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Be The Change You Want To See

The Vote Catcher

EDITORIAL

By Cheryl Rebello

India is catching the imagination of every Indian. And to vote for is to vie for. Or so it seems in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections. People are signing up to fulfill their role in the democratic process, contributing to better political engagement, quality of life, equity, safer neighbourhoods and so on – that’s the vote catcher this time around. Believing in *my* vote and what *I* can do. A billion people rally to this anthem. While political parties air their promises, add bells and whistles, people will get out there to test them. And hold political parties

accountable to their commitment. The manifestos will soon become the reference point for delivery, and more people will now demand

this. Jaago Re! One Billion Votes has facilitated over six lakh registrations such that they can pursue their voter identities. The campaign also moves into next gear, enabling people to make informed choices, and engage with the political system by studying candidate profiles, understanding their manifestos, and then holding the political parties to account.

Security is an issue that concerns every Indian citizen. Janaagraha has initiated a systemic response to needs for better citizen safety and security. This edition of *Janaagraha Times* brings you the launch of the Kannu Teri Bengaluru campaign - A Civil Defence initiative in partnership with Janaagraha, which aims to bolster neighbourhood security, and foster a prepared citizenry. The first Civil Defence division in Bengaluru was launched on 29th March towards raising the Civil Defence force in Bengaluru. Read more in this edition, and log on to civildefence.areasm.org The story on STEERS(State Enhanced Electoral Roll System) tells of a long-term solution for better electoral roll management. One more shot in the arm for democracy. And winding their way across the largest democracy in the world, in a chartered train from the Indian Railways, were over 300 youth who took part on the Jagrati Yatra. An incredible journey!

Work continues on infrastructure projects with Chennai City Connect contributing to modernization and expansion plans at the Chennai airport. Citizen action involving other city stakeholders, details of the platform to participate, and experiences from our outreach activities fulfill this edition. There’s more news from Janaagraha programmes in the updates section. Hope all this catches your attention and involvement. For a better city, let’s vote ourselves in!

Believing in my vote and what I can do. A billion people rally to this anthem.



Cheryl Rebello is the Communications Coordinator at Janaagraha. She can be contacted at cheryl@janaagraha.org

Area Suraksha Mitra – Kannu Teri Bengaluru

Civil Defence Division no. 37, Siddapura and Adugodi Launched

The terror attacks in Mumbai have created a heightened interest in the citizenry to participate in security related initiatives especially those involving their immediate surroundings or their neighbourhoods. Civil Defence & Home Guards, Karnataka and Janaagraha have come together to effectively channelise these energies in Bengaluru. This will be done through the induction of Area Suraksha Mitras into the Civil Defence. Area Suraksha Mitras are citizen security representatives from local communities. Typically an ‘area’ would comprise 3-4 streets, and approximately 300 families. The initiative offers a systemic way for people to play a role in the safety of their neighbourhoods.

Area Suraksha Mitra-Kannu Teri Bengaluru was launched by the Directorate of Home Guards & Civil Defence in association with the city police, Janaagraha and supported by ICICI PruLife and Unilever. The programme was officially inaugurated with the induction of 122 Area Suraksha Mitras (ASM) into Siddapura/Adugodi (Division 37) at the Hombe Gowda Grounds, Wilson Garden. The launch was graced by Smt. Jija Madhavan Harisingh, DGP, Home Guards, Civil Defence & Fire Services, Sri Ramesh Ramanathan, Co-founder, Janaagraha and General T.M. John (Retd.), Chief Warden, Civil Defence.

The occasion saw the allocation of Post Wardens to their respective areas of responsibility. Mr. Pramod Goni, Divisional Warden – Div 37, explained the allocations using a map for the Siddapura and Adugodi Division. The campaign, aimed at empowering citizens to handle situations both in contingencies as well as for neighbourhood security, will work in close coordination with the police and other security agencies.

Speaking at the launch of Kannu Teri Bengaluru, Ms. Jija Madhavan Harisingh, DGP, Home Guards, Civil defence & Fire Services said, “The Civil Defence in Bengaluru is making all efforts to revitalise the force within the city. The central idea of this campaign is to build a trained force through a representation from every area in the city and work towards strengthening police capability to maintain citizen security. Our key goal through the Area Suraksha Mitra initiative is to make our homes, streets, neighbourhoods and communities safer and more caring places to live in.”

“Although there have been several schemes which have been floated for a systematic, sustainable and scalable solution to allow continuous education and

participation between the police force and the civilians, none of them can claim complete success. There is also the challenge of scarcity of resources to manage safety processes in cities. Bangalore, with a population of over 7 million, has only over 12,000 police personnel. As per norms, there should be 125 policemen per lakh population, but Karnataka has only 92 policemen per lakh population. This understandably is the reason why the police cannot deploy the work force required in every contingency. This campaign aims to address that particular challenge and will help support security agencies to meet that ever-increasing demand of the fastest growing city in Asia,” added Ms. Jija Harisingh.

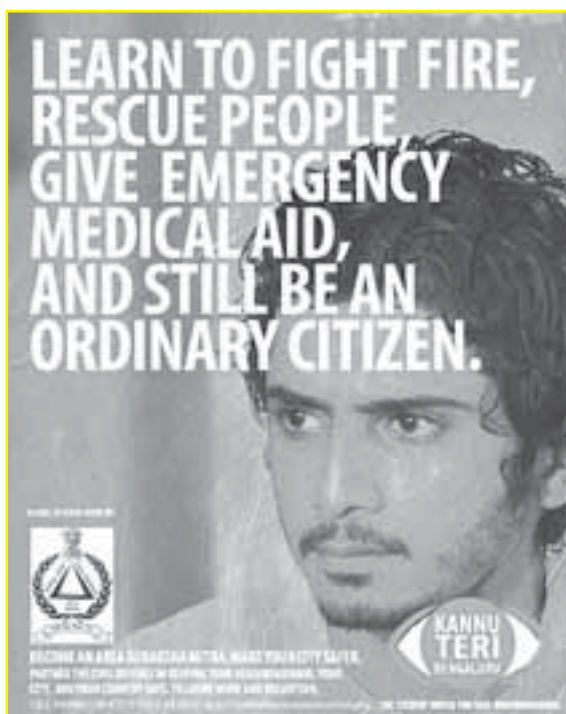
Mr. Pramod, Divisional Warden, Division 37, speaking on why he is proud to be chosen a Divisional Warden said, “Protecting my country has always been an aspiration. After what happened in Mumbai, my resolve to start contributing to citizen safety became very strong. And taking responsibility for my neighbourhood gives me a great sense of satisfaction. To put together a team and assure people in my area is a big responsibility, but I feel empowered to do so with the training I will get from the Civil Defence. People have been very cooperative, and have come forward to help – this

gives me a big boost. Now it’s a matter of pride to keep my area safe.”

Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan, Co-founder of Janaagraha said that the time for cynicism was over, “This initiative is a fantastic chance to show that we care for the city. Ms. Swati Ramanathan felt that it is necessary for people to participate in the political

system and have a sense of volunteerism.

The event saw a crowd of over 500 people participate. Several enthusiastic volunteers enrolled themselves into the initiative at the event. A visible buzz was created not only amongst the residents of Siddapura and Adugodi but also of the neighbouring divisions. Finally there is a way in which individuals can take responsibility for the safety of their neighbourhoods and engage with the “system” rather than just be a bystander.



A Photostory from the Area Suraksha Mitra - Kannu Teri Bengaluru Launch Event on the 29th of March 2009



Eager audience awaits the Launch of Area Suraksha Mitra - Kannu Teri Bengaluru



Proudly wearing the Civil Defence, Area Suraksha Mitra Jacket



Major General T M John, Chief Warden, Civil Defence, Jija Harisingh, DGP, Home Guards & Civil Defence, Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan, Co- Founders Janaagraha, at the event



Ramesh Ramanathan addresses the audience



Mrs. Jija Harisingh speaks about the importance of the initiative



Lighting of the Lamp



Displaying the Divisional Level map of Division Number 37, Siddapura & Adugodi



Handing out kits to the Post Wardens



Jija Harisingh, DGP, Home Guards & Civil defence interacting with the newly inducted Area Suraksha Mitras

S.T.E.E.R.S

By Rajesh Choudhary

STEERS (State Enhanced Electoral Role System) is a programme at Janaagraha that aims to provide solutions for problems which exist in the current election machinery. It is the solution from the supply side of the system which combines technology and civic participation efficiently to maintain the electoral system within the existing framework of election machinery. It is spearheaded by the Election Commission of India itself in partnership with Microsoft and Janaagraha.

Pitfalls in the current process are shortcomings in part numbers of the roll, Poor availability of information, High barrier for citizen involvement, Inadequate process control, Poor data management and Lack of security

A consolidated list of requests received physically is not available with the ERO/AERO (Assistant Electoral Registration Officer), rendering it difficult to monitor progress. Misplacement of forms, inadvertent omission while deciding the result of the request, etc., cannot be ruled out. Delays in the decision making and/or omissions severely hinder the involvement of the citizen, leading to exclusion of voters.

In case of electronic forms, the request is kept pending if the applicant is not available at the time of verification. Given the work environment in a city like Bangalore, giving prior intimation before the verification personnel visits the applicant is critical. The process adopted at present does not provide for such planning. There have been instances wherein such applications are lost, resulting in the citizen losing confidence in the process.

Multiple inclusions (the same name being included more than once, either in the same AC (Assembly Constituency) or in different ACs) can be avoided if, before

including a name the authorities concerned can ascertain whether the name is already included or not. Similarly, inclusions rejected at a certain point of time should not get included subsequently for want of harmonization of past decisions. Such cross AC decisions or decisions spanning various time horizons are severely constrained by the database structure adopted.

The STEERS proposal is to develop a comprehensive framework for better electoral roll management which can be achieved by rationalising part numbers to improve verification, provide better process control, data management and security, easy access to information and citizen involvement.

Any electoral roll management process should address the issues raised in the previous section, namely –

- Rationalise part numbers of the roll to avoid exclusion and improve verification
- Make information easily available and facilitate citizen involvement and
- Adopt better process control, data management and security features.

Janaagraha's role in STEERS will be to create a model for citizen participation.

Citizens and citizen groups must be able to obtain electoral roll related information with ease and actively participate in the process, without the involvement of any intermediary. Availability of the following information, though illustrative, could be a starting point for citizen involvement.

- List of ACs and PCs (Parliamentary Constituencies) in the state;
- Prominent areas and localities included in each AC

Continued from Page 2

- An AC locator system – which when given the postal address, the AC and the part number are made available
- Status of inclusion in the roll – if included the AC and the part number in which the name has been included becomes visible
- Status of inclusion request – whether under process or if rejected reasons therefore or if included the AC and the part number, etc.

While a list of ACs and PCs can be made available easily, section details included in every part number should be expanded and stored in a manner that can support the AC locator system. The database tables containing state and constituency particulars, geographic details like cities, municipalities, etc., and details of polling stations, etc., may have to be suitably modified to support this function.

Citizen involvement is greatly enhanced if intermediation by the official machinery is reduced or eliminated. Given the infrastructure available and the prevailing digital divide, the strategy would differ across geographical locations and the profile of the citizen involved.

A visit to the concerned office should be completely eliminated for willing citizens in urban areas. For instance, a citizen should be able to visit a self-service portal (such as a website) or convenient centres like Bangalore One (a one stop service centre for all citizen services like bill payment, tax remittance, etc.) or an RDS (a Rural Digital Service (E – service) centre at the sub taluka level for copies of land records, income certificates, etc.) and should be able to access information, initiate requests for inclusion/modification, etc., and print the request made for submission during official verification. Apart from disintermediation, this eager digitization would facilitate performance monitoring of the system and support status of inclusion requests.

