



Mr. Gaurav Dwivedi, threw light on the role international finance plays in Smart City Projects. Not only were International Financial Institutions and corporate investors pumping money into these projects, they were also using their financial clout to influence policy recommendations. He brought attention to utter lack of information in the public domain about these projects. “Even the people who get displaced receive hardly any information about just what the Smart City Project is”, he asserted.

To a question from the audience, whether there had been any resistance to the displacement and destruction caused by Smart City Projects, Mr. Chinmay Mishra responded by saying that there were several large-scale protests in Indore, but they were all brutally crushed. “Women protesters were beaten. People were jailed. Buildings were torn down overnight. In the end the pressure from the administration was so much that people realised there was nothing they could do anymore”, he sighed.

Both speakers agreed that the entire process of promoting ‘smart cities’ was highly undemocratic, and particularly unconstitutional - as the Constitutional 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts were violated. Decision-making powers had been taken away from the people’s representatives and elected bodies, and placed in the hands of the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) - parastatals that respond to a centralised command structure. Gaurav Dwivedi mentioned that in several cases the Board of the SPVs includes individuals who also serve on the Boards of corporations investing in the projects. This left the audience wondering whose interest these glamorous Smart City Projects really serve: Is it that of the people? Or is that of financial capital?

For more information on Mr. Gaurav Dwivedi’s Smart City Research, please visit the following webpages:

1. <https://www.cenfa.org/publications/smart-city-in-indore-a-case-study/>
2. <https://www.cenfa.org/publications/booklet-smart-cities-mission-in-india-footprints-of-ifis/>

Additional Suggested reading

1. <https://www.cenfa.org/infrastructure-finance/the-curious-case-of-indian-smart-cities/>

ESG and CFA continue the **“Interdisciplinary Action Research: Conversations with Emerging Leaders”** series next Thursday, 27th August 2020 (5:00 - 6:30 pm on Zoom and Facebook) addressing the theme: **“Interdisciplinary interventions to protest urban lakes and wetlands - Cases from Bengaluru and Kolkata”**. More details on this webinar series can be accessed on www.esgindia.org and www.cenfa.org. Recording of the webinar is accessible at: <https://tinyurl.com/vyx7brnb>.

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