

## Effective Environmental Planning Management (EPM) as a Panacea to Sustainable Urban Development

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### Abstract

The rapid rate of urban growth in most developing countries of the world in recent times is alarming. Mass movement of people from rural areas to the urban centres, the consequence of the uncontrolled rapid urbanization resulting to many un conforming environmental challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, land, water and air pollution, poor environmental sanitation, poor and inadequate housing, urban degradation, sprawl and slums, urban violence, crime, robbery and prostitution as well as many other social vices that make the cities unsustainable. The resultant effects of all these are abysmal failure in the management of cities on the part of the governing authorities and other relevant stakeholders as well as unconducive and unwholesome condition of living of the people. This paper attempts to examine holistically the issue of environmental planning management (EPM) process development and management concept with a view for dynamic and interactive approach for various stakeholders as partners in achieving sustainable cities of our dream. The areas of discussion include conceptual and contextual issues, sustainable cities concept, good urban governance including literature review. The paper goes further to examine opportunities and challenges of built environment generally, the nature and context of environmental problems in particular, the role and duties of environmental planning and management (EPM) process in sustainable urban development. The paper further reviewed briefly the various levels of institutionalization of EPM process with a typical case study of sustainable Ibadan project (SIP). The paper concludes with a list of recommendations to ensure effective and lasting solutions to cities problems through initiation of EPM process achievable in a sustainable manner.

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**Keywords:** *Built environment, Environmental Planning, Sustainable Cities, Sustainable development, Urbanization*

### **Background to the Study**

The world is urbanizing at an astonishing pace, Africa is not excluded. About 50 percent of the world's six billion people now live in towns and cities. By year 2025, it is being predicted that about four billion people in developing countries will be living in urban areas. The dynamics of urbanization globally and particularly in developing countries, manifesting in urban population explosion and rapid area expansion of cities is one major challenge confronting urban administration.

Urbanization can simply be defined as a process whereby increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and their suburbs. UN (1970) viewed urbanization as one of the key indicators for radical social, physical and economic transformation that a society is passing through due to development. Olatubara (2004) also defined urbanization as a process whereby comparatively increasing number of people lives in urban areas as against rural areas. However Peter (2007) observes urbanization as a basic precondition for development which of itself does not guarantee development. Finally, UNDP (1996) posited urbanization to mean the real strength behind economic growth and development of many cities of the world. According to the UN reports on the world urban growth about 29.1 percent of the world population of 2.54 billion was urbanized in 1950, and 48.6 percent of the population of 6.51 billion lived in urban areas in 2005 (Waheed 2009). By implication, the population growth of cities in developing countries is unprecedentedly alarming, for instance, UN-Habitat (2008) estimates that the urban population in developing countries will rise from 1.9 billion in 2000 to more than 3.9 billion in 2030, equivalent to 70 million population per annum. The process in developing countries is occurring more rapidly against a background to higher population growth, lower income, and fewer opportunities for international migration.

Supporting this, Olatubara (2007) posited that the problem of urbanization in developing countries, especially Nigeria, is not necessarily the level but that of the rate. For example while, the level of urbanization in Nigeria is put at 36 percent, that of Columbia, Mexico and South Korea is 71, 74 and 79 percent respectively (FGN, 1997) population Reference Bureau, 2001 and Olatubara, 2007). However, the rate of urbanization in Lagos is 15 percent per annum compared to that of Bogota, South Korea and Mexico City is put at 5.4, 7.8 and 5.4 percent respectively.

However, to some school of thought, sustainable development has been seen as a political process while others view it from a moral perspective.

### **The Concept of Good Urban Governance**

Governance is a system of values, policies and institution by which a society manages its economics, political and social affairs through interaction within and amongst the state, civil society and private sector (Duivedi, 2002, 37). Good governance in cities has in recent times concerned itself with matters regard urban development, looking at it's policy adequacies, challenges and possible solution aimed at achieving a sustainable objectives. The Global Campaign on urban Governance was launched in 1999 by UN-Habitat to support the implementation of the Habitat Agenda goal of sustainable human settlement development in an urbanizing world. As vetted by UN-Habitat (2001a, 2002b), the campaign comprises the

mechanisms and traditions through which citizens and groups articulate and galvanize their interests, meet their obligations, mediate their differences and exercise their rights.

