

**Office of the PRO-Media Coordinator
Jamia Millia Islamia**

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Press Release

Three day International Conference on Smart Cities at JMI ended with important suggestions and recommendations:

Department of Civil Engineering, JMI, New Delhi organized a three day international conference on Smart Cities with emphasis upon its associated opportunities & challenges. The purpose of this conference was to identify various prospects and different obstructions that may come across in a wholesome planning and development of smart cities. Another aim of this conference was to arrive at meaningful, practicable, and feasible solutions to overcome various impediments in the endeavor to develop smart cities.

About 300 papers were submitted to the Conference under as many as eighteen tracks covering almost entire spectrum of aspects related to a smart city. After a thorough review of these papers, by a large team of peer reviewers, about 110 papers were accepted for oral presentation and more than 70 papers were accepted for poster presentation.

The proceedings of the Conference are to be published by Springer, a leading international publisher.

The beginning of Conference took place in an Inaugural session held in the Dr. M.A. Ansari Auditorium, JMI. It was presided over by Prof. Shahid Ashraf, Officiating Vice Chancellor, JMI. Prof. Dr. PSN Rao, Director, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi was the General Chair. Shri. Vijay Kumar Dev (IAS), Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi was the Chief Guest. Shri Dev addressed the gathering wherein he emphasized upon adopting an inclusive approach in the development of smart cities with the aim of improving overall quality of life of its citizens.

Participants and guests came from different countries like USA, UK, Finland, Germany, Holland, Austria, Yemen, Kingdom of Saudia Arabia, Indonesia and from various parts of India.

The conference included five plenary sessions and as many as twenty technical sessions during these three days – with many technical sessions held parallel. A number of distinguished experts in various fields presented keynote addresses. These keynote speakers include: Prof. Kamrul Hosain from Finland, Prof. Anne Feestra from Holland, Prof. Michael Krassowitsch from Austria, Prof. Lew, Prof. Andre Spindler and Prof. Christian Stangenberger from Germany.

Many luminaries from India also presented keynote addresses. They include, Justice Swatanter Kumar (Former Chairperson, NGT), Er. Paritosh C Tyagi (Former Chairman, CPCB), Dr. Altaf Usmani (Senior Manager, Engineers India Ltd), Dr. E Madhu (Sr. Principal Scientist, CRRI), Shri Ravinder Gupta (IAS) and Dr. Ashraf Iqbal (IIT Roorkee).

Apart from keynote addresses, oral and poster presentations of technical papers were made by participants. Paper contributors, discussed important features of their technical papers and significant findings reported in them. These presentations were followed by discussions and in many cases thorough deliberations that have pointed at a number of key issues that need to be taken into account in the planning, development and execution of a smart city project.

The outcome of this conference in the form of significant suggestions and recommendations include:

A strong vision and strategy is the key to the success of smart city projects. A smart city must be designed and developed to ensure improvement in overall quality of life. This can be achieved by adopting an inclusive approach that takes due care of citizens at all the strata of society and prioritizes their various concerns.

Environment, Economy and People are three important priorities for a smart city project particularly in Indian perspectives. Environmental priorities include reduction in pollution, energy consumption and disaster management. Economic priorities encompass efficient management of public services. Whereas, priorities with regard to people include; improving the quality of life by making cities safer and providing more accessible services.

Long payback period of smart cities is another challenge. A significant initial investment may be required to develop a smart city. This can be a risky exercise for a policy maker who intends to deliver fast results with limited financial capability.

Therefore, various models of funding should be explored which may include public private partnerships or any other alternative finance mechanisms such as municipal bonds.

There is a need to establish an effective institutional framework and governance mechanism that must ensure co-ordination among various regulatory and local bodies throughout the lifetime of the smart city project. The agency, so formed, should ideally be independent from conventional civic bodies. It should, however, be accountable to a governance body.

Finally, without negotiating the importance of creating new smart cities, there is a need to gradually and systematically transform our older cities into smart cities. This transformation, however, must not compromise with their associated age old culture and values.

It is believed that this will be a significant contribution of the present International Conference in development of smart cities in India and abroad.

Ahmad Azeem
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