	0.513
Educational Attainment: Reference: High School and Above				
Illiterate	0.773	2.167	0.65	1.916
Up to Primary	1.683	5.38	0.278	1.321
Middle	0.863	2.37	-0.144	0.866
Secondary	0.27	1.31	-0.415	0.66
Sector (Reference: Urban)				
Rural	0.102	1.108	0.539	1.715
Social group (Reference: General Caste)				
Scheduled Tribes	0.254	1.289	0.874	2.396
Scheduled Castes	-0.071	0.931	0.324	1.382
Other Backward Castes	0.117	1.124	0.444	1.559
Marital Status (Reference: Divorced and Separated)				
Never Married	0.468	1.598	-1.217	0.296
Currently married	2.724	15.242	-0.957	0.384
Constant	-3.045	0.048	-0.532	0.588
Constant Variable:				
Household size	-0.05	0.951	-0.077	0.926
Age	0.105	1.11	0.005	1.005
MPCE	0	1	0	1

Source: Calculated from Employment–Unemployment Round, NSSO, 2011–2012.

educational attainments and is the highest for the illiterates. There thus appears to be a clear divide between the kind of jobs taken up by women educated up to middle school, vis-à-vis those who have up to primary level schooling and below. This finding is validated by the earlier analysis of job composition.

The social strata interact somewhat differently with participation in the labour market for men and women. While the men from scheduled caste background have a greater barrier to entry to the labour market for men compared to general caste groups probably due to work-place discriminations, among women, the latter have the lowest probability of entering the labour force. It is well documented that though lower castes are generally disadvantaged in the social structure, paradoxically, the cultural barriers for women from such households to enter the job market is less marked compared to those upper caste women (Agarwal, 1994; Beteille, 1991). For both men and women, the scheduled tribes and the OBCs have a higher probability of entering the labour market compared to the general castes potentially due to the continuation in higher education of members from the latter group.

The domestic and extra-domestic responsibilities that prevent women from entering the labour market expectedly reduce the probability of a married woman being a worker compared to divorced and separated women. However, the cultural restrictions on the never-married girls/women are even higher that prevent them from working, controlling for other factors.

Age, household size, consumption expenditure level of the household (taken as a proxy for income) and rural or urban location have no gender-differentiated impact on probability work participation. Notably, though age has a positive impact on the probability of joining the work force for both men and women, it has a much more diluted impact for women. In other words, experience has a higher premium for men in the labour market compared to what it does in case of women.

Wage Rates and Gender Differentials

The work-participation rates indicate an unfavourable gendered pattern in the peri-urban areas, which in many cases have deepened over the seven years over which this analysis has been done. It is important to examine whether this can be explained by the trend in wage rates, and whether these two factors together magnify to contribute to the vulnerabilities faced by women. Wages have been compared in Tables 7 and 6 for rural and urban areas respectively. This has been done sectorally, and for the type of work, namely, regular and casual, to ensure comparability.⁵⁶

Table 6. Rural Wage Rates of Different Sectors and Comparison of Gender Wage Differentials between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012

Type of Work	Spatial Unit	2011–2012				Female/Male Wage Rate		Mean Difference of Wage Rate in the Sector (2011–2012)
		Male		Female		2004–2005	2011–2012	
		Wage	N	Wage	N			
Agriculture								
Casual	Peri-urban	136	237	103	127	0.69	0.76	42*
	Residual State	141	2414	99	2155	0.62	0.7	
Manufacturing								
Regular	Peri-urban	249	161	181	26	0.41	0.73	118*
	Residual State	266	629	134	85	0.32	0.51	
Casual	Peri-urban	132	132	97	161	0.54	0.74	67*
	Residual State	173	398	96	187	0.55	0.56	
Construction								
Casual	Peri-urban	190	251	130	36	0.7	0.68	84*
	Residual State	199	1823	113	566	0.64	0.57	
Education								
Regular	Peri-urban	498	78	214	40	0.74	0.43	295*
	Residual State	571	703	274	397	0.57	0.48	

