

BANGALORE TUNES INTO CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION	1800 General Post Office opens doors	1853 Telegraph services take off	1955 First radio station comes into being	1981 Television comes to city	2001 First private radio channel begins operations
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OUR CITY OUR MONEY

FROM THE FILES

Vehicle population in Bangalore is increasing at a very rapid rate. The number of motorized vehicles in the city rose from 485,000 in 1990 to 1.27 million in 2000. In 2010, it was 3.5 million and in 2011, it was around 4 million. Therefore, the city needs quality infrastructure to manage this ever-increasing traffic.

In this sixth and final part of Our City Our Money, the focus is on participatory budgeting. It aims at improving local governance by engaging citizens in local infrastructure planning. Bangalore urgently needs to implement it

City needs people's budget

Srikanth Viswanathan

BMP's Budget is a significant lever in Bangalore's transformation. It holds the key to meeting citizens' priorities. The budget therefore needs to evolve from a sterile document into a dynamic process of engagement between BBMP and citizens. Here is a look at citizens' participation in budgeting with comparable Indian examples, policy measures taken in India and Karnataka and reasons why BBMP should play the win-win game of participatory budgeting.

Over 1,200 cities across the world practise participatory budgeting. In several cities and towns in Brazil, it is a way of life. Bangalore is now the 18th most populous city in the world, but doesn't have a participatory budgeting process in place.

Bangalore, 2002-2006
Between 2002 and 2006 for eight successive quarters, public meetings on the financial performance and financial position of the erstwhile BMP were held, attended by civic officials and citizens. It was coordinated by a coalition of four civil society organisations led by Janaagraha. These quarterly sessions were discontinued due to lack of administrative will and absence of an underlying institutional/policy mechanism.



Bangalore, 2003
The Karnataka Local Fund Authorities Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2003, was enacted on September 5, 2003. It sought to establish a framework for budgeting, accounting and auditing for agencies controlled by the state government, including municipal corporations, on the lines of the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2002.

Two key actions are
1. At least two meetings to be held every year at the time of budget preparation and finalization with citizen forums

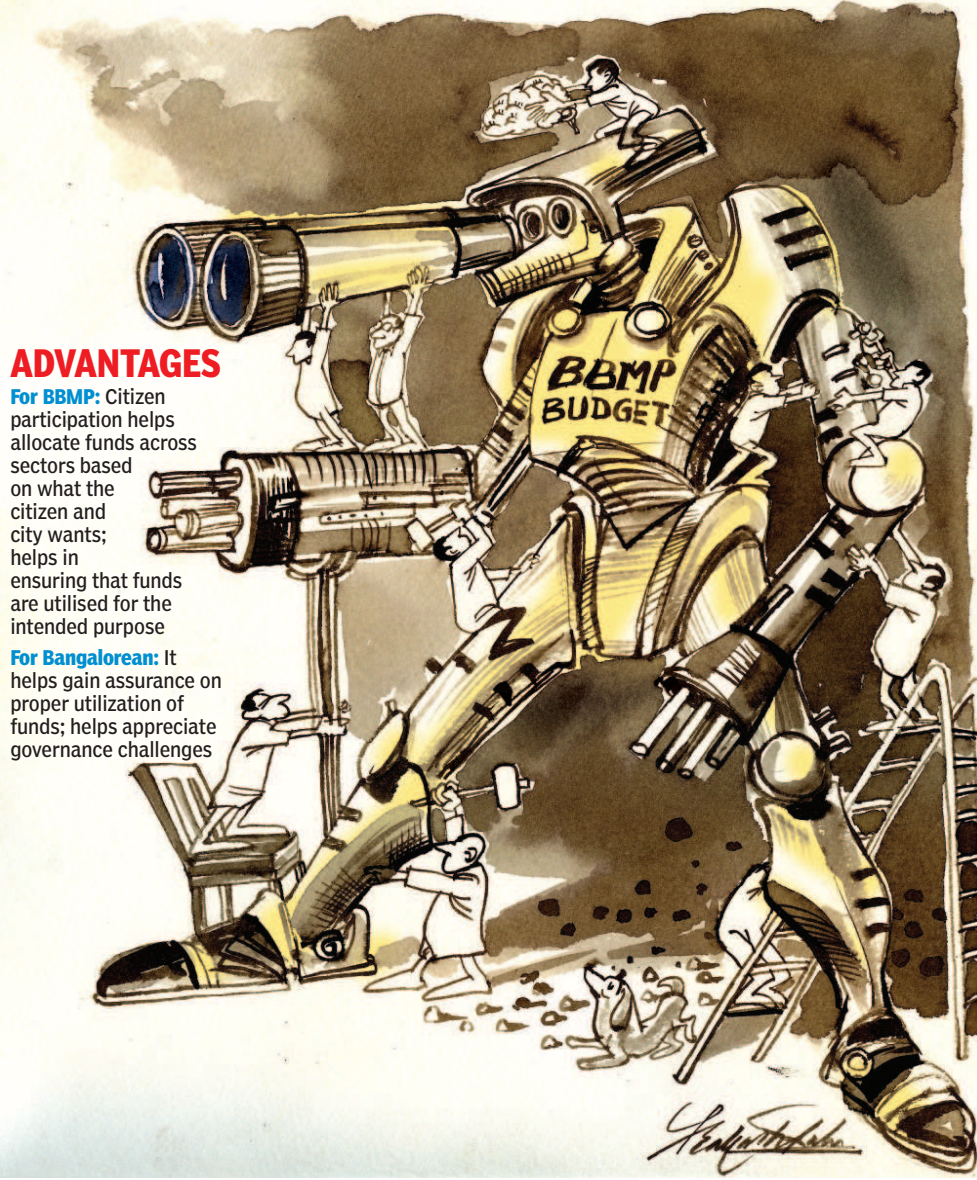
2. Additional meetings to be held with citizen forums at regular intervals to review finances and operations. Rules were not notified and therefore the Act is not in force.

