



ABHAYA CALL

"COME, LET US BUILD THE WARD OF OUR DREAMS"

Interested citizens of Bangalore from different areas/wards have been carrying out activities to improve civic amenities and living conditions and meet the cultural aspirations of people etc through welfare associations cultural/sports association, or through their individual capacity.

However without a overall vision and common objectives these efforts tended to get dissipated and ineffective, and overall development of the area/ward became difficult.

.....Experience shows that individual efforts, howsoever well intentioned have not been able to bring the desired results. Even smaller associations too have not done any better. Since Janaagraha movement brought together various associations, the grievances represented have drawn considerable attention from civic authorities and they have attempted to solve many of the problem.....

Janaagraha, a social movement felt this need for the people's participation and provided a platform in which all the enlightened citizens/organizations can come together to develop an overall vision and implement the same in close collaboration with the civic authorities. In essence, Janaagraha

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A SIMPLE WAY OF SAYING THANK YOU

Volunteer Ramya handing out the first J-RAVE to Col. Rudra, our administration coordinator. J-RAVE is an appreciation system adopted by Janaagraha after a visit to the Ernst & Young office. The idea was made possible here by Ramya, an MBA student who is coordinating the coming PROOF public discussion.

ALL GOOD THINGS COME TO AN END

By Swati Ramanathan

When the previous Chief Minister, S M Krishna, created seven Task-forces to bring in private-sector experience into the public governance arena, there was one task-force in particular that was extremely earnest about it's mandate.

The Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) went about proving the partnership model with spirited leadership. As with any new-kid-on-the-block, the BATF and its activities aroused a range of sentiment within many stakeholders: government, NGO's, media, academicians, and the public in general.

There was derision, distrust, resentment and sometimes envy. There were accusations of being "extra-constitutional", autocratic, unnecessary, and ineffective.

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The Power of the People



.....Janaagraha has given me a new way of looking at democracy, and how democracy can actually be. From elect and forget, now we elect and engage.....

Participatory Democracy were two words that seemed very unclear to me. Though I went through the website umpteen times, the idea of Janaagraha remained like a picture on the sand that had been washed by the gentle waves. As the time for me to come to India, or rather to Janaagraha drew closer, I became more and more anxious as I knew that there was going to be something great, something phenomenal awaiting me there- in Janaagraha.

I became part of Janaagraha through an ambassadorship program which is a program by AIESEC, an international fully

student run organization. The purpose was to gain working experience at an international level, learn the culture and values of people from other countries and to create amazing future leaders of the world. We also want these young “ambassadors” to bring back some valuable take home lessons or ideas. And guess what?

Boy, do I have something extraordinary to bring home and share when I get back!

The way I looked at democracy before, was of course the romantic way, where you elect your leader and leave all your problems to him hoping he would solve everything, and when something is not right, you blame him! But now, Janaagraha has given me a new way of looking at democracy, and how democracy can actually be. From elect and forget, now we elect and engage.

And my time here as the volunteer coordinator has given me the opportunity to experience and to learn from not only the campaigns and activities here but also

the people. Janaagraha relies fully on dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers to help manage the tasks and needs of the movement. I have seen what the power of the people have done and can do.

Janaagraha is a platform for the citizens to engage with the local government, but the real force, is the force of the people. People, who believe in the idea of participatory democracy, people who elect and engage with their leaders, people who don't just wait to be spoon fed! And with the power of people we can definitely make this city a better place for all.

.....And my time here as the volunteer coordinator has given me the opportunity to experience and to learn from not only the campaigns and activities here but also the people.....

So what have I learnt from Janaagraha? Janaagraha provides us with the opportunity to make a difference. You and me have the power to make this difference, it's whether we WANT to make this difference or not! Well I have made my first step in making a difference. Have you?

- Anisha Nair

Volunteer Coordinator

LETTERS

I have Learnt a Lot

I've been associated with Janaagraha for the past two years. Since then, it has not only been a very rich and faithful experience to say the least, but also a continuous learning process for me.

The kind of dedication and professionalism I see in Ramesh and Swati in their work is amazing. The same energy I see being percolated down to the entire team.

