

Smart City Mission: Limited Development in Scope



Smart City

MISSION TRANSFORM-NATION

(Source - <http://smartcities.gov.in/content/innerpage/mission-logo.php>)

In This Issue

COVER STORY:

- Smart City Mission: Limited Development in Scope

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK:

- An Economic Crisis Is Slowly Building up in India's Informal Economy.

SECTION 1: ECONOMY

- The difficulty of being a farmer; Govt bites the bullet on Air India privatization.

SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Politics and Governance:** India Needs to Take the Idea of Tourist Police Seriously; Aadhaar PAN Linking must from July 1.
- **Education:** Teacher training in India set for a regulatory overhaul.
- **Health:** India Fares Miserably in Providing Quality Healthcare Access to Its Citizens; Why this sudden surge in malaria cases in Delhi.
- **Environment:** Modified Approaches.
- **Agriculture:** 70% Of India's Farm Families Spend More Than They Earn—Debt Main Cause of Suicides.

Lead Essay

Smart City Mission: Limited Development in Scope

The Smart City Mission, one of the flagship schemes of the Government of India targeting urban transformation, was launched in 2015.ⁱ The aim of the scheme is to develop 100 smart cities across the country over a period of five years.ⁱⁱ The Mission wants to promote cities that provide ‘core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of Smart Solutions’. This has been envisioned to be achieved through adequate water supply, assured electricity supply, sanitation, including solid waste management, efficient urban mobility and public transport, affordable housing, especially for the poor, robust IT connectivity and digitalization, good governance etc.ⁱⁱⁱ

So far, 90 cities have been named which will be developed into smart cities under the Mission. Surprisingly, none of the existing Indian cities figure among the top cities of the world on any index.^{iv} Under the Smart Cities Mission, each selected city will get financial assistance from the Central Government of Rs. 100 crore per year for five years.^v

While addressing a Business Conclave held at Shri Ram College of Commerce in February 2017, Minister of Urban Development Mr. Venkaiah Naidu had asserted that ‘smart city development is not elitist, and it has triggered inclusive and comprehensive urban planning and development addressing the inherited deficit in urban governance’. Additionally, he had also said that ‘Smart City Mission has brought about a paradigm shift by enabling the mission cities approach the challenges differently rather than doing different things’.^{vi} However, the Area Based Development (ABD) which is been undertaken in the implementation of the Mission speaks otherwise. The areas which have been selected under the Mission in majority of the cities to be developed are either prominent residential or commercial areas, which do not necessarily need to undergo the ‘Smart’ transformation being proposed. Beyond this, the services which will be offered by these Smart projects will benefit a very small and limited section of the city.

Limited Development

According to the Official data, a total of Rs. 1.31 lakh crore has been proposed to be spent on selected 59 cities, and Rs 1.05 lakh crore of the proposed expenditure will be spent on what is called the Area Based Development (ABD) component. This refers to pockets in the selected cities that will be made ‘smart’ with a combination of IT and infrastructure projects such as WiFi hotspots, sensor-based public lighting, redesign of streets, zones promoting start-ups and multi-modal transit points. According to the above proposal, about 80 percent of the proposed investment will solely be allotted to the already well-developed sections of the city. In terms of area that will be covered under the ABD component, amounts to merely 246 sq km (2.7 percent) of the 9,065 sq km cumulative area of the selected 59 cities under the initiative. On the other hand, the remaining

Lead Essay

amount of only Rs 26,141 crore from the proposed allotted funds will be invested for the Mission's remaining components, which are the pan-city projects or those which cover entire cities.^{vii}

