

JANAAGRAHA TIMES

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Be The Change You Want To See

The Throb Of India

By Cheryl Rebello

Every time I hear the National Anthem, or sing together with a gathering of fellow Indians – I feel it – The Throb of India. It's a rising sense of emotion, devotion, duty, and a sigh for the lot more I must do. It's difficult to describe, but all at once it's a sense of pride, a touch of nostalgia, a glimpse of the heroes who made it happen – it's that irreplaceable feeling of belonging. Many paeans have been sung, and verses written in tribute to this wondrous country, but if we were to stop and consider what makes India throb today, what would the answer be?

To begin with it's probably the fact that we are still at it - working to touch a billion lives with the reality of a better quality of life. Despite the growth we are still struggling with distribution. Business houses have great facilities, but competition is still cramped with inadequate infrastructure in cities. Media has become ubiquitous and politicians are getting closer to absorbing the contemporary practices of good governance.

"I believe the 21st century is poised to become an India century."

It's also a fact that a large wave of transformation is under way thanks to the untiring efforts of several groups, and champions of change.

Admirably they soldier on despite the challenges. Their vision is supreme, and they look beyond the ordinary expectations of what the future might bring. Their leadership is making the nation watch them as new age freedom fighters. For the billion dreams that wait, they are hope. For these visionaries, it's a daily striving to see children educated, fed; the old cared for, people employed, financial security for all, to see government supported, and grow robust infrastructure, build consensus in communities, empower and enable government, support affordable housing, sanitation, health and so on.

Making the rhythm of change sustainable are many national level changemakers and the institutions they have built. *Pratham* envisions universal education for children, and are today enabling 17 million children in India in this pursuit. Ways to recycle waste into wealth is the creative longing of *Conserve*, ensuring every ragpicker gets Rs 3500 as salary. Then there is *Sarvodaya Kendra*, an organization involved in making water available through a network of dams, for economically sustainable patterns of farming. Take Project Selco pursuing a mission to provide solutions for solar lighting - a ray of hope for households with no access to commercial electricity. And there's more - those involved in uplift of slum dwellers, affordable housing, and to cap it all – a better functioning democracy.

Industry is deepening their engagement with society and redefining their role in building social capital. A point borne out by Mukesh Ambani speaking at the Leadership Conclave organised by *India Today*, "I believe the 21st century is poised to become an India century." He adds with equal fervour, "I believe businesses aspiring for global stature must ask themselves: Have we identified an important problem? And are we engaged in solving it? If the answer in the positive, they would have qualified to play a global role. For centuries the world's standards were set in the most advanced



nations. The poorer emulated and imitated. Now it is likely to be the other way. It's inevitable that innovation's centre of gravity will ultimately shift. So far nations rich in income set the rules of global investment and trade. From now on, nations rich in natural resources, capital and knowledge will set these rules. So far economic growth catered to just 15 per cent of the global population at the top of the income pyramid. From now on, economic growth will cater to 85 per cent of the global population at the bottom of the income pyramid. To aspire for global leadership is a legitimate business ambition. But there must be a global purpose. A dream to transform some aspect of the world we have inherited. Passion to bring hope to the lives of those whom prosperity has passed by. The edifice of global business leadership should be built on an ennobling vision. And when you reach there, thank God that He chose you to bring joy to the lives of millions of men, women and children."

At Janaagraha we are guided by the same zeal for transformation. Our guiding vision "To fundamentally transform the trajectory of our country, in 20 years." And what will that scenario look like?

"Twenty years from now, India will be best known for the quality of life it offers to its citizens. And this will be accomplished through the practice of democracy that is based on personal freedom, collective action and transparency. A democracy, that provides every citizen with a direct voice and an active role in public governance, leading to an abundance of public and private wealth.

This vision for India would be achieved by developing participatory structures of public governance, by evolving a sense of shared ownership of the environment and the community's destiny and by establishing practices of engagement that ensure broad participation in public governance, of the entire citizenry.

India would provide to the world a model of democracy that brings individual ambition and common cause into harmony, and helps unleash the creativity of millions of Indians in ways that generate the greatest rewards for the society as a whole. By 2025, no Indian would have reason to feel disenfranchised and in fact would have every chance to fulfill his/her personal potential while making the greatest possible contribution to the society."

All of this makes me believe we are at the tipping point of transformation. Change that will transform lives. The collective efforts across the country are like a daily rhythm, an unflinching purpose, an indomitable energy, a throb called India.



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Citizen Participation In Deliberative Democracy

By Rekha Bhatnagar

"Participation extends citizenship and deepens democracy" - Professor John Gaventa

It's heartening to see that Indians today are moving away from the '*Sarkar is mai baap*' mantra and beginning to take their destiny in their own hands. This new perspective is causing critical political and social changes. The single biggest change in the India story has been in the area of self-perception. The enormous churn brought about by faster economic growth, globalization and technology in the last two decades has greatly helped in increasing the pace of this change. If our country was once a land where rivers of milk and honey flowed, today it is known for technological and economic progress. India now stands tall, with her head held high, sharing space with the mighty nations of the world.

As a result of both government and non-government efforts to improve the quality of governance, there is a definite change for the better. And this pace of change can be accelerated if people are able to bring further pressure on the system. After all, citizens are the building blocks of a vibrant civil society and indeed the future of the country lies in their hands.

