



# 50 Thousand Citizens Sign Endorsing TWT Campaign



J-CRC members - Y Damodara, Veena Hegde, Smitha Srinath, N S Mukund, A Sivasankaran, and Nanda P Rao (top) with the other Citizens at Thursday's Community Meeting.

**T**axation with Transparency (TWT) campaign initiated by Janaagraha-Community Resource Committee (J-CRC) has received 50,000 signatures.

This campaign is in support of the stand that Bangalore needs more tax payers, not more taxes. The first step in TWT is to increase property tax compliance by publication of the list of taxpayers.



People from all walks of life in Bangalore, including well known personalities like Dr. U R Anantamurthy, Ms Kiran Mazumdar, Nandan Nilekan, S G Vasudev, T N Sitaram, Dr. Devi Shetty, Prakash Padukone, Justice A J Sadashiva,

B K Chandrashekar, Arundhati Nag, Ashwini Nachappa, etc. have endorsed the campaign, clearly indicating that any change in the tax system should be considered by BMP only after collection of all taxes due to BMP. Even non-payers of property tax have supported the campaign.

J-CRC members, Resident Welfare Associations, School/College students, Corporate companies and other groups including spirited individuals from many wards have come together to collect the signatures with enthusiasm and vigor. Over 40 group meetings were conducted by J-CRC members reaching out to citizens.

Prompted by the response to the campaign,

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# TSUNAMI X WAVE OF HUMANITY

*As all of you are aware, TSUNAMI – the killer wave – has caused immense destruction along the coast of South India leading to huge loss of life and property. It has also wiped out entire settlements along the coast leaving the survivors with nothing but despair and misery. It was therefore left to the other citizens not affected by this tragedy to come to the rescue of the surviving victims.*

*Abhyudaya Federation of Ward 55 is a model to others. They were quick to send a team for relief operations to help the victims.*

*Meera Mukund and Mukund share their experiences here.*

**T**here were heaps and heaps of clothes lying everywhere. "Aid does not mean old clothes," voiced Dr. Thara of Gunashela nursing home, when a team of doctors and some Janaagrahis visited the Tsunami affected areas of Cuddalore.

Visiting the affected places of Manjakupam and Swamiyarpetti, the team distributed individual "kits" containing the best possible basic necessities needed for a family. Right from a kerosene stove, mats, bed sheets, new sarees and provision sufficient for a week were distributed through local dependable organizations.

The team of doctors immunized around 400 people for epidemics, conducted medical check-ups and distributed necessary medicines. The team had taken along with them, three truckloads of relief material.

They were joined by a group of 24 young I.T. professionals age 24-28 yrs from Infosys, Siemens, Wipro, Samsung etc., in the distribution of materials. With smiles on their faces, the group made even the most laborious of tasks like loading and unloading the heavy sacks look easy.

## WHO WENT TO CUDDALORE:

*Dr. Nalini Shenoy,  
Dr. Sandhya,  
Dr. Sharada,  
Dr. Thara,  
Dr. Prabha,  
Dr. Chitra,  
Dr. Saral,  
Dr. Subash,  
Meera Mukund and  
Rama from Kasturba  
Public School*

**Aid does  
not mean  
old  
clothes!**

The team also distributed grains to a Dargah, which was providing freshly prepared hot meals to thousand of Tsunami affected people.

Local people helped the team in providing space to store, load and unload materials (AIC church - providing food to the volunteers; Sathya Sai Trust - housing them – Shekar).

Amongst all the help and relief work, it was rather peevish to notice that the clothes sent for aid seemed like people were disposing off their old ones. Sorting out these clothes was a Herculean task for the team. But the volunteers did their best and distributed clothes that were in good condition.

It was seen that instead of distributing more clothes, increasing the distribution of food grains was the need of the hour.

The team spent the new year and the day after (1st, 2<sup>nd</sup>) at Cuddalore.

