Jaipur – World Class City?

How many of us feel that the government is serious about promoting Jaipur as a world class city? Other day, I asked several Jaipurites and everyone looked puzzled. The general feeling was that business is as usual, and the government is pursuing the agenda with political motives. The most discussed issue was the Metro, and everyone thought that it will not solve the problems of citizens. Some felt that using the metro to travel from home to office and return will not be attractive for various reasons: other tasks to be done before returning home; poor intermodal transport facilities between metro stations and destination, and so on.

Looking at the huge costs, people also felt that investments are needed more in providing water and sanitation facilities, maintaining the roads, and like. For example much time has elapsed since the monsoons, and many roads still have potholes which are traffic hazards, and cause damage to vehicles. There is no policy to attend to potholes in time and engineers are ignorant of the simple fact that a 'stitch in time saves nine'. Added to that is the confusion about which authority is responsible for which road in the city, given that both Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) and Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) are working in the city without proper coordination. And the JMC is hardly functioning due to politics…the Mayor is from Congress Party while the majority of councillors is from the BJP.

When the big Congress party *Chintan Shivir* was organised in January 2013, some roads which the VVIPs were to use were spruced up but the rest of the city was ignored. The VVIPs were invited to inaugurate some of the recent projects in the city: Transport Nagar and the *Gujjar ki thadi* underpasses. *Times of India* writes that JDA's lack of planning has bled the exchequer to the tune of crores (3rd February, 2013), because these will not serve any useful purpose. These two underpasses will not have the traffic flow because the traffic is already using alternate routes.

Planning in JDA is at a premium. The straight overhead road bridge on the Station Road Crossing is another example of bad planning and wasteful expense. It was even questioned by the Urban Development Minister, Shanti Dhariwal. The traffic flow is between M. I. Road and S. J. S. Highway, while the bridge caters to a far lesser traffic flow on the Station Road. The smart thing which has been done by the authorities is to block the crossing during the day to allow traffic to flow without any impediments between S. J. S. Highway and M. I. Road.

However, roads are not just meant for vehicular traffic; they are also meant for pedestrians. Alas, all over the city the right of pedestrians to cross the road is given the short shrift. S/he has to dodge the traffic, because many traffic lights-controlled T-junctions in the city have just overlooked the right of pedestrians to cross easily. Planners and regulatory authorities have just ignored them, as if they were dispensable 'items'. *(Please see last page)*

The trouble is that people who matter, whether authorities or us, only travel in vehicles and are thus ignorant about the plight of pedestrians. If only, we are asked to travel on our feet at such junctions, then we will appreciate their problems.

Is anyone listening?

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

www.google.com

MY CITY

Engaging Stakeholders in Dialogue to Improve Urban Services

The Asia Foundation

> *The objective of the project is to assess the status of the quality of service delivery by urban local government in the city of Jaipur*

Urban local bodies (ULBs)/ Municipalities play an important role in the planning and development of urban areas. ULBs are responsible for providing basic infrastructure and services in cities and towns. However, the performance of many of these bodies/ municipalities including Jaipur, has continued to deteriorate over time. One of the reasons for their poor performance is ineffective and insufficient participation of the citizens in the decision-making process.

Keeping these drawbacks in mind CUTS conceptualised and initiated a new project entitled "Improving Service Delivery by Urban Local Government in the City of Jaipur through Enhanced Civic Engagement" (MyCity) in partnership with The Asia Foundation. The objective is to **assess the status and quality of service delivery by urban local government in the city of Jaipur** through Citizen Report Cards (CRC) by engaging stakeholders and create a Public Services Index (PSI) of each of the selected wards based on delivery against key services to improve the quality of services by the Urban Government.

The inception meeting was organised at Jaipur, on October 31, 2012. It helped **people bringing on board and building rapport with relevant stakeholders**. More than 70 key stakeholders from urban governance including councillors, officials of JMC, civil society organisations (CSOs), media etc. actively participated.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS, emphasised on the importance of local government and said that it is the most **direct interface between citizens and government in a democracy**.

Jagaroop Singh Yadav, Chief Executive Officer, JMC expressed his concern over lack of resources and coordinated effort of all key stakeholders. He stated that we are expected to cater to various services of 50 lakh people of Jaipur city and the **list of services is huge and resources are limited**.

K K Bhatnagar, Chairperson, State Commission on Urbanisation pointed out that the mechanism for collection of various taxes by JMC is disappearing and **resources need to be collected for improving service delivery**.

Miscellany

Rope Trick

John Bogart's famous definition of journalism (when a dog bites a man, that is not news; but if a man bites a dog, it is) found a new version in Chhattisgarh's Dhamtari district. An elderly woman in Basanwahi village died of snakebite. The villagers spotted the snake and captured it. But, instead of killing it, they fastened it by a rope to the pole of a street light and informed the police and local journalists, demanding action against the "culprit".

