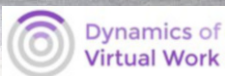# The Rise of the Information Technology Society in India

## Capitalism and the Construction of a Vulnerable Workforce

### Suddhabrata Deb Roy

Dynamics of
Virtual Work

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# Dynamics of Virtual Work

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Technological change has transformed where people work, when and how. Digitisation of information has altered labour processes out of all recognition whilst telecommunications have enabled jobs to be relocated globally. ICTs have also enabled the creation of entirely new types of 'digital' or 'virtual' labour, both paid and unpaid, shifting the borderline between 'play' and 'work' and creating new types of unpaid labour connected with the consumption and co-creation of goods and services. This affects private life as well as transforming the nature of work and people experience the impacts differently depending on their gender, their age, where they live and what work they do. Aspects of these changes have been studied separately by many different academic experts however up till now a cohesive overarching analytical framework has been lacking. Drawing on a major, high-profile COST Action (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Dynamics of Virtual Work, this series will bring together leading international experts from a wide range of disciplines including political economy, labour sociology, economic geography, communications studies, technology, gender studies, social psychology, organisation studies, industrial relations and development studies to explore the transformation of work and labour in the Internet Age. The series will allow researchers to speak across disciplinary boundaries, national borders, theoretical and political vocabularies, and different languages to understand and make sense of contemporary transformations in work and social life more broadly. The book series will build on and extend this, offering a new, important and intellectually exciting intervention into debates about work and labour, social theory, digital culture, gender, class, globalisation and economic, social and political change.

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*To all my cousins, friends, and comrades who work as IT professionals in India and across the world. Without your support and your indulgence, I would not have been able to write the book.*

# Preface and Acknowledgements

Many who know me on a personal level do not know that I am trained as an electrical engineer and was one of the many millions who had applied for a software/IT job in India back in 2016—eight years ago. It was as if an automated muscle response for me, and many others like me who in their final days of their engineering studies begin to ponder over future possibilities. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I did not get through. In 2012, when I was doing my engineering, a couple of people came to my room and started talking about *big terms* like 'imperialism', 'neoliberalism', and 'nationalism'. Meanwhile, my entire focus was on telling them how glamorous an IT life was—a perception that I had developed over the years. And, then finally one of them asked me, 'Do you think what is happening with the workers at these IT Hubs is a good thing?' That question subsequently had stuck with me and continues to do so till date—the result of which is this book.

Like all my other works, this book would not have been possible without the help of a significant number of people.

Thanks to Ursula Huws, one of the series editors and the person whom I had sent the very first proposal about a project of this kind that I had written some five years ago. She was gracious and kind enough to advise me that without some sort of a fellowship or funding, it would be nearly impossible to do anything regarding the project and since I was unable to get one, I had to drop the plans then. That project under Ursula did not take off, but the kind of support that she offered despite me not working with or under her formally has been exemplary. It exhibits the kind of generous individual that she is. Half a decade later, when we met in

London, I spoke to her about this book I had been working on, and she was instantly excited. Thanks for the help, the support, and, of course, the coffee!

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My cousins and friends who work in the IT sector—to whom the book is dedicated to. I will not take their names because of their own security, but I thank them profusely for allowing me into their lives, discussing issues with me and providing me with an intimate view of IT lives.

Thanks to comrades in various IT unions in the country without whose help the book would not have been possible, especially to friends and comrades at the AIITEU. Thanks to Rikta, Cheenangshuk, Suman, and Manas, who have been very helpful to me and my research.

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Thanks to the team at Palgrave Macmillan: Sharla Plant and Karthika Devi for their help. They have been extremely helpful and generous.