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment Rounds, NSSO, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

Table 7. Urban Wage Rates of Different Sectors and Comparison of Gender Wage Differentials between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012

Type of Work	Spatial Units	2011–2012				Female/Male Wage Rate		Mean Difference of Wage Rate in the Sector 2011–2012
		Male		Female		2004–2005	2011–2012	
		Wage	N	Wage	N			
Manufacturing								
Regular	Urban Core	404	569	327	101	0.84	0.81	193*
	Peri-urban	462	487	191	51	0.44	0.41	
	Residual State	403	883	162	138	0.33	0.40	
Transport								
Regular	Urban Core	715	472	796	67		1.11	–62
	Peri-urban	705	276	679	45		0.96	
	Residual State	467	903	494	83		1.06	
Education								
Regular	Urban Core	660	91	597	107	0.78	0.90	169*
	Peri-urban	680	91	502	103	0.93	0.74	
	Residual State	649	545	452	414	0.68	0.70	
Health								
Regular	Urban Core	813	78	567	41	0.78	0.70	230*
	Peri-urban	569	57	316	35	0.95	0.55	
	Residual State	530	129	351	109	0.70	0.66	

Source: Calculated from Employment-Unemployment Rounds, NSSO, 2004–2005 and 2011–2012.

Tables 6 and 7 indicate a few known trends. First, the wage rates of regular workers are higher than that of the casual ones. Sectorally, wage rates move upwards from agriculture, manufacturing, construction, education and transport to health. In all sectors, the male wage rates are significantly higher than the female wage rates, except the transport sector, where in the difference is insignificant.

The rural wage rates are typically higher in the peri-urban areas compared to the residual states in all cases. The notable trend is that in 2011–2012, the wage-rate differentials between males and females are higher in the residual states compared to the peri-urban areas, except in case of education (where females are paid less than half of males) which is the highest paid sector in the rural areas. Importantly, however, in case of both construction and education, the wage rate differentials have increased over time, that is, between 2004–2005 and 2011–2012, while they have gone down for agriculture and manufacturing, which are the two lowest-paid sectors.

In the urban areas, the wage rate differentials are lower compared to that in rural areas. However, in all the sectors considered for the analysis, the gaps are relatively higher in the peri-urban areas compared to both the city cores and the peripheries. Like in the rural areas, the gender disparity in wage rate has increased more sharply in the two best-paid sectors, that is, education and health and these increases are far sharper in the peri-urban areas compared to the other two spatial units under consideration. For the city core, in fact, the differential has reduced over time in the education sector.

Clearly then, the wage rate trends in terms of gender differentials work unfavourably for the peri-urban areas, barring the two lowest paid sector of agriculture and manufacturing in the rural areas. It would be reasonable to suggest that this trend is observed due to men moving from the lower- to the higher-paid sectors (their share is far higher in the non-farm sectors) in the rural areas, and then from the rural to the urban sectors. Since the migration to the city core is more male-selective compared to the peri-urban areas, the competition for jobs among men and women in the higher-paid sectors is likely to be less in the city cores. The male wage rates can be depressed in such cases, increasing wage rates for women leading to lower wage differentials in the city cores. On the other end, since men from the residual state migrate out, the demand for the female labour correspondingly goes up there, resulting in lower wage-rate differentials. In the peri-urban areas, where there would be greater demand for jobs from both males and females, coupled with 'flexible' opportunities for women in diversified sectors manifesting in phenomenon as home-based work for females. This would potentially lead to higher gender differentials in wage rates.

The work and wage dynamics taken together tells a somewhat dark story for the peri-urban areas. Though overall, peri-urban areas do seem to be a desirable destination for the workers, following the 'elite capture' of cities, the findings thrown up by this study suggest a 'degenerated peripheralization' of large metropolitan centres in India as has been stated by existing literature (Kundu, 2009), especially when seen through a gendered lens.

