



# FROM RIGHTS TO RESPONSIBILITIES



Ward 96



Ward 78



Group Discussion with Swathi



Ward 68

Citizen Anchors from All Wards Engaged in Discussions about Problems and Solutions

Photos by Karim

**G**oing from demanding rights to shouldering responsibilities is a leap of faith. Many Bangaloreans took that leap at the workshop for Citizen Anchors, held at Century Club on October 22.

In the Workshop II, for Exploring Solutions, held on Oct 12 and 19 over

250 people had volunteered to anchor specific issues. The Citizen Anchors Workshop was for them. Almost 80% of those who volunteered turned up at the workshop.

Whenever there is an event involving citizens from across the city, the atmosphere tends to be electric. This was no different as (Contd... Page 5)

INSIDE PAGES

Page-2 : Bala Janaagraha Survey

Page-3 : Puzzles about our Past

Page-4 : Quantity to Quality

Page-5 : Preparation for Ward Vision

Page-6 : Photo Album

## VOLUNTEERS SPEAK OUT

*Being very passionate about my country, it feels great to be a part of this citizen movement, hopefully for the better.*

- **Srikrishna**, Ward 54

*Gave me a feeling that I was doing something useful for the community, a feeling of involvement.*

- **Navneet, Hrishikesan**, Ward 74

*The enthusiasm and energy level from many of the*

*residents were more than compensating for the low turnout.*

- **Anil**, Ward 94







*'It helped me understand the problems facing the city at a depth. Prior to this, I either cribbed about the issue or took steps to insulate myself from the impact. Now I understand that I can play a role in its improvement.'*

- **Krishna Hegde**, Ward 100

# Bala Janaagraha Survey at Ward 54

Close to 1,000 children from the 7 participating wards have conducted road surveys in their Ward. Children form groups of 6 with 1 community member to supervise them. Each group surveys one section of their ward using maps like the above and a legend sheet with the information to be collected. This data will be used by the communities for future planning of their Ward.

## Legend (On the Map)

Garbage Bins	<b>G</b>	Under Bridge	<b>UB</b>
Street Lights:		Telephone Pole	<b>TP</b>
Sodium Vapour	<b>Lsv</b>	Junction Box (Phone)	<b>J</b>
Tube Light	<b>Lt</b>	Roads : Mud	<b>Rm</b>
Gsl	<b>Gsl</b>	Concrete	<b>Rc</b>
Bus Stops	<b>B</b>	Paved with Black Top	<b>Rp</b>
Hoardings / Billboards	<b>H</b>	Pavement	<b>P</b>
Vendors /Street Hawkers	<b>V</b>	Drains : Open	<b>OD</b>
Transformers	<b>T</b>	Closed	<b>CD</b>
Electrical Poles		Slum Boundary	
Std Booths	<b>Std</b>	Public Toilets	<b>PT</b>
Traffic Signals		Public Taps	<b>Tap</b>
1 way		Borewells	<b>BW</b>
2 way		Petrol Bunks	<b>PB</b>
Railway Bridge		Bus Terminals	<b>BT</b>
		Pothole	<b>PH</b>

## Qualitative Info (for each street)

<b>Street Name :</b>	
Length of Road	
Street Signs	Yes / No
Street Lights	On / Off
Pavement	One side / Both sides / Not at all
Width of Pavement	
Pavements	Paved / Mud / Interlocking tiles
General Sanitation	Clean / Medium / Dirty
Traffic Congestion	Congested / Not
Police island	Manned / Unmanned
Number of Trees	

## Allocation of Areas to Each School



- Vijayabharathi Vidhyalaya : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.
- Auden Public School : 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 20 & 21.
- Auden High School : 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19.
- Shanthiniketan School : 10, 22 & 23.

Protection of Trees	With Tree Guard / Without
Road Divider	Yes / No

## Slum 1 & 2 Information

Electricity	Yes / No
Water Supply	Yes / No
Houses	Brick / Mud
Roads	Mud / Paved
Drains	Covered / Open

# PUZZLES ABOUT OUR PAST

**A**t most meetings, I begin with two questions. The first one is, "How many people here believe that India is a great country?" In every meeting, there is a burst of hand - raising, like fast-sprouting paddy in the rice fields.

The follow-up question is, "How many of you think that we have a great government?", and the hands drop as if a machete has been taken to the stems. In almost every meeting, except for a few isolated hands that are almost defiantly held up, people send this resounding message.

