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IMPACT ON BUSINESS IN VARANASI DURING THE RESTRUCTURING AS SMART CITY-AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The development of Varanasi as a Smart City is a transformative initiative that aims to enhance the city's infrastructure, governance, safety, and environmental sustainability, while preserving its rich cultural heritage. This research explores the impact of the Smart City development on businesses in Varanasi, emphasizing key areas such as improved infrastructure, safety measures, tourism, and environmental sustainability. The study finds that the introduction of better transportation facilities, including new roads, flyovers, and the ropeway project, will significantly ease logistics and attract both local and international tourists, benefiting businesses across sectors. Additionally, advancements in digitalization and e-governance will streamline business operations, boosting efficiency and reducing operational costs. The revitalization of cultural heritage sites, such as ghats and temples, will create new business opportunities in tourism, hospitality, and handicrafts, while increased foreign investment will foster economic growth. Enhanced safety measures, including centralized monitoring and improved sanitation, will further contribute to a conducive business environment. Finally, the focus on environmental sustainability, including waste management and air/water quality monitoring, will improve the city's attractiveness to eco-conscious consumers and businesses. Overall, the Smart City initiative in Varanasi offers significant opportunities for growth and innovation, positioning the city as a hub for economic development, entrepreneurship, and tourism.

This abstract provides a concise overview of your research paper, highlighting the major findings and the positive impact on businesses in Varanasi as it transitions into a Smart City.

Keywords: Smart City, Business Development, Urban Infrastructure, Tourism Growth, Cultural Heritage Revitalization, Transportation and Connectivity, Safety and Security in Smart Cities, Waste Management and Real Estate.

Introduction

The smart city phenomenon has emerged as a visionary response to the growing challenges of urbanization, aiming to create more sustainable, efficient, and liveable urban spaces through the integration of modern technology, improved infrastructure, and citizen-centric governance. In India, the Smart Cities Mission, launched by the Government of India in 2015, represents a significant policy initiative to transform select cities into models of urban development. Among these, Varanasi—known globally for its ancient spiritual heritage, cultural richness, and historical significance—has played a unique role. The transformation of Varanasi into a smart city is not just a developmental project but a multi-faceted effort that seeks to enhance the city's future potential by integrating modern urban solutions while preserving its traditional identity.

With the rapid infrastructure transformation taking place in Varanasi—ranging from improved road networks and an innovative ropeway project to improved security and governance—businesses across sectors are witnessing significant changes in operations, logistics, and customer engagement.

Furthermore, the emphasis on heritage conservation, tourism promotion and real estate development is not only boosting traditional markets such as handicrafts and Banarasi textiles, but also opening up avenues for foreign direct investment, entrepreneurship and innovation. Smart city initiatives also emphasize sanitation, waste management and environmental monitoring, all of which contribute to creating a healthier and more attractive urban environment for both consumers and enterprises.



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Through this study, we aim to provide an overview of the opportunities and challenges faced by businesses during this transitional phase, and assess the overall contribution of smart city projects to Varanasi's economic vibrancy and sustainability. In doing so, this paper provides valuable insights into how historic cities can successfully maintain a balance between tradition and change in the context of modern urban development.

1. Advanced Infrastructure and Connectivity

● Better roads and transportation facility:

Varanasi's smart city projects includes better road and transportation facility, better connectivity, multistory parking facility, better traffic management will reduce traffic congestion. Business will benefit a lot because of good transportation and road facilities. Due to this, not only big businesses and businessmen but small businesses will also benefit a lot because due to the connectivity of the road, businessmen and tourists from foreign countries will come here, which will give direct and indirect benefits to the businesses. With the construction of new flyovers and highways, it will take less time to travel on the road, due to which there will be no traffic congestion and logistics will also improve.

● New ropeway project:

The government has taken a new initiative in Varanasi by launching ropeway project. The work of ropeway project under smart city Varanasi project is going on at very faster pace in Varanasi. Ropeway stations are being built at many place. After its construction, it will make a huge contribution to the transportation facility of Varanasi. This will also attract more tourists to Varanasi which will be very beneficial for business.

2. Safety and Security Measures

● Centralized control and command System:

Central control and command centres will foster better monitoring and management of various services of Varanasi. With the installation of CCTV cameras and security system crime rates will also decrease. With better traffic management disruptions will be avoided. This will boost the working efficiency of control centres contributing to the faster response and will also lessen the accidents and other miss happenings. With better management system business disruptions dues to these uncertainties will be avoided and business work will be done smoothly.