The concept of governance is controversial and complex; hence individuals and groups define 'good governance' based on their experience and interests. The theme of the campaign for Good urban Governance is 'inclusive city' since inclusive decision making is the nerve centre of good governance. For instance, in the Good urban Governance concept, a set of norms are proposed. According to pieterse (200), UN-Habitat (2000) and Rakodi (1999), the goals include but not limited to the following:- security of individuals and their living environment, access to basic necessities of life, civic engagement and citizenship to promote active contribution of urban citizens to the common goods, equity of access to decision – making processes, promoting local economic development, subsidiary of authority and resources at the lowest appropriate levels, efficiency in the delivery of public services, sustainability in all dimensions of urban development, equity to basic necessities of urban life and transparency and accountability of decision – makers and all stakeholders.

### **Challenges of Built – Environment**

Built environment does not enjoy a common definition among scholars. This notwithstanding, it is an environment that is built, a brown environment as against the forested parts of the city or underdeveloped peri- urban areas. A built environment is an area that is created by people. It includes schools, transport, stations, homes, factories, towns, shops among others (CDC, 2011). The urban environment, like other urban centres, is a product of its urbanization. Since determination of urbanization process which include population growth, migration, economic and industrial growth among others; their resultant effects are continued phenomena. The implication is that urban environment keeps evolving and developing in one way ,or the other in response to the challenges posed on it by urbanization. These myriads of challenges are attributed to either natural hazards or human daily activities. As per natural hazards, the sustainability negativities, regional in equalities become exacerbated when natural hazards probability is factored into it. Natural hazards due to climate change effects have increased in intensity and frequency, most of which occur in developing countries (UN, 2011b, Mutizwa – Mangiza, 2012). Storms, flood, rise in sea level among others are fast becoming regular features of cities (World Bank, 2009). Endemic morbidity and mortality becomes prevalent, sustainability becomes harder to achieve with hazards and disasters. For instance, the natural hazards born reduction of the Anicia glaciers and the melting retreats of the Himalayan glaciers have disrupted the regular production of hydroelectric plants thereby reducing water supply in many cities (World Bank, 2010a). The integrated effects of these challenges cities to serve as the main pillars for a sustainably world.

On the human angle is the environmental degradation resulting from the dynamic interplay of socio, economic, institutional and technological activities. Environmental changes may be induced by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. The various underlying causes of environmental degradation include but not limited to the following: Social factors include population impacts, expansion of cities, poverty and impoverishment of the poor due to direct reliance on natural assets.

Institutional factors may be due to lack of trained personnel and comprehensive data base for projects, ineffective co-ordination amongst various ministries, institutions regarding integration of environmental concerns at the planning stage of project, poor staffing in Government institutions, weakness in enforcement capabilities of environmental institution both at the centre and state level as well as fragmented policies across several government agencies with differing policy mandates. Economic factors challenges may result from transport activities, economic Harbour projects, hazardous waste products as well as manufacturing technology.

Agricultural factors is of severe challenge to the built environment. The various underlying cause of environmental degradation within the framework of agricultural activities includes leaching from extensive use of pesticide and fertilizers, direct impacts of agricultural development on the environment due to various farming activities contributing and resulting in land salination, loss of soil nutrients and soil erosion, intensive irrigation resulting to land degradation, water logging, alkalization and salination, shifting cultivation form of farming as well as over exploitation of land and water resources including use of pesticides and fertilizers.

### **Prospects and problems of Built Environment**

There is no uniformly acceptable definition of a city. Different countries and schools of thoughts use one or a combination of characteristic such as size, area, population, administrative, density, economic and urban characteristics (like paved streets, water supply systems, spatial form, wealth, electric lighting, economy, availability of local resources, structure and ecological impact (UN, 2012; Dbbs et al, 2011b; cohen, 2006; satterthwait, 2010).

Cities bring together many different cultures, ethnic groups, languages, colours, race and religions. Traditionally, each group had its quarter or defined territory. Increasingly, all kinds of people live next door to each other throughout metropolitan regions. This multicultural reality creates risk and complexities but it also provides great opportunities as well as challenging experience.

A marked characteristics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cities is the high population agglomeration which has become a hallmark of transformation in cities economic base and social structure; by concentrating investments and resources; cities heighten the possibilities for economic development, lowering unit costs on the provision of public services such as water, sanitation, education, healthcare, electricity, emergency services and public recreational areas (polese, 2009; satterthwaite, 2010).