However, in non urban areas and in the case of citizens without access to convenient centres, intermediation by the official machinery is inevitable. The BLO(Booth Level Officer) in such cases would play a crucial part in obtaining requests for inclusion/modification, etc., all through the year, as against periodically during revisions. Here too, eager digitization by entering the data at the nearest RDS before the application is handed over to the concerned AERO would bring benefits as above, apart from facilitating monitoring of the performance of the BLO.

All operations on the roll such as inclusions, corrections, deletions, etc., shall go through the ERMS (Electoral Roll Management System), which would codify the workflow related to a process, route the activities to appropriate stakeholders at the right time and capture the progress at every stage. This information can in turn be used to monitor the performance of the process. This will also ensure the presence of only one master copy of the data in the system and would lead to a robust control and security policy around access rights to the electoral roll.

Current Status

Due to the unscheduled Karnataka election, the STEERS pilot project got shifted to Tamil Nadu and so far the pilot for processing 20,000 forms in Hosur Tamil Nadu has been completed. Microsoft has generated the report and has sent it to the ECI, once approved STEERS will be rolled out in the entire state. Since we are talking about a paradigm shift, it will take some time to get the technology in place and roll out the plan. The good news is that the ECI itself agrees that this is the solution going forward within the existing framework. While Jaago Re! One Billion Votes is creating huge amount of momentum and awareness in the public, to the close the loop we need to have the system's solution in place. STEERS could be the answer to this system's solution.



Rajesh Choudhary is the STEERS coordinator at Janaagraha. He can be contacted at rajesh@janaagraha.org.

Citizen involvement is greatly enhanced if intermediation by the official machinery is reduced/eliminated

Tata Jagriti Yatra 2008 – An Incredible Journey Of Discovery

By Shruti Veenam

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. On 24th Dec 2008, 350 young Indians took that first step. Little did they know that the journey of the next 8000 Kms would alter the course of their lives.

This was the TATA Jagriti Yatra 2008, an 18-day train journey across India aimed at awakening the entrepreneurial spirit in youth of the age group between 18 to 25 years. The idea was to learn from successful social and business entrepreneurs. The Yatra covered 13 cities and 18 institutions in 18 days. The journey spanned social enterprises like Aravind Eye Care in Pondicherry, SEWA in Lucknow to business enterprises like TATA Steel in Jamshedpur and Lijjat Pappad in Mumbai. The visits were supplemented by a series of six CNBC TV 18 panel discussions on issues ranging from poverty to conservation of the environment.

Learning Opportunities

This journey was a memorable experience for all Yatris with key learnings courtesy visits from various role models. Each visit with a role model or institution concluded with an analysis of the entrepreneurial lessons learnt by us. The enterprise was studied collectively by the Yatris followed by creative focused presentations by them. Key themes for analysis included the uniqueness of the idea/institution/individual, genesis, incubation, scalability and sustenance of the idea followed by a SWOT analysis. We also had a variety of formal and informal group discussions

in the train on issues affecting the country's growth like industrialization, poverty alleviation, and urbanization ensuring we learned, both on the train and off it.

Each of us was guided in our learning by these key principles:

- Outer Journey of Discovery - To explore India through the Yatra
- Inner Journey of Discovery - The important personal journey of each of us Yatris
- Innovation - To look for the creative spirit of change makers
- Collaboration - To look at the kind of partnerships - financial, physical or human capital characteristic of large enterprises
- Transformation - To reflect on the change that each of us could create after the Yatra

The Entrepreneurial Learning

Personally for me, the highlight was the Aravind Eye Care Hospital in Chennai. It is a classic example of a large scale enterprise built professionally with a vision to create social impact, but with a sound financial model. Optimizing the use of surgeons enabled the organization to cross subsidize the cost, therefore 53% of their services are offered free of cost to the poor. Undoubtedly, a feat all of us marvelled at, as we left the hospital moved deeply by its humility and awestruck at the grandeur of its vision.

- Founded in 1976 by Dr. G. Venkatswamy, today it is the world's largest and most productive eye care facility
- Vision : Eliminating needless blindness
- Track record: Treated over 2.3 lakh outpatients and performed 2.8 lakh surgeries.
- Key differentiator: Doctors averaging 2000 surgeries a year unlike the world average of 220

The second wonder on my list was the Naandi Foundation in Hyderabad . It again stood out for its sheer scale achieved through professionalism and meticulous processes. After we toured through the world's largest kitchen, which feeds about 1.5 lakh kids everyday, we were blown away by its passionate and practical founder. What resonated most with us was his personal journey, his clarity, confidence and boundless passion.

- Founded in 1998 by Mr. Manoj Kumar
- Vision: To alleviate poverty.

- Track record: 5000 villages, 5000 employees and an annual budget of Rs.80-90 crores

- Approach : Undertaking large scale public-private partnerships, creation of social impact coupled with financial self sustenance. Focus on nutrition, education, health



Passengers of the Yatra Train



The Route of the Yatra

and safe drinking water

Another influencing visit was to the Barefoot College at Tilonia village in Rajasthan. The College trains the illiterate and poor and enables them with practical skills. On the visit, what struck us yatris most was seeing traditionally clad Rajasthani women confidently teaching a group of African women how to make solar lamps and cookers! I asked one of these “solar engineers” who was making a lamp in front of my eyes (literally making it with resistors and capacitors!), “Aap kitne tak pade ho?” (How much have you studied?) and I will never forget how much her reply shocked me “hum to bus aatvi tak pade hain” (I have studied only till the 8th standard). Two hours with Bunker Roy made us shiver at the sheer audacity of his approach. We left the village speechless at the courage of this one man, questioning the abilities(or inabilities) of our own minds to make unbiased, unconditioned judgments in recognizing true human potential, and of course with a deep indelible and unsettling feeling that we had a long way to go to unlearn.

- Founded in 1972 by the Ramon Magasaysay awardee Mr.Bunker Roy.
- Vision: To address mass poverty.
- Track Record: Trained 1.2 lakh rural people across 110 villages, making them



All the Yatris

capable professionals who can solve rural problems like making provisions for clean drinking water, healthcare, electricity, and so on.