Bhubaneswar			TOP 5: THE OTHER 3		
BHUBANESWAR PANCITY AREA: 135 sq km ABDAREA: 4 sq km, Bhubaneswar Town Centre District (2.9%)			JAIPUR PANCITY AREA: 485 sq km ABDAREA: 2.4 sq km, Kishanpole Bazar (0.5%)		
TOTAL COST	PANCITY COST	ABDCOST	TOTAL COST	PAN CITY COST	ABDCOST
₹4,537 cr	₹442 cr	₹4,095 cr (90%)	₹2,341 cr	₹819 cr	₹1,521 cr (64.9%)
PUNE PANCITY AREA: 276 sq km ABDAREA: 3.6 sq km, Aundh-Baner-Balewadi (1.3%)			SURAT PANCITY AREA: 336 sq km ABDAREA: 8.7 sq km, Surat Textile market (2.5%)		
TOTAL COST	PANCITY COST	ABDCOST	TOTAL COST	PAN CITY COST	ABDCOST
₹2,870 cr	₹674 cr	₹2,196 cr (76.5%)	₹2,597 cr	₹795 cr	₹1,802 cr (69.3%)
KOCHI PANCITY AREA: 107 sq km ABDAREA: 7 sq km, central city-Fort Kochi-Mattancherry (6.5%)			KOCHI PANCITY AREA: 107 sq km ABDAREA: 7 sq km, central city-Fort Kochi-Mattancherry (6.5%)		
TOTAL COST	PAN CITY COST	ABDCOST	TOTAL COST	PAN CITY COST	ABDCOST
₹2,076 cr	₹691 cr	₹1,385 cr (66.7%)	₹2,076 cr	₹691 cr	₹1,385 cr (66.7%)
(Source: Ministry of Urban Development, Census 2011 & Pune Municipal Corporation)			(Source: Ministry of Urban Development, Census 2011 & Pune Municipal Corporation)		

(Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/mapping-expenditure-80-per-cent-smart-city-funds-for-just-2-7-per-cent-of-city-area-4702935/>)

In Pune, which has been ranked the second best Smart City contender and from where Prime Minister Modi had flagged off the projects last year, Rs 2,196 crore of the estimated Rs 2,870 crore, or 76 per cent, will be allotted into the development of a 3.6 sq km area in the Aundh-Baner-Balewadi pocket, which comprises a little more than 1 per cent of the city's 276 sq km. In Bhubaneswar, 90 per cent of the Rs 4,537 crore Smart City funds are proposed to be spent on the Bhubaneswar Town Centre District, which is a commercial business district that accounts for less than 3 per cent of the city's area.^{viii} Similarly, in Chandigarh, Rs 4,932.5 crore of the proposed total investment of Rs 5,654.89 crore would be invested on Sector 43, which is only 1 square kilometre of Chandigarh's total area of 114 sq km.^{ix}

According to the Ministry of Urban Development, the idea behind funneling a majority of funds under the Smart City project into small pockets is to create replicable models for the rest of the cities. Urban Development Secretary Mr. Rajiv Gauba has said that 'since infrastructure is capital intensive, it has been allowed only under area-based development and not for the entire city'. On the question about channelizing

Lead Essay

maximum resources into small areas, the Government response was that ‘in the limited mission period of five years, it would not be possible to make cities free of infrastructure deficit’.^x

Over the five-year mission period, the Central government will give Rs 500 crore to each Smart City while the state and local body will pool in an equivalent amount with the rest of the money coming from private firms and other sources. However, the mission’s guidelines prohibit capital expenditure on infrastructure on a pan-city basis and allow it only in case of the ABD component. Under the pan-city component, cities can only look at the application of technology to one particular aspect of the infrastructure. The rules ensure that cities put in much of the money in areas that are already developed so as to create “demonstrable projects” instead of investing on city-wide infrastructure.^{xi}

Marginalisation of the marginalised people

According to the 2011 census data, about a third of the country's 1.25 billion population lives in cities. The numbers are further growing every year as tens of thousands migrants leave their villages to seek better prospects in urban areas. Due to such a large number of migrants to urban areas, they are unable to avail the basic necessities of life. They end up living in overcrowded slums which already lack the basic facilities.^{xii} According to a report by New Delhi-based advocacy group Housing and Land Rights Network, India (HLRN), the Smart City Mission plan does not address the needs and rights of poor women and marginalized groups including minorities and migrants. The report also mentions that nearly 14 million households live in urban slums across India, with a further 3 million living on city streets. They have also reported that the drive for Smart Cities has already triggered evictions of people from slums and informal settlements in cities including Indore, Bhubaneswar, Delhi and Kochi without adequate compensation or alternate accommodation.^{xiii} Mr. Rajendra Ravi of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), an umbrella organisation of rights groups, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, "(The plan) will only benefit a few and exclude the most vulnerable from the resources they so badly need".^{xiv}

