

Head- Future Cities

Karuna Gopal

UBW: Prime Minister’s ambitious 100 Smart Cities Vision is going to take shape early this year - Many are of the opinion that India doesn’t need smart cities at all ..

KG : I am excited that we embarked on this smart journey at a juncture when the world economy is not so bright. Smart cities present the greatest opportunity for India – opportunity to infuse ‘Economic Vitality’ into the nation and also to create an ‘Equitable Society’.

Well, contrary to the popular perception that smart cities are all about technology they are actually about Livability, Sustainability and highest quality of life. Let’s understand that Globally, smart cities were consequence of growing urbanization, Inadequate Infrastructure, growing economic competition, and growing Environmental Challenges. India is currently experiencing all of them. So the question of doubting their relevance in India’s context doesn’t arise especially when Indian cities have established themselves as formidable economic engines of growth.

Please remember when IMF Christine LaGarde visited India recently, she did say that India is the only ‘Bright Spot’ in a largely gloomy global economy – India with its Human Capital, Innovation and Entrepreneurship- All but are integral part of cities... So cities have to cherished and nurtured.

UBW: You keep saying that it is ‘A Perfect time to build SMART CITIES in India why do you say that ?

KG : I say that because India enjoys a ‘Late Mover Advantage’ today ... cities around the world that entered the game almost 10 years ago went through iterations of learning. The Mayors then had no clue what Smart Cities were and had to rely on



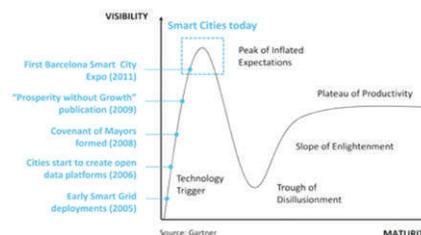
the advice of technology providers. These technology majors were basically creating a market for their products and services. So mostly back then it was vendor driven. Today there is clarity about what is a smart city and most city leaders today are aware of how they would like to shape their cities and not blindly buy everything sold to them. India escaped this pain. Pain of investments and pain of learning...

Back then technologies were nascent and were not mature enough, the costs too were very high and technology vendors competed aggressively. But today see how dramatically different the landscape is! Technologies have matured substantially, their costs have come down drastically and the most beautiful part is vendors are collaborating instead of competing to give ‘wholesome solutions’ to the cities!

Apart from the above advantages, India is entering at a perfect time when Global Best Practices are available, Tested and proven Frameworks, Indices, Protocols are available for ready adoption. Innovative Financing Models are up for takes and PPP frameworks are much refined. In fact the world became a R&D laboratory for Smart

Cities in the last decade and India with its late mover advantage can capitalize on this corpus of knowledge!

India’s advantage can be seen from this exhibit ...



UBW: What are main things under the Smart Cities Mission of the Government?

KG :Our country wants to infuse ‘smartness’ into the four pillars of growth - Institutional, Physical, Social, Economic infrastructures. The Mission is about 3 important components – Green Field Development, Redevelopments and Retrofits.

We are trying to use a combination of sustainable urban planning with good design principles and technology solutions wherever necessary. New Green field cities will adhere to good design principles and use less technology but existing cities with crumbling infrastructure will have to resort to technology solutions.

Please understand that the citizen is at the very the ‘core’ of this Mission...

UBW: What is the Ministry doing now to achieve the stated goals?

KG : The Ministry at this time is nuaning the details of the mission. Working on programs to build and enhance technical competencies, creating the required Human Capital. The ministry is developing Smart

City Standards, Indices and appropriate Protocols. There is a specific focus on forging Partnerships both local and global. As you know there are many countries that are approaching India and offering to be a part of this smart city game. These have to be discussed, and MOUs have to be drafted and entered into. Currently such activities are on. The Ministry is also creating a corpus of 'International Best Practices' and is exploring 'Innovative Funding' models that may work on Indian terrain.

The most important thing the ministry is doing currently is to arrive at appropriate city level Reforms for embarking on this smart journey. The biggest challenge lies in City level reforms, building city competencies and developing Smart Procurement processes for engaging vendors. Reworking PPP frameworks is taxing and it is being done while the biggest focus is perhaps also on making 'Doing Business in India' easier...

The government is trying to Discover all pathways that lead to achieving the smart cities mission of the PM

UBW: How will the Mission be navigated?
We hear there is going to be a challenge cities be chosen? Yes the cities will be selected through City Challenge

KG: There will be 3 phases of selection- City Challenge on the lines of 'Mayors Challenge' of Bloomberg Philanthropy, designed as a "competition for bold ideas from city leaders". Phase-1 (20 cities to be selected in 2015) - Remaining should be provided with additional help and resources to prepare them for selection; Phase-2 (40 Cities in 2016), Phase-3 (40 Cities in 2017).

UBW: How will the cities be shortlisted?

KG: Here are the details:

Economic Criterion

Cities accounting for 54% of Incremental GDP till 2025 - 69

Geographic Inclusivity

All State Capitals (not included above) - 12
Tourist/ Religious - Heritage (not included

above) - 8

Hill and Coastal Areas (not included above)- 4

Mid-sized Cities (not included above)- 7

The Conditions Precedent...

Municipal Reforms - Double Entry Accounting System, Minimum 50% collection of Taxes and User, Charges, Creation of Municipal Cadre...

E-Governance- Electronic Delivery of Public Services, All Information in Public Domain- Zero Emissions: Solid & Liquid Waste; Master Plan based on Spatial Mapping/GIS..

UBW: Can you elaborate on selected Major Investment Plans in India

This is the list I am aware of

USA - Anticipated \$41 Billion Private investment pathways into India; partnership on clean water & solid waste management for 500 cities

Japan - \$35 Billion - mix of Private & Public investment - DMIC - Japan is providing support of \$4.5 billion in the first phase of these projects through lending by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

China - \$20 Billion - A mix of Private & Public investment.

Germany - EU 1 Billion on solar capacity for next ten years.

ADB - \$2.5 Billion to establish 5 Industrial Zones for Andhra Pradesh; \$63.3 m for North Karnataka Urban Sector Investment Program..

SPAIN - MoU would be signed between the two governments with focus on evolving a Master Plan for Smart Delhi. To develop a green field smart city in an area of about 20,000 hectares besides smart infrastructure development in two pockets of Delhi with an areas of 1,00,000 sq mt and 1,20,000 sq mt and redevelopment of identified areas, in which Spanish agencies could lend technical support.

France - Urban development projects in Himachal Pradesh. France is keen on developing Smart Cities having adequate infrastructure and facilities like proper water treatment, waste management, urban transport and street lighting in the state.

Singapore - Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), the Chennai-Bangalore Industrial Corridor and the North-East. Singapore could develop a virtual city or a 'little Singapore' somewhere along the corridor.

UBW: Are you hopeful about the success of this Mission?

KG :Yes, I am more than hopeful ... The Mission is being planned in a comprehensive way. The Union Urban Ministry is not going to work in isolation, it will work closely with Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Environment Ministry, the States and the respective cities. This mission is tied to Swachh Bharat, Digital India and Make in India programs and most importantly the concept of 'Rurbanization' is an integral part of this mission.

UBW: Can anything be more comprehensive than this? - Both in Concept and Design?

KG :I am very positive

(Karuna Gopal is an Internationally acclaimed Thought Leader, Keynote Speaker and Advisor Smart Cities).