- Key differentiator: Belief that being illiterate doesn't mean that one is uneducated. Encourages acquisition of practical knowledge and skills.

I would be doing great injustice if I did not make a special mention of the “train

shattering” affect that Jasmine Shah from Janaagraha had on the Yatris. The talk on the Jaago Re! One Billion Votes (JROBV) campaign at Bangalore turned out to be an instant favourite. The Yatris were completely energized by the fresh, smart and innovative approach of the JROBV campaign. What undisputedly stood out was the fact that this was initiated and being led by someone as young as a 27 year old. The Yatris could relate to someone their age and felt that it vindicated the fact that you can create change anytime you want, as long as you are determined to. The influence was powerful enough to create loyal JROBV volunteers of the Yatris, many of

who have now undertaken independent voter registration drives inspired by the campaign.

There were many other visits, and all of them deserve to be mentioned. I can never do justice to all the amazing places and people that we visited. All I can say is that each visit was diverse, unique and relevant; each one offering us heaps of learning that we know will help us throughout our lives.



Pitstop at a Railway Platform

The Subliminal Learning

The diverse range of Yatris selected from all regions of India offered a wide canvas to learn from, and certainly made the learning more interesting! The Yatris were young students and professionals, from rural and urban areas. Living together with 350 bright minds allowed us to learn and discover each others strengths, taught us how to tolerate different views, and most of all, to respect other peoples' goals and approaches to life. I met people younger than me who had already started businesses; I also met some people with immense strength, who have bravely faced many challenges in their lives,. Through our interactions we learnt the importance of collaboration. As Rajdeep Sardesai said at a discussion we had, in Delhi, “the future belongs to “bridge-builders”, people who can bring together a diverse set of people and work with them.”

Fun Galore

Though the aim of the Yatra was to create a serious learning environment, it was far from a boring educational tour. In fact all of us will always remember it for the fun moments we shared. Sleeping on 3 tier berths and living in enclosed coupes

which eventually became our “rooms”, our own in-house radio station - Bindaas Bol, our own request show, our innovatively designed bathing suites, the bickering over mobile charging points, the late night discussions, the singing, the dancing, the delicious food (cooked exclusively for us in the train everyday), each of these were experiences of a lifetime. Oh and how can I forget the platforms! We learnt to live on and love Indian Railway platforms – we ate on platforms, we slept on platforms, we played antakshari on platforms, we had presentations on platforms, we even partied on platforms! Yes, we are now capable of surviving on Indian Railway platforms for any number of hours! We also learnt (so I'd like to believe) how to live in drastically varying climatic conditions – from the scorching heat of Kanyakumari to the spine chilling Dilli ki sardi!

Keeping the spirit alive

Most of us have still not recovered from our Yatra “hangovers” and may never fully, I think. Each one of us left the Yatra changed. We are all in different phases of our lives and left the Yatra with varying feelings – some confused, some uncertain, some of us are uncertain but determined, and some of us are already on the path to creating change. But the one emotion that we all collectively left the Yatra with was Inspiration. Each of us knows deep in our hearts that this little journey has taught us something so essential that we must give back by acting on this learning at some stage in our life. Till then, we Yatris have formed our smaller city wise networks to keep the spirit alive.

As we fondly recall the memories of the Yatra, we also know that the end of this Jagriti Yatra marks the beginning of 350 personal Yatras. Where these 350 Yatras go, only time will tell. But we promise to pursue our personal Yatras with the same cheer and passion as of the TATA Jagriti Yatra, with the same ‘Yaaron Chalo’ attitude, singing the Yaron Chalo song in our hearts...

Kuch badal raha kuch badalenge

Tab badalega jab badalenge

Kuch dekha hai kuch dekhenge

Kuch likha hai kuch likh denge...

Yaaron Chalo badalne ki Rut hai

Yaron Chalo savarne ki Rut hai!



Shruti Veenam is a volunteer at Janaagraha.

Moral Policing

By Mr. Nayak

The media had been “breaking news” on the attack on some young women in a pub, in Mangalore a while ago. The perpetrators, instead of being apologetic, have been on a righteous, moral high ground .One of their leaders going to the extent of saying that these young women were like their sisters, and that they wanted to “save” them from moral degeneration and bring them back to the ways of Indian culture. This poses several questions. Firstly, does Indian culture teach us to treat our sisters like cattle? For them to be kicked, herded, humiliated and traumatized? What sort of culture anywhere in the world teaches such type of jungle behaviour? Can such behaviour be part of any “culture”? Secondly, what is Indian culture?

The culture of India has been shaped by the long history of India, its unique geography and the absorption of customs, traditions and ideas from some of its neighbours as well as by preserving its ancient heritages, which were formed during the Indus Valley Civilization and evolved further during the Vedic age, rise and decline of Buddhism, Golden age, Muslim conquests and European colonization. India's great diversity of cultural practices, languages, customs, and traditions are examples of this unique co-mingling over the past five millennia.

India is also the birth place of several religious systems such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. The various religions and traditions of India that were created by these amalgamations have influenced other parts of the world too.

Culture, therefore, is values, systems and practices evolved over the years and has taken something from other cultures as well and made it its own. Therefore, culture is not something static and has evolved over time. Moral values also change over time. It is not a crime or sin to go to hotels, or for that matter, to any other place of entertainment for a citizen of India. Women also are citizens of India, aren't they? What does our constitution say?

I am quoting from Part III Fundamental Rights- Article 15, 2 and 2(a). “No citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them,

be subject to any disability, liability, restriction, condition with regard to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment..." No less than the Constitution of India has recognized that Indian culture today has changed. The Constitution under article 15(3) further goes on to say that, "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children" The Constitution recognizes the vulnerability of women and children and the protection that they may need from bigots, culture vultures, and trash of the same ilk and enjoins the state that it is at liberty to make special provisions for them to protect them.