Personally I've benefited and learnt a lot from here. I've had the privilege of listening to many eminent personalities and got to know about the various activities, the sacrifice some of them have made for the betterment of our society as a whole. The



list is endless and it never ceases to awe me!

Programmes like Bala Janaagraha and Yuva Janaagraha have been so successful amongst the younger group that it's heartening to see them voluntarily and enthusiastically coming forward to participate in the various activities of Janaagraha. It is so essential for these youngsters to understand our government and the importance attached to citizen's participation in the governance.

This awareness which is slowly spreading across amongst our youngsters and also other sections of the society through Janaagraha activities is sure and solid! Hopefully I'll be able to contribute my mite in this movement always.

- Veena Hegde, Ward 50

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.....This awareness which is slowly spreading across amongst our youngsters and also other sections of the society through Janaagraha activities.....

The Mind of the Middle Class

Last week, my mother-in-law brought home an old issue of a Gujarati magazine, in which there was a letter written by Harilal Gandhi to his father, Mahatma Gandhi.

It was a painful letter, full of the sorrow of a lost relationship caused by what the son believed was an overbearing father.

This resulted in a discussion about Gandhi, and soon the temperatures started rising: it is difficult for temperatures not to rise when one is discussing Gandhi, especially his private life. Besides the family and my mother-in-law, we also had my mother and Varun, a young 18-year old nephew of a dear friend, who was visiting from Mumbai, volunteering at Janaagraha before he left for his undergraduate studies at Berkeley.

....."What if you were Gandhi's best advisor, and his choices were: one, to work to get Independence for India; or, two, be a great father and husband. He could only do one of the two. If he did one, the other would not be accomplished. What advice would you give him?".....

Soon, Swati posed a question, "What if you were Gandhi's best advisor, and his choices were: one, to work to get Independence for India; or, two, be a great father and husband. He could only do one of the two. If he did one, the other would not be accomplished. What advice would you give him?" She deliberately left only two options to push the debate.

Most of the advice veered towards telling Gandhi to fight for Independence, for differing reasons. One said

that there must be sacrifice for great results; another said that it is the price of greatness, not all of us can lead the country.

A few were of the opinion, quite emphatically, that the family came first. "If everyone took care of our families, that is enough, isn't it?"

It is a difficult question to answer. Obviously, the ideal answer is, "Why can't he do both?"

But this question opened up a different seam in the conversation, about the mind of the middle class.

It is only human to think of our own needs, especially those of our family. After all, we chose to have children, they did not ask to be born. And we have an obligation to them before anything else.

But while this is critical, it is also important to see that we are a part of society.

Imagine if we were living in Afghanistan, or Iraq, or Palestine. Whether you like it or not, you would have no control over your personal lives. The social fabric is torn. Children cannot go to school because there are no schools in many cases. Often, girls cannot step out of houses. Boys get shot at, sometimes not coming home. In many cases, they choose to fight back, making unnatural choices. Women get raped, law and order is missing. There is

no functioning society. It is close to anarchy.

In this situation, do we have the luxury of thinking only about our family? To what end?

If a society has to function, it requires millions and millions of small acts of unselfish work. It is like a never-ending carpet that is being woven, with each successive generation picking up the threads, and doing their bit. Some societies are at an advanced stage, where the carpet is well-woven already, others like Afghanistan have to start at the very beginning. Sometimes the carpet tears, and we have to collectively repair it. And this is not the responsibility of government, it begins with the **people** first taking responsibility. If we admire other societies, we are admiring the work of millions of people, over scores of generations. We are admiring their carpets.

And what is the state of our own carpet in India? Is it complete? Is everyone doing their bit? Are there gaping holes? The reality is that, despite our weaknesses, we are lucky to be living in a society that is shaped by thousands of large-hearted people. I have personally met so many, both inside government and outside it. They are everywhere, and yet they are invisible. Helping street children, fighting for women's issues, standing for hours at the traffic lights in the dust and smoke directing the vehicles, taking burn victims to the hospital, and so on. The list is endless.

They do their bit, not because it is their job, not because someone asked them to do so, but because it had to be done. They see the big picture.

What if every one of these people decided that they were only going to think about themselves. Imagine what could happen to society. All the things that you and I take for granted will simply disintegrate when a society stops functioning. There is a hidden glue holding this delicate fabric together.

