



**Institute of Social Sciences**

New Delhi

## **D.T.Lakdawala Memorial Lecture - 2015**

**If Mayors Ruled the World:**

**“Does this mean the same in Europe, the U.S.A, India and China?”**

By

**Dr. Benjamin R. Barber**



(L-R): George Mathew, Chairman, ISS, Benjamin R. Barber, City University of New York, H.K. Dua, Former M.P. (Rajya Sabha), Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS

The challenge of how to organize governance in an increasingly globalized world has become pressing. One of the few public intellectuals to have vigorously engaged with this challenge of political theory is Professor Benjamin Barber, Senior Research Scholar at The Graduate Centre, The City University of New York. He focuses on cities as the sites of future power, rather than sovereign nation states or bodies such as the United Nations. He views cities as essentially egalitarian social spaces. Taking forward the idea that the cities of the world will associate with each other to together shape the world of tomorrow, he has founded a project to bring together a global parliament of mayors.



Dr. Benjamin R. Barber

Delivering the 14<sup>th</sup> D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture

He brought to life burning global issues, and possible solutions, during the 14<sup>th</sup> DT Lakdawala Memorial Lecture at the Constitution Club in New Delhi on 14 December 2015. Dr Barber also interacted with academics at the office of the ISS, which hosted his visit to India.

He began his public lecture, titled *If Mayors Ruled The World: Does this mean the same in Europe, U.S.A, India and China?*, by asserting that political theories and frames developed from the seventeenth century would not suffice for current global trends. Cities, 'he held, are the key units for engaging with the future. "Why is it time to go back to the city? Because city is the beginning of the civic community... There was a Rome before Italy,

The idea of the city as the locus of political power and economic engagement goes to the heart of the great conundrum that faces the post-modern world: the need to reconcile globalization with the assertion of the particular – the pan-national with the local. The pioneering work of the New Delhi-based Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) has also engaged with these challenges for three decades, focusing on robust decentralization and the effective empowerment of local self-government bodies. It was fitting then that Dr Barber's first engagement with an Indian audience took place under the auspices of the ISS.



Presidential Address by Shri. H. K. Dua

or a New Jersey before the US ...and it is in cities that people are capable of addressing their needs.” Capitalism and the Market system have led to productive jobs and better lives, but not for everyone, he stated. Even the United Nations, which he called the Disunited Nations, was a product of two world wars; it was a conglomerate of Nation-States and not a truly representative global entity.

“Liberty is Local,” Dr Barber emphasized, quoting the famous French political thinker and historian Alexis de Tocqueville. The global nature of trade is an indicator that governance needs to take a cue from this dictum in order to better reflect ground realities. Citing an example from his own life that reflects globalization in today’s times, Dr Barber said that like every young American wanting to buy a truly American car when he was younger, his first buy was a Chevrolet. Today, however, he owns a BMW, a German brand. He went on to describe how a Chevrolet, an American brand, is now manufactured in countries such as Mexico while select models of German brands like BMW were manufactured in the US. Which then is an American car, he asked.

Dr Barber highlighted climate change, one of the most critical challenges that face the world today, as a global issue that transcends national boundaries. Talking about the recently concluded Paris Conference of Parties (COP) 21 meeting, he exhorted the audience to understand that, under ideal circumstances, even if all the commitments of such an agreement were to be fulfilled, the world would not be able to achieve even half of its objectives to combat climate change. Therefore, he said it is imperative that cities grapple with this task sooner than later.

There is, of course, more than one view on the best way to organize governance in a globalized world. Rahul Mukherjee asked from the audience whether one could depend on cities to bring peace and sustainability. In the light of seminal work by Robert Dahl and Steven Lukes, he emphasized that decentralization by itself may not be sufficient; one must study the processes that cause social conflict in local arenas.

Dr Barber encouraged such intellectual engagement. He did so even more vigorously at a stimulating discussion on his bestselling book, *Jihad Vs McWorld*, which the ISS organized at the India International Centre the day after the public lecture. Some of those who attended had travelled from as far as Kashmir to discuss the subject, which threatens peace at global and local levels. One of them, Najmu Saqib, asked Dr Barber about the ‘ummah’ conceptualization of a global Islamic fraternity in the context of globalization.



The discussion raised many such questions. How does one respond to the violent rejection by terrorists of unbridled materialism, consumption and media projection? How do we deal with alienation and despair? How does the world meet the grievances of those millions who feel like victims of globalization? Should we eschew the comforts of contemporary lifestyles? Many see consumption-based lifestyles, albeit environmentally unsustainable, as requisite conveniences, even rights. Others despise contemporary mores as libertine excesses, even as abominable.

The Lakdawala lecture too drew a large and eclectic audience. At the outset, Professor Barber had called on students and young scholars to take the lead to resolve global issues, echoing the theme of Prof Stiglitz's talk at the ISS in 2008: *Crises Today and the Future of Capitalism*. It was evident, Dr Barber asserted, that the conventional notion of the Nation-State and Capitalism for governance is becoming obsolete. Everything from new technology to markets are now global in function and scope, he pointed out. Hence, governance mechanisms need to adapt and evolve accordingly. The governments of cities could link up across the globe much more organically than nation states.



