

LALBAGH IN SEPIA: The beautiful garden of Lalbagh was once used by the British army as camping space, says S K Aruni, deputy director of the Indian Council of Historical Research. On March 4, 1791, the British attacked Bangalore, which was then ruled by Tipu Sultan. The British army headed by Lord Cornwallis fought with Tipu's soldiers near today's Corporation circle, and their army had its camp near Lalbagh, says Aruni. "Lalbagh was not a flower garden then, but it was called Mantapa hill, which had a tower built by the city chieftain Kempegowda.

AREA OF COMPARISON OF VARIOUS CIVIC BODIES	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai	Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation	Corporation of Chennai	Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike
	480 area in sqkm	650 area in sqkm	462 area in sqkm	800 area in sqkm

OUR CITY OUR MONEY

DIFFERENT STROKES



Don't dismiss it as rubbish

Garden City to Garbage City

Rs 11 crore: The amount Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike spends every day to clean up the city. And it spends Rs 330 crore a month. The city generates approximately 4,500 tonnes in a single day. About 30% of the garbage produced in Bangalore is vegetable waste. Another 23% is other organic waste, including food. Of the 4,500 tonnes, 54% is generated in households, 20% in markets and function halls, 17% in commercial establishments and institutions. Only 10% of the garbage is segregated at source. BBMP is not the only one to blame though — people have also contributed to the mounds of garbage dumps on the streets.

Palike dumps Duct cell

It was in 2005 that a Public Interest Litigation was filed by Subba Reddy, president, Bangalore Advocates Association, about the sad state of roads in the city. The high court formed an experts' committee, headed by former bureaucrat Captain S Raja Rao, to give recommendations. One of the recommendations was to have a technical advisory committee of experts to guide BBMP in engineering works and a Duct cell was formed accordingly. Any stake holder was supposed to obtain permission from the Duct cell while carrying on road cutting in the city. This cell was constituted to have some control over digging of roads. However, in December 2009, BBMP decided to do away with the cell.



Relief in offing for London's busy roads

Pay rent, dig up road

What is the solution to indiscriminate road digging? London authorities have hit upon a solution. To charge utility companies for digging up roads. This would give the agencies an incentive to complete works quickly. More than 100 different utility companies regularly dig up London's streets. 38% of traffic delays in the capital are caused by roadworks at an estimated cost of nearly £1 billion of economic disruption every year. With the proposal getting the green signal, companies will be charged up to £2,500 a day to dig up the busiest roads at peak times. BBMP, please take note

VIEW FROM THE TOP

BBMP has been preparing budgets in a frivolous manner, not understanding citizens' needs. Works taken up will sometimes run across many places in the city, which might or might not affect residents of those places.

But when ward works are taken up, citizens who will know more about the problems in their localities would give better ideas to the ward engineers and corporators of what is to be done. BBMP should start public hearings, three to four months before the budget, to assess the needs of the citizens. Engineers and corporators can then work on the cost estimates and let the residents know which works would be taken up during the next fiscal year."

- Samuel Paul | FOUNDER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTRE

We don't have a practice of citizens' budget in the country. The central government doesn't ask states while framing Union budget, state governments don't seek needs of districts while making state budgets; similarly BBMP does not ask its citizens what they need in their city budget. This is a sheer lack of political will. A budget has two components—routine works determined by the administrative officers and developmental works which should emerge from the citizens' needs. There should be a discussion between the corporators, engineers, citizens and experts on infrastructure to downsize the lists as per the needs and feasibility of the municipal corporation to fulfill those needs."

- RS Deshpande | DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

BBMP is in the process of presenting its annual budget for 2012-13 shortly. Hope it won't be like the previous years when they presented a hugely unrealistic budget of more than Rs.9,000 crore but achieving hardly 40% of their targets. The budget should concentrate not merely on grand infrastructure projects but should devote more funds for constructing hawking zones in every ward, changing the tender specifications for SWM to include collection of dry and wet waste from all households etc. Enough provision should be made to complete the delayed and ongoing projects. On the revenue mobilisation front, they have to bring all the 22 lakh properties under the tax net. Finally, proper annual auditing - both financial and quality - must be made compulsory."