They now contemplate to adopt a village and help in rehabilitating the inmates with the support of like-minded people. Interested people: please contact "Abhyudaya". Further detail – Ph: 30623722.

**- Meera Mukund**  
Ward 55

old clothes, we decided to take with us Survival Kits consisting of Kerosene Stove, vessels, plates and cups, mats, blankets, torches and candles, basic provisions like rice, dal, oil, condiments, spices etc. These things help many families to go back to their homes, rebuild their lives and lessens the burden on the relief camps.

**- N S Mukunda, Secretary, Abhyudaya**

## WE ALL DIE

*on that morning, on that shore,*

*who, among us, went to greet the sea  
and were cursed in return?*

*on that morning, on that shore,*

*who, among us, went to sleep with lovers  
and were swept away?*

*who, among us, was that lonely fisherman  
that the sea lied to?*

*who, among us, was that child and its sandcastle  
that the sea swallowed?*

*who were the trees, the nests  
that the waves cut through like a sword?*

*who were the ants, the worms, the fishes  
that died with wounded pride?*

*who, among us, surrendered?*

*who fought like a man, like a woman?*

*and who was left behind, to count the dead?*

*on that bloody morning, on that bloody shore,*

*someone among us, held a frozen lover  
to the bosom and raged,*

*as the woman who raged,*

*not knowing who or what or how or why.*

*someone sat among ruins,*

*ruined, doubting the ways of god.*

*and someone wept and wept,*

*with those who wept,*

*till every drop of tear fell as a stone*

*on this earth, this earth,*

*whose heart is stone.*

*let us grieve! let us grieve!*

*we are one in death, after all!*

*oh! cruel earth!*

*oh! cruel waves!*

*what have you left us with?*

*among us, someone*

*will never laugh again*

*without sorrow.*

*among us, someone*

*will never sing or work or make love again*

*without pain.*

*among us, someone*

*will never find his home again*

*among ruins.*

*among us, someone*

*will never live again*

*among us.*

*ah! this we know by now.*

*when someone cries,*

*we all cry.*

*when someone dies,*

*we all die.*

**- Balaji Gopalan**

Ward 92

## LETTERS

A few of our members had already gone to the affected areas as members of relief teams. Depending on their feedback and the discussions we had with the Office of the Collector of Nagapattinam one of the worst affected areas, Abhyudaya decided to send its own team of Volunteers to Nagapattinam.

Since we were advised by the authorities not, to take cooked food and

# CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT: WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT



I have long argued that in order for local governments to work better, citizen involvement is a necessary ingredient. I have also argued that the urban voter is a second-class citizen in India, without having the same opportunities to participate as her rural cousin. One of the weaknesses that has emerged out of the bivalent approach that we have taken to decentralization in our country is that the economic education of the Indian citizen that is happening with globalisation – being significantly felt in the urban areas - is not being supported or joined by a political education, since the space is not available. Hence, the state, by intent or otherwise, is creating a society of underdeveloped, politically malnourished citizens.

Indeed, there is merit to the argument that this is a trait that needs to be especially cultivated in young democracies, especially those that emerge into democracy from a feudal and culturally complex past like India.

At the upper end of the social strata, there is a dangerous trend emerging: there are many among the urban elite in India who are skipping around the world, taking the best of each country, essentially as free-riders, without paying the price that is necessary to build the fabric of democratic decision-making that got this quality-of-life in the first place. This is one of the less understood side effects of globalisation: the phenomenon of the free-rider globalists, who are not citizens anywhere, and therefore never feel the pain of participation, who takes the roads, the schools, the airports, the water supply, the garbage trucks all for granted, as they merrily skip from one country to another, blissfully ensconced in their personal lives, even if this is the building of economic machines that in turn pay taxes and keep the machinery of government going. Paying for the grease does not give anyone

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opt out of the messy work of maintaining the democratic engines. Unfortunately, this is one of the results of global capitalism, where there is a price tag for everything.