Section of the audience

Dr Barber, a Harvard alumnus who has been consulted by President Bill Clinton of the US, President Roman Herzog of Germany and institutions such as the European Parliament, pointed out that his friends, British sociologist Anthony Giddens and American economist Joseph Stiglitz had also given the Lakdawala lecture.

The D.T. Lakdawala Memorial lecture is organized annually by the Institute of Social Sciences. In his introduction, Dr George Mathew, Founder-Director and current Chairman of ISS, threw light on the contributions of the late Prof Lakdawala towards studying ways to alleviate poverty and social injustice. Amartya Sen, Albie Sachs, Noam Chomsky, Mohammed Yunus and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam too have given the lecture over the past few years.

These earlier lectures were remembered in a photo presentation at the beginning of the programme. Dr Mathew recalled that world-renowned trade unionist and former cabinet minister George Fernandes had suggested that Professor Lakdawala should be the first Chairman of the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS). Several distinguished luminaries including Vice-President Hamid Ansari and former prime ministers I.K. Gujral and Manmohan Singh have chaired the lecture in the past. Like earlier lectures in this series, Dr Barber's lecture was attended by diplomats, academics, civil society activists and students from across Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR).

In his presidential address, former ambassador and editor H.K. Dua spoke at length of how today's challenges to the nation-state system are global in reach and impact. He agreed with Dr Barber that cities must be the focal point of governance. Mr Dua pointed to immigration among the various factors causing the European Union's current fragility. He also emphasized the threat posed by global multinational companies with great influence over law-makers and policy formulation, and covert influence over people's minds.

Emphasizing themes that are at the core of the ISS's work, he said that power needs to be delegated to Panchayats (Village Councils) in India and that the seeds of global governance need to be sown with people as the centre of power.

Proposing the vote of thanks, Dr Ash Narain Roy, Director of the ISS, said that cities indeed had the potential to change the grammar of politics. Quoting Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States, Dr Roy said that great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events while small minds discuss people.



## Media Coverage

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015

# Prof to give talk on urban leadership

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Benjamin Barber, founder of the Global Parliament of Mayors project, will deliver the DT Lakdawala memorial lecture on Monday at Mavalankar Auditorium.

Barber will address urban leadership in his lecture, titled "If Mayors Ruled the World: Does that mean the same in Europe, the US, India and China?"

The Walt Whitman Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University, Barber is currently a senior research scholar at the Graduate Centre, City University of New York. His latest book, "Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities", sheds light on the salience of the city as the hub and source of political power.

The Global Parliament of Mayors project is a governance platform empowering mayors to deliver viable cross-border solutions to international challenges.

Journalist and parliamentarian HK Dua will preside over the lecture, which is hosted annually by the Institute of Social Sciences.

\* THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015

# City must make public transport attractive: Prof

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Air pollution is an issue without borders, and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has taken it on with a set of extraordinary measures. That's the kind of civic initiative that political scientist Benjamin Barber can get behind, though he's not a fan of the odd-even scheme for cars.

"Road rationing and congestion pricing are punitive models, you need to make public transport attractive," he said at the 14th DT Lakdawala

Anindya Chattopadhyay



**CAPITAL CALLING:** Barber

memorial lecture of Institute of Social Sciences. But Barber believes that cities alone can tackle the diffuse global problems that nations cannot solve.

The professor emeritus at City University of New York and author of 18 books, including the popular Jihad vs McWorld, Barber is a champion of city leadership. His latest book is titled "If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities".

"It is time to go back to the city original civic and political institution of the world, the place where citizenship was born," said Barber. Cities create more natural and positive identifications than na-

tions, he added. Where nations are rivalrous zero-sum games, cities are pragmatic, non-ideological, instinctively multicultural. "If India gets larger, Pakistan gets smaller. But Delhi, Karachi and Kabul can all flourish."

"The problems of the city turn out to be the problems of the world." Climate change, terrorism, refugees crises—cities are most intimately affected by these problems, and most equipped to solve them, he said. Barber has founded Global Parliament of Mayors to be launched next September at the Hague. This would be a "league of cities", he said, where mayors could come together, find common purposes and enact policy.

He quotes Alexis de Tocqueville on city life in the US—"liberty is local". Parts of his argument stretch thin in India, where local and national citizenship are not framed in the same way; and where urban parties like Shiv Sena can successfully play on nativist anxieties rather than openness. But Barber's ideas have attracted attention in a world that now largely lives in cities.

"Decentralisation is essential, for cities to become democratic," said Barber. "India must make governance more participatory, at local and municipal levels."

What does he think of smart cities? "Dumb and dumber", he said. It's a popular buzzword "that evades the question of social and civic goals that the technology is used for." A smart city would let its informal economy thrive, its squatters, its street vendors, who embody urban resilience, he said.





ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഓഫ് സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസസിന്റെ നെതൂറൽത്തിൽ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ച ഡി.ടി. ലക്ഡവാല സ്മാരക പ്രഭാഷണം ഡോ. ബെഞ്ചമിൻ ആർ. ബാർബർ നയിച്ചുവെക്കുന്നു. ലോക്മേ. ഡ്വാ. ഡോ. ആഷ് നരെയ്ൻ റോയ് എന്നിവർ പങ്കെടുത്തു.

# ‘ജനാധിപത്യം നിലകൊള്ളാൻ നഗരങ്ങൾക്കും ജനങ്ങൾക്കും കൂടുതൽ അധികാരം വേണം’

**ഡി.ടി. ലക്ഡവാല സ്മാരക പ്രഭാഷണം സംഘടിപ്പിച്ചു**

ന്യൂഡൽഹി • ആഗോള പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ ഫലപ്രദമായി പരിഹരിക്കാൻ നഗരങ്ങൾ കേന്ദ്രീകരിച്ചുള്ള ഭരണസമിതികൾക്ക് ശ്രീമാനായ ഡോ. ലക്ഡവാല സ്മാരക പ്രഭാഷണം ന്യൂഡൽഹിയിൽ സിറ്റി യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിലെ മുൻകൈ നഗരഭരണകമ്പ്യൂട്ടർ ഗവൺമെന്റുമായ ഡോ. ബെഞ്ചമിൻ ആർ. ബാർബർ, ഇന്റർനാഷണൽ ഓഫ് സോഷ്യൽ സയൻസസിന്റെ ഐഎസ്എസ് നെതൂറൽത്തിൽ സംഘടിപ്പിച്ച

പ്രഭാഷണം നയിച്ചുവെക്കുന്നു. തീവ്രവാദം, കാലാവസ്ഥാ വ്യതിയാനം എന്നിവയുടെയും ആഗോള പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെ പോരാടാൻ നഗരങ്ങൾക്ക് സാധിക്കും. നിലവിൽ നഗരങ്ങൾ തമ്മിൽ വിവിധ വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ആഗോള തലത്തിൽ നഗരങ്ങളെ ഏകോപിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനുള്ള സംവിധാനമില്ല. നഗരങ്ങൾക്കും ജനങ്ങൾക്കും കൂടുതൽ അധികാരം നൽകേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. ജനാധിപത്യം അതിന്റെ ഏറ്റവും അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായ നിലവാരമാണ്.

കൊള്ളാൻ ഇതു വഴിയൊരുക്കും. ഇത്തരം ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തലുള്ള ലോക രാജ്യങ്ങൾ നഗരവൽക്കരണത്തിലേക്കു കയറിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. സാമൂഹികമായ ഭാവി ലഭിക്കുന്ന പ്രതീക്ഷയിലാണ് ഗവൺമെന്റ് വിട്ടു ജന നഗരങ്ങളിലേക്കു കൈമാറുന്നത്. അതിനുള്ളിലുള്ള പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ഏറ്റവും വലുതാണ്. എന്നാൽ, ആഗോള തലത്തിലുള്ള ഈ പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ നേരിടുന്നവർക്ക്, രാജ്യങ്ങൾ സ്വന്തം അതിർത്തിക്കുള്ളിൽനിന്നു ചിരയിടുന്നു. ആഗോള തലത്തിലുള്ള കൂടുതൽ ചിന്ത ഉണ്ടാകുന്നില്ല.

അതുകൊണ്ടാണ്, ലോകത്ത് ഇപ്പോഴും തീവ്രവാദവും രാഷ്ട്രവാദവും നിലനിൽക്കുന്നത്. രാഷ്ട്രങ്ങൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള ക്ഷേമത്തിലൂടെയാണ് ഭാവി ലഭിക്കുന്നതുമാണ്. രാഷ്ട്രങ്ങളെക്കൊണ്ട് കൂടുതൽ സംഭാവനകൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുന്ന നഗരങ്ങളുടെ പ്രവർത്തിപ്പിക്കുകയാണ് - ഡോ. ബെഞ്ചമിൻ പറയുകയുണ്ടായി. മുൻകൈ നഗരഭരണകർമ്മങ്ങൾ എച്ച്.കെ. ഡ്വാ. സമയക്രമം വഹിച്ചു. ഐഎസ്എസ് ഡയറക്ടർ ഡോ. ആഷ് നരെയ്ൻ റോയ്, ഡോ. ബാർബർ തുടങ്ങിയവർ പ്രസംഗിച്ചു.



**Institute of Social Sciences**

**14th D.T. LAKDAWALA MEMORIAL LECTURE**

by

**Dr. Benjamin R. Barber**

*City University of New York, Author and Founder of the Global Parliament of Mayors Project*

Theme

**“If Mayors Ruled the World: Does this mean the same in Europe, the U.S.A., India and China?”**

Chair

**Shri H.K. Dua**

*Eminent Journalist*

**4.30 pm Monday, 14 December 2015**

**Venue: Mavlankar Hall, Rafi Marg, New Delhi**

