

# INVOLVE

## Inclusivity through citizen engagement

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### Problem Statement

Citizen engagement processes employed in planning, implementation, and utilisation of urban infrastructure projects and services in the Smart Cities Mission need to be critically analysed in order to institutionalise participatory practices for creating inclusive smart cities. Urban renewal schemes and missions have employed a top-down approach for the functioning of projects, with limited space for citizens' voices which are otherwise pivotal in creating pressure on the government for delivery of services. The India Smart Cities Mission was the first of its kind to emphasise and make mandatory people's participation in a 'bottom-up', planning approach, making it a critical component in its process. Citizen engagement through virtual interactions and informal discussions forms a significant part of governance and city planning processes in today's age of ICTs, which have been used in the smart city planning processes. Through this process, there has been an attempt to involve citizens in shaping their city into an inclusive and gainful one.

### Idea

Project Involve 'Build inclusive cities by institutionalising local government and citizen partnerships'. This project proposes to create a comprehensive institutional framework towards this end, by mapping the citizen engagement modalities in the planning process in 98 Smart Cities, previous national and global models of civic participation, as well as analysing the patterns of use of the citizen friendly services in implemented projects in order to suggest solutions for improving their usage.

Project Involve views online and offline citizen engagement as complementary processes each filling in the limitation gap of the other for achieving the same end goal as part of a broader institutional platform facilitating civic participation. The Project seeks to nest an online platform in the presently existing structure of civic associations within cities, connecting them to each other and to the local government. The platform attempts to ease the channels of communication between citizens and officials by connecting location and interest based civic associations such as RWAs, MTAs, slum associations as well as civil society organisations with their city officials in real time. By providing a regular and sustained channel of communication through a platform for co-creation of solutions to urban problems, the Project hopes to take a step in the direction of institutionalising local government and citizen partnerships.

### References

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