● Digitalization and E-Governance:

Implementation of e-governance systems and better digital connectivity will streamline business processes and improve efficiency.

● Improved Safety and Security:

Enhanced surveillance and security measures will create a safer environment for businesses and customers, potentially boosting foot traffic and business activity. Installation of CCTV cameras at various places, centralized control system and proper management of traffic congestion will create a healthy working environment for people of Varanasi as well as these measure will create a safer environment for tourist which will encourage them to visit city again and again and spend more time and money.

3. Increased Tourism and Business Opportunities:

● Revitalization of Ghats and Heritage Sites:

The initiative to make Varanasi a smart city also includes the development of cultural and heritage sites and renovation of them. The major project includes renovation of Kashi Vishwanath Temple & Kaal Bhairav Temple, construction of one of the largest Meditation Center Swarved Meditation Center rennovation of Parks, Ghats including making of Namoo Ghat etc. The development of cultural and heritage attractions will open up new avenues for businesses to cater to the interest of



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tourists, such as souvenir shops, handicraft stores and cultural events. This will also greatly boost the local businesses of Varanasi.

- **Enhanced Tourist Experience:**

Smart city's project put much emphasis on revitalization of Ghats, cultural and heritage sites, roads and transportation facilities which increases the overall tourism experience. Improved transportation, sanitation and hotel facilities will encourage more and more tourist, repeated visits, longer stay hour and enhanced tourism will give boost to hotel sector as well new and existing business opportunities.

- **Promotion of Local Culture and Handicrafts:**

The smart city Varanasi project has been designed to upgrade Varanasi with today's technology. The meaning of this upgradation is not that Varanasi should leave its old heritage, culture, local handicrafts and those things for which Varanasi is known for centuries, but its main aim is to integrate the old heritage business and culture of Varanasi with modern technology so that the old culture and some famous things like Banarasi saree, silk woven clothes, handicrafts and small and big businesses get a new identity and attract more and more tourists and foreign companies should also come here and invest through FDI.

- **Improved Quality of Life:**

Smart city mission includes so many renovation as well as construction projects. This development of Varanasi will attract more and more tourist contributing to the increased demand for accommodation and other things. This will attract foreign investors to invest through FDI which will foster the growth of business sector and will create new employment opportunities for the people of Varanasi. With increased tourism and better employment opportunities standard of living of people in Varanasi will also increase at faster rate.

- **Greater Investment Opportunities:**

A smart city environment with improved infrastructure, governance, and safety will make Varanasi more appealing to investors, potentially leading to new businesses and economic growth.

- **Real Estate Development:**

The development of Varanasi as smart city is expected to boost the real estate market. It will increase the demand of residential and commercial real estate specifically in the area having improved infrastructure better road and transportation facility. Businesses and retail chains are capitalizing on Varanasi's growing popularity, leading to increased development of commercial spaces, shopping complexes, and office buildings. Overall, the Smart City development is turning Varanasi into a more attractive destination for real estate investment, with efforts being made to attract investments from across the country and abroad leading to increased demand and appreciation in value of both residential and commercial properties.

- **Innovation and Entrepreneurship:**

The focus on technology and digital solutions in a smart city can foster an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship, creating new business opportunities in the tech sector and beyond.

- **Employment Opportunity:**

Varanasi Smart City Mission includes the development of various sectors including tourism, hotel sector, road and transportation facility, real estate and technology is expected to create new employment opportunity across different skills.

4. Environmental Sustainability:

- **Improved sanitation and waste management :**

If there is good facility of cleanliness and garbage management then business will benefit a lot. People will be able to work under proper system, There will be a good system of cleaning the drains, due to proper sewage management, there will be no consumption of water, water will not accumulate at various places, due to which people will not fall ill and work



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will also be done properly and if cleanliness is good then tourists will also be attracted, which will greatly benefit the business. Smart City Mission also aims to provide adequate water and electricity supply, sanitation and waste management. <https://varanasismartcity.gov.in/about/smartcity-mission>

- **Waste Management:**

Efficient waste management systems will improve the city's cleanliness and hygiene, creating a more pleasant environment for businesses and customers.

- **Air and Water Quality Monitoring:**

Real-time monitoring of air and water quality will help businesses implement sustainable practices and contribute to a healthier environment.

- **Smart City Solutions:**

Businesses can develop and offer smart city solutions, such as traffic management systems, waste management technologies, and energy-efficient solutions.

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