With this background, it is perplexing to hear our politicians in power saying that they are determined to curb the "Pub culture" and "Mall culture" that is spoiling our youngsters in general and women in particular. They are saying this in the same breath with which they are condemning the incident mentioned in the preamble of this article. Considering the age of some of these politicians it appears that they are still stuck in an age when women were considered inferior to men and fit to be treated like cattle. It is a sad commentary on our Democracy that the safety of our citizens, women in particular is in the hands of politicians with such myopic vision. The worst part is that our legal system is so inefficient and porous that the moral police continue to practice their distorted version of Indian culture to the detriment of the weaker sections of our populace. The frightening part is that many men in our country support in private the culture vultures in their moral policing.

Mr. Nayak was a former employee at Janaagraha

Footpath Clearance Drive

By T.Vidyadhar

The misuse of footpaths is evident everywhere in the country. Misuse is mainly by hawkers, petty shop owners, vendors, road side workshop owners etc. In Mumbai many of the footpaths are used by slum dwellers.

Politicians find it is easier to allow such misuse as these people form a significant part of their vote bank. They say "hotte padu" the bureaucratic set up finds it a nice avenue for collecting bribes. Nobody wants to apply their minds to solve these problems, for example; by finding suitable locations like food courts in specific areas cordoned off by partitions, or by providing low cost malls for such vendors etc. Road widening is being done without any concern for where pedestrians will walk once you uproot the footpaths. Misused footpaths have forced pedestrians to use the roads as footpaths, putting their lives at risks.

In order to ensure that footpaths are suitable for use by pedestrians, Triward Federation in Hebbal Constituency took up a footpath clearance drive with the help of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Officials along with the Health Department and Police Departments (Traffic and Law & Order). Mr Vijaya Kumar, Executive Engineer BBMP, was very eager to get on with this drive and deputed his men along with a lorry to take away material lying on the footpath. The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Assistant Commissioner of Police and Police Inspector (Traffic) Mr Murali participated by deputing their men as well. Since the BBMP makes and maintains footpaths, they are the ones who are primarily responsible for ensuring clear footpaths for pedestrians'. They have BBMP Metropolitan Task Force Teams to assist them.

Cars and bikes, parked on the footpath were cleared along with material like BESCOM poles, construction material etc. Tender coconuts stored and sold on the footpaths were cleared as were panipoori carts and many other hawkers.

Triward Federation has decided to continue this drive periodically. One of the main objectives of this drive was to create awareness on the subject. There are people with vested interest who promote the misuse of footpaths and hence constant vigil by the citizens is needed. A CITIZEN is mighty and powerful and can take on anyone.



Mr. T. Vidyadhar is a socially active citizen. He is the Convener of Triward Welfare Associations Federation.

Airport Modernisation Project

By Shobha Menon

The Chennai Airport at Meenambakkam has been slotted for modernisation and expansion. The work is to be carried out by the Airport Authority of India and it includes the creation of a parallel runway, taxiways, aprons and new passenger handling buildings. The expansion work will involve the acquisition

of land in nearby areas. The modernisation and restructuring is expected to cost around Rs.2350 Cr, of which the cost of construction of the runway, taxiway and apron would be around Rs.1100 Cr, while the cost of construction of the terminal building, cargo building, car park and face uplift would be Rs.1250 Cr.

Chennai City Connect (CCC) commenced its work with a meeting, with Airport Director, Mr.Natarajan and his senior team, which involved briefing them on the organization and the work that CCC does. CCC also proposed to assist the authorities on solutions for the issues concerning the airport during the interim period of construction of the new terminals and current facility renovation. In the first phase of the project, CCC is working on vehicle movement, traffic flow, parking and other factors governing the external environment of the airport.

The medium term plan of the project aims at optimizing the internal space and improving passenger convenience and comfort and related issues prevailing within the terminal. CCC in the long term endeavours to make the airport a mobility hub, integrating it with other modes of the transport and traffic system.

CCC's team on the project includes, traffic planners, urban designers and a pool of architects with rich experience in their field of expertise.

The first phase of our study and recommendations would be presented to the Airport team and we plan to have standard manuals made which would include information on areas like passenger walkways for users, both regular and those with special needs within the airport, signage, info display screens, parking models etc, taking international standards as the reference.

The authorities at the airport feel that CCC is a knowledge resource and are very forthcoming in organizing our on-site study and providing us with their perspectives and inputs.

Shoba Menon is the Project Coordinator for City Connect Chennai.

Making It Count – Outreach, Jaago Re! One Billion Votes.

By Ashika Korula

I came to Janaagraha in October 2008, my first ever stint as a volunteer anywhere with anything of substance. I was introduced to Jasmine Shah, National Campaign Coordinator of the relatively-low-profile (at that time) Jaago Re! One Billion Votes campaign. A total of 3 minutes into Jasmine Shah's "campaign pitch" and a voice screamed within my head 'Please, oh please let me be a part of this!' Soon enough I found myself amongst the most interesting lot of youngsters, working on the most interesting campaign to 'wake up' the nation.

Outreach activities began with a bang, Mr. T.S Krishnamurthy addressing crowds at IIT Madras, NR Narayanamurthy at Infosys, Rakeysh Mehra at Wipro, hundreds of registrations pouring in.

We have come a long way since. A 150 Host Institutions (colleges & corporates) have committed efforts to ensure 100% registration within their campuses; we have held 30-35 other awareness/registration drives at college fests, malls and other public gatherings. In January, 2009 we were present at Dosti Terminus, a Youth Festival at Hyderabad, where we addressed an audience of about 15000 excited youngsters, eager to make their mark at least in some small way. On day one of the festival, we generated about 1000 fresh registrations on the spot! Advait and



Jaago Re! One Billion Votes Team with Rakeysh Mehra

the relentless brigade of the Hyderabad City Team Members (CTMs) continue to do us proud.