Both were equally perplexed: the police over what action to take against the snake and the journalists over how to report the incident. Since people routinely die of snakebite in these parts, the incident clearly was not news, so journalists diligently searched for a new angle. And finally, they found the headline: "Villagers take snake hostage". There was no report, however, of what the police did.

(BS, 20.12.12)

Penalty for Dirtying Trains, Stations

If implemented properly, this could potentially become a money spinner for the Railways. The Ministry has notified that people found dirtying railway premises can be fined up to ₹500.

Except in authorised places, one could be penalised for littering railway premises or coaches by cooking, bathing, spitting, urinating, defecating, feeding animals or birds, repairing or washing vehicles, washing utensils, clothes or any other objects, or using the railway premises to store your stuff except in such facilities or conveniences specifically provided for such purposes.

Authorised vendors or hawkers will have to make necessary arrangements to keep containers or dustbins to collect litter and ensure proper disposal of contents.

The officials authorised to collect fines are station master or managers, an officer above the rank of ticket collector of the commercial department or an officer of equivalent rank of the operating department.
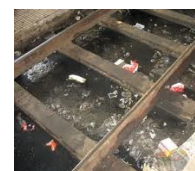
(BL, 21.12.12)

'Aadhar' registration to get easier

If you have not got your 'Aadhar card' made, please do not fret about it. The card can now be made at the *Tehsil* Headquarters without having undergone an entry to crowded camps for this purpose. Once the registration is done, an individual will be entitled to receive the card at his residence, within a period of three months from the date of registration.

According to the Ministry of Information & Technology, Rajasthan has reached second stage of the nomination process for Unique Identification Number (UID-Aadhar cards). At least one crore people have been issued Aadhar cards and 17 months hence, every individual in the state will hold an Aadhar card.

The UID will be used for making payments to beneficiaries under various government schemes, such as the rural job guarantee programme, public distribution system, social security pension schemes, LPG distribution scheme, the Chief Minister's rural BPL housing and higher education scholarship. *(BN, 18.11.12)*

Mukhbir Yojna showing results

The *'Mukhbir Yojna'* has started showing results as two persons have become eligible for reward for helping Health Department authorities conduct decoy operations at doctors' sonography clinics in the city. These centres were caught violating the PCPNDT Act through alleged involvement in sex selection activities.

However, it appears that there is a need to spread awareness about the *Mukhbir Yojna* which rewards people providing information about doctors, nursing staff and others involved in sex selection by using technology. The state government introduced the scheme for encouraging people to play their role to curb female feticide. *(ToI, 17.12.12)*

World Class University Soon!

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot clarified that the proposed World-Class University will come up only in Jaipur. Jaipur already has 17 private universities in a radius of 100 km. The city is demanding a world class university to retain students who usually migrate to Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore for higher studies.

He said that a high-power committee will be formed to explore opportunities in higher education. Gehlot also informed students that the state government is providing vocational training to one lakh urban and rural youths to increase their employability. *(ToI, 21.11.12)*

Jaipur 10th Most Populated City

Jaipur will soon join the club of top ten most populated cities of urban agglomerations in the country. With an expected population of 4.2 million by 2025, Jaipur will rank 10th in the list, a jump of four positions from 1990.

Urban agglomeration is the population of main city added with the population of any suburbs. For Jaipur, it includes suburbs *like Bassi, Sanganer, Shivdaspura, Ramgarh* and *Kanota.*

A recent report published by the UN-HABITAT on the "State of The World's Cities 2012-13" suggests that the average population increase of Jaipur urban agglomeration from 1990-95 to 2020-25 will be 26.3 percent.

In 1990, Jaipur was the 13th populated city in the country with a

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Metro Updates

JMRC to Construct Phase I(B) of Metro

The Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) has decided to take up the construction work for Metro project phase I (B), while operation and maintenance of the Jaipur Metro phase - I has been given to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). In the 13th meeting of the Board of Directors, it was decided that the JMRC will make a foray into the construction work of the Metro corridor proposed from *Badi Chaupar* to *Chandpole*, based on an engineering-procurement-construction (EPC) model. *(www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in, 28.12.12)*

Metro to Get Special Police Force

The city police has sent a proposal to the state government for deployment of a dedicated police force under a Deputy Commissioner of Police for Jaipur Metro. As per the proposal, police outposts will be set up at each Metro station and a separate one for the casting yards. The dedicated Metro security branch will not only look after the security, but also deal with crimes including robbery and theft taking place inside Metro trains and at stations. *(ToI, 23.11.12)*

