

# Integrated Command and Control Centre is the backbone for most of the smart city projects.

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**R**udrabhishek Enterprises (REPL), an integrated urban development & infrastructure consultant is intensively involved in SCM of Government of India, and has been providing consultancy in conceptualization, planning and implementation of multiple smart cities viz., Varanasi, Kanpur, and Moradabad in U.P, Indore and Jabalpur in M.P, Dehradun (Uttarakhand), and Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh). "One of the most crucial part of the successful implementation of any project under SCM is thorough situation analysis," says **Dhirendra Ahire, DGM – Operations, REPL.** Excerpts from the interview...

## **As a reputed infrastructure consultancy firm involved in the smart city mission of Government of India, how do you assess the progress of SCM, its impact on economy and growth potential for smart city industry?**

Smart City Mission (SCM) is an effort by the government to address core issues of stakeholders and improving the quality of life. The essence of the scheme is to understand ground conditions, verify available data and propose optimised solutions in more scientific manner and cohesive interactions with stakeholders. SCM projects have now matured and showing due improvements in the facilities/ amenities provided by the authorities. Though all projects would not bear fruits immediately but definitely helpful in attaining the sustainable urbanisation. Coming back to economic aspects; smart city projects are meant to improve quality of life for

the beneficiaries and not all the projects needs to be financial viable in implementation. On its quantitative impacts, it can be different for different cities based on its pace and bandwidth of improvements during implementation of the projects under SCM.

## **How critical is 'customisation of solution' based on the requirements of the city / its uniqueness and people & culture? What is its impact while preparing the DPR and design strategies?**

All the projects under SCM for any city deserves a customised solution which is only relevant to its requirements, ground realities and need of the stakeholders. What remains constant is only 'approach'. As project management & development consultants for different smart city projects across different parts of India, we have acquired the expertise in the correct approach and methodology, this certainly provides an edge. It is essential to give most relevant solution to even same project for different cities; one DPR cannot hold acceptable for other and so the design strategies. This customised solution compels consultants to put quantitatively same efforts on the DPR.

## **Could you give an example with any of the SC project REPL is engaged with, for example Varanasi SC project?**

To provide reference to any one or two projects from any smart city would be not-picking and we feels other projects shouldn't be seen as less viable. If we are considering Varanasi, there are several projects which has improved or once

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reaped could provide substantial benefits to the people of Varanasi. In that context and by the virtue of Varanasi Smart City, few projects are as under:

- Ghat revitalization and façade improvement of Dashashmogh Ghat, Darbhanga Ghat, Shitala Ghat, Ahilya Bai Ghat, Munshi Ghat
- Cultural up-liftment through Audio Visual – IT Solutions for rituals at Kashi Vishwanath temple
- Redevelopment of old wards in Kashi
- Redevelopments of park and parking
- Macchodari Smart School and Skill Development Centre
- KanhaUpvan (Gaushala for approx 2500-2800 Stray Cattle)

### What do you think are the major challenges while preparing the DPR, in project prioritization & phasing, preparing capital investment plan, implementation roadmap, bid process management and overall project management?

All of them have their fair bit of challenges to summarise following are the challenges faced by the consultants.

- Time constraint
- Liaisoning with the stakeholders and beneficiaries
- Continuity of the authority and its mandate
- Most important is budget allocation

### How challenging is the integration various services / stakeholders / smart utilities in a SC project and what is the critical role played by ICT / IoT and other disruptive technologies?

One of the most crucial part of the successful implementation of any project under SCM is thorough situation analysis. SAR accounts for all the ground realities and needs of the people benefitting from the projects and constraints from the stakeholders point of view. Many times these are two different entities and even do not have same view point. Effective way outs is the key in making such projects a win-win situation for all. Technology plays a pivotal role in any smart city project. Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) is the backbone for most of smart city projects. It can, not only facilitate two way communication with individual arm of the projects but also provide optimised solutions by interpretations of interdependent scenarios within the integrated projects.

### How have you been able to leverage these technologies while preparing the DPR?

In multiple ways: Smart road project, SCADA (electrical/ water) can easily be connected though



▲  
Machodari School,  
Varanasi.

ICCC with its scalability potential. The same is taken into account while preparing DPRs for relevant projects. The best example could be Varanasi, while you can find all the IOT projects as mentioned above along with cultural upliftment through audio visual – IT solutions for Ghats are interconnected with KICCC (Kashi Integrated Command Control Centre).

### Is there any study done after completing a project on the performance on 'the liveability index'. How encouraging is the scenario?

For us, most of the projects are under execution. It is a very good point to be undertaken, though an official study which can be published is not yet conducted. The feedback has always been sought through personal interactions with beneficiaries and stakeholders. The response has different flavours during the different phases of implementation, like there are inconvenience during any construction, the outcome could be great, but current phase could be cumbersome for the general public.

### How do you anticipate the challenges in processing and harnessing the data in another five years down the line?

We need to develop or improve safe cloud based storage solutions to connect all these cities and to supplement Digital India Mission.

### What is your outlook for the next 5 years and what further regulatory and policy reforms do you expect to fast track the smart city mission?

We believe SCM would cover more cities and can cover most of Tier III cities in near future. The lessons learned from the earlier projects under SCM would pave a road for more robust and comprehensive policies to implement projects in even shorter duration. There could be extension/ expansion of the projects for few cities which had benefited greatly by this mission.

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