

## **Minutes of Consultation on Bhopal Smart City Project Proposal held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

The Consultation on Bhopal Smart City Project proposal was organized by NCHSE Environment Helpline at Gandhi Bhawan, Bhopal on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The objectives of the consultation were to know the views of various sections of the citizens of Bhopal about the proposed Smart City Project in Bhopal. Senior Bureaucrats, Architects, Journalists, Sociologists, Academicians, Advocates, Representatives of Resident Welfare associations and people from other section of the society participated in the consultation.

Major points emerged from the consultation are listed below:-

1. The participants appreciated the guidelines of Smart City Mission of Government of India which underlines citizen consultation and participation in developing the plan.
2. The proposed development plan under Bhopal Smart City project concerns every citizen of the city, but the information regarding the plan is not adequately available in the public domain. Even after submission of the proposal to the GOI, it is difficult even for intellectuals and subject matter specialists to get access to the actual plan. Therefore confusion prevails among the citizens. Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) should make the project document available to all, if necessary, even on payment.
3. The project document prepared by the BMC has little input from the Town planners, Architects, Environmentalists, economists, sociologists, and general public from the city. Therefore, it raises doubts about its inclusiveness and economic and environmental sustainability.
4. Due to lack of information regarding the actual proposal, a lot of negativity has been generated among the people of Bhopal regarding the Smart City proposal. Its financial part is incidental since the present development plan may lead to social tensions among the masses.
5. There was unanimity about the inappropriate inclusion of Shivaji Nagar and feeling that the proposal will in fact ruin it and its parks, roads, skyline, environment and citizens' lifeline. The vacant areas and those where old government quarters have been demolished e.g. North T T Nagar and other parts of Bhopal may be more appropriate for development.
6. Smart city should cater to the future needs of the city and its proposal should include provision for employment generation and opportunities for revenue generation to make the city development sustainable.
7. The proposal should have the objective of productive investment and assured return.
8. Project should not include high cost facilities which are not economically sustainable. Otherwise such facilities would be a burden on the city, which might not only slow down the future development of the city but the state as well.

9. The priorities of the people include improved basic services like safe drinking water, improved solid waste management, general safety and easy availability of various goods and services.
10. Project should include shelter for the poor and provision of improved urban basic services especially availability of safe drinking water and access to sanitation for the poor neighborhood. Consultations on Smart City proposal organized by various forums presented in this consultation showed that there is need for improved urban basic services like sanitation, garbage management, roads and controlling fire hazards for such settlements.
11. Plan should include improved safety for vulnerable section of the society including women and children, including safe transport for women and differentlyabled.
12. There is urgent need for constructive participation of citizens before finalizing the development plan, which citizens could back up. Only informed citizens' consultation could bring about viable proposal and facilitate its implementation.
13. In fact transparency, citizens' informed participation, consultation, appropriate sites and services for development are crucial.
14. Consultation conclusion should be sent to Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh and to the appropriate ministry of GOI.



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