Understandably, it has not been easy. We've had linguistic agitations, separatist movements, sectarian violence and divisive politics. We've had to battle poverty, centuries old traditions and superstitions. Then came 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments to address the need for decentralisation and the local political engagement. The Right to Information Act is another revolutionary enactment to make governance transparent. These efforts have narrowed the gap between citizens and government, thereby making appreciable contributions to participatory

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democracy. This has cemented the trust in government, supported people-centric development, facilitated equitable economic growth and tackled corruption through greater people's participation and accountability of government.

Waves of change are imperative as people are impatient for greater transparency and accountability in governance. The time has come to institutionalize this change. Although citizen participation is a fundamental need for democracy, participatory involvement of citizens in governance, and accountability of local self governance structures is yet to reach a significant level.

Sixty one years down the line every Indian feels that there are winds of change and shift in mindsets and that slowly but surely the people are becoming citizens.

In recent years a number of civil society initiatives have used a variety of tools to try and improve the quality of governance. Citizen organizations, Resident Welfare Associations, and

other Civil Society Organisations have tried to address many local issues, and have contributed where government has fallen short of expectations.

The role of the media in Media too has to be underlined in taking India to an era of the informed citizen. Several initiatives in both print and electronic media have put the spotlight on the citizen. Programmes like *Your Voice Always First* and *Citizen Journalist* among others have democratized the media..

PROOF (Public Record of Operations and Finance), a public campaign launched in mid-2002 in Bangalore, that promotes greater transparency and accountability in local government institutions, has succeeded in influencing the city corporation to present its quarterly accounts to the public thus providing citizens with the opportunity to participate in discussions that are vital to their quality of life. This is now moving into the realm of defining service level benchmarks for public service providing agencies.

There is much to be done to broadbase the dialogue and bring more people to the table for dialogue on specific city issues. Bangalore CityConnect Foundation (BCCF) attempts to do this and build bridges with government that are useful to deliver consistent outcomes for the city. Bangalore City Connect Foundation is a registered non-profit organization that creates a platform to unite urban stakeholders outside the government to collectively engage on urban management issues. The objective is to partner with government agencies for improvement of urban infrastructure.

Confederation of Indian Industry (Southern Region and Bangalore chapters) and Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy are the founder members of Bangalore City Connect. Several traffic and transportation projects have been taken up under the aegis of Bangalore City Connect. The idea is to address issues of project inputs, issues of strategic importance, and needs of implementation.

Janaagraha's experiences in Bangalore attempt to understand the systemic nature of the problem, and bring in participation from all quarters to improve quality of urban governance. Several civil society and community-based organisations across the country are also playing a big role building collaboration with government. Collectively, they provide substantial evidence that urban residents, even in large metros, care deeply about their city, and wish to participate. Indeed, the amount of social energy that can be harnessed is extraordinary.

Some of the other public initiatives across India include Voter Awareness Campaigns of Catalyst Trust; Public Interest Litigation by Common Cause; Jan Sunwais of Mazdoor Kisaan Shakti Sangathan; Campaign for Effective Citizens Charters by Praja and Lok Satta; Budget Analysis and Advocacy of Disha; employment generation campaigns by Kalyani; and disaster management initiatives of Jeevan Prabhat.

Good governance, according to experts, implies: universal protection of human rights; laws that are implemented in a non-discriminatory manner; an efficient, impartial, and quick judicial system; transparent public agencies and official decision-making; accountability for decisions made about public issues and resources by public officials; devolution of resources and decision-making power to local levels and bodies in rural and urban areas; participation and inclusion of all citizens in debating public policies and choices.



"Participation contributes to open government, open government contributes to the need to justify official actions in terms of morally acceptable principles, and the need to justify contributes to better decisions". - W.N. Nelson

Sixty one years down the line every Indian feels that there are winds of change and shift in mindsets and that slowly but surely the people are becoming citizens.

It is a wave that is sweeping the entire country. In all walks of life from home to school to the work place, decisions are becoming participatory and each voice is assuming significance. The last mile hasn't quite been reached, but we are well on the way of realizing the vision.



Rekha Bhatnagar is a volunteer with Janaagraha.

ABIDE: Government Says They Will!

By T. Vidyadhar



Agenda for Bangalore Infrastructure Development (ABIDE) an interactive workshop was held on 28 June 2008. Participants included the Chief Minister, ministers, officials, citizens and experts from NGOs, RWAs, and practitioners. It proved that collective wisdom is the key to success of any government business/ institution. In the words of Chief Minister Mr B.S. Yeddyurappa "nobody is *sarvajna*" more so the elected leaders. He asked elected leaders to use the knowledge bank available from enlightened philanthropic citizens.