During a panel discussion on 'Emerging Lessons on Environmental Assessment' held on the sidelines of the Spring Meeting of the World Bank, Social activist Medha Patkar had said that the ‘Smart City-related evictions in India are brutal’ and she had also alleged that the ‘demolition of the habitats in the name of development is undermining the very existence of people living there’.^{xv}

Conclusion

Despite the assertions made by the Union Urban Development Minister that the Smart City Project is not elitist and is based on Inclusive development, it can clearly be inferred by the proposed investment which has been allotted to projects under ABD in various cities is very limited in scope. This is not only limited in terms of area but also the section of the city population which will avail the benefits of ‘Smart city’. Though, the Urban Ministry has asserted that the ‘ABD model’ will be transformed first and then these will be further replicated in other parts of the city under the pan-city projects, it has to be noted that under the current

Lead Essay

allotment for the concerned 59 cities, out of the total Rs. 1.31 lakh crore only Rs. 26,141 crore will be invested in the pan-city projects. When the majority of the investment is being allotted to a very limited portion of the city then how will the remaining funds assist in replicating the ABD models in rest of the city? This will only be possible if more funds will be allotted to the pan-city projects else the Smart City will only be developed in a limited and a restrictive manner.

Further, it has been reported that with the implementation of these projects in some of the cities will lead to the displacement of a large section of the marginalized people who are currently living in slums. Merely providing technological transformation will not resolve the urban developmental issues. Adequate development of the basic infrastructure across the city is the need. Otherwise, the Cities can never develop into 'Smart city', and they will continue to remain Smart City in name.

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Headline

An Economic Crisis Is Slowly Building up in India's Informal Economy

(Indervir Singh, *The Wire*, June 28, 2017)

Many economists argued that the effects of demonetisation process on economic growth would be negligible. However, as the estimates of growth for the third quarter of 2016-17 were published in March, they quickly declared that the lower growth was the result of lack of understanding of economics and hard facts. Moreover the provisional GDP estimates for the fourth quarter also show that the Indian economy grew at 6.1% in the fourth quarter of 2016-17 compared to the expected 7.1%. Gross value added growth at basic prices also lower than 8.7% in the fourth quarter of 2015-16. But the real situation may still be much bleak than presented by the estimates as the effect of demonetisation on informal sector is likely to be underestimated.

Read more <https://thewire.in/151918/an-economic-crisis-is-slowly-building-up-in-indias-informal-economy/>

Date Accessed: 28.06.2017

Economy

The difficulty of being a farmer

(Ram Kaundinya, *Livemint*, June 28, 2017)

About 145 million landholdings of India are always under pressure from both the supply and the demand sides. The farmers with access to irrigation are better placed and those who are in rain-fed and drought-prone areas are most vulnerable. Occupying 60 percent of the cultivated area but contributes only 45% of the total agricultural production, these are the farmers without the financial wherewithal to withstand the vagaries of nature.

Read more: <http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/UUK14BsraCTBUNOcJqwQYL/The-difficulty-of-being-a-farmer.html>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

Govt bites the bullet on Air India privatisation

(Tarun Shukla, *Live Mint*, June 28, 2017)

The privatisation of national airline, Air India and five of its subsidiaries has been approved by the Union Cabinet. The airline has an outstanding debt burden of Rs. 52,000 crore. A group under the Finance Minister Mr. Jaitley will decide on the treatment of unsustainable debt of Air India. Though some experts, such as Mr. Amrit Pandurangi, formerly the head of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP's aviating practice, welcomed the government's move but however he warned that 'it should not be hurried otherwise it could create a bigger mess than it already is'.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Companies/Gnfl2rQDyo8jNWGFgvNq9J/Cabinet-approves-Air-India-disinvestment-Arun-Jaitley.html>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

Governance and Development

POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

India Needs to Take the Idea of Tourist Police Seriously

(The Times of India, June 28, 2017)

This article supports the recommendation made by a government run institute asking for the establishment of specialised police force to protect tourists. The government has claimed that 13 states have deployed tourist police but the incidence of crime has not reduced. Further, examples of Singapore and Ireland have been cited to improve the tourism policy in India in this aspect.

