



SUSTAINABILITY IS THE NEW BUZZWORD IN THE WORLD OF REAL ESTATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE. IN THIS CONTEXT, INNO GROUP HAS LAUNCHED A NEW INITIATIVE, BUILD YOUR CITY (BYC), THAT FOCUSES ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH. HARINI SRIYAM IN CONVERSATION WITH KALYAN JAYAPRAKASH, DIRECTOR, INNO GEO CITY AND DIRECTOR, ACQUISITIONS, INNO GROUP...

**What does Build Your City (BYC) entail, and what's the central idea behind it?**

BYC is a citizens' platform that lets the common man voice his concerns regarding the city and offer solutions. For instance, we often talk about how our waterways need to be cleaned, and complain about the bad condition of roads in the city. Now, these are real issues that need to be addressed. BYC is relevant because it brings people who genuinely care about the city together and seeks to address some of the problems that we face.

**How does BYC plan to achieve its objectives? What are some of the various methods through which these voices can actually gain prominence and influence policy makers?**

We need to concentrate on generating awareness. That is the first step. And we plan to do this through street plays that focus on a number of civic issues including garbage segregation. We will also be conducting panel discussions and encouraging people in the city to be proactive and offer their ideas and suggestions on our Facebook page.

**How has the response to this initiative been, and what are your plans for BYC?**

The response has been overwhelming. In about three days of the launch, we've had

all walks of life, want. Besides, we now have a repository of ideas. The next step is to analyse them and in the future, create an interface where our group (Inno) and policy makers can discuss some of the concerns raised by citizens and work out ways to implement them.

**In what way will BYC contribute to the larger goal of building sustainable cities?**

A sustainable city cannot be built overnight; it's about conserving energy, using renewable resources, reducing carbon footprint. Where we are relevant is in the process of drawing in citizens who want to make a difference. People have offered us their suggestions. It's good to know that people in the city are concerned about these issues. The Government's decision to (partially) ban plastics in the State is also a good move.

**The initiative is also a step towards promoting public participation in the process of infrastructure development. But how can inclusivity be achieved? Do you think that projects in the city are actually participative in nature?**

I disagree with this view. While it is true that we could do with a lot more participatory development, all the major infrastructure



over 1,000 followers on Facebook. People have already been flooding the page with suggestions on how to improve the quality of life in the city. Every single person who lives in the city is a stakeholder, in this process and we want them, especially the youth, to actively participate here. The initiative offers tremendous scope for growth. We want to concentrate on the grassroots level and understand what people in the city, from

projects planned by the Government - like the Metro Rail, for instance - cater to all sections of society, particularly to those in the lower income bracket, who do not have their own vehicles. Yes, slum dwellers get displaced in the process, but there is no alternative. They need to be accommodated in quality housing units in decent neighbourhoods.

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