These free-rider globalists live in “synthetic communities” bound together by the internet. With the internet releasing the dependence on location, it has therefore minimized the concept of the local citizen while possibly increasing the concept of the global citizen. People have started caring about the Siberian whale and the Brazilian rainforest, but not about the local water supply or the neighbourhood slum or the city council.

In new democracies, the idea of federalism and participatory processes at the grassroot level serve a much larger purpose than the efficient outcomes that they deliver in the more mature democracies. In the young democracies, local governments act as the political crucible to educate the citizen, and build the bulwark of civil society, of being a sort of political kindergarten.

One specific example from a developing country will prove the point: the Iranian experience in local government.

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# Imprinting emotional responsibility on young Citizens

**I**t was always a pleasant feeling for me to have been a volunteer of JANAAGRAHA. Giving me the feel of share as a Bangalorean, it helped me understand the responsibility of being a resident of Bangalore, then the higher level of being a citizen if India.

A development or progress can be achieved only through responsibility and this responsibility creeps in when one feels the ownership. However the feel of ownership doesn't arise in a day or two, but with a slow psychological and emotional process.

On this line it is very pleasing to see how JANAAGRAHA through Bala Janaagraha is imprinting this emotive responsibility among the young citizens in school through classroom sessions. The "Me and My City" has helped students become aware of civic sense.

the transport facility of BMTC buses its loopholes and positive points.

I enjoyed the debate with Mahila Mandali school kids on the topic "Usage of plastic" and the walk with the students in Gandhinagar protesting 'usage of plastic covers. Exhibiting some paper bags which they had made showed how positively they were responding to create ecological balance.

I had once heard from Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan quoting one of the great personalities that we owe our nature to our younger generation. It is the loan that we are using now which we have to give to our younger generation, hence we have no right to misuse or spoil it. I appreciated these words more when I saw how the students were responding in the sessions. The students were more responsive and questioned when they saw any improper functioning in their surroundings and



form of models. We could analyse and see the applications of lever, pulley, Newton's law of motion and many other applications in the simplest manner. We also had a chance to see various kinds of medicinal plants, precious stones and minerals.

The field trip to 'mind tree' gave the students a view of how the MNC's work. The visual clippings of the directors of the company helped students in understanding the real hard work and process of starting a company and developing it.

Being a volunteer of Bala Janaagraha I too have learnt a lot along with the



In the classroom the students have been positively responding towards these sessions and were more interactive. Discussing through the lessons, students were able to examine the actual scenario of Bangalore. Each one was bringing out their experiences as examples for their lessons. Speaking about various roads, how garbage was littered in places, and

appreciated the things which were right. I found these were all their natural reactions.

The field trip to 'Vani School' and 'Mindtree' were more informative and amazing. Vani school which appeared to be a park with a playground when we entered was actually a practical room to visualize various theories of science in the

students and have improvised on my civic sense and awareness. The teachers were very co-operative and active through all sessions. The sessions were interactive and brought out innovative ideas aiming towards the development of civic amenities and civic sense.

- Madhavi B D  
Ward 50

# BJ CIVIC EXHIBITION IN WARD 7



Sri Vidya Mandir School (left) and Cluny Convent (right) Students with their exhibits at MES Kishora Kendra, Malleshwaram

**W**hen the schools in our ward could not participate in the Annual Civic Exhibition held on Nov 21, 2004 at Mahaveer Jain College as they were busy with their test and school day Malleshwaram Swabhimana Initiative (MSI) felt that these children should be given a chance at least at the ward level.

We decided to have an Inter-School Civic Exhibition. With this came a lot of questions like when, where and how.

A lot of planning had to be done to plan a convenient date and after consulting the three schools the date was fixed for Jan 8.

Then came the question of the venue. We had a few in mind but all none was available on that day. Finally when we approached the Secretary of Mysore Education Society (MES) and he readily agreed to give us their quadrangle with tables for display of models, chairs and the public address system.

