



BUSINESS COLLOQUIUM

10th December 2020

School of Human Settlements, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar successfully organized a Business Colloquium on the topic "Who Governs the City?"

Mr. Mathew Idiculla, Lawyer, and Researcher and Policy Professional from the Centre for Law & Policy Research, Bangalore, shared his views on the topic and his thoughts on the legal frailty of local urban governments in India. He started by indicating the kind of ownership the local government has for their cities, taking examples of cities like London and Bogota. He tried to explain how the mayors were outlining the city's vision and compared it with Mumbai, where the Chief Minister is outlining the vision of the city. The evident difference that he mentioned between global city governance and Indian city governance is the power distribution among the Local Authorities.

Mr. Idiculla explained about the Enactment of 73rd and 74th Amendments. These Amendments, later on, had problems as there were no grass-root level improvements because of the lack of local government participation. To address this problem, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment mandated the creation of Panchayats at three levels, and the 74th Constitutional Amendment lays down three types of municipal bodies. Some of the key changes that the 73rd and 74th Amendments brought about were mandating the creation of elected municipal governments, with reservation of seats for SC/ST and women, in all urban areas in India. There were other institutional changes, like the formation of Ward committees, Metropolitan Planning committees, and District committees.

He also highlighted the key provisions specified in Article 243-W. According to him, the 74th CCA has problems of inherent limitation in the design and implementation failure. Besides this, the local government is stifled by the state government because of parastatal agencies, functional autonomy problems, lack of financial autonomy, powerless Mayor, absence of the regional governance system, Ward committees and civic participation, and the administrative power of state government. Other challenges, like the centralization of urban governance, has weakened the state of the municipality. Programs like Smart City Mission and JNNRUM have further centralized the governance and development trajectory of Indian cities. He also mentioned the SPV- driven urban governance.

According to the speaker, this urban governance crisis can be addressed by devolving more powers to local governments and units below them, creating a multi-tier governance framework for cities, and aligning democratic accountability through empowered mayors and accountable parastatals. In the end, he raised concluding thoughts by questioning the same topic- "Who actually governs the city?"

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Batch – 2020-22

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