The problem is that this is hard to do, with all the family responsibilities. And nowadays, it is getting harder to do. The world is moving so fast, with so many pressures. Everyone needs more money for the necessary things in life, children need to study harder to get ahead, parents to take care of, in-laws to take care of, the home, the help.

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Published by Janaagraha at # 198, Nandidurg Road, Jayamahal, Bangalore - 560 046 and Printed at Shubhodaya Printers, (Ph : 26679508) # 48, Rangarao Road, Shankarapuram, Bangalore - 560 004.

Editorial : Ishwar Daitota (Communications Advisor), Suresh (Layout)

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The Mind of the Middle Class

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This list is also endless! It is hard to find time to do all this, AND pick up my thread to weave the fabric of society.

But the same pressures are felt by everyone. How do they manage? I agree that some people have more challenges than others, that it is more difficult for them. And then I think of Boniface Prabhu, who – in a wheelchair – not only wins the world special tennis championship, but also finds time and energy to start an academy for others like him.

So, the starting point has to change. The starting point that I don't have a responsibility, that I need to only think of myself and my family. If this starting point moves, and each of us

begins to see our empty space at the carpet, with the loose thread, we have made a beginning. Motivating oneself to get to there and start weaving requires discipline and dedication, like everything else in life.

There are still so many empty spaces at the Indian carpet.

This is not about Gandhi, it is about each of us. Why can't we do both?



Ramesh Ramanathan
Campaign Co-ordinator

Face to Face in Malleshwaram

Unlike the previous Face to Face with Candidates of Assembly Election wherein we, the MSI members had to go to respective candidate's place, interview then disseminate during the programme, it was a cakewalk this time. Candidates were asked to file affidavits covering all the requisite information about them.

.....the meeting started on time and ended after exactly two hours. First, the candidates talked about what their plans if would be they won, followed by a question and answer session.....

Election Officer was co-operative enough to hand over the copy of the same to us free of cost. We reproduced them in a format, printed and spread it across our constituency comprising Ward 1 to 7. Candidates were also contacted well in advance regarding their participation in the Face to Face with the Public programme and got their concurrence to attend.

Venue was fixed, which came free to us for such a public interest cause. So in the posters and printouts itself we could invite the public to take part.

Till the "D" day others were doubtful whether candidates will turn up. But, we

were however confident, because such programmes give opportunities to candidates to interact, particularly the educated ones who do not bother to vote. When the local police was informed about the programme, they extended a warning notice to us saying 'that if any untoward incidents happened among the different party supporters, we the MSI would be responsible and liable as it would be risky to call them all on a single stage. This time barring one, all were well educated or Doctors by profession.

A total of seven candidates contested in our constituency. Except the one who was the victim of not getting the Janatha Party symbol, the other six had come, that too on time. A special stage was arranged to accommodate all in one row. It was a nice sight to watch, otherwise rivals rubbing their shoulders with each other, smiling and greeting each other. As announced, the meeting started on time and ended after exactly two hours. First, the candidates talked about what their plans if would be they won, followed by a question and answer session. It was quite a brain storming one, and nobody maligned the others. In the very beginning it was announced that one should not criticize the other.

Here, I would like to mention one incident. According the Affidavit filed by our sitting MLA Mr. Seetharam, there were some dues from his side to the Government, which we had also duly furnished in the Format. As the Posters were stuck at different places, his supporters objected, but, the MLA quietly

filed one more affidavit saying that due to typographical error, mistake has taken place and sent the copy to me with the relevant documents to prove that there were no arrears. We accepted and helped by changing the remaining posters. Our format has really helped him in three ways

.....Face to Face meeting ended with a happy note with a good gathering and the proper co-operation from the candidates.....

1. Not to sign any document without reading thoroughly.
2. To be available over phone when required on such occasion (I had told his supporters, when they surrounded me, that I had tried to contact him to get his verdict on this but he did not bother to come on the line, so I had to reproduce whatever was in the Affidavit.
3. There was a report in the Newspaper about Mr. MB Patil of Bidar MLA. Such an embarrassment was avoided by the MLA because he could rectify his error well in time.