Read more: <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-editorials/welcome-to-india-india-needs-to-take-the-idea-of-tourist-police-seriously/>

Date Accessed: 28.06.2017

Aadhaar PAN Linking must from July 1

(The Tribune, June 28, 2017)

Taxpayers will now have to mandatorily link their Aadhaar number with their PAN card from July 1. This move has been introduced by the government with an aim to monitor the tax evasion through use of multiple PAN cards through the Finance Bill 2017-18.

Read more: <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/aadhaar-pan-linking-must-from-july-1-govt-notifies-rules/428759.html>

Date Accessed: 28.06.2017

EDUCATION

Teacher training in India set for a regulatory overhaul

(Prashant K. Nanda, Live Mint, June 29, 2017)

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), which is the apex teacher training regulatory body in India under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, is preparing a proposal to take action against errant teacher training institutions. This move is expected to curb the growth of the poor quality intuitions and to bring about transparency in teacher training. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 teacher education colleges may be barred from admitting fresh students from the next academic year.

Read More: <http://www.livemint.com/Education/Sv1fUC77bS7B5tFM7LKXeO/Teacher-training-in-India-set-for-a-regulatory-overhaul.html>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

HEALTH

India Fares Miserably in Providing Quality Healthcare Access to Its Citizens

(Vipul Vivek, The Wire, June 25, 2017)

Among 19 countries in South and Southeast Asia (including China), India did better only than Pakistan over 15 years to 2015 in potential and actual health care access and quality. According to an India Spend analysis of the Health care Access and Quality (HAQ) Index publishes in the Lancet, a British medical journal, in 1990-2015, India's gap widening by 5.5 points, 1.4 points less than Pakistan. It has been argued that the inequality between states and the health sector that has failed to keep up with changing trends in diseases could be responsible for the widening gap in India.

Read more: <https://thewire.in/151081/india-fares-miserably-providing-healthcare-access-citizens/>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

Governance and Development

Why this sudden surge in malaria cases in Delhi

(Subhojit Goswami, *Down to Earth*, June 28, 2017)

Since January 2017, 113 cases of malaria have been reported so far in Delhi. According to the data released by the municipal corporation of Delhi (MCD), 39 people had contracted malaria during the same period in 2016, 19 in 2015 and 29 in 2014. In fact, 23 cases of malaria were recorded in city hospitals in a single week ending June 24. Further, it has been reported that according to the data from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) suggests that this is the second highest number of malaria cases in the last four years after 353 cases were reported in 2013.

Read More: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/why-this-sudden-surge-in-malaria-cases-in-delhi-58169>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

ENVIRONMENT

Modified Approaches

(Abhijit Dasgupta, *The Telegraph*, June 28, 2017)

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee recommended that genetically modified or GM mustard be commercially used in order to make India self-reliant in the production of edible oil. It has been suggested in this article that this policy decision must not be taken without consulting the farmers. Since they are the main stakeholders they must be given an opportunity to express their opinion on this contentious issue.

Read more: https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170628/jsp/opinion/story_158981.jsp

Date Accessed: 28.06.2017

AGRICULTURE

70% Of India's Farm Families Spend More Than They Earn—Debt Main Cause of Suicides

(Devanik Saha, *India Spend*, June 27, 2017)

According to an analysis of India Spend, it has been reported that, 'nearly 70% of India's 90 million agricultural households spend more than they earn on average each month, pushing them towards debt, which is now the primary reason in more than half of all suicides by farmers nationwide'.

According to the NSSO data, 'nearly 85% of all operational farm holdings in the country are smaller than two hectares in size'.

Read More: <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/70-of-indias-farm-families-spend-more-than-they-earn-debt-main-cause-of-suicides-26738>

Date Accessed: 29.06.2017

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