I ask myself often, what is it about our country that makes us believe that it is great, and feel proud of its greatness. Beyond a blind jingoistic nationalism - fastest growing economy, second only to China, etc. - there is a genuine belief that India has greatness in it. I feel it myself. The signs are there: the sublime music, our dance forms, our food and literature, the incredibly sophisticated material about human spirituality, and so on. All these are clear manifestations of a culture that is highly evolved. Applying modern methods of human behaviour like Maslow's ladder - which talks of basic survival at the bottom of the ladder, and self - actualisation at the top - we must clearly have been a society closer to the top than the bottom. Because I imagine - and have been led to imagine - an idyllic past where people lived in small communities, celebrating life, making decisions for themselves through panchayats, building great architecture and creating art and literature.

And then it seemed like the bottom fell out somewhere along the way.

Because, as an Indian, what I have today is only a frustrating graffiti of greatness: each artefact by itself - be it music or art or whatever - a tantalising glimpse into a life that was, but somehow not complete; each isolated in its splendour, leaving many questions unanswered. If we were so great, and so evolved as a society, how could we have had such repressive customs towards our women, how did we not offer freedom to all our people, how could we have created a social structure that emphasised position at birth rather than dint of individual effort?

As an Indian, I cannot accept these facets of our past. I find it difficult to reconcile these with all those other aspects of greatness that I so admire. I look to the outputs of the West, of the era of Enlightenment, and find those appealing: of decisions arising out of reason and challenging traditional authority, of an emphasis on secular, liberal and democratic societies. I attribute these to the West, because I do not know better; it is likely that

these same values were there in our society at some point.

I also know that I am a mixture: that at the same time I celebrate these qualities of the West, I am also deeply moved by the intense spiritual material that India offers, that this is ultimately what each individual journey is about.

All of this results in a deep sense of dissonance. How do I reconcile the confusing signals that I receive from the pages of the past? What sense of identity do I have about myself as a result of this? How does this affect how I react to the forces of globalisation, with its mixture of good and bad?

And specifically, how does it help in improving our general quality of life, so that every one has the freedom to make choices, good or bad. Because that is ultimately what good governance is all about.

The last point is entirely related to the work that we are doing at Janaagraha. Not unexpectedly, most of the challenges we face are related to human behaviour. And I am not talking of the politicians and the administration; I am talking of the citizens. All our messages are being sent out to everybody. But these are being received through the filters of each person's own mindset, which is like a maze where some messages simply end up in dead-ends, and others pass through to result in action. Why is it that some people are able to form cohesive groups more quickly than others? Why do we keep our homes washed, and our streets dirty? What prevents us from taking responsibility in a democracy? How is it that we can talk of a glorious past with panchayats, but have such amnesia when it comes to today?

Not being a historian or a sociologist, these remain to me puzzles about our past.



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# Quantity Gives way to Quality

**O**n October 12, the Ward Vision campaign moved into the second stage - to explore solutions to the issues identified at the first workshop. While the number of participants across the wards were just 1/4th of the first workshop, they engaged with great energy. And the quality of discussions were excellent.

What was lost in numbers, was more than made up by the enthusiasm of those who participated.

The workshop had two sessions - one for Costing related issues and the other for Policy related issues. While the Costing related issues were discussed at the area-level, the Policy related issues were discussed at the ward level. Participants were to explore different solutions and also arrive at Citizen Anchors (people responsible for each issue), at the end of each session. Many willingly took up the responsibility.



Serious Discussions at Ward 96

One of the real positives to come out of this workshop is the participation of agency officials. At least 3 to 4 participated in each workshop. They waited patiently till the first session on costing got over, and also responded to the queries well.

## Ward 50

In Ward 50, the workshop was held at Sri Bhagawan Mahaveer Jain College. There were around 70 participants, which was less compared to the previous workshop. The workshop began with a welcome speech by Mr. Rajiv Gowda, Professor in IIM. Mr. Chenraj Jain, who spoke after him said, 'Now that we have got a chance through Janaagraha, we in partnership with the government, have to participate in the developmental activities of Bangalore'.

Many were present from different government agencies - 3 from Police, 2



Ward 78 : Swati Ramanathan and Vivekanda Salimath guiding the Participants at Workshop-II

from BMTc, and 2 from Horticulture. Mr. Gangadhar. T. Nayak, police Inspector of Sidhapur Police Station said that Janaagraha is a very good campaign and that Participatory Democracy will help making Bangalore a model city.

## Ward 54

In the workshop held on October 12, 2003, at Vijaya Bharati School, Girinagar around 60 people participated. The workshop began with the prayer by Smt. Jaya Parthasarathy at 10.30 am. Mr. Mukund, Secretary Abhyudaya, briefed the community members on the agenda for the workshop.

Though there was a reduction in the number of participants compared to the first workshop, the discussion was a fruitful one. In the second session, all the issues were discussed at the ward-level, since the number of participants was less. This ended up as grievance-redressal, as people started expressing personal problems. Officials from Police, BMTc, BWSSB and BMP (Health & Electrical) attended the workshop and answered the queries.

