



"The Political Economy of Labour Law"

Speaker

Babu Mathew

Date: October 19, 2016 (Wednesday)

Time: 11.00 am to 12.30 pm

Venue: 10th Floor Auditorium, Pixel A (Azim Premji University)

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About the talk: The Political Economy of Labour Law

Post neo-liberalism we witness rapid deterioration in both conditions of work and conditions at work. Pauperisation and proletarianisation on the agrarian front fuel the ever growing migration to urban and semi urban centres. There is a 'race to the bottom' in many precarious forms of employment such as construction, garments, plantations, security services, housekeeping, domestic work, etc. There is rapid erosion of freedom of association, tripartitism, conditions at work, real wages, social security and job security. We will, through reflection around a few key concepts emerging from our rich labour jurisprudence of the early post-colonial period, examine how we are reduced to reproducing 'modern forms of slavery' through the hegemonic discourse of 'flexible labour'. Are there any signs of hope and what ought to be the future trajectory?

A brief profile of Babu Mathew

Babu Mathew comes from a background of trade union and civil society work. He was Vice-President of Trade Union International affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions for Asia-Pacific region for two terms. He has led collective bargaining in small and medium scale industry, large private and public sector undertakings, MNCs and the service sector and signed scores of wage settlements ranging from the plant level to the national level. He specialised in organising labour across a wide range of employments, and in bringing the field experience gained, to the classroom through the teaching of labour law. He has been awarded the Nehru Fellowship.

Babu Mathew has been a Human Rights activist focusing on the marginalised. He set up the "Centre for Child and the Law" at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore (NLSIU) and held the Government of India Chair on Juvenile Justice. He played a key role in drafting the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and in child related law reform processes.

He went on to be the Country Director of Action Aid in India in which capacity he coordinated human rights work across 24 states of India for two terms. He is a founder member of both the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication and of the Working Group on Human Rights. He has been active in cleaning electoral politics.

He has been teacher of Law for the last four decades. He is a gold medallist in Labour Law and Administrative Law and he earlier was the Registrar of NLSIU.

Babu Mathew sustains a special interest in the political economy of law with particular reference to Labour Law, Constitutionalism, Law & Development, Human Rights, and Child Rights. He is presently Resident Professor at NLSIU, coordinating the Master's programme in Public Policy.