Dunedin, New Zealand                    Suddhabrata Deb Roy

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# About the Author

**Suddhabrata Deb Roy**  is a research associate-postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Culture-Centred Approach to Research and Evaluation (CARE), Massey University, New Zealand, where he is working on analysing the causes and impacts of Islamophobia in India. Committed to bridging the epistemological gap between theory and praxis, he mainly works on Marxist theory and believes in doing intensive fieldwork-based research. His works have appeared in journals such as *Capital and Class*, *TripleC*, *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics*, *Critique*, and so forth. He has written for reputed online platforms including *The Sociological Review Magazine* and *Notes from Below*. He is the author of four books: *Social Media and Capitalism: People, Communities, and Commodities* (2021); *Mass Struggles and Leninism: Reflections on Contemporary Struggles in India* (2022); *Singing to Liberation: Songs of Freedom and Nights of Resistance in Indian Campuses* (2023); and *Pandemic Fissures: COVID-19, Dehumanisation and the Obsolescence of Human Freedom* (Routledge, 2024). This is his fifth book. He can be contacted via email at suddhabratadebroy@gmail.com.

# The IT Society in India, Its Inhabitants, and Their Lives of Desperation

## Introduction

India evokes different feelings among different people. If one is a tourist, one might get enamoured by its diverse culture; if one is a sports fan, one might get enamoured by the love that Indians show for cricket. However, the definition of India that attracts much of the Global Financial Capital is its reputation of being a global software and Information Technology hub, which produces around 1.5 million engineers every year (Shah, 2023). The Indian Information Technology (IT) sector

> established a new model for businesses in India, one that was professionally run and meritocracy-based, which was systems—and data-driven, and followed world-class quality and corporate governance standards. They changed the world's perception of India as a land of snake charmers to one of technology-savvy professionals. (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2022, pp. 16–17)

The Indian IT sector has played a critical role in the generation of a global identity for India as a nation. The IT industry in India has become one of the flagship industries that has come to not only define the country but also alter it socio-economically, culturally, and politically. Though computing and software have been a part of the Indian industrial set-up since the 1960s (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2022), the transformation of the

Indian IT industry began when in 1991, as Harish Mehta (2022) writes, the Government of India (GOI) commissioned the World Bank to do a survey studying the potential of India as a software hub, of which the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), the premier trade association established in 1988 for serving the Indian IT Sector, was also a part. The results of the survey however were very heart wrenching for those of the ruling class with even Ireland scoring much better than India in certain domains of the survey—a country which is much smaller in size and population than India (Mehta, 2022). From there on India's rising software giants initiated a struggle against the various restrictions put in place by the Nehruvian welfare state, which restricted the monopolisation of capital into the hands of private capitalists. Its main weapon was the large pool of engineers in India who were ready to do quality work for low wages thus providing a significant cost advantage to global corporations (Mehta, 2022; Gopalakrishnan et al., 2022). At the same time, the Indian IT sector's embracement of hyper-productivity as an operating principle made it a lucrative option difficult to be overlooked (Murthy, 2010; Reddy, 2022).

The neoliberal reforms of 1991 altered the Indian society at a structural level initiating a string of changes within the ideological and material contours of the society. Neoliberal reforms had been initiated in India with the intention of establishing a neoliberal bourgeois democracy transforming the private corporate sector—accounting for merely 10 per cent of the economy in the early 1990s—into the leading component of the Indian economy (Vanaik, 2001). The neoliberal reforms of 1991 were a major moment in the history of India because it represented the transformation of India from a semi-feudal welfare state to a neoliberal capitalist economy. Achin Vanaik notes:

> From the fifties to the seventies, India had followed its own distinctive version of the import-substitution industrialisation model, more inward-oriented and state-regulated than elsewhere. The class character of the state was likewise sui generis—a dominant coalition comprising all sections of industrial capital, substantial land-owners, and senior bureaucrats, in which state functionaries operated as overall coordinators. In the eighties, a maturing bourgeoisie, more confident of handling external competition, and a burgeoning 'middle class'—actually an elite of mass proportions—hankering after higher levels of consumption, pushed for a cautious integration into global markets. (Vanaik, 2001, p. 44)