The last major hurdle of short snacks for the children and prizes for the various events was solved when Sunil Kumar of Abbee Hearing Solutions came forward with

On Jan 8, 2005 as planned the function took place and the winners of the various events are

- Best Civic Model : Cluny Convent*  
*Best Collage : Sri Vidya Mandir*  
*Best Paper Bag : Sri Vidya Mandir*  
*Debate I Prize : Mythreyi S., 7'B' Cluny Convent*  
*II Prize : Alekhya Andal, 9 'A' Sri Vidya Mandir*  
*Quiz I Prize : N.S.Akshay Kumar, 7'A' MES Kishora Kendra*  
*II Prize : Archana R. Kadambi, 9'B' Sri Vidya Mandir*  
*III Prize : Siddharth Bhattacharjee, 9'D' Sri Vidya Mandir*

Rs1,000/- towards prizes. For the snacks Kusum Ramaswamy contacted Sunil of Food world and they showed interest in helping us out. With an e-mail from MSI, they got into the act and secured snacks from Britannia and Cadburys for 400 students.

For the Judges we decided to have people from other wards and it so happened all the three judges were from wards where Bala Janaagraha programme was not being conducted They were Goda Srikanth from Basaveshwaranagar, Vasanta Iyer from Mahalakshmi Layout and Rashmi Madhusudan from Seshadripuram.

We had the following five events

1. Civic Models
2. Quiz
3. Debate (Topic: Should voting be made compulsory)
4. Collage Display
5. Paper Bag Display

Attendance of students was 50%. Staff of MES Kishora Kendra and Cluny Convent, parents, Bala Janaagraha team from other wards and the community members from Malleshwaram were also present.

- Sithalakshmi  
Ward 7



MES Kishore Kendra Students exhibiting their crafts

# Citizen Engagement: Why it is so Important

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.....“Amongst the most important themes are the discourse around civil society (*jame'eh-ye madani*), the necessity of political (multi-party) competition, and the importance of reversing the centralization of power. Rather unexpectedly, civil society, a concept central to western political theory, has almost become a household term in Iran over the last five years, especially after President Khatami employed it as a slogan defining his reformist and democratizing agenda. Hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, and many scholarly journal articles have been published on this theme in the last few years. In these discussions, the councils are viewed as institutions necessary to realize the goals of popular democratic participation within the Iranian polity.

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as a critical element in the expansion of civil society because they provide a check on centralized state power. Through these local institutions, which will bring government “closer to the people,” the citizens will have a greater and more direct role in the management of affairs affecting their everyday lives. The local councils have also been interpreted as potentially creating a new type of political space in Iran, in which one can be critical of, but not in opposition to, the central state. This is an extremely significant possibility (and subtle insight) for a polity in which any criticism of central state power, either clerical or monarchical, has been viewed as a direct threat to that power. And it is clearly linked to the hope that local elections will lead to greater organized competition between plural social interests. While it is possible that the opposite could

be the case (as a result of the dominance of local elites, or the lack of fiscal autonomy and organizational capacity on the part of the councils), the three themes of an expanding civil society sector, greater local political competition, and a reversal of the centralization of power are seen explicitly as possible outcomes of the decentralization reforms. Several commentators have observed that for councils to work properly requires robust civil society organizations. In this view, the councils will help channel and refine [*tasfieh, palayesh*] people's needs and preferences and modify populist pressure on the government. Institutions of local governance can contribute to the process of transforming people into claimants [*porsesh-gu*] and in this way make government accountable [*pasokh-gu*]. For reformers therefore the councils

represent a deepening of the democratic aspect of the Islamic Republic (however, shallow it might appear at present).” (Political Decentralization and the Creation of Local Government in Iran: Consolidation or Transformation of the Theocratic State? Social Research, Kian Tajbaksh)

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This last point has not been documented much, and has great import as the world begins to democratize. The first step in a democracy is to hold elections, but then, this is followed by the more difficult and continuous task of ensuring good governance. As discussed earlier, a 3-tier structure of centre/state/local government, done correctly, can not only provide the right institutional mechanism, but possibly more critically, offer an real-time political education at the local level for the citizens. People must know how to walk before they can run.