Slow Progress in Metro

Taking action against the slow progress of civil construction work for Jaipur Metro tracks, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) suspended work of the contracting firm, DSC, from many of the work sites, and handed them over another firm. The work will now be done by ITD, another firm already engaged in civil construction of the Jaipur Metro. DMRC plans to complete civil construction of the metro elevated track from Mansarovar to the railway station by June 2013, the deadline of Metro completion. *(DB, 23.11.12)*

Plans to Connect Metro with Airport

The state government plans to link Jaipur Metro (phase II) with *Sanganer* Airport. Earlier, detailed project report of Phase II did not include the airport. The JMRC has decided to link *Ajmeri Gate* with *Sanganer* circle through underground metro link as against an elevated track but that could not link airport. Earlier, there were only 5 underground metro stations from *Ajmeri Gate* to *Panipech*. But due to the extension of metro link to *Sanganer* Circle, there will be 11 more underground metro stations. *(RP, 26.11.12)*

population of 1.4 million. However, the report projected that the urban sprawl of Pink City will stand at 4.2 million in 2025, making it the 10th populated city in the country.

The report also projected that Jaipur will have a population increase of 3.2 lakh between 2010-15, 3.5 lakh from 2015-2020 and 4 lakh from 2020 to 2025. *(ToI, 29.10.12)*

BRTS Corridor in six months

There is a huge challenge before the JDA to complete the Bus Rapid Transit System corridor and open it to public in the next six months. The High Court directed the JDA to complete the outer ring road project in the next two years to ease heavy vehicular traffic movement from B-2 bypass.

A sum of ₹35.6 crore has been allocated for this road widening work. The court also directed plantation of trees five times the existing ones along the road side of the bypass and that these should be taken care of by the Horticulture Department. *(RP, 29.11.12)*

Ring Road left in the lurch

As the deadlock between the state government and farmers persists over the issue of land, the city continues to suffer from traffic woes. According to the *Ring Road Sangrash Samiti,* the Ring Road

project was proposed by the state government without availability of sufficient funds and the JDA wants to grab their land.

Despite the number of accidents witnessing a rise, the fate of the ring road project that was proposed to connect highways to *Ajmer, Tonk* and *Agra* cities

and divert the heavy traffic continues to hang in the balance.

According to reports, the recovery of the expenditure to be incurred on the project will be compensated only by way of selling of the commercial land planned within the strip of 90-metre-wide corridor on the either side of the road. *(DB, 10.12.12)*

No place to walk for Pedestrians

In its haste to join the league of World Class City, Jaipur seems to have run over its pedestrian population. A recent study by Institute of Development Management found that Jaipur roads are the worst for pedestrians among Indian cities.

The study conducted in 15 major cities of the country has revealed that Jaipur's "Walkability Index" is 0.64 much lower than other places. The higher the index, the safer and better the conditions are for people on foot.

The pathetic conditions for pedestrians on city roads can be assessed from the fact that Patna, which is considered an under-developed city, offers safer road conditions for people walking on roads than Jaipur. *(DNA, 11.12.12)*

'Team Clean' Jaipur formed

A group of young volunteers have started a citizens' drive to keep the pink city clean. The group 'Team Clean Jaipur' was formed earlier in December 2012. The idea was a thought among some friends when they noticed the way garbage and dirt was strewn across the city.

The first drive was conducted on December 14, 2012 in Vaishali Nagar, where around 35 volunteers took part. Next was the massive drive in the walled city on December 23 where the number of volunteers was above 100.

Apart from their own funding, JMC has also supported them with resources in one of their drives. *(PTI, 30.12.12)*

50 Low-floor buses plying in Jaipur

Due to increase of demand of Low-floor buses in city transport, Jaipur City Transport Services Limited has decided to run low-floor buses on contractual basis. Under this, Company has promised private operators to run 50 more buses.

Company will retain the revenue from these buses and will pay the contractors. After this deed, Company will not need to directly invest in buses as the drivers will be deputed by the private contractors and conductors will be deputed by the Company.

Purchase of the buses will be done by private contractors only from the pre-decided brands. Company will provide a depot for the parking of these buses. *(RP, 14.12.12)*

JDA demolishes 12 houses

The JDA spearheaded a massive anti-encroachment drive against residential units in the city, demolishing over two dozen illegal structures in the *Amanishah Nullah* alone. In pursuance of directive issued by the High Court of Rajasthan, enforcement team came into action near Maharani Farm area.

Over four houses were razed in *Jagannath Puri*, while 12 houses were brought down in *Jagannath Puri* area. The drive will be continued. However, angry residents tried to block the team but were unsuccessful in their attempt.

They claimed that the state government's rehabilitation policy does not meet their demands and claimed that the JDA has done injustice to them. Many others claimed that they feel cheated by the housing societies which they claimed had befooled them with false promises. *(DB, 28.12.12)*