Dr Ravindra made a presentation on Governance in the Bangalore Metropolitan Region and BBMP. Mr Sachdev from RITES presented CTPP with maps, roads, Metro, Mono Rail, CRS, BRTS figures etc. According to the RITES report Rs 46000 crores of investment is needed to improve Bangalore's transportation scene, with most of it suggested towards public transport. Mr Ramesh Ramanathan, made a presentation on the goals and objectives of City Connect – a multiple stakeholder platform that is currently focusing on Traffic & Transportation. The organization seeks to collaborate across the city and support government with projects and implementation. After the presentations, and a break for coffee, participants were asked to split over three workshops - one each on Infrastructure (roads, power), Governance (focus on Kasturirangan's MPC Report) and Civic services (urban poor, health, water, sanitation). As Chairman of Civic Services panel Sri Katta Subramanya Naidu had many suggestions to resolve water issues with alternative plans instead of depending on Cauvery water. Mr Heblikar said that the best solution for managing Bangalore's growth is to develop tier II and tier III

centers. It was best to spread growth around; and bring in some disincentives for overcrowding in Bangalore.

The query-answer session, and suggestions were interesting. Some areas touched upon included raising guidance value, sakrama scheme, parking as source of revenue. Group housing, housing for middle class and poor were discussed. The concept of a directly elected Mayor won widespread support. On Kasturirangan's Report questions like "Is local governance failing because the system isn't designed well, or is it just that the roles aren't being discharged well?" were asked. Lunch break followed the workshop. People used the time post-lunch for networking. A few ministers and officials were easily reachable as well. Mr Vidyadhar was called upon to provide feedback on Civic Services panel. Mr Mohandas Pai and Mr Hegde presented feed back on Governance and Infrastructure discussions. At the closing ceremony the Chief Minister promised to hold such meetings on regular basis

This initiative taken by the Government in organizing an interactive meeting to discuss and deliberate wide ranging issues on the city's infrastructure and other services has brought hope, energy and enthusiasm among the citizens. Experts in different fields were there to share their experience, give suggestions for better governance. Even Bureaucrats were ready with information in their respective fields.

It appeared that the objective of the meet was to present some of the government's current projects in different departments, future plans, and issues concerning governance etc. The idea was also to seek suggestions from the public on how to improve performance of the government. Clearly one step in the direction of participatory governance. Following were the highlights of presentations.

Water – Lifeline of People

After meager source of water from Arkavathi with a dam across in Hesaragatta and a dam across near Thippagondanahalli, Cauvery is only the source of water for Bangalore. Now BWSSB is using alternatives as Cauvery cannot cope with the ever-increasing demand of water in Bangalore. Now BWSSB is supplying 810 mld of water. Additional 500 mld of drinking water is expected by 2011 from the 2nd phase of the 4th stage of Cauvery water supply scheme.

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Present demand of water in the City -	840 mld
BWSSB will supply by 2015	1500 mld
Demand by 2036	2550 mld

In order to cope up with the demand of water BWSSB has planned alternative sources. Like re-use of water through wastewater filtration process.

BWSSB is already treating wastewater for re-use in non-palatable applications. This is now proposed for potable purposes based on ultra filtration process treatment.

Other Alternatives

Re-use of Lake Water, Phase 1 & 2

In order to improve the ground water recharge, BWSSB is promoting the adoption of rain water harvesting systems in houses.

BBMP

- BBMP recognizes the fact that Bangalore is a global city and there is a need to urgently improve infrastructure. As on June 2007, the following projects have been approved by JNNURM.

Storm water drains	643 Crore
Road and road related	308 Crore
Basic services to the urban poor (BSUP)	60 Crore

- 91 roads have been identified for widening. 10 roads including Bellary Road, Palace Road, Hosur Road, Hosur -Laskar Road, Race Course Road, Sheshadri Road, Kasturba Road, Nrupatunga Road, Old Airport Road and Jayamahal Road have been taken up for widening at a cost of Rs 80 crore.
- 10 Underpasses/ grade separators have been proposed to address traffic bottlenecks at important locations and have been approved under JNNURM .
- 7 Underpass, surface pass using pre-cast elements have been completed/are under progress.
- 4 ROB/RUB are in finishing stages ensuring smooth traffic flow at the Railway crosses.
- BBMP has also taken up remodeling of storm water drain networks.
- BBMP proposes dwelling units for slum dwellers with services like drinking water, sanitation, electricity, community centre. Five pilot slums are taken up for redevelopment.
- 17 lakes are proposed for rejuvenation under JNNURM scheme.
- Adoption of scientific approach to solid waste management through mechanization at ward level.

KUIDFC

Completed Project- ADB assisted Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Project.

Ongoing Projects-

- ADB assisted Karnataka Urban Development and coastal Environmental Management Project.

- WB assisted Karnataka Urban Water sector improvement Project.
 - WB assisted Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project
 - ADB assisted North Karnataka Urban sector Investment Program
 - Bangalore Mega City scheme.
 - The greater Bangalore Water and sanitation Project.
 - JNNURM
- Capital Investment plan for Bangalore as envisaged in the CDP for water supply & sewerage, solid waste management, roads, road related infrastructure, urban drainage, urban renewal, other civic amenities, tourism and basic services for urban poor. Investment will be 22,536 crores for balance period till 2011-12
- Community awareness and Participation Program.(CAPP) with focus on Health and Sanitation, Women's development and empowerment, Skill Training Programs and low cost sanitation Program.
- Karnataka Municipal Reforms Project deals with slum up gradation, roads, landfill sites, Greater Bangalore Development of roads and sanitation.