Outreach activities in North India also began to churn out

numbers. Championed by Ankur Chaturvedi (Delhi CTM), RKGIT, Ghaziabad, raked in another 700 registrations in one sitting. Manu Ahluwalia, Outreach Coordinator for the North, started what he calls 'Chai Raids' where, on the morning of events being launched at college campuses, hostel inmates were woken up with a hot cup of tea. What a way to 'wake up'! I thought he was mad when he first suggested it; I had to swallow my words almost immediately when I saw its immediate success.

In Feb 2009, Prashant Nanaware, Outreach Coordinator for West India, received

an award from Mumbai University for special contribution to the cause of getting college students registered for voting. Mumbai leads the way, having brought on board the campaign close to 45 institutions till date.



Speaking to College students at an Outreach event

The work that the Bangalore City Team has done is nothing short of admirable too, having churned out another 45 or so Host Institutions. The team is constantly guided by the ever calm and cool Vijay Pamarathi, and the unassuming Abhinand Parthasarathy. The Bangalore City Team is the largest and most active, with volunteers as young as

19 & 20 years old. Pranay, Nilesh, Roshan, Arun, Namratha, Saleela, Kapil, Vivek and Vijaydeep are just a few of those enthusiastic city team champions.

In early February, outreach activities were kicked off at Kolkata with Apeejay Surrendra Group of companies. Our partner and Kolkata based NGO, Pranthakatha, lead by Bappaditya Mukherjee has now built up a strong base of volunteers and registrations are going on in full-swing. In a matter of less than two weeks, we saw a 5000 increase in voter registrations on the website. I recently got the privilege of interacting with Mandeep and Swatantra, City Team leaders at Chandigarh, who make themselves available for us at the oddest of times of the day. 'Anything for the cause' as they say. Another significant feather in our caps was the announcement of nominations for CNN IBN's 'Indian of the Year' Awards. Janaagraha was nominated in the public service category for its efforts to increase voter registration amongst the youth. Suman, our National Outreach Coordinator, attended the awards ceremony and was humbled by the wonderful response received from eminent personalities, the likes of Madhavan Nair and Abhinav Bindra. To quote Suman, 'It was amazing to see the kind of credibility the campaign has earned. People recognize Jaago Re! One

Billion Votes as a timely, concrete effort to bring about change.' The response from the media has been no less encouraging. Leading TV channels have dedicated exclusive shows featuring members of the team, and even the City Team Volunteers.

I would be lying if I said that wherever we went, we were met with open arms. We do see cynicism, frustration and a deep sense of disappointment, especially amongst the youth. But, to them, and to us, the campaign stands for so much more than just voter registration. Through every on-ground activity, our aim is to underline the urgent need of the hour, which is for each citizen to play a more active role in democracy, and to realize that only through constant engagement of our leaders will 'change' be conceived.



Jaago Re! One Billion Votes Team at Janaagraha

At Janaagraha in Bangalore, we have a small Outreach Team, ably supported by fabulous Communications, Technical and Election News teams, and of course, by a host of enthusiastic City Team Members. Even as I write this, the team just keeps getting bigger. Corporate houses like Accenture, ICICI Prudential, Fidelity and many others have launched the campaign in their offices nation wide. The success that Jaago Re! One Billion Votes has seen has largely been because of its enthusiastic, poised-for-success volunteer base. It is truly a grassroots, people's movement that provides opportunities for ordinary people to do great things in their own small way. We begin with baby steps and hope that it only gets better.



Ashika Korula is the Outreach Associate for Jaago Re! One Billion Votes. She can be contacted at ashika@janaagraha.org

Volunteer Quotes

It has been a wonderful learning experience being at Janaagraha. I have been in the non-profit sector in India since 1991, but have never worked with one that works towards improving urban governance. The mission and space Janaagraha works in, is what excites me most about being here. The very talented and committed team here comes from different backgrounds, but all have blended in so well into the organisation's aspirations. The approach and REED framework within which Janaagraha carries out all its programmes has been very enriching for me. The Bala Janaagraha programme that I am working with has been doing some very innovative and impressive work with school children and I am enjoying being a part of this team. I think after all these years I am looking forward to being in an organization where I will learn new methodologies, skills and knowledge.

- Arati Menon Gupta, Bala Janaagraha Co-Cordinator

I have just had the most amazing experience working with Janaagraha. This internship has enhanced my social awareness. I am sure all my volunteer mates will agree with me when I say that we had the friendliest working environment. For a student like me with not much knowledge of the actual working scenario on ground level, this was an eye opener. My thanks goes out to the Jaago Re! One Billion Votes team for patiently guiding and engaging me in activities from time to time. Every single day has been a learning process and an experience I will cherish for life. JROBV aims to get one billion votes registered and I hope that happens soon. I am one amongst many who have registered to vote through the JROBV website! I wish the best to Janaagraha in all their future endeavours.

- Leela Reddy, Intern from Manipal Institute of Communication

"We see the children doing a lot of work on the Bala Janaagraha programme. Assignments are being given to them regularly along with projects. It is all being done in a very systematic manner as per the guidelines given by the Bala Janaagraha programme for the project work. The children are very happy with the work. The children were taken outside into their own neighbourhoods to do the project where they took photos of the conditions around them and then elaborated on those photos with some explanation in their projects." It was very fulfilling to work with these children on the projects and see how much they learned just during the small period where they were completing their work.

- Pramila, Bala Janaagraha Volunteer

After my sojourn with another non-profit, I had decided to focus my time and energy with an organization that dealt with civic issues and Janaagraha came to mind quite easily. My first days at Janaagraha were spent behind documents and having one-on-one conversations with different individuals. What struck me right away was that each individual that I met truly had concern and passion for civic issues and was putting their best foot forward in contributing to the organization's objectives. This struck a cord in me because I always believed that concerted and collective action can always have a bigger impact than a one off goodwill gesture and I see this at Janaagraha. Everyday has been a journey of hopefulness and learning at Janaagraha and I know it will continue to be one. What may change in this process is that my experiences on the field will in turn contribute to the overall growth of Janaagraha and that's a huge responsibility which I willingly take!