- NS Mukunda | PRESIDENT, CITIZENS' ACTION FORUM

What Bangalore needs is efficient and effective framework of governance. A number of institutions are involved in governing the city. What they need to do is join hands and solve the city's civic problems. But agencies seem only to spread chaos.

Please send your suggestions and comments to speakoutbangalore@timesgroup.com with "Times Civic Audit" in the subject

Govt Should Ensure That The Civic Body Has More Powers, Funds And Staff To Deliver Quality Service

BBMP needs a booster dose

Srikanth Viswanathan

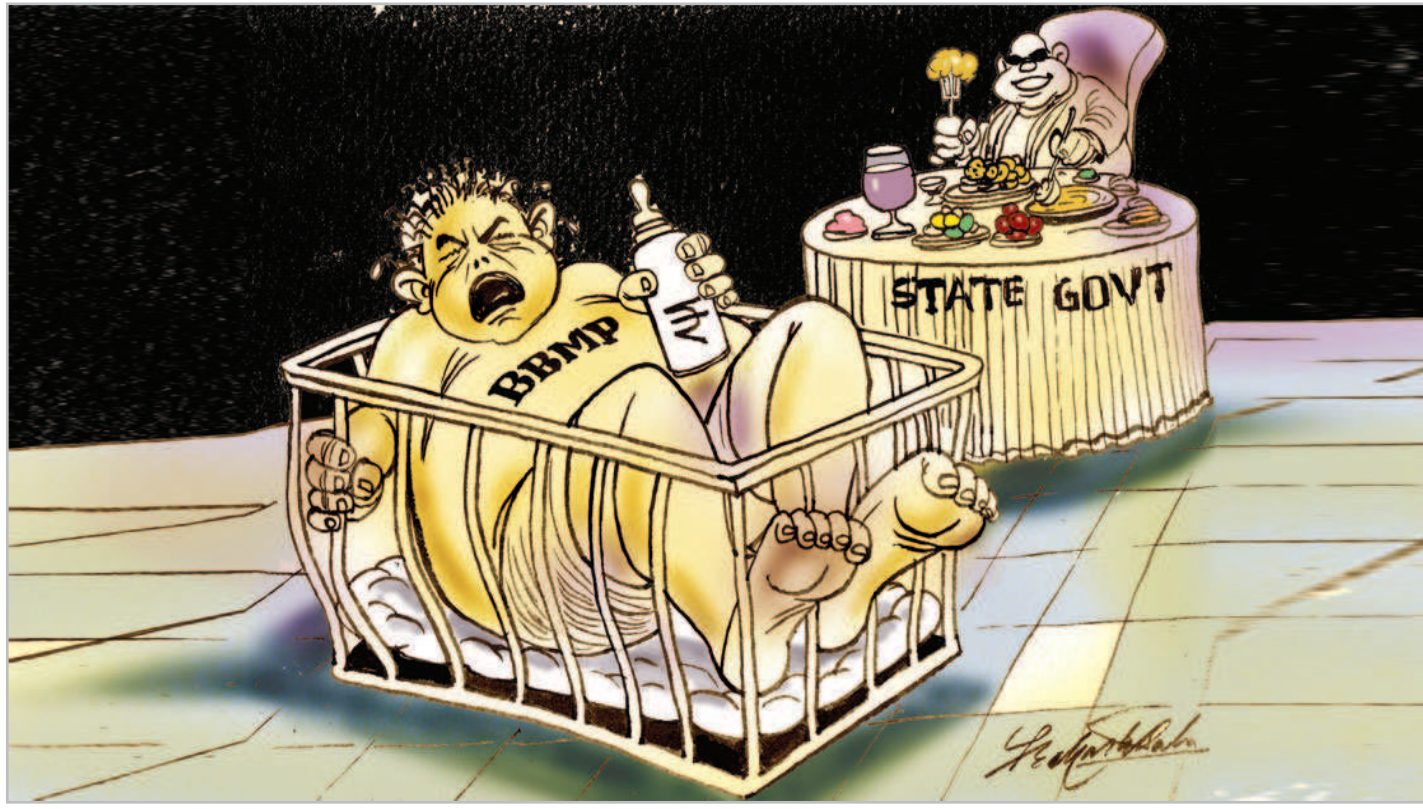
The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is not just a civic service provider; it is the local self-government of Bangalore. But does BBMP really run this city? Apparently not. Even viewed just as a civic agency, it is only one of the many agencies that is engaged in civic service delivery and infrastructure in Bangalore. It handles less than 40% of the annual expenditure in the city and has on its payroll less than 15% of the workforce engaged in civic work in Bangalore. But yet most Bangaloreans look to BBMP as the entity responsible for creating a better Bangalore.