Conclusion

The entry point of this article was through a conceptualization of the peri-urban space as one that is dynamic and transient, holding both opportunities and vulnerabilities that are unequally distributed across different sections of people living there. The peri-urban areas has been compared and offset against the city core, on the one hand and the residual state on the other, that represents a space beyond the urban fringes which is expected to have more rural characteristics than the peri-urban areas. These three spatial units ideally should form a continuum with respect to the processes and outcomes of urbanization. The above analysis shows that with respect to a number of employment characteristics when analyzed from a gender perspective, the peri-urban spaces breaks the continuum and creates a spatial dis-continuum. With respect to work participation and wage rates, such discontinuities have commonly heightened over time. This, taken in conjunction with the continuities in overall wage rates and per capita consumption expenditure leads to the conclusion that the process of urbanization in the large metropolitan cities of India has offered exclusive opportunities, favouring men more than women.

Work participation of women in peri-urban areas has been found to be particularly low, in relation to men. This, in part, conforms to other studies in developing country context, which find that women have gained less from the economic dynamism in the peri-urban areas (Lanjouw, Quizon & Sparrow, 2001). Women from the upper economic strata have, however, been selective about the jobs that they have taken up and work more as regular and salaried workers compared to its two other spatial counterparts. Those from the marginal economic groups, in rural areas, appear to have lost land-based activities and have shifted to casual employment. The non-working women have shown a greater propensity to take up part-time work of regular nature if it is made available at home, particularly in the peri-urban areas. It has been established in earlier studies that although women voluntarily opt for subcontracted home-based

work, the terms are extremely exploitative. This can be suggestive of two types of interventions: one route could be a government provisioning of home-based work targeting to engage the women of the displaced households, thereby assuring minimum statutory wage rates; the other more permanent route would be to direct public investment to ensure higher levels of access of women to education, safe transport and crèches in workplaces. The former, as our results indicate is a strong barrier to women entering the labour market.

This study finds the rural peri-urban more on the margins compared to the urban peri-urban areas since the women of these areas are not able to access the fruits of urbanization. The National Rural Guarantee Schemes which are not actively managed in these areas due to their nearness to large metropolitan cities should not only be initiated in these areas, but the gender sensitive provisions like providing women work close to home, along with providing crèche facilities could go a long way in encouraging the women in these areas to join the labour market.

The study finds that while the gender differentials wage rates are reducing at the lower ends of the work spectrum, they increase at the higher end and such increases are sharper in the peri-urban areas. This indicates that even if women are somehow able to overcome the barriers to enter the job market and the better-paid sectors, the wage rate differentials in these sectors are likely to act as a dampener.

The optimistic outcomes predicted by the World Development Report 2009 of an accelerated urban-centric growth driven by the private sector is in no uncertain terms invalidated in this paper. The hope that a fast-paced urban-centric growth would provide inclusive employment opportunities to migrants appears to be based on uncertain grounds, going by the disparate results it produces for men and women. The peri-urban spaces that are the most dynamic in terms of attracting private investments produces work opportunities that are extremely unequally distributed.

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Notes

1. The activity status on which a person spent a relatively longer time (major time criterion) during the 365 days preceding the date of the survey, is considered the usual principal activity status of the person. To decide the usual principal activity of a person, he/she is first categorized as belonging to the labour force or not, during the reference period on the basis of major time criterion. Persons thus adjudged as not belonging to the labour force are assigned the broad activity status 'neither working nor available for work'. A person whose principal usual status is determined on the basis of the major time criterion may have pursued some economic activity for 30 days or more during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey. The status in which such economic activity is pursued during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey is the subsidiary economic activity status of the person.
2. The peri-urban areas in Bangalore have been the only exception to this general rule.
3. This analysis has been done only for women since the WPR for men has remained more or less stable over time.
4. The determinants of work participation have been done using a Logit Analysis, with the dependent variable taking a binary form, that is, whether working or not.
5. It needs to be noted that the database used does not include the wages of the self-employed category, in which has a substantial share of total workers, since that is difficult to compute.
6. The sectors compared are those that have a minimum sample size (at least 30 in each category).

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