The online call for comments for the Smart City Challenge put forward by the Chennai Corporation is a good platform to get voices of the citizens. But what it leaves out is citizens without access to the internet as a daily way of life. It leaves out citizens who are not aware about this call for voices. It leaves out citizens who are busy toiling in the hot sun outside and not spending hours in front of computers where they can type in their responses and be heard at the click of a button.

Recognising this, Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices organized a series of consultations with excluded groups like the urban poor, sexual minorities and children to re-imagine Chennai as a Smart City. The participants include members from the above groups. Their names are: K.P. Dhanamma, R. Sujatha, N. Rajan, M.Raj Kumar, S. Neelvathi, M.Rubesh, A.Mageswari, N. Vasanth, M. Naveen, M Sheshadri, G. Monika and S. Jesudas.

Their recommendations are collated below and uploaded at their behest as they do not have individual email ids. They call for a Smart City that is inclusive of all its citizens. Probably this is means, even the way in which views are sought should be inclusive, especially of those people who tend to get left behind because of their lack of economic means, digital connect or access to information.

Recommendations from children

(Vasant, Monica, Sheshadri, Naveen, Raj Kumar, Rubesh – children from urban slums who attended the press conference)

Why are cities always built keeping in mind an able bodied working man in mind? Look at it from our perspectives too.

- Children need to be consulted in government planning the programme.
- We want the smart city with park and play grounds.
- We want Separate Park for girls
- We want the smart city with the safe road for children
- All schools in smart city must have playground and good library.
- We want the schools in smart city with pure drinking water and toilet with water facility.
• We want the smart city, which is friendly for disabled people.
• Smart city should be able to accommodate the requirement of aged people
• Ensure safety for child pedestrians by providing separate lanes as part of the road.
• Enforce strict implementation of traffic rules.
• Special buses for school children only
• No honking near school zones
• Toilets should be in accessible places even in the night, which are safe, secure and with proper lighting.
• Disabled friendly toilets
• Proper waste collection and management in slums
• Provision of health services, mobile health clinics near the slum areas with timely access to treatment and services
• Cover all the drainage and maintenance, especially during monsoons.
• School infrastructure (WASH, classrooms, electricity, flooring) for corporation schools needs to improve
• ICDS centers in cities need to improve in the areas of kitchen hygiene, proper infrastructure, WASH
• Separate toilets for girls with water and proper disposal systems
• Road safety near the schools needs to be improved
• Emergency fire alarms and extinguishers to be provided in all the corporation schools
• Child and disabled friendly stair cases, water taps
• Street lights maintenance in the slum areas
• We prefer foot over bridge as they are safer. Provide adequate lighting in existing subways.
• Chennai Corporation should restore the legitimate spaces (park and play ground) of the children illegally occupied by corporates.

Recommendations from transgender participants
Dhanamma, Sujatha (transgender participants who attended the press conference)

We want the smart city, which will accept our identity and consider us part of the society. Smartness of a city is not just in its modern facilities and infrastructure, but also how it treats its denizens. There should be no stigma and discrimination against the people with different sexual identity. We want the smart city, which understand the livelihood problems and provide opportunities for work. Chennai - Smart city should set an example to rest of India by inducting the transgender in to work force. Awareness needs to be created among the younger generation about sexual minorities.

• Enforce vehicle pollution control measures
• Free access to public toilets
• Sufficient functional public toilets monitored with regular water supply and maintenance
• Toilets should be in accessible places even in the night, which are safe, secure and with proper lighting.
• Disabled friendly toilets
• Proper ventilation and lighting in the houses at slum relocation sites
• Relocation sites should have accessible transport and livelihood opportunities
• Regulate the rental rates for housing so that Transgenders will get affordable living spaces
• Housing rights for the urban poor leading to getting government issued identity proof such as voter ID, rations card, etc. This facilitates access to all government schemes and entitlements
• Separate toilet provisions for Transgender in public / common spaces (Railway stations, bus stands,
Urban Poor voices

Rajan, Neelavathy, Mageswari (homeless persons and slum dwellers who attended the press conference)

We are the city makers. Why then are we being thrown out of the cities we build? Don't treat us as use and throw.

- Enforce strict implementation of traffic rules.
- Improve the public transport system (frequency, quality, accessibility and affordability)
- Parking on public spaces should be curtailed.
- Address the rising demand for parking spaces for two and four wheelers.
- Free access to public toilets
- Sufficient functional public toilets monitored with regular water supply and maintenance
- Toilets should be in accessible places even in the night, which are safe, secure and with proper lighting.
- Proper storm water drains and drainage system in slums
- Safe electricity connections to all including slum housing.
- Gas connections to all slum houses
- Proper ventilation and lighting in the houses at slum relocation sites
- Relocation sites should have accessible transport and livelihood opportunities
- Housing rights for the urban poor leading to getting government issued identity proof such as voter ID, rations card, etc. This facilitates access to all government schemes and entitlements
- Access to mobile networks and communication covering all the places within the city. Includes secluded and slum areas.
- Provision of health services, mobile health clinics near the slum areas with timely access to treatment and services
- Cover all the drainage and maintenance, especially during monsoons.
- Lights in subways
- Effective land use by the state. The government should be able to purchase (e.g. Kerala state can purchase land for public good) property. Chennai city corporations should purchase land from individuals and corporates in prime locations to provide infrastructure for the public.
- Sincerely explore the possibility of relocating to the near by place. Consult the community about the place of relocation; consider the connectivity and distance; availability of livelihood