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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOUSING & URBAN AFFAIRS
NIRMAN BHAWAN, NEW DELHI-110011

MESSAGE

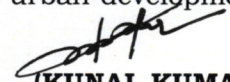
India's journey as a young, vibrant nation has been full of successes, with accomplishments in sciences, defence, arts, culture and welfare. While recent efforts to push for sustainable growth are commendable, much of this development is yet to achieve larger inclusion, especially across India's urban centres.

The idea of what constitutes a "good life" has been a point of debate for many philosophers. It has been fundamentally understood that it is **Quality of Life** that matters most to everyone, and public policy's role in achieving the same is paramount. Under **Article 21** of the **Indian Constitution**, the **Right to Life** legally guarantees every person a certain modicum of life that ensures her dignity and personal growth. But it becomes imperative to initiate social and economic changes to help achieve this idea of socially engaging life, not just in letter but in spirit. And thus, access to specific basic amenities such as Housing, Water, Sanitation become imperative in ensuring a good quality of life. The Smart Cities Mission (SCM) has taken a step towards this objective by promoting cities that provide core infrastructure, good quality of life and a clean and sustainable environment through application of 'Smart' Solutions.

The **Ease of Living Index 2020** has been a collaborative effort of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, city administrations, and other stakeholders. With **four pillars, 13 categories** and **49 indicators** across **111 cities**, the Index has been envisaged in a comprehensive manner. The Index has a **Citizen Perception Survey** component to gauge the citizenry's pulse concerning their Ease of Living. With this, the Ministry has sought to facilitate Smart Cities and other Million+ population cities in assessing their present status, which will eventually lead to better planning and management.

With its **outcome-based approach**, the Index provides several insights into urban liveability standards prevalent in the country. Most cities have emerged as good performers in this Index, adding to the confidence that we are moving in the right direction of improving Ease of Living in Indian cities. That being said, the scope of improvement in the performance of some cities is immense, and the scores also reveal regional disparities across different categories of assessment. The diversity in regional needs must thus reflect in urban development and planning efforts undertaken to improve Ease of Living.

This initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to help cities assess their ease of living vis-à-vis national and global benchmarks such as the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** promises to be a transformational endeavour. I am thankful to all stakeholders, for participating in this Index and strengthening the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism. I firmly believe that this collaborative exercise will allow conversion of challenges into opportunities, that will go a long way in strengthening the practice of urban development in the country.


(KUNAL KUMAR)

New Delhi
01st March, 2021