Face to Face meeting ended with a happy note with a good gathering and the proper co-operation from the candidates. Incidentally, Police ACP himself had come to the venue and posted two constables.

- **Sumathi Rao**
Ward 7

Looking Back

J-CRC BULLETIN for MAY

The J-CRC members met the commissioner of BMP on May 3. The members explained to him the unsatisfactory situation and the delayed work of BWSSB in the 27 wards. Mr. Srinivasa Murthy the commissioner said that he would discuss it with the BWSSB and sort it out.

The other issues were regarding KRIA and wrong data entry of the computerized receipts of the property tax by the BMP.

- Rotary club of Bangalore Cantonment had organized "Arogya 2004", a health exhibition (May 7 to 9). Of the many stalls put up, Janaagraha's was one. Some of the J-CRC members, along with other volunteers manned the stall on all the 3 days.

- Singamma Srinivasa Foundation (SSF) had organized an orientation programme on "Building Budgets" for elected women representatives from various

parts of Karnataka at IPP Hall., Malleshwaram from May 8 to 10.

- The first phase of the building budget project aimed to understand whether the interests of women reflected in the budget of State and Local Government. The second phase focused on developing specific tools to enable greater participation of the elected women representatives in the budgetary process.

- The methodology of SSF for developing tools is by holding interactive workshops with partners. SSF had requested Janaagraha to partner this orientation programme. The J-CRC members gave a presentation on Ward Planning, Ward Works, Federation building, etc to the elected women representatives. It was a learning experience for the J-CRC group too.

- On May 19 Ernst and Young a global

financial consultant company had arranged a half a day training session for the Janaagraha volunteers and the J-CRC members.

- A preliminary Q&A session of the PROOF Q4, public discussion was held at the Janaagraha office on May 20. The Q4 budget variance report of the BMP was distributed to the community members. Lots of questions arose from the communities regarding the receipts and expenditure. These questions are compiled and will be put forward during the PROOF public discussion.

- On May 27 Sri Jayaprakash Narayan of Lokasatta (Hyderabad) interacted with Janaagraha members and in reply to questions on motivation of people, JP suggested that the communities should work on electoral reforms, health and education. He also suggested that a ward committee should be constituted at the ward level.

Wards 68, 94 and 100 had MRMs during the month of May. In Ward 68, the MRM was sans any agency officials. Wards 94 and 100 had successful MRMs. Ward 94 is in the process of forming a federation.

- **Smitha Srinath, Ward 50**

Janaagraha office personnel, volunteers and the Janaagraha Community Resource Committee (JCRC) Members visited the corporate tax consultants M/s Ernst & Young at the Brigade Software Park in Banashankari II Stage.

E & Y are already in full partnership with Janaagraha in the Bala Janaagraha programme, thanks mainly due to the admirable personal interaction between our co-ordinator Mrs. Sunitha Nadamuni and the CEO of M/s E & Y, Mrs. Sharada Cherwoo.

The tastefully arranged conference room, called Nalanda after the great ancient university in Bihar, with name badges, programme sheets and refreshments, bore testimony to the meticulous planning, however ordinary the event might have been to the participants.

After a brief introduction of each participant staff members of E & Y, we followed them on an extended tour of the facility.

It was amazing to note the usage of every inch of wall space, cubicle partitions etc for depicting some meaningful message. Ms. Sharda and the staff took pains to explain the genesis of the humane side of the business. The hard headed ethics of a business dealing with the complexities of corporate taxes, was in complete

An Encounter with a DIFFERENCE

contrast with the whole hearted and joyful approach by the CEO, administrative manager and the staff of the company.

Wherever financial matters are to be dealt with, I had personal allergy to the entire subject and therefore the atmosphere in E & Y was an eye opener to me. The lesson learnt was that nothing need necessarily make a person grim and less humane in approach, even when engaged in congenially disagreeable tasks.

The inspection tour was followed by brain storming sessions on two subjects which we chose to explore. The subject of Technology applications employed by us in Janaagraha was not dealt with in detail, as it is tailored to suit specific objectives.

The second subject chosen was communication. Mr. Ishwar opened the discussion, wanting to popularize writing habits in communities, particularly with Janaagraha members. This writer analysed the reasons why most people recoil from practices of writing for publications.