**Ramesh Ramanathan**  
Campaign Co-ordinator

# Support Pours for TWT from all Corners

(Contd... from Page 1)

BMP published the tax demand list on their website. However the list of taxpayers and details of tax realization must be included in the list published.

In the meantime, the J-CRC proposes to increase the number of signatures significantly with full and active support from the general public.

The signatures will be presented to the Commissioner, Mayor and the



Chief Minister in a public function on a suitable date.

Janaagraha community Resources Committee expresses gratitude to the citizens of Bangalore for their wholehearted support. "We're sure that the citizen involvement in developmental plans would gather momentum and help improvement in public governance in all fronts. Janaagraha wishes to once again impress upon the citizens that public participation is the only solution to achieve our aim of a better tomorrow."

## Update on Ward Sabhas

The New Year started off with a meeting with the members of PACE (Peoples' Welfare Association for Cleaner Environment) on Jan 6, after a gap of one month. It was a pleasure to have ward Asst. Executive Engineer Prakash and the Health Officer Lakshminarayan.

The meeting observed one-minute silence for **Ward 78** the victims of the Tsunami.

PACE congratulated Gunashekar, our Corporator on being appointed as the Chairman of the 'Taxation and Finance Committee' of BMP. Krishnamurthy and Bhuvaneshwar met the Corporator on the Jan 4, to discuss at length on the implementation of the Ward Vision and the POW.

The Engineer's attention was drawn to the pathetic condition of the roads in and around his office (Shivaji Circle) and interior Vasanthnagar. He assured to look into it.

- Sarojini Naidu, PACE, Ward 78

Monthly Review Meeting was held on January 1, with Bangalore Mahanagara Palike's Assistant Executive Engineer (Ward 85) Prasad and 7 members representing Sarvagnanagar Citizens' Forum, at the AEE's office. The issues discussed are as follows -

1. The status of 2003-04 programme of works. The AEE produced records showing completion of all spillover works with work pending and completed recently, including the much-delayed **Ward 85** Kadirappa road asphalted in controversy.
2. Two works in the current year's POW are already under progress (Concreting works in Byappanahalli Extn.) and the remaining works are in various stages of finalisation for work orders.
3. In reply to Muniswamy's (Vice president, Sarvagnanagar Citizens Forum) complaint on the poor condition of the

footpaths/drains on Wheeler road, M M Road and R K road AEE pointed out that R K road and S M road are already mentioned in this year POW and work would be taken up shortly.

4. AEE agreed to visit the Ward for joint inspection (on Jan 18) with Citizens Forum to see the condition of various roads, storm water drains and Byappanahalli Service road.

- S Murali, Sarvagnanagar Citizens Forum, Ward 85

## Janaagraha Calendar (JANUARY 16 - 31)

### Other Activities

Jan 23 : Bala Janaagraha Teacher's Appreciation Event (10.30 am - 1.30 pm) @ Portel Information Techlogy, Salarpuria Citadel (Opposite MICO), 3, Hosur Rd., Adugodi.

### Ward Sabha

- Jan 15 : Ward 50, V V Puram (10 am) @ Ward Office (Mr Venkatram Ph : 57602856).
- : Ward 72, Domlur (5.30 pm) @ Ward Office (Mr Rama Moorthy - Ph : 25267918).
- : Ward 73, Vimanapura (4.30 pm) @ Domlur Ward Office (Ms Akhila Krishna Kumar - Ph : 25273735 / 9845045397).
- : Ward 100, Sanjayanaagara (6 pm) @ RMV Club (Mr R C Dutt - Ph : 23416906).
- Jan 22 : Ward 55, Padmanabhanagara (10 am) @ Ward Office (Mr Prasad - Ph : 30623722).
- : Ward 54, Srinivasanagara (10.30 pm) @ Ward Office (Mr Y Damodara Ph : 26721457).