BDA

BDA has formed 62 layouts, approved 31 private layouts, sanctioned CA sites, built shopping complexes, constructed grade separators/flyovers, 62 km outer Ring road, provided parks etc. Renovated Lalbagh Glass House, created irrigation facilities at Lalbagh and Cubbon Park by installing a modern wastewater cycling plant.

Projects

- Development of existing 12 Lakes
- Creating zero tolerance signal free traffic movement from Hebbal Junction to Central Silk Board (31 KM). There are 17 junctions. Number of junctions improved-5, under progress -4. Number of junctions proposed during 2008-'09 - 8.
- BDA proposes to form five new eco friendly Layout around Bangalore.
- 45000 houses are proposed for economically weaker sections at affordable cost.
- Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) is proposed to provide long-term solution to the city traffic. PRR will connect all major highways and roadways in and around Bangalore

BESCOM

BESCOM initiative includes better management of electricity, quality and reliability in power supply, customer satisfaction, speedy fault location and restoration. BESCOM has planned for distribution automation in Bangalore City. BESCOM has opted for IT solution to help consumers. Energy audit through Distribution Transformer Centre (DTC) can detect energy pilferage



Other achievements of BESCOM is introduction of Compact Transformer Stations, Rural Load Management System, efficient Lighting Program, efficient irrigation pump sets Program

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

Inflation And The Citizen

By N.V. Nayak

A Inflation is the buzzword today. In fact I have heard some people attributing the Congress party's unsuccessful attempt to gain power in Karnataka to "inflation", as the UPA government has failed to contain inflation.

It is the common man who gets immediately affected on account of inflation. The simple definition of inflation is increase in the price of goods and services over a period of time. Inflation is measured either by the price index or the GDP deflator. In India it is measured with reference to the wholesale price index.

The classic reason for inflation is excess liquidity or increase in M3.

Inflation erodes the value of money as it fetches lesser goods and services in exchange. It impacts the poor the most as wages are either constant or do not move in tandem with the inflation rate. Inflation is measured as a percentage of increase in wholesale price index over the base year. The commodity price increases contribute to increased prices

of manufactured goods as well as food products. This means the poor are forced consume less or borrow more. Borrowing lands them in perpetual penury, as the borrowing is purely for consumption needs, and no assets are created out of the borrowings.

The classic reason for inflation is excess liquidity or increase in M3. Supply and demand economics also play a role in building inflationary pressures. Too much money chasing too little goods can cause prices to rise. Hence monetary measures for containing money supply coupled with easing availability of goods and services should in turn contain inflationary pressures. Inflation is now plaguing many parts of the world, and India is not unique in this respect.

This time around the weakening dollar and the rising crude prices are said to be the main culprits of inflationary pressures. As far as this story goes, in India due to risk aversion and FI pulling out of the stock and bond market, dollar demand has grown and USD has actually strengthened. This in turn, coupled with rising crude prices,

has left little choice to the government but to raise administered prices of petro products, and the monetary authorities to intervene in the forex market.

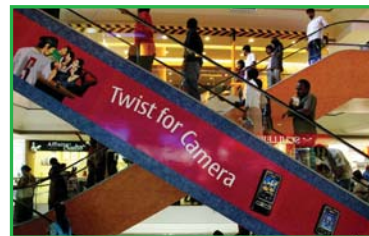
Both these actions have accelerated the inflationary pressures. The increase in the crude prices and weakening rupee has made fertilizer and chemical prices to go up and as a result food prices will be impacted. It is a double whammy! Already shortages have caused agitation and one death in police firing in Haveri, Karnataka.

According to the leftists, the government should scrap all customs duties etc on petro products. If this is brought to zero at their demand, it will leave large holes in the budget leading to fiscal deficit and only way it can be bridged is by increased government borrowings, which again adds to the liquidity. The local levies are a state subject and Karnataka State has not lowered its levies making it the costliest State in respect of petro products. Thus, it is a complex issue. Subsidy in any form has a nasty habit of boomeranging. There is no free lunch. Ultimately a price has to be paid for such largesse.

It is expected that the monetary authorities will either increase CRR or the reverse repo rate or both to fight inflation. In this event, the GDP growth will be impacted. Growth is already impacted in some important sectors like IT due to the recessionary US market. Until, supply side picture improves we will have to live with this situation, and there is little that the Government can do. I expect inflation to hover much above the comfort zone of 5% (which the monetary authorities consider as a comfort zone) for a long time to come.



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Benchmarks In Financial Disclosure

By N V Nayak

In 1992, the 74th constitutional amendment bill was passed to address the weakness and ineffectiveness of the State Local Bodies, which was attributed to failure to hold regular elections, prolonged supersession's and inadequate devolution of powers and functions. Even though the constitutional amendment took place, implementation by the states was tardy or inadequate as no time frame was set for the states to bring about the changes envisaged by the amended constitution. The amendment set the roadmap for REED framework of Janaagraha, which stands for Regional, Enabling, Empowering and Direct accountability. Specifically the 74th amendment mandated the constitution of ULB's and regular elections, identified 18 functions to be

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devolved to ULB's and mandated the constitution of State Finance Commissions for recommending revenue sharing norms between states and ULB's.