Sharda suggested that in case the writing

.....The lesson learnt was that nothing need necessarily make a person grim and less humane in approach, even when engaged in congenially disagreeable tasks.....

was converted from a task to a fun – effort, there would be more attempts at writing. A number of ideas were put forth and each suggestion had been duly noted down and the responsibility to write about those topics were also marked. It is expected that this exercise would ignite the hidden talent for writing amongst all Janaagraha and E & Y members, which could then be refined and adopted as a road map to encourage the communities at large.

After a sumptuous lunch we thanked to every one in E & Y and particularly to the CEO. We jointly invited E & Y family to visit Janaagraha at the first opportunity and we took our leave with a little sadness. It was really an encounter with a difference.

- **A Shivashankaran, Member, J-CRC**

I was the first polling officer in the recently held Lok Sabha and Vidhansabha elections conducted on April 20, 2004. I would like to share my experiences with the Janaagrahis.

Polling officers are generally elected amongst government servants of various departments and when they need more polling officers, teachers from reputed private schools are recruited for the job. Each polling booth which has more than 1,200 voters has a team of 6 polling officers and a police official. There is a presiding officer who is completely in charge of his booth and has complete powers to carry out his responsibilities legally and effectively. It is his duty to carry out fair and just voting in his polling booth. He has to co-ordinate with his team. The first polling officer's responsibility is to identify the voter either through his Voter ID or 23 other specified documents and allow him to vote. He makes a note in his voter's list of the people who have voted and also the number of men and women who have exercised their vote.

The second polling officer's job is to mark the voter's forefinger with indelible ink and take his signature.

The third polling officer notes down the serial number of the voter as per the list and the number of voters as per the persons voted and gives the voting slips to the voters.

The 4 and the 5 polling officers manage the electronic voting machine and help the voters to vote.

The police constable sits out near the

entrance of the polling booth and sends the voters inside.

The whole team is set up on the day prior to the elections. On the previous day of the elections they are given appointment orders which have a batch number. They arrive at their specified centers and the number of their polling station is displayed. They then reach a table with their P.S. number. Each table has 3 P.S. numbers, it is here that they meet their team mates. Their work starts from 10 am. Once all their members arrive, they collect all the election material and proceed to their specified buses. Six teams

Experience of Polling Officer - a Janaagrahi

going in the same direction travel in one bus. The teams are dropped off at their polling stations with their materials. The officials then start preparing for the next day - filling of forms et al. The polling officers are required to stay back in the polling stations till the elections are over.

The job of the polling officer is a very responsible one. On the day of the election at 6 am they have to prepare the electronic voting machines. They conduct mock polls in the presence of the polling agents of the various parties and seal the machines after assuring the agents of the various parties that there are no votes polled against any candidate. Then the EVMs are sealed and become tamper proof.

These EVMs ensure that there are no invalid votes and the voting cannot be tampered and the voter IDs help in checking proxy votes. This is towards having free and fair elections once all the above are in place.

The voting is conducted through out the day from 7 am to 5 pm. The polling officers are also instructed to allow the last person in the queue to vote even if it is after 5 pm.

Periodical cross verification of voting is done by the team. The returning officer of the area too visits them a couple of times to ensure that everything is alright.

After this the polling officers wind up everything, calculate and cross verify the number of votes polled, the number of women voters etc. They leave the polling stations around 7 pm by the same bus

which dropped them there. They deposit the election materials in the centers and there ends their responsibilities.

The job of the polling officers is challenging, enjoyable and a responsible one. But they face hardships in terms of facilities. Sometimes they do not have a proper place to rest in the nights, lack of proper toilets, innumerable mosquitoes and unavailability of food, coffee, tea makes people avoid taking on this task. Apart from this they have to face the ire of irate voters and screen the fake voters.

The polling officers should be allowed to discharge their duties as assigned to them to ensure fair and free elections.

- Mrs. Meera Mukud, Ward 55

New layouts to have two water lines

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will lay separate lines for potable and non-potable water in all new layouts being developed by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) and the Kamataka Housing Board (KHB).