BBMP's lack of capacities (finances, powers and staff), the multiplicity of agencies that handle civic services in Bangalore and the coordination between them is collectively a crucial issue that needs to be addressed before we aspire for a quantum leap in the quality of life in Bangalore. The starting point in this process is for all agencies to view the city of Bangalore and its residents as a single constituency and through a collective lens, rather than view them through their individual sectoral perspectives. This essentially calls for a paradigm shift towards an integrated city governance model by this collective group rather than a narrow sectoral approach that is currently being pursued by each agency.

It is here that the need to augment BBMP's capacities in its role as a first among equals gains credence. There are 2 concomitant actions that need to be triggered.

1. The state government needs to invest a lot more in Bangalore's infrastructure, its largest city and also growth engine. The current expenditure across agencies is estimated at around Rs 10,000 crore per annum (excluding cost of power purchased by Bescom) and most of this money goes towards day-to-day operational expenditure and not to asset creation. Compare this to the annual budget of Rs 26,000 crore of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai alone for an area smaller than Bangalore and a population only one and half times larger.

2. Secondly, BBMP needs an urgent shot in the arm in respect of powers, finances and people. It is currently greatly constrained on several fronts. Its coffers are empty and it has close to 40% vacancies in its workforce. It has also very limited powers and requires the state government approvals or legislation for several actions required to augment its own revenues. BBMP will continue to fall short of expectations unless



TIMES civic audit



it is empowered on these fronts.

Bangaloreans have a voice in their governance only through BBMP. Other civic agencies are parastatals or departments of the state government that are accountable to the state/central governments, but not directly accountable to the citizens of Bangalore whom they serve. The representation they have through Board positions in parastatals has not amounted to much in terms of coordinated efforts or reflecting people's aspirations. It would be in the true spirit of democracy that BBMP is given pre-eminence in the city. For that, the state government needs to empower it with more powers, more people and a larger purse, with strings (of disclosure and accountability) attached.

SNAPSHOT OF KEY CIVIC AGENCIES OF BANGALORE

Civic Agency	Annual Budget / Expenditure (Rs Cr)	Area covered (SqKm)	Estimated staff strength
Bangalore Electric Supply Company (Bescom)	8,477	41,092	12,658
Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)	3,857	741	11,786
Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB)	2,292	800	2,402
Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC)	1,279	4,073	32,396
Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited ³	1,161	NA	NA
Bangalore Development Authority (BDA)	696	1,220	925
Bangalore City Police (BCP)	128	2,190	16,109
Bangalore Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA)	2	8,005	NA
Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services (KSFES) department	NA	741	269
Bangalore City Traffic Police (BTP)	NA	1,200	3,262
Total	17,892		79,807

The writer is manager, Public Record Of Operations and Finance (PROOF), the public disclosure and accountability initiative of Janaagraha

NOTE: Given the paucity of disclosures and despite differing accounting bases, this analysis is based on annual/budgets/annual accounts/others based on availability. As is the case with operational data like headcount and Area in sqkm. It is based on sources like websites of the civic agencies.

WHO IS DIGGING MY ROAD?



ROAD RAGE: Citizens are put to inconvenience because these critical civic agencies simply don't talk to each other

Sunitha Rao R and Aparajita Ray | TNN

One agency digs up a road and scoots. Road repaired after public protests. Another agency comes and digs up the same road. And this goes on throughout the year.

For instance, if you tour around the city on a particular day, you will find a number of roads dug up, bar-

ricaded by BWSSB, Bescom, KPTC or BSNL. After six months, if you go back to the same roads, you will still find they being dug up again.

Mindless digging up of roads seems to be a never-ending project of civic agencies. Motorists have for too long stuck in traffic jams because of utility companies working at their convenience and not the road users. This is a problem

which has frustrated millions of motorists for decades and is seen as one of the biggest causes of urban gridlock.

