wants to be seen as an integral part of Indian life.

Omkar Goswami, in the concluding chapter, highlights an important feature of the growth that we have achieved in the last two decades — it is entrepreneurship, best represented by many unlisted service enterprises that have aided the growth in GDP. The organized sector has no doubt shown spectacular results, for instance, a 46-times increase in profit after tax of the publicly listed companies of the BSE, but as this journal has pointed out (September 2012), the role of the so-called unorganized sector in generating both employment and growth needs to be highlighted more prominently. Our leading management institutions would be doing a great service by complementing the excellent book under review with a similar account of the smaller enterprises in the informal sector. Goswami concludes with four very important concerns — growing inequalities that have accompanied a reduction

in poverty, geographical inequalities, with a distinction made between "the east and the west of Kanpur", problems in managing three resources, spectrum, natural mineral resources and land, and finally, the return of some aspects of the permit raj through judicial activism, audit observations or even executive action. This cautionary ending is welcome, since it reminds us that India still has a long way to go. Its entrepreneurial spirit has always stood it in good stead, but today, businesses are being called upon to play a greater role in the inclusive development of the country.

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The State of Our Cities
Evidence from Karnataka

Samuel Paul, Kala Seetharam Sridhar, A Venugopala Reddy and Pavan Srinath
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There is a fairly widespread recognition that we are moving towards a rapid process of urbanization. Issues of development and poverty that was once focused in the rural areas is now finding increasing importance in the urban context and setting. The need to make informed decisions and customize interventions to the areas where such interventions are needed depends heavily on the quality of data. One of the aspects that we constantly lament about is the non-availability of meaningful data either for research or for policy making.

In this context, this is a very important book. It is important because it recognizes the gap that an academic always encounters; it tries to fill in the gap and offers a template of a database that could be built up over a period of time across all the habitations – not necessarily cities. It will be particularly useful in not only preparing master plans for the habitations, but it will help the local administration to prepare and plan for civic amenities. The book opens by making a case for itself and also detailing the methodology of collection of data. The book

covers data on 15 cities of Karnataka, a chapter dedicated to a city. The overall template covers the history, demographics, economic dimensions, infrastructure and other services, quality of life and the budgets. All these are interesting pieces of data. Indeed as the authors present the data, they also bring to the fore the difficulty in obtaining granular city based data. It is somewhat surprising that given that the national databases are built on the basis of primary granular data, we find it so much more difficult to get disaggregated data.

Take for instance the availability of credit and banking data. While the book has been able to present the data with the co-operation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), one should have had a natural access to such data bases. With the level of technology being used, it should not be difficult for agencies like RBI to put the entire database (subject to the confidentiality aspects) in a manner that could be downloaded and accessed as per the requirements of the seeker of data.

As we work with databases and use these databases to draw policy inferences, we also discover that there is disconnect between the agency that collects the data and the users of the data. For instance, let us discuss the observation made by the authors:

> "Given India's service revolution, we examined if at all there is any single sector which dominates the services category in all the cities. Talking all the 15 cities into account, we found that a little more than a fifth of workers were in wholesale and/or retail trade and an additional one-fifth in "other" services such as public administration and defence, compulsory social security, education, health and social work, other community, social and personal service activities, private households with employed persons, and extra territorial organizations and bodies. Unfortunately we neither have data on information technology [IT] or IT enabled services in the cities not enough data to examine if employment in traditional services [such as work in hotels, restaurants, or trade and commerce] were high in smaller cities."
> (p.16)

This quote from the book opens up a classic question on the methodology of data collection by government. Do we do our collection on the pre-specified silos and populate them, or collect raw data and later classify them into some silos? If it is the latter, then the database should be able to turn in the data that the researchers want. The above quote is also an indication of how badly the statistics of the country lag the trend shown by the primary sector. Given that IT and ITES are expected to be one of the significant employers in the services sector, the data classification not capturing the detail is something we should ponder over.

The book does not touch upon the government inter-departmental co-ordination specifically, but we may have to discuss this issue in the context of the book. In most of these, there is little co-ordination between departments. For instance, the Ministry of Labour has classified all the occupations in the country using a four level hierarchy and aligning it with International Standard Classification of Occupations. This classification is called the National Classification of Occupations. Wonder how many of our surveys done by other government departments use this classification in mapping the occupational patterns. If the government does not use this classification, the probability of someone else using this classification

is remote. If we were to make data comparable across time and across sectors and locations then these protocols need to be followed. While bringing out the data on cities, the book points out not only to the gaps, but also the direction in which data could be organized.

The angst about the data continues elsewhere in the book as they are looking at comparing city data sets:

> "Despite the JNNURM and numerous urban poverty programmes, basic information on the urban poor is sorely lacking. No data exists on a city-wide basis on the magnitude and the problems of the urban poor, their households, and the services delivered to them. How programmes can be designed and delivered in the cities without such basic knowledge is difficult to fathom. There are wide variations among the 15 cities on most of the parameters on which this study has gathered official data. The inter-city disparities in resource distribution and utilization are most striking. The fact that different departments of the state government are in charge of different services and programmes could be one reason".

This could be a nightmare not only for the policy maker, but a lesser mortal like an academic. Where would you start a quest if basic information is not available? How would one draw up a population and a sampling plan? And what level of triangulation could we do between the primary data and the database to understand representativeness? In this sense the book really throws open the inadequacy of information and the need for organized data.

Even when we take the broad parameters on which the book presents data there are further questions that crop up. It is okay to look at data at a city level, but how a city is broken up by the various departments is not uniform. The way the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board divides up a city like Bangalore is different from how the wards are cut up under the Brihat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike; this is different from how the postal department has organized pincodes; Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporations organization of divisions is unique and the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company's organization of divisions would also be uniquely different. Each one of these data providers would have a different definition of the borders of Bangalore. Therefore any researcher or policy maker working in the field of urban issues is bound to face significant prob-

lems in secondary data and how it is organized. The authors also highlight the other problems with data. Look at this quote for instance:

> "As far as hospitals are concerned, we found that Bangalore [The city] has 13 hospitals [including government hospitals, private hospitals, and nursing homes] per lakh population [or a total of 1,027 hospitals]. However, what matters is number of beds in the hospitals rather than the number of hospitals themselves. Unfortunately, our data on the number of hospital beds cover only government hospitals since we did not have data on beds in all hospitals."

So, while the book works as a resource book and an aggregation point of organized data on 15 cities of Karnataka, it also implicitly raises many more questions about the quality and quantity of data that is available in the public domain. Therefore what is unsaid in the book is as important (if not more) as what the books brings to the table.

This is certainly not a book to be read. It is a book to be referred to. In that sense, the book is a bit of a let down due to one factor. It has been published late for the 2001 census data where it ends and a bit too early before the 2011 census data could be obtained. If only the authors had added the 2011 data it would have been even more useful for somebody who wanted to analyse this neat data over time. Clearly if one indeed tries to "read" the book, then the problem encountered would be that of monotony. Unless one was doing a specific research on a particular city, the format looks repetitive – and seems to say the same thing about each city. A little bit of work would have made the text more readable. While there is a comprehensive chapter that looks at data across cities, it would have been good when specific data of a particular city was being discussed a counter point, a comparison, a reinforcement of that using data from other comparable cities could have been slipped in. It would have made the book a little more readable.

Irrespective of other expectations, this is no doubt an important book, but only as a starting point. The quality of data and the quality of analysis from now on should only improve – both in terms of coverage of cities and in terms of the depth of the data provided, and also in terms of the granularity of the data.

Prof. Paul and his team need to be complemented for this painstaking and frustrating work that they have undertaken.

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