(\*Note: Please cross check the timings, venue and the date of above meetings as they are subject to last moment changes)

# Participatory Democracy in Rural Karnataka Under Progress

**J**anaagraha is not confined to Bangalore city or its suburbs only. Principles and practices of Participative Democracy are passed on to the rural populace also, through Singamma Srinivasan Foundation.

Villages such as Kembavvi and Sarangaon in Gulbarga District, Karatagi and Hire Bhaganahalli in Koppal District, Kogali in Bellari District and Henaganahalli in Bijapur District are active in this process.

Progress in the first five villages have already appeared in the previous issue of Janaagraha Times. A report on the progress in Henaganahalli Jummal and Savanahalli in Bijapur District is here.

The interaction between Janaagraha partner Singamma Srinivasan Foundation (SSF), the Local Govt. officials, and the elected women representatives as well as activists in the village was held on Dec 28, 2004 at the Panchayath office.

Following Government officials took part in the meeting or were briefed on the programme.

1. Bijapur Zilla Panchayath – Chief Planning officer – S R Pawar.
2. Bijapur Taluk Panchayat – Executive officer – Todal Bagi.
3. Henaganahally Gram Panchayath – Secretary – S S Bhashiban.

The elected representatives who attended the meeting.

1. Ambarva Hoogara – Vice President
2. Tulasi Bai – Member – Taluk Panchayat.
3. Members of Panchayat and activists including members of self Help Groups numbering over 20, from 3 villages .... Summal, Savanahalli and Hanaganahalli.

The meeting was moderated and facilitated by Ahalya Bhat, Associate Director, SSF, supported by Deeksha and Anand of SSF.

The progress made in these three villages under various programmes were openly discussed and the following points emerged.

**1. Transport :** Budget allocation as well as work completed included Bus Stands in Sumal and Hoganahalli, but the bus shelter in Savanahalli is yet to be taken up.

**2. Sanitary Facilities :**

- a) Rs 50,000 has been allocated in the Budget.
- b) Toilet Facilities already constructed are not used or maintained properly and the villagers require persuasion and training in this regard. Special toilet facilities for women are required.

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**3. Jala Nirmala Yojana :** Rs 7 lakhs already collected from Sumanal but not much from Savanahalli and Honganahalli. Work notification is yet to be issued but secretary assured urgent action.

**4. Drainage Facilities :** No improvements noticed and urgent action is required by Govt. in this regard.

**5. Health Facilities :** Maternity Hospital function but there is no Lady Doctor. Secretary wanted a representation by the

villagers to expedite action by higher authorities.

**6. Library facilities :** The Secretary requested better usage of the library.

**7. Vocational Training :** Training in various activities such as making pappads, pickles and Agarbathi, diary farming etc. have made progress but marketing facilities need attention. SSF will explore if Bangalore can be a marketing destination for these products.

**8. Ambedkar Aashraya Scheme** is misused as beneficiaries are not properly identified. BPL list also needs revision to exclude the undeserving and include the deserving people.

**9. Ration Card :** Similar malpractices exist, and urgent action is required from Govt. as well as the people to set this right.

**10. Payment of Taxes :** Compliance rate is 50% and SHG activists came forward to assist Govt. The secretary offered incentives of up to 5% of the collection, to them.

Altogether the progress appeared to be good. Janaagraha and SSF should endeavour to increase the reach and deepen the impact of Participatory Democracy. (Based on Minutes of Meeting by SSF)

- A Sivasankaran  
J-CRC Member (Ward 94)



Well known Kannada writer, novelist and educationist Mr K T Gatti visited Janaagraha Centre recently, during his visit to Bangalore. Mr Pramod Goni - Coordinator of Urban Poor for GBWASP, explained to him about the concept and working of people's participation in local governance.