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was set up by the Government with an outlay of about INR 50,000 crores (to be contributed equally by the states and urban local bodies) for better Governance of ULBs. PFMA or Public Financial management and accountability reforms in ULBs is a part of the JNNURM mission. There are certain mandatory and certain voluntary reforms prescribed under PFMA, and availability of JNNURM funds is conditional on the state taking the path of reforms.

The acronym PROOF stands for Public Record of Operations and Finance. The Charitable Trust PROOF which is a partner organization of Janaagraha came in to being with the specific objective of the stakeholder's education about, and participation in the functioning or operations of the urban local bodies and its finances. The thrust is on public disclosure of the financial affairs of ULBs and involvement of the stakeholders. PFMA

is a thrust area for PROOF in so far as it relates to Standardised Service Level Benchmarks.

The Ministry of Urban Development, GoI, had mandated the World Bank to conduct a diagnostic study of PFMA in local bodies and they came out with Standardized Service Level Benchmarks. Basic tenets of PFMA were taken to comprise the following for which SSLB were set:

1. Legislative framework
2. Accounting (including budgeting & cash management)
3. Audit
4. Internal Control
5. Procurement.

In each area mentioned above the World Bank study devised these benchmarks, assessed them against policy and progress to be able to gauge performance under JNNURM.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK: The key benchmark prescribed that prevailing rules and regulations should provide an enabling environment for key aspects of PFMA. Current state acts do exist but they are vague and subject to interpretations. In practice requirements of state municipal acts often not adhered to. There has been progress in this area, as MoUD suggested model municipal law and crucial changes to the rules that accompany municipal acts to ensure that they are comprehensive. MoUD has mandated disclosure laws for ULB's under JNNURM

ACCOUNTING PLANNING AND BUDGETING: The key benchmark prescribed reliable information to be made available to decision makers, based on cogent budgets that are consistent from one year to the next, are participatory and reflect the priorities of the people. Most municipal acts do provide for annual accounts. Budgeting is also prescribed. But there is no mandate for participatory budgets that are realistic and outcome based. In practice larger urban bodies maintain accounts and have adopted NMAM but medium and small ULBs are yet to progress. Budgets are ad-hoc and not realistic. Under JNNURM one of the reform agenda set is the introduction of double entry accrual based accounting system. It is also mandated to have internal budget earmarking. ICAI was given the task of preparing accounting standards and disclosure norms. Some gaps do remain in this area.

AUDIT: The key benchmark prescribed providing assurances to the stakeholders that money was used for the purposes intended. The municipal acts do provide annual audits by local fund auditors but no penal action on non-performance. In practice larger ULBs or those that moved to market for funds are able to furnish

audited accounts, but the audit quality is suspect. Medium and small ULBs have audit arrears. There has been some progress. MOUD and the C&AG have started thinking about ways to strengthen the local fund audit offices through the preparation of manuals and guides. Other ways of building capacity of LFA are also under consideration like certification programs.

INTERNAL CONTROL: The key benchmark mandates clearly defined systems and procedures backed by policies to monitor activities of each department and function area. Under current policies and acts of ULBs, in most cases there is no provision for internal audit and there is no provision for a department to conduct such audit. Audit checklists are yet to evolve. Audit committees are not formed. Progress in this area has been tardy.

PROCUREMENT: The key benchmark mandates that ULB procurement needs to be efficient, and managed better to ensure increased competition, value for money and transparency. Currently legislation governing procurement in most cases is defined, though it is very rudimentary and mostly based on lowest cost basis. Most state acts prescribe ULBs to follow state/ PWD rules for the purposes of procurement. The ills plaguing this area can be summarized as- No concept of value for money, no specialized procurement department, limited transparency, no linkage of procurement with budgeting and planning, no standardized documentation and procedures. The last one results in delays in evaluation and sanctions, which in turn results in cost and time overrun. There has been much progress in this area. Several states have passed Tender transparency act. Some progress has also resulted through e-procurement. Going forward model guidelines and standardized documentation needs to be developed.

While some progress in the area of accounting and public disclosure has been achieved, areas such as audit, procurement, and internal control are areas where more progress is needed. It is significant that several agencies are engaged in developing service level performance indicators for ULBs. Once the SSLBs are developed by PROOF and ICAI the MoUD will circulate these to the 63 cities that are participating in JNNURM, as the templates by which they could generate their service level information, and by which their ongoing performance indicators will be measured, as part of the continuing JNNURM review process. PROOF has a significant role to play in the area of PFMA and SSLB.

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Here's Looking At The Media

By Deepa Kunte

Today the media has become the need of the people. It has played a significant role in exposing the prevalent social evils as well. People are made aware of the social evils existing in society and the perpetrators of such crimes are exposed. Through its sting operations, scams and cases of corruption are exposed thus bringing in accountability and transparency to the system. The media has recognized the citizens' right to information and tries to fulfill it in appropriate form, for example the declaration of the assets and other relevant information about the candidates who stand for elections.



The media reflects India's challenges of illiteracy, poverty and need for equitable distribution of growth. It exposed the plight of the poor farmers who were totally at the mercy of nature and were being driven to suicide. This made our government take some positive steps in lessening their burden. With literacy levels increasing rapidly over the past decade, and more and more people having disposable incomes

after meeting the basic needs, the media's reach and influence is only going to grow over the next decade and more.

