

Chapter 10 Encountering and Engaging with Modernity: Vulnerability and Exclusion of Youth in Odisha

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Abstract This chapter focuses on low-income youth in Odisha, India, and their movements to work in the informal and formal sectors in the cities of Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru and Tiruppur. Many of these youth, who belong to the lower caste, poor families and indigenous communities, migrate from the Odisha countryside to receive training for work in garment factories in Bengaluru and Tiruppur. Others live in the slums of Bhubaneswar, while engaging in urban work. The chapter is based on a study that aimed at understanding how young men and women in poor and disadvantaged situations access, aspire to, prepare for and adjust to work in the city. The analysis focuses on youth movements and manoeuvres to counter differences in the material (i.e. physical resources, economic poverty) and social structures (i.e. gender, ethnicity, caste, class) underpinning urban inequality. The outcomes of their efforts underline a particular form of gendered and relational vulnerability and exclusion. Despite comprising an important workforce in the lower segments of the Indian economy, most youth in Indian cities encounter vulnerability and exclusion, and this remains a challenge.

1 Introduction

In India, urban spaces are expanding by the day, and it is estimated that, by the year 2030, 41.76% of India's population will reside in urban areas (UNFPA, 2007). Urbanisation has led to city expansion, migration, investments in housing, roads, transportation networks and water and power infrastructures and growth in the number of 'smart' cities. In this way, urbanisation has become synonymous with modernisation, especially with respect to the uptake of digital technology, the creation of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, growth in active citizenship and efforts to

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