

Post Colonial Cities and Accumulation through Policies : The Example of Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) in India

Capitalist accumulation in the post colonial cities has emerged as an important area of research in social science and is being debated in the academia. The process and pattern of accumulation in post colonial cities in the global south has been extensively related to the path of globalization . Pranab Bardhan(2009) refers to the changes in the economic structure of India as 'tortuous transition of the Indian economy. Therefore, the study of post colonial urbanism in general, and post colonial cities in particular have received a lot of attention from scholars in urban studies in the recent years. Authors like Ananya Roy, Partha Chatterjee, Jennifer Robinson belonging to different diasporas have emphasized on the definition of post colonial urban and the post colonial city. The argument that the above mentioned research scholars have wanted to present regarding post colonial cities is that at this juncture it is important to study the changes the current cities are facing in their growth from the colonial cities, therefore since the time of post -independence. The questions that need to be picked are: Is there a relation between the colonial cities and the post colonial cities, what are the changes one notices in the two kinds of structures, how does account for such kind of changes.

Globalization has become one such element which is being manifested in global south and more prolifically in cities. Therefore, a very important feature of post colonial urbanization is no doubt globalization and with that to maintain the status quo, the cities have come to the foreplay. The term globalization has seen a meteoric rise since the mid 1980s. With this concept also emerged the World City paradigm formulated by John Friedman(1984) which was carried further as a concept by Saskia Sassen(2001) in the concept of global cities. The theories lead one to the understanding that cities have always played a very vital role in the economies of the country. However, the role of cities have undergone drastic changes in the globalization phase. These metropolitan cities have been referred by the scholars as the centre of growth where they are contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product and also as cities of capitalist accumulation where the pattern of business gives the industries surplus generation for further expansion. Therefore, globalization has marked urban cities as sites of flow of global finance capital, the footloose wanderings of transnational manufacturing firms and the diverse mobilities of the world's elite alongside diasporic and migrant communities from poorer countries.

However, the post colonial studies have critiqued the idea of world cities. According to them World Cities hypothesis present the role of cities in the wider networks and circulations associated with

globalization. Although some cities of the so called Third world have got incorporated in the hierarchies of the world city network, there are many who would remain off the map. So developmentalism continues to pervade the global world city narratives and what is most worrying for a post colonial urban studies is that World Cities approaches, by placing cities in hierarchical relation to one another, implicitly establishes some cities as exemplars and others as imitators. On the contrary, the importance of the phenomena of globalization to post colonial studies comes firstly from its demonstrations of the structure of world power relations which stands firm in the 20th century as a legacy of western imperialism. Secondly, the ways in which local communities engage the forces of globalization bear some resemblance to the ways in which colonized societies have historically engaged and appropriated the forces of imperial dominance. Therefore, post colonial urban studies scholarship have critiqued that the interpretation of cities of the global south which have also been based on eurocentric idea and rigid western definitions of the city and urban.

However, there is a recent line of thinking among researchers on post colonial urban theory that Third World cities are no longer to be defined as the same. They should be recognised as Global South cities who organize themselves amidst the changing economy and social structure of the cities. The changing economy of the country also entails the change in the character of capital and the way the surplus is accumulated. In post colonial studies, a major point that is emphasized is to understand how accumulating classes are able to exploit others and to induce other classes to accept as in their interests the requirements for continued capital accumulation. Globalization also relates to the decreasing agency (though not the status) of the nation state in the world political order and the increasing influence of structures and movements of corporate capital. Therefore, the role of the state in accumulation process in the current phase of globalization has been that of a facilitator . The state is an important agent in making the process of accumulation for big corporates, national and international, very smooth and easy. In this perspective the current paper intends to explore the significance of policies of the state as an important instrument which facilitates capitalist accumulation specifically in the post colonial cities. Although majority of the policies are supposedly for the benefit of the masses, a deeper analysis of the policies reveals a completely different story.

The urban reform policies have been of central significance in the last decade. It is interesting to relate the significant emergence of reform agendas for the mega cities at this time period of globalization. The paper wants to argue that the urban reform agenda has been a crucial aspect for accumulation in the cities. Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission(JNNURM) is an example of the reform process which can see the state behaving as a capitalist intending to make the process of

accumulation a smooth process in the cities. The paper attempts to underline a few of the strategies in the reform process and subsequently its implementation which lay bare the pro-capitalist tendency of the state. The reform emphasises the change in the role of the state to a pro-market whose major function is to increase the share of the global private sector in the economy to a huge extent. No doubt this shift in the economic structure also has social and above all spatial implications.

The mission statement of JNNURM states that the aim of the mission is to encourage reforms and fast track planned development of identified cities. The focus points of the mission were efficiency in urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, community participation, and accountability of Urban Local Bodies towards citizens. The paper argues that a project of the scale of JNNURM would require land. However, the mission does not mention how that land would be financed, considering the mission would not fund land costs. A convenient option of the concerned authorities is to make land available by cleaning up slum lands which have been the home to many for the last several years. Furthermore, the paper argues that the objectives of the mission fail to comprehend that land is a very important resource with regard to the economy of the urban poor and therefore for their survival. This puts a heavy strain on urban land and other resources which are increasingly freed from less productive uses such as small scale manufacturing or housing for the poor and deployed for the purpose of profiteering. The paper concludes that issues of accessibility of land for urban poor have not been addressed in the mission. Therefore the accumulation process with land at the core seems to be very clear in this agenda.

Keywords: Post-Colonial City, State, Policy, Capitalist Accumulation, Urban Reform, Land.

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