Recently the media played a significant role in influencing public opinion. Its role of investigative journalism brought up important issues of public concern to the notice of the courts. In the Jessica Lal murder case the media helped in expediting the whole legal process. With the efforts of the media people became aware of the misuse of power by the politicians and bureaucrats, and public outrage built across the country. Finally the accused, the son of a senior Congress leader was convicted by the Delhi High Court after being acquitted earlier by a Delhi Court. The media's need to spend time on research is

underlined, as they work to collect statistics, evidence and through informed debates attempt to shape public opinion as demonstrated in the Nithari case. In this case the media exposed influential people who were trying to hush up the case. Finally under pressure it was handed over to the C.B.I. for investigation.

Since India's Independence the media has truly evolved from its conservative role as an informer to one who has fearlessly and boldly exposed corruption and oppression. It has empowered people by educating them and raising their awareness and acted as a check on exercise of power. On television shows the public are given a chance to voice their opinion, express their views and question their leaders in an atmosphere free from fear. The citizens are also encouraged to report on issues thus paving the way for citizen journalists. The media truly recognises the importance of the voice of the citizen and enables them to participate

Has this expansion and power of the media been translated into greater public good? The media has come in for criticism in it's handling of the Arushi Talwar and the Uma Khurana cases. Coupled with the freedom there is a responsibility cast upon it. It is the duty of the media to report correct information in an unbiased manner with respect to the right of privacy. The need of the hour is a new political culture and the only powerful instrument people have at their disposal is a free and vibrant media. The media should shift its focus to being solution oriented to encourage positive change and to give hope to the billion citizens of our country. Only then will it fulfill its aspiration as being "for the people, of the people and by the people."

Deepa Kunte is a volunteer in Janaagraha

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Ward Standards And Service Levels

By Anjana Krishnan

Ward Infrastructure and Services Assessment is a quality of life assessment being piloted in the city of Bangalore. The unique thing about WISA is that it is an assessment of the infrastructure and services totally from a citizen's perspective. As the first cause and the end recipient of democratic frameworks, the citizen of late is becoming more aware, and it can be said that a dutiful and empowered citizen is a celebrity in his/her own domain. WISA offers exciting opportunities for citizens' participation.

What defines sustainable urban development?

According to Asian Development Bank, the three pillars for sustainable urban development are improving the enabling environments, the framework of institutions, policies, incentive structures, and reporting requirements for urban governance; ensuring that decentralisation and devolution are made to work; and continuing programmes of technical assistance and training for improving urban governance and management.

Janaagraha's paradigm for change as described by the REED framework (Regional Approach, Empowering and Enabling local government, and Direct Accountability of local government outward to the people) encompasses the entire gamut of the above mentioned components.

Relevance of WISA - Any development plan or strategy has four components viz. Targets (goals and targets to be achieved within the time frame), Instruments & Mechanisms (the legal, scientific, economic, institutional provisions through which the targets will be achieved), Monitoring and implementation frameworks (Indicators that can be used to track the progress of the implementation) and Institutions (the organizations, government / private bodies, that will institute and facilitate its implementation) .

The monitoring frameworks form the most crucial and are lacking in data for urban services. The Ward Infrastructure Services and Assessment seeks to create the baseline data, for assessment of Infrastructure and Services. Assessment of an urban citizen's quality of life is generated on the basis of a set of 48 indicators in seven categories such as Mobility, Public Amenities, Public Safety , Environment & Ecology , Health and Sanitation, Water Supply and Electricity. Ultimately, a Quality of Life Index for will be generated for the city of Bangalore as well as for the wards.

For a citizen: WISA will prove to be a tool that will enable the Urban Citizen to participate in planning and result in enhanced decision-making role of citizens in the city. The residents of a ward can use the data to hold government accountable for the state of public goods services and infrastructure.

Tool of accountability by citizens: How would we know that the right life saving drugs are being supplied, and how would we know how effective they are? Is the investment on healthcare bringing about any substantial changes? Citizens can hold government accountable and track the progress being made in their respective wards

Planners and Policy makers: For policy makers it could form the basis for devolution of funds and provide the much needed baseline data for planners. It could also feed into the reporting and monitoring requirements, helping in governance

WISA is purely a perspective from the citizen's end, and seeks to complement the government's supply side with the citizen's demand side feedback; bridging the gap between what the government wants to do and what the people finally get.

Structure of WISA - The project has three working components the way it has been envisioned viz., the Planning, Volunteer management and Technology. The planning part involves conceptualizing and researching the methodologies of measuring an indicator, documenting the rationale and processes, designing protocols for implementation, planning and executing the operations, and monitoring of processes. The Volunteer management processes are critical to the project. It involves interacting with volunteers, managing the resource requirements, at the same time acting as an interface between the planning and implementation, maintaining the vibrant link with people and functionality, the balance between people and processes. The creation of a quality of Life Index of Infrastructure and Services at the Ward and City level and its presentation to the public is the ultimate objective of WISA. The third component deals with the dissemination technologies used to communicate the results to the public; specifically it involves the creation and maintenance of a web portal based GIS application.