The BWSSB Chairman, M N Vidyashankar, announced has that a decision to lay two lines in all new layouts had been taken by the board recently.

This step would ensure that potable water was used only for drinking and non-potable for other purposes.

The BWSSB had already commissioned six sewage treatment plants (STPs) in the city and eight intermediate sewage pumping stations would be ready soon.

"We will encourage the use of recycled water and this will help us in the long run. There will not be water shortage in the city in the next few years," Mr. Vidyashankar has said.

The BMP had entrusted the Rs. 150-crore project to lay water and sanitary lines in new wards to the BWSSB last year and the board had taken up work in packages.

The members reportedly asked the BWSSB Chairman to request the Bangalore Electric Supply Company (BESCOM) to supply subsidised power for the project.

Greets and

Janaagraha would like to congratulate Preetha (She was coordinator of PROOF in Janaagraha) and Vijay for the birth of their baby girl, on June 12 at Chennai. We would like to welcome little Arundhati into our infant Janaagraha Family.



PROOF Baby Girl

COME LET US BUILD THE WARD OF OUR DREAMS

(Contd... from Page 1)

aimed at public governance through people's participation.

Over the last two years people from 15 wards of Bangalore city came forward to take advantage of Janaagraha's initiative and participated effectively in ward Yatras, issue identification, exploring solutions, analyzing costs and revenues, building the plans, developing vision documents and discussing the same with civic authorities for implementation. This has been taken in the true spirit by the civic authorities, and monthly review meetings are taking place between civic representatives, concerned departments and area representatives.

Janaagraha has also been successful in creating civic awareness in various classes/groups of people by such initiatives as Bala Janaagraha, Yuva Janaagraha etc.

With the initial success of the above

.....Experience shows that individual efforts, howsoever well intentioned have not been able to bring the desired results. Even smaller associations too have not done any better.....

.....Now that Janaagraha has shown us the practical way of unitedly working towards achievement of our objective, let us join our hands together in this venture of forming the federation.....

movement, it is felt that the people from various wards should take advantage of the Janaagraha platform and it is suggested that a federation of all welfare associations/individuals/Business establishments interested in the welfare of their ward be formed for each ward so that all the issues/problems can be solved in a spirit of cooperation understanding and togetherness.

Needless to say, all the participating associations represented by its president/individual members will be on equal footing in the proposed federation and issues will be discussed/prioritized based on needs/aspirations of the individual areas with due consideration for the development of the ward as a whole.

Experience shows that individual efforts, howsoever well intentioned have not been able to bring the desired results.

Even smaller associations too have not done any better. Since Janaagraha movement brought together various associations, the grievances represented have drawn considerable attention from civic authorities and they have attempted to solve many of the problem.

Now that Janaagraha has shown us the practical way of unitedly working towards achievement of our objective, let us join our hands together in this venture of forming the federation.

This process is now being initiated by a group of ward representatives whose phone numbers are given below. You may contact the same.

Come, let us together build the ward of our dreams and in turn the city of our dream.

- Abhaya, Ward 54

Janaagraha Calendar

(JUNE 1 - 30)

Self Help Group Meetings

- June 4 : ANKUR Meeting (3 pm) @ Janaagraha Office.
- June 16 : CDS (2.30 pm) @ IPP Centre, 16th Cross, Malleshwaram.
- June 18 : ANKUR Meeting (3 pm) @ Janaagraha Office.

MRM Meetings

- June 5 : Ward 74, Jeevanbhimnagar (4 pm) @ Ward Office - Mr. Nagaraj Prabhu (Ph : 9448070546).
- June 5 : Ward 78, Vasanthnagara (5.30 pm) @ KSV Nilaya - V Krishna Murthy (Ph : 22286411).
- June 7 : Ward 7, Malleshwaram (6 pm) @ Malleshwaram Swabhimana Initiative - Ms. Sumathi Rao (Ph : 23449824).
- June 19 : Ward 54, Srinivasanagara (10.30 pm) @ Ward Office - Y Damodara (Ph : 26721457).
: Ward 100, Sanjayanagara (6 pm) @ RMV Club - R C Dutt (Ph : 23416906).