Prospect wise, the significant growth of the built environment or cities in recent decade is owing to the functions they perform. Basically, people migrate from rural areas to urban centres in attempts to seek for better employment and higher income. Cities are believed to be centres where wealth are Business which creates jobs and human capital base are usually sited in the cities. The word 'city' according to Queszon (2004) refers to the seat of the national government; aesthetically the show piece of a nation, where multitude of people visit as epitome of culture and economic nerve centre of the country; socially, cities are dignified concentration of human life, aspirations, endeavors and achievements; and economically,

they are productive, self contained community. Consequently, cities are seen as habitats of hope and better life. According to Agbola and Sobanjo (2004), these are the main reasons why cities are usually overcrowded as hotbeds of opportunities, centres of trade and commerce, administrative capitals, melting points of various people from various tribes, modern infrastructural facilities such as light portable water, good roads, telecommunication, bigger markets, health facilities, educational institutions, employment and variety of entertainment centres. Invariable the pulls of attraction of migrants to the urban centres are due to their conviction for possible better living conditions; the 'perceived goodies' that abound in the cities.

Contrastingly however, a larger percentage of migrants to the cities do not really know or seem not to know the extreme reality of life in the urban centres thereby entrapped in the gallows of employment and abject poverty. Consequently, some are rendered jobless, homeless and sleep under the bridges, open space, parks and market stalls. This is because cities suffer acute housing shortage (Salau, 2009). Agbola (2005) presented the paradox of cities themselves as being noted for 'dramatic crises' ranging from unemployment, environmental degradation, urban infrastructural deficiencies, lack of access to key resources and violence. Similarly, Onibokun (2000) as quoted by Waheed (2009) posited that 'the city centres are gradually and systematically decaying without any tangible programme of rehabilitation. The new urban peripheries emerged in an unplanned manner and without the necessary infrastructures. Overcrowding, complex land use, marginal employment and inadequate social infrastructure characterized the urban environment in many of the urban centres'.

In Nigeria, the cities have grown beyond the control and management capacity of the professionals in the built environment, policy makers and urban scholars. Decent living has eluded the urban majority; the basic infrastructural services are becoming luxuries in many neighbourhoods' crime, delinquencies and high rate of unemployment have combined with endemic poverty to create the prevalence of the culture of general apathy and disillusionment in most of our urban cities. The scenario has rendered Nigeria built environment unsustainable. Onibokun (2006) warned that whether we like it or not, cities will continue to grow, the challenge will continue to become more complex and development will continue to take place; but the nature of the development and the resultant effects (positive or negative) will be a function of the quality of the management strategy adopted.

These factors usually proceed over long periods of time, hence the requirement for environmental management procedures that would keep subsequent developments orderly and properly through a sustained policy implementation process. It thus gives prescription in terms of policy focus, which are meant to provide long-term guidance for effective and orderly implementation. Such prescriptions serve to ensure that urban environmental planning and management matters proceed in a manner devoid of unconformity and chaos.

### **Environmental Challenges in Nigerian Cities- Nature and Context**

After the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UCCED) at the Rio Conference where core environmental and sustainable issues were identified and agreed upon; Nigeria as a country has made significant attempts in addressing most environmental problems; through some are still visible many years after UNICED's treaty.

Hagget (1986) defines environment as the sum total of the conditions that surround a person at any given point. All human activities have impact on the environment. According to Jain et al (1977) the consequences otherwise known as impacts have been explained as 'any change, positive or negative from desirability point of view. The resultant effects of human activities on urban land use in Nigeria are numerous and complex. Firstly, the mounting influx of people into the cities has left a wide gap between housing stock and housing demand resulting in overcrowding and attendant negative consequence. Over population of cities and pressure on urban infrastructure and social amenities resulting in poor maintenance, roads are in dismal state of despair; inadequate access to portable water, escalated traffic congestions, epileptic power leading to closure of small and medium scale industries resulting in capital flight to neighboring countries. Another area of environmental challenges is inadequate collection of waste; both solid, liquid and gaseous which by extension includes but not limited to industrial wastes, faces, papers, nylons, domestic refuse, livestock waste ect. Accumulation of solid waste in Nigerian cities has become a major concern and worrisome.

The waste management laxity is a by – products of inadequate personnel, poor financing in efficient institutional framework, poor technological knowledge as well as ineffective planning. Additionally, population has constituted in no small measure to the nuisances in the built – environment.