ACTIVITIES

Technology

- ESRI India have been assigned the task of designing the required GIS database modules and the web application tools. The team visited from Delhi at the beginning of the month and the WISA team was provided inputs for the System Requirement Specifications. For each indicator, we defined the values to be obtained, benchmarks, procedure of standardization and weightage. The next step is to customize the system design specifications, how we would like the data to be presented in a user friendly manner and yet reflecting the business logic.
- The previous evaluation system of scoring the indicators on an ordinal 5 point scale appeared to be inappropriate for our purpose. We adopted a cardinal evaluation system measuring the distance of each indicator value from its benchmark on a 10 point scale. This rendered the scoring system more objective.

Traffic junction audit and bus crowding surveys

- Traffic junction audit involves assessing the quality of signage, road and lane marking as well as pedestrian safety and comfort at junctions whereas the bus crowding surveys involves estimating the status of crowding in buses during morning and evening hours at key locations in a ward. This month we had a set of MBA students from MS Ramaiah institute, who volunteered to undertake the traffic junction audit and the bus crowding survey. They completed a total of 30 wards. After a couple of pilots we improved the survey questionnaire. In all 120 junctions, 40 bus stops were surveyed in 30 and 20 wards respectively

Water sampling - BWSSB and ground water

- Access to safe and sufficient water is a basic human right. We are testing water quality on seven parameters viz. pH, Nitrates, Arsenic, Fluoride, Total Dissolved Solids and Bacteriological parameters (E. Coli and Coliform). The Bureau of Indian Standards has specified strict limits, exceeding which the water

is said to be unfit for drinking. For example, a lower range of pH values (lower than 6.5) is indicative of dissolved heavy metals. Metals like lead and iron dissolve easily in an acidic medium. E. coli is a type of fecal coliform bacteria commonly found in the intestines of animals and humans. The presence of E. coli bacteria in water is a strong indication of recent sewage or animal waste contamination.

- Water is being collected monthly from our volunteer households in each ward. We are measuring the water quality at the supply end of the BWSSB. The volunteers are given specific instructions for water collection (the water must be collected directly from the BWSSB line, before it goes into the storage tank or the 'sump'). Sterilized bottles are provided for collection of the bacteriological samples. After collection they must be refrigerated, as per sampling protocols. The samples are then collected in the lab vehicle with our field volunteer.
- So far, the water sampling exercise has been a challenging one. The first challenges was to find at least one volunteer from each ward offering his /her household for the sample collection. The second challenge was coordinating the availability of our volunteers, with the water timings. The third challenge is the on-ground activity itself of locating the households and covering the wards in a zone on the designated day, something we discovered can be very exhausting without adequate resources and planning frameworks. After two months of planning and execution we have attained 80 % efficiency. A few ideas for automated water sample collection responses such as a mass SMS are underway, where a mass SMS is sent and the households reply to it upon collecting sample.
- The important thing is that the households realize the value of the water quality assessment and are extremely co-operative and aggressively seek information regarding the outcomes. After two months of being in the field and planning for samples, the volunteers are increasingly enthusiastic!

Ground water table levels

- A fall in the ground water level is a measure of the sustainability of the ground water resource in a well. The ground challenges of this assessment are far more complex. The households whose borewell we are assessing have to switch off the pump the previous night and not switch it on until the sampling team arrives, giving it a rest of at least eight hours. Then the casing of the borewell is opened, just enough to insert a probe connected to a multimeter. The cable is dropped into the well and the continuity is established when it hits the water and the multimeter records a deflection. This length of the cable at which it registers a deflection gives a measure of the static water level.
- It is very encouraging to see that immense openness and cooperation has been shown by the households. The water from the well is also tested for potability

The results for this quarter for all the indicators will be up be on the WISA website by September. The planning for some indicators in health and sanitation like Capacity



Anjana Krishnan is a WISA Planning Associate
Janaagraha

of Health Services and Outbreak of diseases has already started.

JANAAGRAHA BULLETIN

Bala Janaagraha – The classes are under way and planning for the civic project has begun. The theme this year is "Understanding My Neighbourhood" to develop a child's curiosity and understanding of the local area. The Bala Janaagraha textbook is being re-structured and re-designed as well. A team of content-writers and designers are involved in detailing this.

The YUVA campaign has now been re-christened **OneBillionVotes**. This campaign is being launched in partnership with Tata Tea. The OneBillionVotes Campaign attempts to impact a positive political change by stimulating the participation of youth in voting. The campaign targets youth, and aims to make them the primary changemakers in bringing the up the One Billion target in voter registrations.

Community Policing ideas are being discussed with the Bangalore police in a move for safer cities. In the wake of the recent bomb blasts there is an urgency to involve community in measures that will prevent such occurrences. In view of this Janaagraha has proposed a comprehensive polling booth mapping, with representatives to support the police from local neighbourhoods. This is under review.

City Connect – The multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue with government is now moving ahead and bringing more members to the table. Over ten city level projects in the area of improvements for traffic and transportation are now under way.

