

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy  
[www.janaagraha.org](http://www.janaagraha.org)

**Founded:** 2001 | **Head Office:** Bangalore | **Coverage:** Pan-India | **Full Time Staff:** 130  
**Budget (2013-14):** Organization – INR 20 Crore; Governance – INR 20 Crore



ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Janaagraha works with citizens and the government to catalyze systemic change in urban India. Focused on developing the quality of urban infrastructure and services, as well as the quality of citizenship, its work ranges from civic education in schools, to providing support to state governments in the design of urban transformation agendas. While a large part of its work is based in Bangalore, it has scaled several programs to cover all of India.

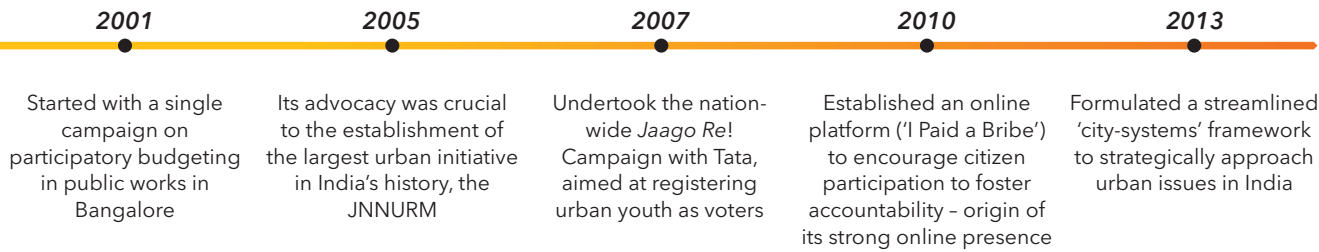
THE PROBLEM

Urban India faces several unheralded issues, ranging from a lack of platforms for citizen participation to patchy or broken infrastructure and service delivery systems. Further, the approach taken to improving our cities tends to be reactive and focused on the short-term.

JANAAGRAHA's RESPONSE

Janaagraha builds the capacity of citizens to actively take part in public affairs, creates platforms for citizen engagement, and works with the government from the local to the national level, on systemic and institutional reforms.

HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Some of Janaagraha's engagements across the themes of its city-systems framework include:

1. Urban Planning and Design:

Towards ensuring planned and sustainable development, Janaagraha, through its sister organization Jana USP, advocates for, and pilots best-in-class urban planning policies and design standards, in collaboration with state and local government.

2. Urban Capacities and Resources:

The organization works with administrators at various levels of the government to institute reforms that enhance human and financial capacities of city governments.

3. Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation:

It addresses the accuracy of voter lists through mobilizing communities, undertaking research and advocacy in partnership with the Election Commission of India.

4. Transparency, Accountability and Participation:

'I Change My City' serves as a city-specific e-database of information on civic issues, and as a portal for citizens to lodge complaints and seek redressal on issues under the purview of local authorities. Its PROOF program compiles hyper-local data at the ward level, linking service provision to budgetary outlays. Other initiatives include 'I Paid a Bribe', an online portal that tracks graft; community policing; 'Bala Janaagraha', a civic education program for children; and research initiatives across various themes.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement

WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- ✓ In 2013, the Karnataka government allocated INR 500 crores for re-development of 45 roads in Bangalore as per Janaagraha's Tender S.U.R.E design standards.
- ✓ Robust, scalable online platforms created - 'I Paid a Bribe' has been replicated in 10 countries in less than 5 years of its creation; close to 50% of the near 12,000 grievances posted on 'I Change my City' stand resolved, with Janaagraha assisting in mobilizing key stakeholders.
- ✓ Comprehensive 'city-systems framework' developed to identify root causes of systemic shortfalls in urban India; two annual surveys published; 2014 survey covers 21 cities, up from 11 cities in 2013

WHAT'S NEXT?

- To scale-up 'I Change my City' to Bhubaneswar, Jaipur and Delhi, the groundwork for which has begun.
- To build on its work in planning and redesigning roads in Bangalore, working to develop and implement planning and design standards for rejuvenating public spaces in the city.
- Scaling its work in urban planning and design to two other states over the next three years.

As Janaagraha scales the implementation of these various components of its city-systems framework across India (as outlined above), a key organizational priority will be to ensure greater strategic coordination across its programs, to maximize impact.

VOICES FROM THE GROUND

“*I believe that urban India, at least as far as the roads in cities are concerned, should be a completely different picture if Tender S.U.R.E. specifications and Tender S.U.R.E. model [developed by Janaagraha] becomes the basis for road making... it's a big leap forward*”

- I.S.N. Prasad,  
Principal Secretary, Chief Minister's Office,  
Govt. of Karnataka, 2008-2012

QUALITY INDICATORS

- Leadership**

Founded by Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan

  - Ramesh Ramanathan served as the national technical advisor for the JNNURM
  - Swati Ramanathan has received the Rajyotsava Puraskar – Rajasthan's highest civilian award – for the Jaipur 2025 plan developed by her
- Partnerships**
  - Individual Donors: N.R. Narayana Murthy; Sridar Iyengar
  - Corporate Donors: Tata Group; Google provides in-kind tech support; HSBC; Infosys
  - Institutional Donors: Omidyar Network, Edelgive
  - Brown University, on the Janaagraha-Brown Citizenship Index
- Endorsements**
  - I Change my City won the Global Impact Award at the Google Impact Challenge (2013-2014)

“India's cities are in a mess. The challenges are too deep and systemic to take tactical stabs at fixing them. Lack of clear leadership, and a mishmash of institutions with fragmented mandates add to the already mammoth problem. Janaagraha wants to engage with leaders to help them diagnose urban challenges through the lens of a “City-Systems framework” and develop a customized transformational strategy and execution plan for their city, to improve the quality of life.”

- Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan, Co-founders

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