Urban life is impacted largely because the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) do not see eye to eye. Although each tries its best to provide civic amenities, it is when it comes to coordination that they balk. If BWSSB gives water sup-

ply and sanitation lines to discharge sewage, Bescom gives power connection and supply, BBMP builds roads and footpaths and playgrounds, BDA builds flyovers. Added to these are the BMTC, which provides commuting services in the form of buses and bus stations and there are a number of telecom service providers for telephone and mobile connections. All of these utilities operate individually. What they need to do is act as a cohesive unit.

For example, if a sewage line is to be repaired or relaid, the rule-book says that BWSSB has to take BBMP's permission to undertake the work and pay the road-cutting charges, costs of re-laying the road to it after the work is done and also relay the road. In most cases, the digging agency doesn't relay the road. And thus begins the blame game. BBMP, after much persuasion and protests, steps in. A case in point is the changing of water pipeline in Vasanth Nagar area which went on for months causing inconvenience to people.

This happens only due to lack of co-ordination between the civic agencies, which results in wastage of time and the taxpayers' money. Bringing discipline into play, especially backed by financial penalties, may bring a measure of order to our roads.



SHINING EXAMPLE: London city is all set for the Olympics with help from volunteers

Lessons for Bangalore

Team London is a voluntary wing of the London municipality, backed by the mayor of London Boris Johnson and founded by Rueben Foundation. The aim of the volunteers is to create a concept of 'impact volunteering' which is to strategize how to work towards the pressing social and civic needs and set outcomes of their work. It also looks at measurements to judge the progress of the volunteers. Their top three priorities are to reduce crime, improve quality of life by providing equal civic amenity to all citizens and increasing opportunity for youths in the volunteering sector to deal with the pressing social conditions of the city of London. At a time when the funding has fallen and social needs have increased, the Team London volunteers eye to encourage the volunteering sector. Their working model is based on the Cities of Services model, first conceptualized in New York City.

A perfect recipe for chaos and confusion

MESSY HSR LAYOUT



Here is a perfect example of lack of coordination. BWSSB started laying water pipelines on the 27th main 80 feet road in HSR Layout. Last year, it had dug deep trenches on one side of the road and dumped mud in the middle of the road, making the side roads non-motorable. As a result, residents could not access the main road leading to Sarjapur. To make matters worse, the board had halted work for six months. After public protests, it ultimately did complete the work. But this brought no relief to the residents as the roads came under BBMP's jurisdiction. And residents had to battle it out with BBMP for relaying the road to make it motorable.

VARTHUR LAKE OR FOAM BED?



Sewage comes under BBMP, treatment of sewage is BWSSB's function and maintenance of Varthur and Bellandur lakes is by the Lake Development Authority. Who is responsible for the pathetic state of the lakes? Varthur Lake is no more a water body with fresh water supporting aquatic life. These days, it is filled with soap bubbles and hyacinth weed. According to Lake Development Authority, BWSSB's sewage lines are connected to storm water drains and so sewage water enters Bellandur and Varthur lakes. The pollutants here are the detergents used for washing clothes, hence foaming. About 250 mld of untreated sewage enters Varthur Lake.

SITES IN FARM LAND



Lack of coordination between BBMP, the department of stamps and registration and taluk panchayats has resulted in parcels of farm land being sold without the revenue department's permission for change of land usage. And someone down the line makes a fast buck. Such properties do not get khata (title deed) from BBMP and thus create a nightmare for the buyers. Without khata, no financial institution gives loan for the construction activities and that is when the buyers or the property owners realize how they have been cheated. Such cases are rampant on the outskirts of the city, that is in the newly added wards.

STINKING SHIVAJI NAGAR



Commercial Street, one of the oldest shopping destinations in Bangalore's Cantonment, is a case study for poor coordination between civic agencies. Due to irregular garbage collection by BBMP, many restaurants, sweet shops and roadside eateries dispose waste directly into the manholes. As a result, the sewage flow is blocked and manholes overflow. But BWSSB is in charge of manholes. The problem is citizens don't know which civic agency to approach. More often than not the problem persists with the agencies indulging in blame game. The scene is no different at Church Street, which is a Food street. During rainy season, the street gets clogged with drainage water entering shops and restaurants.