AHEAD In Wards 96, 97, 98 And 100

By T. Vidyadhar

Who said that our elected leaders disappear once they are elected? Sri Katta Subramanya Naidu MLA of Hebbal Constituency and Minister of Excise, IT/ BT, Information and BWSSB has proved them wrong. He has been holding several citizen meetings in his constituency after he got elected. He also met Triward Federation of Welfare Associations on 12th July, 2008. In power for three months now



Sri Katta Subramanya Naidu inaugurating the Hebbal development workshop

the minister has been conducting meetings setting aside substantial time to address citizens' issues. On 2nd August 2008 he gave a listening to issues of the citizens of Hebbal constituency apart from suggestions from an enlightened gathering. This was an interactive workshop organized by Advanced Research Institute, Bangalore in Association with Katta Foundation, Hebbal Constituency Development Monitoring Committee and Citizens Welfare Foundation, Bangalore at Taralabalu Kendra, R.T.Nagar, Bangalore. Minister Katta Subramanya Naidu in his letter to invitees stated that the intention of the workshop was to discuss various issues of Hebbal constituency and to evolve a comprehensive strategy for overall development. Resident Welfare Associations, NGOs, Educationists, Industrialists and Prominent citizens participated in the workshop so that suggestions from learned citizens could be availed apart from listening to their problems. BBMP Chief Engineer (East), Chief Engineer (CE) Storm Water Drainage , CE Major Roads, BBMP, CE, BWSSB, CE, BESCOM, ACP Law & Order, J.C Nagar, ACP, Traffic, Officials from Food & Civil Supplies, Health (BBMP) and Revenue

were present to inform the audience and the minister about their plans for the area and to listen to issues for finding time bound solutions.

Dr P.K Shetty and Sri. T.Vidyadhar played a key role in organizing the programme.

It was refreshing to note that BBMP provided copies of the proposed development work, Programs of Work for the year 2008-09 in Hebbal Constituency. Health Department provided copies of Sanitation Hand book.

It was heartening to note that the minister arrived ten minutes before the time of commencement of the program. He delivered the inaugural speech and asked the officials present to respond to grievances of citizens within the time frame. Earlier Dr.P.K.Shetty welcomed the gathering and introduced the theme of the workshop. About 1000 citizens were present. More than 55 representatives of RWAs and individuals made written suggestions/complaints and most were addressed by the minister and the officials present. In addition to these, issues raised on the floor were also responded to.



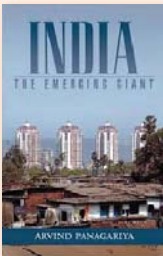
Sri Katta Subramanya Naidu addressing the audience

It was announced that within a week a web site of Hebbal Constituency will be launched and the citizens can address their grievances through emails too.

Truly participatory democracy can bring in better results and the development will be faster and people friendly. It is hoped that such interactive workshops be held not only in Bangalore but also in other cities/towns of the state as well as in the entire country.

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

India The Emerging Giant *Author: Arvind Panagariya*



Book Synopsis by Deepa Kunte: Arvind Panagariya is a professor of Indian political economy and politics at the Columbia University. India has witnessed a growth of 8%-9% in the last 4-5 years. The author feels that the economy would equal the size of the U.S. economy in 20 years. To sustain this growth he suggests reforms in the power and labour sector so that people shift from agricultural to industrial activity. The growth rate was due to the reforms introduced by Dr Manmohan Singh as the Finance Minister in the year 1991. The author suggests that four factors in favour of continued growth were that India was far better integrated into the world economy, the appreciation of the rupee, increase in the size of the working population and increase in the savings rate.

Speaking of on poverty and inequality, the author feels that focus on equality hampers growth and poverty alleviation, and that policies in favour of small entrepreneurs promote equity but is anti-poor & regressive. This is a debatable point.

As far as policymaking is concerned it is driven by victory in elections. Resistance to policy comes from three sources – from those within the ruling party, those from the opposition and those adversely affected by the reform. The author observes that the success of the central government in carrying out policy changes has been in areas under the purview of the state such as agriculture, health, water, and electricity. Reforms relating to land and labour have made little progress.

Regarding issues in macroeconomics the author feels that India has maintained a relatively stable environment, but paid attention to efficiency only recently. Inflation and unemployment are relatively stable. A cause for concern is the large public debt, which exceeds 80% of the GDP. He advises against rushing into full capital convertibility, as the costs in case of a financial flow crisis are large. The greatest challenge India faces in macroeconomic policies is the financial markets. The author while dividing financial markets into three says that the overall financial health of the banking sector is quite good. In respect of the capital markets India has made greater progress in the equity than the bond market. The insurance sector has been opened to private entry and foreign investment, and the pension system is in urgent need of reform to cover those employed in the unorganized sector.

The author's view is that the ultimate development problem that the country faces is that of transforming its rural agrarian economy into a modern one. He attributes the slow transformation of the economy to the slow growth of the manufacturing industry. This view can be debated upon. He also suggests some compelling reforms in agriculture, which is a big challenge for the country.

In the area of reforms, telecommunication has been the single most important success story.

In the area of transportation, success has been achieved in the area of national highways and domestic civil aviation

In the area of urban infrastructure and rural roads the progress remains elusive.

The government has failed to deliver social services such as education, health and water, and he suggests private partnership in these schemes. He also recommends a complete overhaul of higher education.

His view of India is optimistic in view of the current ongoing economic slowdown in the U.S. as there has been an increase in the savings and investment in the country. India's economic growth is an important landmark of our times. The author gives an analysis as to how it came about and how it can be sustained. He outlines the challenges faced by the country in various areas as well as provides answers to them. It is a must read for any student of economics.

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