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

ALL GOOD THINGS

(Contd... from Page 1)

While the BATF was indeed extra-constitutional in the sense that there was no constitutional provision for such a body, it has been one of the most creative and out-of-the-box endeavors of government.

It is also true that the BATF could have found more ways to be inclusive in its initiatives. There was however, no previous model to follow or learn from. With the opportunity for change so rare and tenuous, the BATF had a healthy respect for its limited window of opportunity and was realistic in its goals.

There was also appreciation, respect and a genuine hope for change. And change was delivered. The BATF has created a new model for private engagement in public governance. Its members have been

unafraid to get their hands dirty in helping make a difference to the functioning of local government.

Nowhere in India, have service agencies and city administration stood regularly in front of the public, with increasing confidence and conscientiousness, to present their future plans and account for their past promises.

The systemic changes that the BATF has championed have piqued the interest of several State governments and Social Development Organizations. For myself, I salute the generosity, dedication and achievements of the BATF.

As Mr. Gopalkrishna of the TATA group said at a recent event: the effectiveness of leadership must be judged when it is no longer there. The BATF will be sorely missed in the city of Bangalore.

Bala Janaagraha - Amdon BioVigyan Exhibition



Mr. Eric Lam Lights the lamp as Prof. Sharad Chandra and Students look on.



A four-day Life Sciences and Biotechnology pilot program at Mallya Aditi International School was inaugurated by Prof. Sharad Chandra of Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore, here today. He commended the organizers for familiarizing the children with the complicated concepts by using novel teaching methodologies.

About 70 students from Mallya Aditi International School and Seshadripuram High School participated in this workshop jointly organised by Bala Janaagraha and Amdon BioVigyan Limited, Bangalore. The Amdon-Bala Janaagraha partnership aims to introduce the

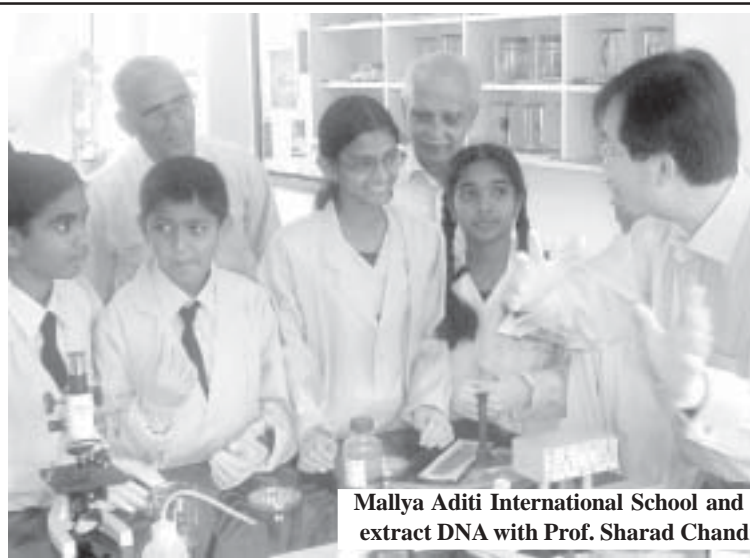
children to the power of biotechnology in the area of public health through path breaking experiments.

The sessions conducted by Eric Lam, CEO of Amdon Group, were kept short, fun filled and interesting by introducing activities, games, role-plays and lots of laboratory hands-on experiments. The children conducted experiments like DNA extraction, culturing and identification of bacteria which reinforced the need for good hygiene and sanitation in their daily lives.

The Amdon Group has developed a suite of programs on topics like Cell Biology & Genetics, Microbiology, Environmental & Food Sciences,

Molecular Biology, Natural Product Chemistry, Agri-biotechnology, & recent fields like Structural Biology, Biophysics and Bioinformatics for students at all academic levels. Bala Janaagraha is an activity to inculcate citizenship values in school children through community action. The programme will be conducted in over 90 schools this year; through fieldtrips, classroom activities and community projects, children develop a comprehensive understanding of the way their city functions and their role in it as citizens.

The joint vision is to make biotechnology education a reality for children from all strata of society.



Mallya Aditi International School and Seshadripuram High School Students extract DNA with Prof. Sharad Chandra, Prof. Ishwaran and Mr. Eric Lam.