According to Olokesusi (1997), pollution can be simply defined as the presence in the environment in such quality and duration and under such condition that may cause discomfort to or endanger the safety and welfare of people or that may cause injury or damage to plant and animal life or property or that interfere with the normal enjoyment of life or use of property or conduct of business.

The challenges of industrial populations are enormous. According to UNCSD (1997), Nigeria has about 5,000 registered industrial facilities and some 10,000 small scale industries operating illegally within residential premises. These are most noticeable in places like Kano, Enugu, Lagos, Portal court, Kaduna. Where pollutions due to coloured, hot and heavy metal – laden effluents most especially from the textile, paints, chemicals and tannery queried industries are discharged directly into open drain and channels thereby constituting dangers to water uses and aquatic lives.

Similarly, flooding is another challenge with devastating effect on the built – environment. Flooding manifests in three main forms; Urban flooding, Coastal flooding and river flooding are numerous, but prominent among these are the destruction of water shed, reduction in the level of water infiltration, rapid population growth resulting in massive encroachment on river banks, collapse of dams as well as dumping of solid waste in river channels. A living witness was the Ogunpa flood disaster of August 1980 in the ancient city of Ibadan. The flooding was caused by blockage of river channels and drains by solid waste which unfortunately resulted in the loss of 300 lives and properties worth over #1.5 Million (Mabogunje, 1988). Other associated urban environmental challenges resulting from uncontrolled urbanization include robbery, incessant urban violence, prostitution, poverty and other uncomfortable attributes that makes the built environment unsustainable.

### **Sustainable Urban Deployment – The Role of Environmental Management (EPM) Process**

Wahab (1998) defined Environmental planning (EPM) process as a bottom – up participatory, interactive and collaborative approach to urban planning and management whereby public technocrats work in concert with the organized private sector (OPS), the voluntary Non-governmental organizations to jointly address environmental and socio economic issues affecting people and their environment. The EPM process is a holistic, dynamic, flexible and interactive approach to sustainable urban planning and management capable of addressing all environmental challenges in most built – environment.

Wahab (1996) inter earlier, observed that in most developing countries, especially in Nigerian urban areas citizens look to governments to provide all their needs, which are often met in form of physical projects, usually provided based on 'top – bottom' approach without the inputs of local beneficiaries. This approach makes management of the technocrats as well as seeing the government as the sole custodian of all wisdom and possessing all the resources and know – how for development thereby resulting in a by small failure. Buttressing this, Awogbade and Kolawole (1980) observed that, by implication most communities often see government projects as 'theirs' (meaning – belonging to government) as opposed to 'ours' (i.e belonging to host communities). The unfortunate scenario is that where government project fails, those formulated and executed by grass root – local communities often survive and thrive.

Therefore, Environmental planning and management (EPM) process alleviates environmental problems confronting urban area as well as strengthening the local capacity for better planning and management. It is a continuing, dynamically evolving and adaptive process that can be initiated and built – up within any metropolitan administration (UNEP/UNCHS,1987) EPM rejects the traditional methods of planning and project implementation.

Agbola (2006) described EMPs as a largely consensus – building exercise, which leads at the end of the day to development of a plan. Similarly Bloxom (1996) noted that master plan would seem to have lost touch with the people and their needs. In essence, EPM provides avenue for inclusion of the poor in low- income earners and even the poor in fashioning out solution to problems that concern them.

For example, in the provision of urban security, inclusion and integration of local indigenous communities will practically better results in tacking criminals rather than development and mobilization of federal troops. The local people, apart from knowing themselves, they are also very familiar to the terrain in their respective zones.

### **Institutionalization of Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) process**

Institutionalization of EPM process is the integration of the entire process into the daily routine of everyday activities of the public, private and popular sector institutions. The EPM process is said to be institutionalized when 'it is widely accepted and routinely applied to decision making in environmental and urban management' (UNCHS/UNEP).

Instituting an EPM involves some basic steps, these, according to Passion (1994) include identifying and describing urban environmental issues; mobilizing and bringing together all those concerned to elaborate feasible response to issues, agreeing on practical course of actions, and implementing those actions through co-ordinated intervention.

