

URBAN AGE CONFERENCE

GOVERNING URBAN FUTURES

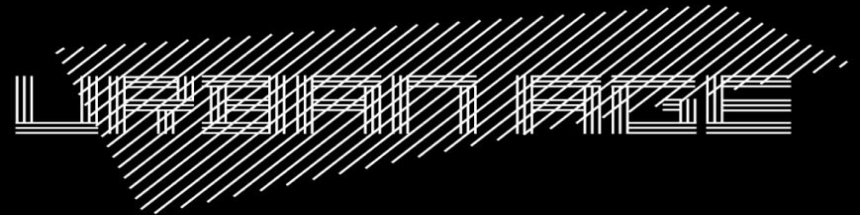
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*A voice for urban India:
decentralising governance*

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Urban Government, Lesser Government



- Issues of urban governance more political in content and consequences than other matters
- For long, urban local government, regarded as a lesser government
- In comparison, rural local governance is better regarded
- Of the total 542 Lok Sabha seats, 92 are prima facie urban.
- In state assemblies, 25% of total seats (3,700) may be urban but this varies across states

74th Amendment: Some Issues



- 74th CAA has not helped better representation
- In many urban areas, there are numerous non-municipal territorial entities, parastatals occupy functional and financial domain
- Reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs have diluted and fragmented the representative base for urban constituencies
- Mayors continue to be mainly ceremonial
 - Tenure limited to one to two years

74th Amendment: Some Issues



- 74th CAA is based on the fundamental premise that all urban areas should have a municipal self-governance setup
- However, the government itself has derailed the provisions of the 74th CAA by providing a loophole (Article 243Q) – state governments are allowed to not set up municipal bodies in industrial townships
- Demand side also weak because of citizen apathy and lack of interest, e.g. Jamshedpur

State Officials or Elected Leaders??



- Some cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Mumbai, Mysore, Chennai and Hyderabad examples of well managed cities
- Because of strong executive powers vested in Commissioners appointed by the State Govt.?
- Attempt in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal to bring together politically elected leadership and appointed officials
 - Mayor-in-Council
- Rule by State Appointed Officials or Elected Leaders?
- Still proclaim decentralized political governance?



Are Smart Cities the way out?

- Essentially a public works approach to better delivery
- Some things are not smart
 - Maximising private gain by monetizing land
 - Allowing indiscriminate proliferation of private transport vs. increasing public mobility
 - Gated communities
 - Bypassing of local governments
- Smart cities only partial answer
 - Shortcuts will leave the urban areas further divided and distressed

Urban Challenge and Public Participation



- Government is making a beginning in realizing the importance of public and political participation, e.g. Swachh Bharat or Clean India
- However, if participation is sought, political accountability has to be a prerequisite
- Political spectrum yet to make up its mind about what the role of elected urban bodies will be
- Should scale of urban challenge become more severe for a serious political discourse?
- Fractured thinking, fragmented setup – a political and policy failure



Thank You

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