- Sunil Thomas, Community Leadership Programme

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I had the most amazing experience working with Janaagraha. Like everyone I used to think that I knew everything about what is happening around me, how the BBMP or municipality works or the facts/ myths about voting. The WISA project showed me that it is easy to criticize the government or politicians but there is lot of hard work required to work for the people. The Jaago Re Campaign (as the tag in the television commercial goes - "Wake up time, Wake up time!") was certainly an eye opener for me. There are so many things I didn't know, the mechanism of how to vote or how important voting is or who to vote for, etc, the things I was ignorant about like most other youth. Janaagraha gave me a chance to go to slums in Bangalore which I don't think I would have done in my life. It showed me the underdeveloped side of Bangalore, the mentality of people, their awareness about things around them. I wish more people come and volunteer with Janaagraha as it is a great learning experience.

I experienced a lot from Janaagraha and I can take this forward in my life and share it with other people. Working with Janaagraha has changed my attitude towards many things. I realised that working for society is very difficult. I appreciate the work the Janaagraha Team is doing for the people and in helping the government develop our nation. There are so many great minds behind the working of Janaagraha and its projects, and in turn its contribution to society. I wish them all success in future projects. I thank you all for having given me the opportunity to work with all of you and hope to come back and work with Janaagraha again.

Thank You Janaagraha!!!

- Shashank, Intern, Jaago Re! One Billion Votes

Platforms To Participate

By Anjali V. Kumar

Most of us are familiar with anecdotal incidents of the challenges of trying to address basic issues impacting our lives on a day to day basis. The list of problems is numerous and we are often made to run from pillar to post when dealing with local governments and agencies. I first came to Janaagraha with the same basic complaint and with a desire to address this problem. Janaagraha seemed like the ideal place to address these issues because of their wide gamut of activities and programs combined with their approach of engaging citizens, governments and civil society.

At Janaagraha we believe that the basis of a good quality of life is ultimately citizen participation. But the current political and administrative setup makes it difficult for citizens to participate in urban local governance.

Today Indian cities are divided into wards with each ward consisting of approximately thirty thousand voters. There is a representative for every Ward but his accountability is split among 30,000 voices. How can we as citizens ensure that our voice is heard amongst this cacophony of voices? What if there was a smaller institutionalized platform where people could come together to address their issues?

For citizens to be able to participate they require some legalized functional unit. This is where the Area Sabha concept comes in. Each ward has several polling stations within it, with each polling station having a maximum of 1500 registered voters. This is a far more manageable number of people to deal with as opposed to the 30,000 registered voters in a ward. Thus we at Janaagraha proposed the creation of a new platform centered around the polling station called the Area Sabha, consisting of the list of all voters registered to vote at that polling station and the geographical territory occupied by these voters was similarly called an Area. This idea is not unprecedented. It is in fact an adaptation of the Gram Sabha concept that is successfully being practiced in rural India to enable rural Indians to participate in their local government.

This idea was given shape and expression by Janaagraha and we advocated it incessantly, putting out a model Community Participation Law a.k.a the Nagara Raj Bill. Today it stands as a mandatory reform in the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). With a maximum of 1500 voters per polling booth, this translates to roughly about 20 Area Sabhas per ward. Each of these 20 groups of people engages with the Ward Corporator through a formal platform, obligating him to take their needs and inputs into consideration.

Now that the Area Sabha is a legally mandated reform as part of the JNNURM, the next step is getting it implemented on the ground. This involves lobbying with the states that have signed the MoA with JNNURM and following up with them to ensure that the law is tabled and passed in the State Legislative Assemblies without the spirit of the idea being lost while it is being translated into law.. The good news is there are some states that have already enacted this reform. Although they are not all in hundred percent conformity with JNNURM guidelines, it's a start. Now we continue to focus our efforts on getting all the states that have signed the MoA to pass the law, while ensuring that the states that have passed the law get all the

technical assistance and expertise that they need to establish and sustain Area Sabhas.



Anjali Kumar works on the Advocacy Programme at Janaagraha. She can be contacted at anjali@janaagraha.org

Janaagraha Programme Updates

Civic Literacy Workshop- Emerging Areas of Research Inquiry in Urban India

For a democracy to function well – for voters to elect competent leaders and hold those leaders accountable its citizens must be well-informed. Civic literacy is the knowledge and capacity of citizens to make sense of their political world, to be effective citizens. In 2006, Janaagraha, in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (JHU-SAIS) in Washington, D.C. had conducted a survey in Bangalore to measure the level of civic literacy among the residents of Bangalore. The results of this survey will be presented at a meeting on May 7th at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

The meeting will consist of two sessions during the day- in the morning an open session on problems of urban governance, on Janagraaha's work in Bangalore and on a joint research initiative between Janagraaha, The Center for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, which aims to develop a Civic Literacy Index. The presentation in the morning session will be by Mr. Nandan Nilekani, Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan, and Nandita Aras. In the afternoon, the discussion is scheduled to focus on the project for developing a Civic Literacy Index, how to develop further research on India's urban politics and governance, and Janagraaha's initiatives towards building such research capacities.

Jaago Re! One Billion Votes' Shut Up And Vote Rock Concert Tour

It turned out to be a memorable event for everyone present at the "Shut Up & Vote" Live Rock Concerts, a part of the ongoing Jaago Re! One Billion Votes campaign. A pioneering Indian Rock Band – 'Thermal and a Quarter' rocked the crowd at various locations around India.

Janaagraha and Tata Tea had announced the "Shut up and Vote Tour" across the country as part of their ongoing Jaago Re! One Billion Votes campaign. The Tour played host to a nationwide rock concert by the famous Rock Band – 'Thermal and a Quarter' across 5 major cities, IIT Chennai, on the 20th of March, Presidency College, Kolkata on the 23rd of March, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on the 25th of March, D.Y. Patil College, Mumbai, on the 27th of March and the finale at St. Joseph's College of Commerce, Bangalore on the 28th of March.