In short, the four elements of EPM process include the following:-

- (1) Information management and expertise
- (2) Decision – making process
- (3) Project / Programme implementation
- (4) Resource Mobilization and utilization

### **Level of Institutionalization of EPM Process**

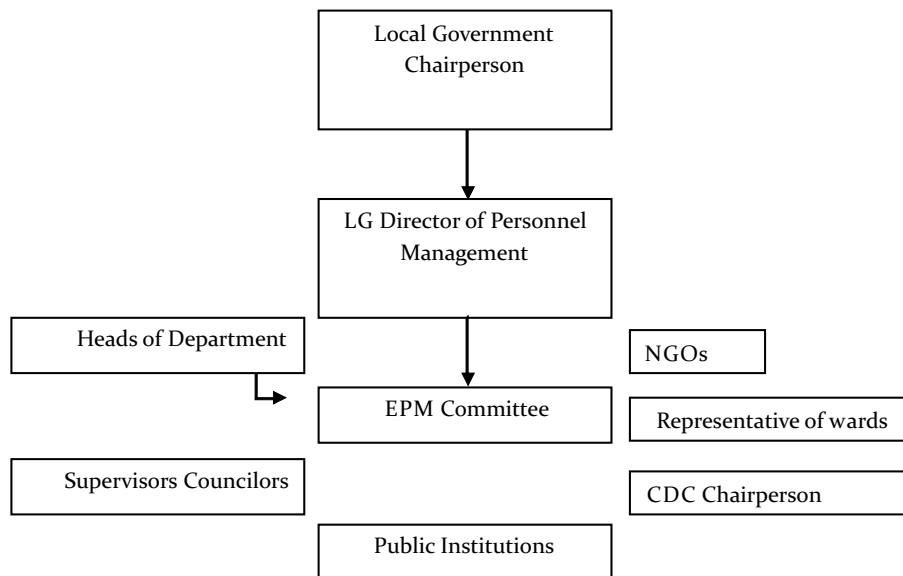
According to Wahab (2006) EPM process has four levels of institutionalization and these are:

**The public institutions** – where government is seen as the ultimate guiding force in Urban planning and Management. In Nigeria, the Federal, State and Local Governments, being constituted authorities with necessary legal, human, financial and material resources, are expected to be in the forefront in the whole process of institutionalizing the EPM process through their various ministries, departments, or units of any government should adopt and apply the EPM process in every one of its activates: project/ programme initiation, assessment, priotisation, planning, implementation and management. In doing this, Working Group (WP) will be set up that will consist of representatives from each of the units.

- a. **Community Level:** At the community level, since, most environmental problems occur here, every member of the community must be encouraged and be involved to participate in fashioning out the community – based solution to matters affecting their neighbourhood. As a result, every community members must support the creation of genuine alliance between community members, local, state, and federal level government; other public agencies, the private sector voluntary organisation and the international support agencies based on partnership, accountability, transparency, accountability, transparency, collaboration, participation trust and inclusion (Wahab, 1998).
- b. **Local Governments Level:** Within the framework of this level of government, all the local governments in the state will be involved in setting up of relevant Local government EPM boards, Working Group (WP), etc; that will promote joint capacity – building as well as collaborative projects/ programmes based on EPM process.
- c. **State Government Level:** Within the framework of the State Government Level, there is the formation or setting up of Committees, Boards, Project Working Group, etc., that will work together in the EPM process.



**Fig.2: Proposed Structure for Local Government EPM Committee**



**Source:** Wahab (2006).

**Sustainable Ibadan Project (SIP):- As case study of EMP Process Application**

The name, 'Ibadan' is a corruption of Eba – Odan which literally means 'near the grassland' to reflect its location on the fringe of the forest zone near the savanna. The city and many of its surrounding villages existed long before the imposition of British colonialism (C.O Ikporuko, 1994).

Going by the historical records in the outline History of Ibadan by Akinyele, Ibadan was founded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century at a time when the title of Kaakanfo had not been introduced Alaafin Ajagbo who reigned between (1620-1660) created the title of Aare Ona- Kakanfo in 1640 when he was re – organizing the Yoruba Army. Ibadan had metamorphosed through Yoruba wars and was an autonomous State before the establishment of British administration – (pax Britannica' in 1893).

Ibadan is the largest indigenous city in the tropical Africa (South of Sahara) with a population of well over three million inhabitants. The city situated at an average height of 200meters' above sea level, is drained by the four river basins and encompassed by secondary rainforest as well as savannah.