New Delhi, 2005-06
The model Community Participation Law, a mandatory reform under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, was issued in 2005-06. It requires that ward budgets be prepared six weeks before the municipal budget and be discussed in a ward committee meeting three weeks before the preparation of the ward budget. All residents of a ward are entitled to attend these meetings. The Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Amendment) Bill of 2011 is a diluted version of this with no specific references to the above.

Pune, 2008
Pune Municipal Corporation launched a formalised participatory budgeting model in 2006-07 which has since been running successfully. Technical support was provided by Janwani, a civil society organization, and the Centre for Environment Education. Close to 6,000 citizens had given inputs for Rs 35 crore of works in 2009-10. While this is a modest beginning, it is a significant pilot considering no other major city in India has undertaken anything similar.

Bengaluru, 2012- Where are we today?
Twenty-three years after participatory budgeting was born in Porto Alegre in Brazil and a smaller city like Pune making a beginning six years back, Bangalore still has no trace of it in its civic fabric. Efforts like those of the residents of Sagayapuram are indeed commendable, but need to be institutionalised.

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



ADVANTAGES
For BBMP: Citizen participation helps allocate funds across sectors based on what the citizen and city wants; helps in ensuring that funds are utilised for the intended purpose
For Bangalorean: It helps gain assurance on proper utilization of funds; helps appreciate governance challenges

BMTC, way to go



ON THE TRACK: Traffic management centres like this are set up at various hubs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

WHILE BBMP hasn't bothered to take citizens' opinion in JnNURM projects, BMTC has shown the way. It has successfully implemented the JnNURM project in its purview—the setting up of Traffic and Transit Management Centres (TTMC) at various hubs in the city, with commuter participation. TTMCs have been conceived as transport infrastructure for the urban renewal project aimed at providing one-stop travel to commuters. They comprise a bus terminal, maintenance facilities, public amenities, Park and Ride facility and provide inter-modal connectivity. The first 10 TTMCs were built at a cost of Rs440 crore, funded by JNNURM funds, but the plan is to have 45 TTMCs in the city. BMTC officials said they did have commuters' participation in forming the detailed project report for the first 10 TTMCs. But they have not formed City Volunteers Technical Corps (CVTC) or a committee of citizens. BMTC officials, however, plan to keep in mind the citizens' needs.

Palike ignores bottom-up approach

Sunitha Rao R | TNN

Will there be a process in place to check flooding during monsoon? Will the underpass work be completed? These and such concerns can be addressed only if there is citizen participation in governance. A glaring example of the omission of this vital factor—of participatory process—is evident in the ambitious JnNURM project. Rolled out in 2005, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), a central government initiative, was to put Bangalore on the path of development with a host of infrastructure projects. And the key factor was the formation of City Volunteers' Technical Corps (CVTC). But this remained a non-starter. Because the Palike invited applications from civilians to be a part of CVTC at the fag end of the project and the council failed to approve the shortlisted names in time. This is in clear violation of JnNURM norms. Result: The intended beneficiaries had lost an opportunity to list their priorities. CVTC has been envisaged to encourage private sector participation, citizen's involvement in



DRAIN PAIN: The remodelling of drain work in Shivajinagar, taken up under JnNURM, has come to a standstill. It has now turned into a dumping ground

urban governance at the grass root level and transparency in municipal governance. Also advise the city governance and management team on enlisting community participation in service delivery. Totally nine groups of five persons each were to be set up. The groups were to be given orientation through resource persons on the different projects taken up in

PENDING PROJECTS

- Remodelling of primary and secondary storm water drains at Vishabhavathi valley at a cost of Rs 420.89 crore; at Hebbal valley at a cost of Rs 269 crore; at Chalaghatta valley at a cost of Rs 105 crore and at Koramangala valley at a cost of Rs 128 crore
- Underpass at Kadirenahalli junction at a cost of Rs 24.8 crore

COMPLETED WORKS

- Construction of grade separator at Maleswaram, Yeshwantpur
- Construction of grade separator at Tagore Circle, Gali Anjaneya temple, Mysore Road, Hennur Banaswadi-junction

response. So we published the notification once again, for which we got 47 responses. Of them, 45 applicants were shortlisted and the list was sent to the council for approval. The council is yet to approve it, but the project term of five years is over and no such committee can be formed now." BBMP spent over Rs 1,000 crore for various works under JnNURM, and is yet to get Rs 250 crore for the completion of the pending works.