Contemporary India has adopted a highly favourable attitude towards the private sector. The private sector plays an influential role in the way in which the contemporary Indian society manifests itself, both globally and to its own citizens. It controls a significant share of the India's economy and has been often recognised as the chief force behind the recent economic growth in India (World Economic Forum, 2019). Among the service sectors, it is the IT industry that has come to be recognised as the major driver of the growth that India has witnessed in the service sector. The growth of India's economy since the 1980s has often been equated with the growth of the software industry in India because of the number of people that it employs and the revenue that it generates. The Indian IT sector employs close to 5.1 million people directly as of 2022 and is expected to be valued at around US $245 billion during FY2023 according to NASSCOM—growing faster than the Indian economy itself (Ministry of Electronics and IT, 2022; Phadnis, 2023). The estimate is that the IT industry will employ close to 9.5 Million workers by 2026 (Ministry of Electronics and IT, 2022).

Numerous factors have enabled the growth of the IT sector in India, including the extremely cheap rates of data in the country, the tremendous growth of technical education, and the usage of laws related to special economic zones (SEZs) that granted certain special powers to businesses in specific areas (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2022; Mehta, 2022). The middle-class professional service workers played an important role in the neoliberal transformation and were the primary vehicles of India's supposed economic ascension after 1991 (Fernandes, 2006; Chadchan & Shankar, 2012). The new middle class which was employed in various private companies and had formal and secured jobs and earned enough monetary and financial returns was critical to the development of the gentrified spaces deemed to be essential for the socio-economic development in India (Smith, 1979; Fernandes, 2006). A critical role in this transformation was played by the service sector, which commanded an important position in the neoliberal transformation of India. India's service sector contributed around 53 per cent to India's gross value added (GVA) at current prices during the financial year 2021–2022. Service sectors such as Information Technology (IT), business processing outsourcing (BPOs), and other allied services such as education, banking, healthcare, education, communication, and insurance—combined together—contribute around 66 per cent share in India's GDP and generate about 28 per cent of the total

employment in India.[1] The growing share of the services within the GDP is a major shift from the predominantly agrarian economy that used to characterise India (Bhalla, 1987). The IT sector in India has played a crucial role in this regard, being the largest employer within the private service sector (Didimishe, 2023).

The changes in the sectoral employment were taking place concurrently with the development of a neoliberal state in India, which restricts itself merely to the creation of newer markets wherever markets are present transforming itself into a substitutive state (Harvey, 2007; Berry, 2022). The Indian state was slowly transforming itself into a state that promotes an economic structure dominated by monopolistic transnational capitalism that goes against the Keynesian welfare models that had dominated the conceptions surrounding welfarism in the twentieth century (Huws, 2017). Under a welfare state, it is the public sector that ensures that the management of the state runs in accordance with democratic principles (Desai, 1984). The structuring of the public sector has been such that it has allowed the middle classes to take greater amount of control over the same. And since the public sector had been the most visible part of the workers' movement in India (Crouch, 1979), the middle class also constructed an important progenitor of left-wing vanguardist politics in India. It was only natural that after the 1991 neoliberal economic reforms, the most eligible section of the population came to be the ones who were entrusted with the responsibility of managing it—the middle class. However, the middle class is also the section which gets aligned with the ideals of capitalist globalisation and neoliberalism easily because it already remained attached to ideas such as personal responsibility, achievement, and so forth (Weiss, 2019). And one of the prime ideas behind the rise of neoliberalism has been the constant erosion of the idea of social responsibility in favour of more personal responsibility (Giroux, 2014).