## Ward 74

The workshop started with the introduction by Mr. Ravi, a volunteer from Janaagraha. Government authorities of 4 departments of ward 74 had come to discuss with the participants about their problems and the ways of solving it - Health, BWSSB, BMTc, Police.

About 70 people attended the workshop held at Miranda School. While the discussions about problems and solutions were lively, there was some reluctance to volunteer for Citizen

Anchors. However, after persuasion, some did.

## Ward 94

About 70 people participated in the workshop held at Siddhartha College. While the participants were far less when compared to the first workshop, the discussions were good. As Mr. Shivshankaran of Ward 94 put it, 'We didn't want a large representation. We wanted the discussion to be a quality one'.



Enthusiastic Women Coming to Workshop at Ward 94

7 people volunteered to be anchors across issues. From the government side, officials from BWSSB, BMP, BMTc and Police participated in the workshop. They responded warmly to all the queries.

## Ward 100

The workshop started with an introductory speech from Swati. Overall, the workshop went off very well at Ward 100. About 100 people participated in the workshop held at Ward 100. Officials from different government agencies - Horticulture, BWSSB, Traffic, Police - participated in the workshop.

# Citizen Anchors to Prepare Ward Vision Document

**O**ver 200 citizens from various walks of life have signed up with Janaagraha to be Citizen Anchors for creating a Citizens ward vision document for their wards, with the support from experts and agency representatives.

These Anchors, who are familiar with the local problems, will identify possible solutions of about 25 issues such as Roads, Crime, Street lights, Solid waste management etc, concerning the quality of life at the ward level. They will gather information, voices and opinions of the people in their ward during the next few weeks and form a ward level plan of action for the next 3 years, with specific outcomes to

specific problems.

These citizens, with about 20 percent women, are committed to engaging with the local government to ensure improvements in their wards. The Handbook on Participatory Planning gives them information on specific topics and Janaagraha center will provide them secretariat assistance and set up discussions with subject experts and

government agencies as desired.

On Thursday Janaagraha conducted a workshop for them to meet as a city-wide group to discuss participatory planning successes in other parts of the world, and on how they can be effective as citizen anchors, and towards creating a vision document for their ward, in the coming few months.



## FROM RIGHTS TO RESPONSIBILITIES

*(Contd from Page 1)*

citizen anchors from all the wards engaged in discussions about key problems and also solutions for the same.

The function started with a speech by Ramesh. He shared with the citizens, the vision document prepared by the community board of Manhattan. The citizens were surprised at the similarities

of issues and fascinated by the level of detail the document went into. Ramesh emphasised the fact that even a country as developed as USA needs citizen participation for it to function effectively.

Then Swati briefed the citizens on the agenda of the workshop. Two kinds of groups were formed. One to discuss the costing related issues – Roads, Footpaths, Drains, Parks and Streetlights. Other to discuss policy related issues, for example traffic, zoning etc. While the costing related issues were discussed at the ward level, the policy related issues were discussed across wards.

The discussions were lively, with a lot of debate on alternate solution before arriving at the final one. It was also an educative experience for every one as there was great sharing of knowledge. Experts from different fields also participated in the workshop. They helped the citizens identify the right solutions.

Overall, one couldn't have asked for more, be it in numbers or in the enthusiasm of participants.

### Janaagraha Calendar

(Oct 15 - Nov 15)

- Oct 18 : MRM @ KSV Nilaya (5 pm) - Ward 78.
- Nov 2 : Workshop III @ Vijaya Bharathi School, Girinagar (Ward 54), (Ward 94).
- Nov 3 : MRM @ Ward Office (10 am) - Ward 55, MRM @ KVS Nilaya (5.30 pm) - Ward 78 & MRM @ Sumangali Sevashrama (10 am) - Ward 96.
- Nov 6 : MRM @ Ward Office (4.30 pm) - Ward 94.
- Nov 7 : MRM (5 pm) - Ward 07.
- Nov 8 : Symposium for Corporators on Local Government Financial Management @ Infosys, By Dr. Ravikanth Joshi
- Nov 9 : Workshop III @ Jain College, Basavanagudi (Ward 50), Jyothinivas College (Ward 68), Mt. Carmel College (Ward 78), Sumangali Sevashrama (Ward 96), Sya Pre-University College or Ramana Maharshi Cultural & Heritage Academy (Ward 100).
- Nov 15 : MRM @ Ward Office (5.30 pm) - Ward 67 & MRM @ Ward Office (6 pm) - Ward 68.



Volunteers at Citizen Anchors Workshop

# Electrifying Atmosphere at Citizen Anchors Workshop



Ward - 100



Ward - 68



Ward - 54



Ward - 55



Ward - 85



Ward - 74



Ward - 96



Ward - 50



Group View