With some thrift, she manages her happy home

SHORING UP IS TOUGH

Every hike in power tariff weighs heavy, but power cuts have not disappeared. And water is quite inadequate. My children are young and dirty their clothes often. Earlier, we used try and save at least Rs6,000 but now, it's become difficult to save even Rs5,000.



Aparajita Ray | TNN

Bangalore: Keeping books is not easy, and home budgets in recent times have proved it. TOI speaks to a middle-class homemaker who manages her household well enough, in the light of the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) failing miserably to manage its wallet, despite receiving grants and loans worth thousands of crores. "I should thank my husband who takes the larger responsibility of running the household, because he earns nearly thrice as much as me. But to live in Bangalore with costs rocketing every day, it's difficult to make every-

one happy in a joint family," says Rekha BS. Rekha is a librarian with the University of Agricultural Sciences and draws a salary of about Rs8,000 a month. Her husband, Ganesh, who works with a private firm, earns about Rs22,000. They live in Sanjaynagar in North Bangalore, with two daughters and Ganesh's elder sister and brother-in-law, who is retired. Her daughters, aged four and six, go to a private English medium school in the neighbourhood. "My elder daughter is in primary school and younger one is in pre-school, so their education doesn't cost me more than Rs1,500 a month. But groceries cost around Rs4,000 and we keep aside Rs1,000-1,200 for milk, the kids and family," she says. They live in their own house, and pay Rs11,000 towards their home loan. Ganesh bought a small car two years ago but it was not enough for the joint family. He exchanged it for a utility vehicle which came at a lower cost, but he still has to shell out Rs3,000 as the car loan EMI. Slamming the BWSSB and

Bescom for inefficient service but high tariffs, Rekha said the household pays Rs1,000-1,200 towards water and electricity bills. She and her husband have strived to keep their mobile phone bills economical, and weekend outings to malls are a strict no-no. "We visit relatives or temples during weekends, or go to Tirupati. We want our kids to learn our culture rather than adapt to the 'burger culture'," she says. Rekha, an ordinary homemaker, manages her household within just Rs30,000, and also makes it a happy home. But the mammoth BBMP, despite getting crores as grants from Hudco, banks and state government, property tax revenue amounting to Rs1,200-1,500 crore and revenue from advertisement hoardings, has hundreds of works spilling over or pending for years together. In 2011, the BBMP has also mortgaged some of its iconic buildings like the City Market complex and Public Utility Building on MG Road. Which a middle-class family would never do. Our civic body can learn a lesson or two from Rekha and her fraternity.

VIEW FROM THE TOP

I think BBMP should look at two budgets -- one for the entire city and one for the wards. City budget should look at general and major problems like the garbage menace, parking problems and maintenance of roads. It can



introduce a transport cess for people having more than two personal cars; this will make people shift to public transport and reduce traffic congestion. BBMP has never maintained a property register. This is the reason is why many people just escape from paying property taxes. The Palike should maintain records of all CA sites so that encroachers don't flourish. Ward budgets should include things like having more public toilets in each ward and solid waste management centres."

- Mukunda Rao | RWA EXECUTIVE MEMBER, JAYANAGAR 5TH BLOCK

BBMP should not give inflated estimates but be realistic. In many of the parks, rain water harvesting systems have been installed at a cost of Rs30,000 or more while the maximum expenditure on a RWH system can be Rs20,000. The same money can be used for fixing the roads and cleaning garbage. It's shameful that the Garden City has been today labelled as Garbage City. We don't want wider roads, but properly maintained motorable roads with running footpaths. Councilors should not decide what the ward residents need in the budget. Like the councillor of Ward 180. This ward has two slums in Yaranagar and Pragatipura. A sum of Rs15 lakh each is being spent to build two arches in the slums. This is a complete wastage of money. Instead developmental works for the welfare of slum dwellers can be started."

- Ravindranath Guru | RWA MEMBER, BANASHANKARI 2ND STAGE

First of all, corporators of each ward should come out of the party's shadow and concentrate on their responsibilities towards the people who elected him/her. This has a local yet a wholesome approach towards development of the city ward wise. As for infrastructure, BBMP should see that more public toilets and multi-storied parking facilities are provided. Work on the parking lots around hubs and markets should start without any further delay. BBMP should also restrict parking in congested areas of the city. More importantly, it should constantly be in touch with the other civic agencies and utility wings to improve services."

- Sajjan Raj Mehta | PRESIDENT, BHARATIYA JAIN SANGATHAN, KARNATAKA

I am curious about the budget but have hardly any hopes. No new projects can actually be taken up. This budget is only to repay loans and interest amount and pending bills. Even the tax that every property owner is paying to BBMP is not spent on infrastructure development in the city."

- PR Ramesh | FORMER MAYOR, BBMP

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