

Making Urban Economic Development Sustainable

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The global urban population is poised to grow. People will keep moving to cities in search of better economic opportunities. According to United Nations, the urban population will touch the 5.2 billion mark by 2030. The increasing population in cities is straining existing services and infrastructure. To cater growing demand, urban centres are building new infrastructure to provide adequate civic services and create new avenues of employment generation. City leaders and urban planners need to ensure that the economic and infrastructure development is integrated sustainably. All the stakeholders involved work towards making a positive contribution to improving the local environment.

The ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic disrupted economic activities in the cities worldwide. Lockdown measures to curtail the spread of the virus confined people to their homes for over a year by shutting down economic activities and offices. It led to revolutionary changes in the work culture. However, the impact was not the same for all. Local business owners, shopkeepers, daily wage earners bore the brunt. Coupled with this was the effect industries had to face due to widespread reverse migration, with informal workers moving back to their hometowns. This led to an enormous gap in the supply and demand of unskilled and minimally skilled manual workforce.

The tax collection of municipalities also witnessed a decline. It could be argued that it was an unprecedented and possibly one-time event. But, the cities have to be prepared for all eventualities and build pandemic and economic resilience.

Many cities have now announced the stimulus package for diverse local groups. The focus is on sustainable economic practices and green and inclusive recovery. Cities will have to promote and adopt renewable energy, encourage resource efficiency and sustainable practices in the business operations of local industries. Cities have to revisit their policy planning to create a framework for improve their tax collection while maintaining their focus on sustainable development practices. Their intervention would also be needed in making conducive business environment in the cities for the industries and businesses to opt for energy efficient and resource efficient practices.

As engines for economic growth, urban centres are well-placed to achieve the ecological goals advocated under several international agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, New Urban Agenda, Paris Climate Accord, etc. As cities begin to reopen with large-scale vaccination drives underway worldwide, the governments and local authorities must restart urban economies sustainably. One aspect that they must realise is that this is a unique opportunity, giving governments the chance to reinvent their economic and market systems. It is also necessary for governments to work on making informal and migrant workers socially and financially secure. This will renew their faith and trust in cities,

encourage them to move back and extinguish the gap in the supply and demand industries face.

While making the cities economic resilient and sustainable, urban local governments will also be contributing to SDG 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17. Making urban economic activities sustainable is also a step forward to localising SDGs and augmenting the pace of global initiatives.

To discuss more challenges and opportunities faced in localising SDGs and making cities economic resilient, the **All India Institute of Local Self-Government**, in collaboration with **CITYNET**, is organising a Webinar on '**Making Urban Economic Development Sustainable**' on **Friday, July 23, 2021**, at **11:30 AM (IST)**. This is the second webinar in a series of monthly webinars supported by Foundation EMDA Southasia and 3R Waste Foundation.

Key Points of Discussion

- Local Economic Development and Sustainability
- Importance of Resource and Energy Efficiency
- Building conducive environment for revamping revenue and sustainable practices
- Innovative Economic Models
- Engagement of Stakeholders and Role of ULBs