While under a welfare state that often mainly functions through the public sector enterprises (PSEs), human beings are analysed as citizens, and under neoliberalism, they are analysed as customers because of the neoliberal focus on profits rather than on social well-being (Harvey, 2005). Such changes within the society cannot be brought forward without a compliant middle class because of the hegemonical role that the middle class plays in the society in favour of the status quo either ideologically or politically (Katz, 1993; Harvey, 2005; Weiss, 2019). The growth of the

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[1] Details are available at the website of the India Brand Equity Foundation: https://www.ibef.org/industry/services [Accessed 05.04.2023].

middle class was antithetical to the binary class structure that was often espoused by orthodox trade unionism in India. The generation of individual subjectivities causes a major divergence within the orthodox Marxist movement that fails to consider the non-economic factors in a social movement. Class belongingness does not emerge only out of the economic conditions but also from other factors such as control and coercive domination (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979) that change in the ways in which working individuals construct their social selves. Marginalised individuals remain particularly vulnerable to such changes because the evolving norms of public conduct often do not consider the casteist, majoritarian, and gendered nature of the social spaces within which these individuals have to conduct themselves.

Such tendencies have been constantly validated and often encouraged by the numerous Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and software technology parks of India (STPIs) which have been established with the belief that they would ease the business procedures associated with the IT sector within the IT hubs. Bengaluru was one of the first IT hubs developed in India back in the 1990s. Even today, a significant section of engineers (including engineering students) and others who desire to make a career in IT will often mention Bengaluru to be their first choice when it comes to choosing their employment sites. As a senior trade unionist, Amanullah Khan, stated in an interview to the author:

> Bangalore[2] because of its unique climatic situation[3] was an instant hit with many of the international companies. They set-up offices here, and most of them got a ready-made workforce because there were a lot of software-based PSEs already in the city. Some of the recently retired staff who had settled down in the city served as their initial employees, and then subsequently new people came in, who also settled in. Then their children grew up, and they needed education, so all these engineering colleges were set up.[4] And, now when the second generation has had children, you are seeing

[2] The old name of Bengaluru.

[3] Bengaluru's climate is often ascribed to be the best in the country. More details are available at: https://www.bengaluruonline.in/city-guide/amazing-weather-of-bangalore. For more details on migration to Bengaluru, see https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/bengaluru/what-brings-so-many-migrants-to-bengaluru-928532.html [Accessed 05.04.2023].

[4] Bengaluru has one of the highest numbers of engineering college density in the country with more than 200 engineering colleges located in and around the city. More details are available at: https://ceo.karnataka.gov.in/uploads/83951696398287.pdf [Accessed 05.04.2023].

the boom of universities. It has been a process in itself, but sadly, the only companies who have suffered have been the PSEs.

The growth of the IT sector in the country has resulted in certain changes within the urban spaces in which it was allowed to flourish, Bengaluru in particular. The development of Bengaluru has taken place in a highly gentrified manner whereby significant changes have been implemented into the fabric of the city which have created grounds for privatisation to thrive in the city (Nair, 2007). Bengaluru has become one of the most sought-after models of urban development for any region that desires to develop an IT hub of its own. With time, numerous other IT hubs have been formed in the country: Hyderabad, Gurgaon (now Gurugram), Noida, Kochi, Pune, Chennai, and others. Similar structural changes have been institutionalised in cities such as Gurgaon (Oldenburg, 2018) and Noida (Vasudevan, 2013), widely recognised as one the fastest-growing cities in India. Most of these urban spaces have come to be defined by signs of affluence that the IT industry has come to render mainstream in the society modifying the relationships that its inhabitants have with the marginalised populace that *also* inhabit the space. Most of these hubs have come to be defined by a steady migration of engineers, software professionals, and other such professional workers from the middle classes. At the same time, there has also been large-scale internal migration of low-paid workers into these cities serving the IT industry as support or service workers (Chakraborty, 2021). These workers are key parts of the transformation that is brought forward within the social reality that capitalism produces that tries to achieve a domination over the entire society. They remain one of the worst effected from the exploitation that the IT sector produces receiving low wages and living through extremely precariat states of existence (Chandrasekhar, 2003). As Mario Tronti had argued:

> [T]he relation between capitalist production and bourgeois society, between factory and society, between society and State achieves, to an ever-greater degree a more organic relation. At the highest level of capitalist development, the social relation is transformed into a moment of the relation of production, the whole of society is turned into an articulation of production, that is, the whole of society lives as a function of the factory and the factory extends its exclusive domination to the whole of society. (Tronti, 1962, Para 17)

The IT sector in India has left an indelible mark on the socio-economic structure of the country. SEZs and STPIs, which have been formed to further the sector (Mehta, 2022), have been one of the major hallmarks of the exploitation that is meted out to the IT workers. SEZs and STPIs have rendered mainstream the frequent violation of labour laws and policies (Paul, 2014). The social factory that develops around the IT industry is also nurtured by the constant rise in the number of technology-based institutions which have ensured a constant supply of engineers and other allied professional service workers for the sector to employ (Gopalakrishnan et al., 2022). At the same time, the growth has also been concurrent with a corresponding growth of uneven development and precarity in many of India's non-urban and semi-urban regions, which has created an internal migrant workforce[5] of more than 100 million people according to the 2017 Economic Survey (Tumbe, 2018). The failure of the welfare state in India can be related to capitalism's relationship with the process of uneven development (Desai, 1975). Capitalist development is often highly uneven in nature designed to favour those who possess the requisite socio-economic and cultural resources to utilise the effects of the developmental trajectory to their own benefits (Harvey, 2005; Wainwright, 2013). Uneven development is a result of the ways in which capitalism constantly impoverishes certain regions for achieving development in some select regions for some select individuals leading to the large-scale commodification of labour power in the latter regions (Harvey, 2006). The neoliberal reforms have ensured that India continues to suffer from uneven development, a characteristic feature of the development of capitalism in the 1990s globally. And, one of the most explicit examples of the same is the social composition that one can find in the IT hubs.

The uneven development that characterises India embeds within itself potentially politically explosive factors in certain contexts because '[most] of India's economic development in the past four decades has come from the southern and western states … which have become hubs for manufacturing and high-tech industries [while] the heartland states … have shown little sign of catching up' (The Economist, 2022, Para 5). The distinctiveness of certain regions has always played a key role in the uneven development that many regions in India face, both economically and socially (Prasad, 1988). Even within the various metropolitan areas, cities such as

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[5] The term here refers to individuals who migrate for economic reasons, mainly to find work.

New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru have been characterised by socio-economic growth at a faster rate than other areas such as Kolkata, Chennai, or Guwahati (Telangana Today, 2024). Most of the IT Hubs have been formed by a constant wave of migrations to these urban spaces which have been an important part of the developmental trajectory of the IT hubs in the country. Although no proper survey has been conducted with regards to migrant formal IT workers in the IT Hubs, it can be assumed, as an IT union activist stated, that half of the IT workers in any of the IT hubs are migrants:

> More than three lakh [300,000] people entered Bengaluru in 2022, and that is after Covid. Now, undoubtedly, most of them are precariat migrant workers, but at the same time, we can assume that at least thirty to forty percent of them work in the IT sector if we analyse the recruitment patterns of the IT companies. The government will not conduct a survey because it will reveal the growing stress on the city and expose the sub-regional fault lines.

Such a massive influx of migrants has changed the nature of the spatial process in cities such as Bengaluru, as well as other IT hubs such as Gurugram, Hyderabad,[6] and Noida, altering the dynamics of class structure and consciousness therein. The changing patterns of class identification have a dialectical relationship with the choices that individuals make with regard to their employment. The changing nature of the state and the society also play a critical role in this regard. The delicate balance existing between the drive for financial profits and well-being of the citizens gives rise to conditions where marginalised individuals face an increasing amount of repression and exploitation. For example, a section of eligible Dalits has continued to be funded by private corporations for their education but very few private corporations actually institutionalise affirmative action within their organisations (Khan, 2019). Muslims, continue to be underrepresented in the various formal sectors that provide social security and are mostly employed as self-employed labour that contributes to their marginality (Mansoor, 2021). Women, on the other hand, continue to be viewed as individuals for whom their sexuality or their association with a particular family is an asset that can be used for garnering better

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[6] Although Hyderabad is the name used, most of the IT offices are located in Cyberabad, a planned part of the city developed specifically for the purpose of IT firms.

advantages within their employment arrangements. The continued relevance of such perceptions has caused certain disparities to arise within the various bodies formed to address these concerns, which go far beyond the economistic arguments given by mainstream trade unions and management strategists, and their normalised organisational philosophy and operational strategies.