Although, Ibadan as we know it today started as a war camp, it grew so rapidly within a period of few years. The growth of Ibadan is another classical example of urban sprawl in Nigeria. Spatially, Ibadan sprawls over a radius of 15km, with majority of the city, including the inner core unplanned. The only planned area of the city is a mere juxtaposition of small developments that historically began with colonial enclaves.

The sustainable city programme (SCP) was initiated and launched by the UN-Habitat (UNCHS) in the early 1990s. It was to serve as strategy for capacity building in urban management; its principles were based on planning concept of environmental planning and management.

Ibadan was one of the twelve cities all over the world initially selected as demonstration project for the sustainable city programme (SCP), and the design was to provide useful learning experience for sustainable growth and development of other cities in Nigeria.

The main function of SIP at inception in 1995 was to carry out wider city consultation (WCC) whereby all stakeholders from all sectors come to discuss issue relating to the development of Ibadan city. At the end of these discussion workshops, three main urban issues were identified as priorities for immediate attention and action. These critical issues are challenges of adequate water supply, institutional framework for EMP process and effective waste management system.

The ultimate future urban challenges to be addressed will include among others, urban poverty, property identification, flood and drainage control, street trading, watershed protection environmental pollution, development of a comprehensive metropolitan plan, education, neighbourhood upgrading, transportation and establishment of environmental information system.

Thirdly, a number of working group (WGs) were set up to examine critically and proffer solutions to the issues identified in the city consultation (CC). A working group maybe made up of cross – section of relevant stakeholders with membership cutting a cross technical, professional and managerial qualifications, most especially those directly affected by the environmental issue in particular, such stakeholders include transport drivers, entrepreneur, householders, government officials, businessmen and women as well as market traders. The working groups (WGs) can freely discuss the various environmental challenges facing them and jointly proffer practical solution that directly and mutually developed internally and devoid of technocrats nor external influence. The working groups (WGs) are able to willingly and fully sacrifice or donate their time, talent, money, energy and other God given resource within their means to enhance the desired objectives solutions and betterment of their communal welfare thereby overcoming the environmental challenges facing them.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Urbanization presents one of the most pressing and complex challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (world Bank, 2004). With more than half (50% of the world's population currently living in urban areas, which is only 2.8% of the land on earth ( Mc Granaham and Marcotullio, 2005), the environmental localized pressure can only be better imagined. Places and spaces are continually been mutilated, recreated, degenerated and exploited for plural purposes, consequently scholars, researches and policy makers now recognize that urbanization is the only powerful force for economic growth and poverty reduction. Overcoming the identified challenges can become cities 'failures turned inside – out'; turning them into opportunities for achieving sustainability, investment in infrastructures, agriculture, social development, environmental planning management among others thereby becoming a strategic opportunity for integrated urban planning for the purpose of sustainability.

On this note, Environmental planning management, an alternative to top- bottom approach in solving cities problems in the contemporary world. Is achievable by effective engagement of relevant stakeholders in consultation, interaction, cooperation, collaboration and participation in the efforts to improving and developing the built environment.

Ibadan, having been one of the twelve elected cities of the world chosen as pilot survey in the sustainable city Project (SCP) as strategy for capacity building in the management of built environment. It is envisaged that the ultimate goal and objectives will soon be transferred and resultant effects reaching to other states and local government in the country. This programme will enhance development of demonstration projects in other areas of socio, economic, physical, infrastructural services aimed at improving the life of people and effective environmental planning process for sustainable urban development.

The following recommendation must be strictly enforced for the purpose of effective and lasting solution to cities problems through initiation of EPM Process:-

1. There must be continuity in the implementation of SCP, irrespective of government in power or political parties
2. Adequate and timely provision of logistic support like qualified staff, housing, communication equipments, office space, transportation, operational budgets among others,
3. All inclusiveness of all relevant stake holders in the identification and implementation of urban development alternatives.
4. Participatory approach to project design and implementation – project are more successful, if they are participatory in design and implementation Participatory approaches offer three main advantages.
5. They give planners a better understanding of local values, knowledge and experience
6. They can help resolve conflicts over resource use.
7. They win community backing for project objectives and community help with local implementation
8. Fostering of greater mass; participation through working groups (WG) in decision Making policy formulation, execution and monitoring, thus develops the confidence of the people in themselves, in their societies and in their government. This, in turn, would lead to the development of a greater service of commitment to development and readiness to sacrifice for it.

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