These rock concerts aimed to leverage the platform of music to encourage the youth to vote and be the difference they seek. A music video under the same name 'Shut Up and Vote' has also been created by the Bangalore based Rock Band, Thermal and a Quarter. The video aims at highlighting the importance of participation of youth in the electoral process in a language that youth understand and associate with- Music!

'Thermal & A Quarter' won the crowd with their rocking performance and unique compositions, the most popular being – 'Shut Up & Vote!!' composed for the campaign. The band members Bruce Lee Mani (guitars & vocals), Rajeev Rajagopal (drums), and Rzhude David (bass, vocals) had the crowd swaying to their tunes.



Thermal and A Quarter Performing at the Concerts

Bruce Lee Mani, the lead vocalist and guitarist of Thermal and a Quarter elatedly shared, "Jaago Re! One Billion Votes wanted us to do something which involved educated urban youngsters. This is when the whole format of an English video came about. We specifically wrote this song and made a video for the campaign. I hope the crowd liked the video and our performance. We are truly honoured to be a part of this campaign. The active participation of the youth in determining the future of the country is essential and the first step is to exercise the right to vote. We aim to motivate the youth to join this endeavour through our music".

Janaagraha and Tata Tea started the Jaago Re! One Billion Votes campaign with the belief that the real power to bring about a change lies in today's youth. And the first step in realising that power is by communicating to them their primary responsibility – exercising their franchise!

"The initiative is to awaken the youth to get the entire nation to vote while empowering people to take a step forward. Music has always been able to move the youth. The response to this initiative has been phenomenal. We are confident that this year the voter turnout will be really good". opined Mr. Sharat Potharaju- Head of Communications, Jaago Re! One Billion Votes.

The Jaago Re! One Billion Votes campaign vests the onus of change on educated urban young voters sounding a wake up call for the billion people of this country to unite and bring about change - a change in the quality of governance that can happen only with active participation through voting and electing quality leaders; a change by strengthening the roots of Indian democracy.



"Shut Up and Vote" - The Concert Anthem

Book Review - Imagining India

Author: Nandan Nilekani



Book Synopsis by Deepa Kunte: The author is the co-chairman of Infosys Technologies Limited and was awarded the 'Padma Bhushan' in 2006.

The book is a fascinating tryst with history as the author examines the factors that contributed to India's progress as well as those that hampered it. The book has four parts to it.

In the first part, the author quotes Tom Friedman who says, "India is the luckiest country of the 21st century". The author feels that the country has the right blend of huge natural resources as well as entrepreneurial ability and technological know how to grow as a nation. It has the second largest pool of skilled labour. It produces 2 million English speaking graduates, 15 thousand law graduates, 9 thousand PHD's and 3 lakh engineers every year. It is emerging as a rapidly growing consumer market with a middle class larger than the population of the US. However, only the provision of suitable infrastructure can enhance the productivity of this emerging manpower.

There was also a growing realization that the government by itself could not enable the kind of growth India needed. It was only the reforms introduced in 1991 that brought about a real transformation in the government's vision from being a pro-business to a pro-market economy. These reforms boosted the potential of the private sector.

The author acknowledges the force of the people in compelling the government to keep English language in India since this was the passport to good job opportunities for a better future. The author refers to Information Technology services as the Trojan horse through which globalization entered the economy and gained acceptance. The rise of a new generation of Indian entrepreneurs has resulted in India emerging as a foreign institutional investment destination.

India is also benefiting from emerging opportunities within agriculture with cheap labour intensive methods of production.

The second part of the book deals with issues which are accepted but have not fructified into results. Education in India has gained popular appeal but the state of our schools is far from satisfactory. The author feels that our response to the situation will make all the difference between the world's largest community of illiterates and a country with a large pool of talent that can drive the economy to higher levels of growth. The crisis in our cities can be traced back to the time of independence as our idea of India is of a country which is predominantly rural. Our slums are the saddest symptoms of our urban failures. Our cities have become a ground for the rise of the literate and middle class who demand change and could also be the country's biggest strength in meeting the challenge of city reforms. Political parties are now recognizing the importance of an emerging urban India.

Investments in infrastructure today get a lot of political attention and some sectors like railways, aviation and telecom have surged far ahead of others like roads, power, water and urban transit systems. Public-private partnership projects have emerged as models of infrastructure. However, our efforts in infrastructure development remain chaotic and are a huge struggle. The author feels that we as a country, though fast growing, are still constricted by infrastructure and regulatory barriers, our reputation as a knowledge power is threatened by weak primary schools, our cities struggle for better governance and as the world's seventh largest country, we seem to be running out of space to grow.

Part three of the book deals with areas which are lacking in progress. Sectors such as education, labour markets and local governments have interest groups which are deeply rooted with a lot of political clout and therefore, reforms have failed to take off in such sectors. Rural India has been hit hardest by the lack of consensus on reforms. Weak incentive, infrastructure shortages, lack of access information and education, capital constraints and labour imbalances have been identified as causes.

The fourth part of the book explores ideas which are critical to our future. The greatest need for rural India is to move to a direct benefit system. A government willing to transform subsidies into cash payment vouchers directly would create new wealth for rural people. The author feels that an IT enabled national I.D. system would be revolutionary in distributing state benefits and welfare handouts.

India's rapid economic growth demands new ideas in the areas of health, energy and the environment. The relationship between growth and our environment has become an easy one. The author has quoted Rajeev Gandhi in saying that development which destroys the environment eventually destroys development itself. We have to put in place a sustainable social security system and not have an energy that is based entirely on the heavy use of hydro-carbons. The awareness of global warming has spread even to farmers as they notice changes in monsoon patterns. Effective policies in these areas will depend on harnessing the ability at a local level to take charge and innovate. The author concludes by saying the challenge we face is in uniting our people and policy makers towards urgent and necessary solutions. He is optimistic as India has achieved consensus before. He feels that India rediscovered is young, impatient, vital, awake, a country that may finally be coming close to its early promise.