The changes that the IT industry has brought within the Indian workers' movement have been diverse, so much so that the conditions of work in the IT sector have also forced many of the public sector enterprises (PSEs) to change their organisational strategies. One senior trade unionist in the public sector banking services stated:

> With the growth of the IT sector, the workers' expectations from their own companies have been changing. In the past, we used to organise *workers*. Now, we organise the middle class—a distinct shift can be seen here. The terms have become enmeshed with each other now. We have even begun to analyse ourselves as being a middle-class union. There is a rise of corporate culture in the offices. That does not change anything organisationally, but it does point out that we are now organising a workforce which hates the term 'workforce', much like how our brothers and sisters in the IT sector hate to be called workers.

The primary problem faced by the workers' movement in this regard has been to rescue or redefine the working-class identity and a sense of social solidarity from the forces of alienation that run amok under neoliberal global capitalism producing segregations between different kinds of workers, often based on skills (Huws, 2017). Most of these tendencies have been aided by a growing authoritarian politics, austerity measures, growth of centralised models of development, and the consistent weakening of structures and networks of solidarity, which have caused a rift to occur between the local structures of solidarity that continue to exist in countries such as India and the kind of structure that neoliberalism desires to create. These changes have been accompanied by a gradual process of de-politicisation which has made it difficult for individual subjectivities to be expressed and catered to (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Conditions such as these bring forward a bio-political mode of control that often makes it difficult for discourses focused on social justice to be propagated among the non-capitalist classes. The generation of an egalitarian discourse focused on workers' welfare and progressive social restructuring is a

political process in itself. Historically, the Central Trade Unions (CTUs)[7] have played a critical role in this regard and were instrumental voices against impoverishment. But these organisations have suffered tremendously under neoliberalism which have had their effects on the IT sector as well, especially in the domain of unionisation. While previously, the trade unions only worked with the formal and the informal workforce of a particular workplace, privatisation rendered this two-fold division of workers in the workplace relatively redundant and instead produced a multiplicity of different class positions—sometimes within the same workplace with different class positions often been found among individuals doing the same kind of work.

More than 90 per cent of India's workforce works in the unorganised sectors (Sengupta, 2007). Within the organised sector, the most important role was once played by the various PSEs, which currently employ only around 2.2 per cent of the total employment generated in India, a significant decrease from the 12.2 per cent that it used to employ in 1994 (Chandrashekhar & Ghosh, 2019; Gera, 2022). Such a change has caused numerous alterations to occur in the economic and social lives of individuals. The prominence of the private sector as intrinsic component of economic and human development has converted a section of the middle class into working poor living under deplorable conditions. It has also produced a new middle class that is armed with newer methods of fulfilling their subjective desires. The sense of dependence is a critical part of the neoliberal construction of the middle class (Goldthorpe, 1982). The service sector, which provides working individuals with a fixed salary, a certain amount of job security, and an avenue to gain an improved lifestyle, plays a crucial role in these processes. The proliferation of salaried service workers among a certain section of the population enables structures of control to further capitalist domination by acting as compliant enablers of the philosophy of their employers, who provide them with their salaries (Marcuse, 1964)—more so in the case of India because the salaried service workers control the narrative discourse about socio-political and cultural changes in the country.

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[7] Three major CTUs of India are the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), and the All India Council of Central Trade Unions (AICCTU) informally affiliated respectively with the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation.

