



# What is Smart about Smart Cities?

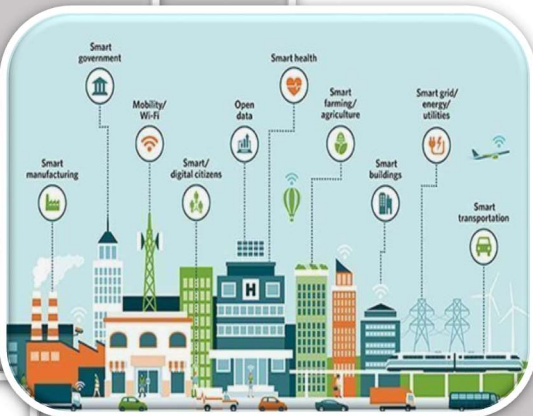


**Dr. Nadeem ul Haque**

Smart cities are increasingly popular in the global south as 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to the management of urban infrastructures systems, data and information about territories and populations. It has shaped entrepreneurial initiatives and increased competition across cities and nations in mediating urban interventions through technology, leading to top-down and universalized notions of seeing the city from above. This webinar will examine the social and cultural consequences of the smart city particular on gender, social class and spatial justice. It will argue that we need to reimagine the smart city from below as made of critically conscious citizens claiming their right to knowledge through technology. The smart city from below to cultivate right claiming citizens who use the opportunities and innovations of technology and digital space to make cities, nations and global corporations accountable and transparent. The popularity of smart cities is surging particularly in the global south as modern solutions to data and information related to the territories and population, and administration of urban framework. It has formed business dynamism and accelerated competition among cities and countries in considering urban involvements via technology, leading to top-down and global ideas of observing cities from above.



**Dr. Ayona Datta**



- Smart city is the integration of technology with a strategic approach to sustainability, cost reduction, citizen's well-being and economic development. Moreover, a smart city is actually an aggregation of utilities, supply chain, vehicles, homes, metering, health, security, equipment and so on.
- To get a more accurate concept of smart cities, let us move to the academic definitions of a smart city. The first critique in this regard is Hollands (2008), as he discussed the use of technology and that too conceived in four different ways. To initiate with the first way that is the application of technology in a wide range of urban systems. Secondly, he talked about the embedding of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the city. Moreover, he emphasized on the radical transformation of urban life through technology. Another thing he highlighted is the use of smart technologies to bring cities together to enhance innovation and smart growth.

- The next academic definition of smart cities is presented by Dirks and Keeling (2009). According to their definition, a smart city is one that deploys technology to revolutionize the core systems (inhabitants, businesses, transportation, communication, water and energy) and optimize the returns from limited resources.
- In addition to the above definitions, Townsend (2013, 2015) also gave us a new perspective of smart cities. He said smart cities are the places where information technology is combined with infrastructure and architecture, everyday objects and our own bodies to address the social, economic and environmental issues.
- However, these concepts of smart cities are not new; there is a very long and strong genealogy of the smart city that has led us to this point and going forward from this point. We used to talk about digital revolution and embedding of smart technologies within cities. One of the first ideas that technology has a relationship with urban form came from Fathy (1991), on telicity where they talked about telecommunication technologies that shape urban form.
- The next work in this regard is of Castells (1996), where he presented the idea of informational cities. In his work, he talked about cities and regions transformed under the combined impact of a restructuring of the capitalist system and technological revolution.
- Furthermore, Dutton et al. (1997) gave the idea of a wired city that what happens to a city if it gets wired not only because of communication system and physical material changes but also due to social, political and cultural changes.
- Likewise, Graham and Marvin (2001) provided an important idea of connecting cities through information and communication technology (ICT). Moreover, they particularly talked about premium network space, which is of great importance for us to understand.
- Additionally, Komninos (2002) talked about an intelligent city that software systems can be used for efficiency and innovation. This leads us to another idea regarding intelligent cities provided by Shin (2009) in which he said everything is connected to everything. According to Shin, people are also connected to the networks like mobile phones, apps, and track and trace software and so on. Moreover, he put forward this idea that a city is no longer just wired or informational but people, their thoughts and experiences are also a significant part of these networks.
- Before describing what is smart in smart cities, we would like to make it clear what is meant by the word “smart”. The word smart can be misunderstood as people sometimes think by smart people means clever people; this is not what it exactly is. We do not want people to be clever as clever people can often not do the right things. All we want is intelligent people who are critically conscious and who have the knowledge of how cities work and who have the capacity to intervene into these systems to make them more democratic and transparent. In this regard, Batty (2013) said that smartness lies in the active and democratic participation of communities in e-government through information technology.
- The argument we make regarding smart cities is that cities cannot be run with the help of big data; they need deep data that is real embeddedness and understanding of the complexities of everyday lives in communities.



**What have digital technologies done? What is the technology that is used by people? And how do people use technology rather than asking them to use technology?**

We can analyze the role of technology through two distinct aspects: gender digital divide and ownership & possession.

### **Gender Digital Divide**

Gender divide means if men and women have never been equal users of technology. Likewise, it is not just women who do not have as many phones as men have, but it is also how women use these phones is very important. If we look at statistics in India, around 71% mobile users are men and remaining are women and a mobile phone which is connected to the internet is most likely owned by a male

### **Ownership and Possession**

When we talk about ownership and possession we look at the following indicators:

- Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology skills, by type of skills.
- Proportion of the individual who own a mobile phone, by sex.
- Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology.
- Proportion of individuals using the internet.