When such sectoral shifts—such as the one that India has been witnessing from being a largely agrarian economy to a service oriented one (Gordon & Gupta, 2003)—occur with more workers engaging in either flexible, casual, or (relatively) low-paid work, it can often result in the creation of the working poor in countries of the Global South, because such nations do not have much social security schemes in place (Majid, 2001). Workers coming from the marginalised sections are more at risk of becoming the working poor because they are not only subservient to the established power relations, but also the secondary effects that those power relations have on everyday urban reality (Gilbert, 1998). Conditions contributing to their deplorable living standards are further enhanced by the hostility that the IT sector possesses towards trade unions because the workers are restricted from accessing organisational set-ups that can enable a radical transformation of their workplaces and social lives. They often portray unions to be bodies composed of irresponsible individuals whose sole purpose is to disrupt the social stability. They correspondingly use all the financial and legal powers at their disposal to counter and dismantle any organisational structure within their organisations. The uniqueness of contemporary capitalism is that while in the past, the capitalists used force to ensure compliance from the workers in this regard, the contemporary capitalists have used their financial and disciplinary prowess to develop a sense of consensual submission (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Dekker, 2022). An active embracement of disciplinary methods can be seen in the writings of many of the early progenitors of the Indian IT industry such as Murthy (2010) and Reddy (2022).

Contemporary capitalism aims to achieve a structure of domination that is camouflaged as empowerment despite being more exploitative than most other historical forms of domination. It desires a stable social order in order to further its own accumulation and remains averse to any kind of conflict that can potentially disrupt the everyday functioning of the market. The hegemonical control that is inflicted on the workers is navigated through the institutions of the office, the community, and the family—encompassing the totality of the workers' social existence. Capitalist control over the IT workers benefits from creating a sense of alienation within the workers constructing for the workers—a social reality that converts them into highly compliant subjects. Organisations working among these workers have had to take these factors into account when devising their strategies. The middle class in developing countries is a constructed category which capitalism invents to further oppress the working-class

creating avenues for the deeper penetration of neoliberal governmentality among the poorest of the poor while at the same time excluding them from the aegis of the remnants of the welfare state (Lefebvre, 2008). Their engagement with these issues shapes their subjective selves and the attitude that they come to possess towards representative bodies—most notably the trade unions. The anti-unionist nature of the IT sector has worked against the unions as most workers in the private sector have come to believe that if they get recruited by a union then they might face potential unemployment. Under a welfare state or in public sector jobs, the workers can at times mitigate these issues because they are secured as far as their employment is concerned, which makes them relatively more empowered than their private sector counterparts. Most PSEs use payment structures independent of the efforts and productivity of the individual worker, thus reducing the risk that an individual worker possesses regarding wages and job security (Vickers & Yarrow, 1991). Such structures of job security however are not present in the private sector (Prasad, 2018), including the Indian IT sector.

It is of common knowledge that the workers in the Indian IT sector, like most other private sectors, are more exploited in nature than their public sector counterparts. The contours of exclusion include aspects such as job security, retirement benefits, and long working hours—which lead to a complex relationship between employment and upliftment and contribute to the creation of atomised individuals, the impacts of which are an important point for the arguments presented in the book. The IT workers differ significantly from the public sector workers. Previous research in different contexts has pointed out that the public sector employees are more pro-social than their private counterparts because they enjoy more socio-cultural capital and are less likely to perform menial jobs (Macbeath, 1979; Gill-McClure, 2007; Torin & Vlasspoulos, 2015). They also differ in terms of their ideology and motivation because a 'private enterprise is animated purely by consideration of profit, while social purpose and welfare are supposed to be the dominant motives of public enterprise' (Lokanathan, 1957, p. 9). The differences between the sectors play a significant role in determining the ways in which the trade unions function among them. In the public sector, the issues that the trade unions take up are usually more political than the private sector. This is because the public sector itself works on a premise that is highly political in nature as it draws its socio-political legitimacy from the state. The private sector necessitates