### **How do we make this community visible in digital space?**

We can make this community visible in digital space through:

- Writing the city from its margins.
  - City as text.
  - Embodied and effective data on the city.
  - Oral history.

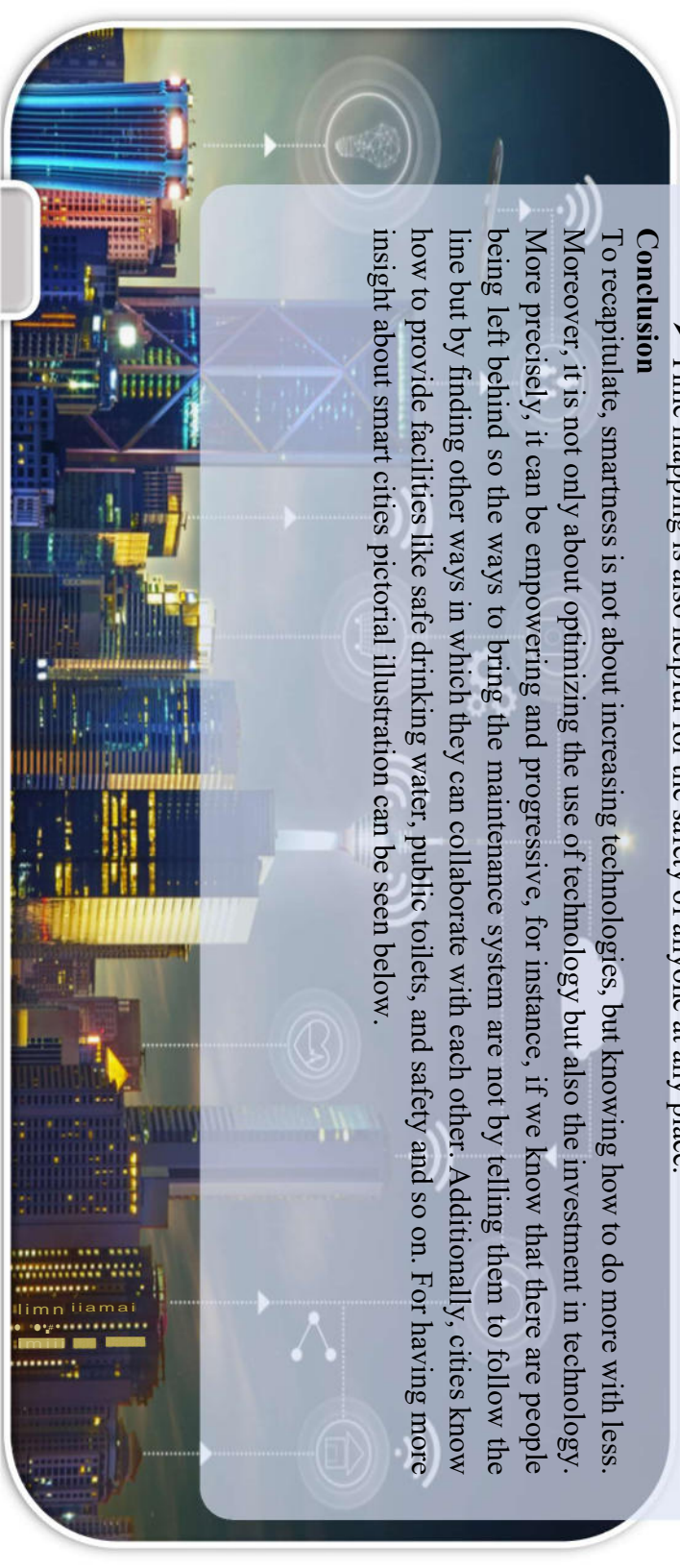
### **What technology actually does to enhance safety in a way that can be sold and bought by urban authorities?**

Safety is enhanced by:

- Focused on CCTV surveillance, command and control centers, GPS, drones, police presence.
- Ignore the temporality and social/ cultural nature of violence and surveillance over women and marginal bodies.
- Creation of an online safe space actually became a really exciting and enriching experience for all of us.
- Time mapping is also helpful for the safety of anyone at any place.

### **Conclusion**

To recapitulate, smartness is not about increasing technologies, but knowing how to do more with less. Moreover, it is not only about optimizing the use of technology but also the investment in technology. More precisely, it can be empowering and progressive, for instance, if we know that there are people being left behind so the ways to bring the maintenance system are not by telling them to follow the line but by finding other ways in which they can collaborate with each other. Additionally, cities know how to provide facilities like safe drinking water, public toilets, and safety and so on. For having more insight about smart cities pictorial illustration can be seen below.





[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGgdlS6Z1oQ&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGgdlS6Z1oQ&feature=emb_logo)

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Mixed-modal access

Clean & non-motorized option

Integrated ICT

**Smart Mobility**



**Smart People**



21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

Inclusive society

Embrace Creativity

Culturally vibrant & happy

Safe

Healthy

**Smart Living**



**Smart City**

**Smart Economy**



Entrepreneurship & innovation

Productivity

Local and global interconnectedness

Enabling supply & demand size policy

Transparency & open data

ICT & eGov

**Smart Government**



**Smart Environment**



Green buildings

Green energy

Green urban planning