



Standing Up For Your Rights



Civic Bangalore

Citizens' Voluntary Initiative for the city of Bangalore

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#6, IInd Floor, Kasturi Apartments, 35/23, Langford Road Cross,
Shanthinagar, Bangalore - 560 025, Ph: 080-22110584/ 41144126

Email: info@civicspace.in, Web: www.civicspace.in

Bangalore's explosive growth in the 1980s was followed by an even bigger boom in the 1990s. It grew into the fifth largest city in the Asia. However, its haphazard growth contributed to a fragile transport system, erratic water supply, and appalling housing conditions. Bad roads, poor sanitation and growing pollution added to the chaos. With a system on the brink of collapse, it wasn't surprising that citizen's opinions were neglected when embarking on yet another project.

The key to unlocking this systematic nightmare and providing a better quality of life for all in the city was good urban governance. And this could only come from decentralization of power and more people participation. With this objectives in mind, a diverse group of concerned Bangaloreans soon came together to form "Citizens Voluntary Initiative for the City" (CIVIC) in 1992. CIVIC believed that change would only come if people demanded and were allowed participation in the governance and development of the city.

For over one and half a decade, CIVIC has aimed to provide citizens with a platform for participation in the governance, management and planning of the city. Through numerous programmers, CIVIC has encouraged citizens to speak and to interact with government agencies, allowing for increased transparency and accountability in governance. Advocacy, workshops, meetings, newsletters, press releasers, discussions with the government, preparation of status papers and organizing surveys are some of the methods employed

by CMC to facilitate people participation and promote good governance.

Civic Aims

- Mobilize public participation in planning, administration and management of the local government by providing an effective forum.
- Push for greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Civic Routes

- Aid information sharing with citizens and government.
- Lobby for greater democratization in city administration.
- Work for improvement and decentralization of services.
- Provide support to other local groups and their initiatives through partnerships.
- Press for public meetings and official hearings to improve transparency and to mobilize public opinion.
- Focus on socio-economic problems of vulnerable groups with in the context of urban planning and administrative reform.
- Demand environmental improvement and better quality of life for citizens.

Civic Strategies

- Encourage participation rather than set up parallel structures.
- Build credibility among other NGOs and government agencies.
- Formulate strategies flexible to bureaucratic pressure and changes.
- Develop in-depth knowledge base for dialogue and non- partisan campaigning.

- Create awareness of 74th constructional amendment and right to information ACT.
- Champion neglected yet important issues like government reforms and citizen's charters.
- Use media and residents' association to highlights changing urban situation.

Civic Achievements

The Nagarapalika Act (74th constitutional amendment)

This act was passed in with the intention of institutionalizing decentralized urban governance. It foresaw the setting up of ward committees and designates them to be responsible for the planning, and implementation of local services. CMC has campaigned for the effective implementation of the act and rules, resulting in the government setting up ward committees in the bang lore city corporation. Along with studying their functioning. CMC has also submitted reports to the government with suitable recommendations and created awareness about the 74th amendment amongst the act's eventual beneficiaries, including slum-dwellers. The



Tabling of BBMPs 2007-08 budget report in the presence of BBMPs Administrative Officer & Joint Commissioner

comprehensive changes suggested in the legislation were even endorsed by the national commission to review the working of the constitution.

Ward Committee Study

CIVIC, the nagarapalika network and institute of social sciences, New Delhi conducted a study in 2003 to understand how ward committees function, the problems they face, and whether they comply with the rules laid down in the 74th amendment. Some of the highlights of the study are; the formation of ward committees at present does not comply with the spirit of the 74th amendment, one ward committee per ward, selection of members of ward committees being on nominations and not by elections, etc. CIVIC has been striving for actualizing the 74th CA in letter and spirit.

Right to Information

Citizens should be aware that the right to information act, 2001 allows to information from any government service provider and expect a response with in a stipulated time. Among other efforts ton raise public awareness, CIVIC has worked to make the



Workshop on Right to Information Act with NGO Forum Network

annual reports of the BWSSB, KPTCL, KUIDPC and BMP available to the public, increasing the transparency in the working of the government departments, and decreasing the likelihood of corruption. Through training workshops, awareness campaigns, Public meetings and forums with the government, CIVIC has raised the level of awareness and brought it to the forefront. The lack of willingness cooperation from bureaucrats and elected representatives continues to inhibit the right to information of citizens.

Citizens Charters

Carrying future the right to information, CIVIC has worked with other government departments, such as the stamps and registration adept., the police Dept, the BMTC (Bang lore metropolitan transport corporation), the RTO (Regional Transport Office), the BWSSB(Bang lore water supply and sewerage Board) to make their characters easily accessible to the people.

BMP Slum Survey

CIVIC supported a NGO study on BMO slums to bring out the existing situation in services and amenities in them and thereby to make the concerned city officials aware of the existing slum situation in bang lore, and to give them suggestions to improve the conditions of the slums. The recommendations that resulted from the study were shared with the BMP and the slum residents.

A monthly newsletter, slum jagattu, which focuses on slum conditions, the schemes granted by the government for slum-

dwellers and the issues faced by them in their implementation, is being partially supported by CIVIC. The newsletter's editorial and entire management is contributed by the people of the slums under discussion.

Transport System

The government-owned transport system was one of the most inefficiently managed, loss-making departments in Karnataka. CIVIC, along with citizens suggested ways to improve the department's functioning. Customer friendly measures and tariff structures were also initiated by the corporation, with assistance from CIVIC and transport experts.

Customer Grievance Mela

The frustration of being unable to enlist a local official to remedy a local problem is a common experience. To assist citizens to lay open their grievance and officials in leading an ear to people's problems, CIVIC organized the customer complaints mela in various localities, including slums a forum where residents of certain locality can voice



Public grievance meeting with local residents and officers held at Mallechwaram

their grievances to the various department of the government and seek solutions.

Core Group Meetings

The objective of these meetings is to brainstorm solutions to new civic challenges. These sessions are held with other NGO groups, activities and members. Conducted once in two months, these serve to share research or CIVIC activities, present issues before officials and induce interaction between officials and citizens. These



Round table conference on the future of Bangalore held under the leadership of Prof. B.K. Chandrashekhar & participated by people's representatives & like minded people

meetings have helped various organizations come to an understanding on current issues and their opinions are brought to an notice of the concerned officials.

Garbage Disposal and Management

Citizens have increasing become aware that much garbage that could be used as fertilizer is being wasted. Together with swabhimana, another NGO, CIVIC devised a training programme for housewives and maids, regarding the segregation and disposal of household waste. CIVIC also enabled a platform to focus on the citizen's role in the BMP Private solid waste disposal contract.

Developed by Saahas and CIVIC, a work plan was implemented in a health-sub ward of BMP. This included monitoring of door-to-door collection of waste, waste segregation at source, recycling of dry waste and local composting of organic waste.

Bellandur Lake Study

Bang lore's neglected water bodies are used as "vote banks" Vote tools are usually aimed at the poor here it is the opposite for politicians who cover them and convert them to sites for better off citizens often evicting the poor, or are left to be polluted by the industries an localities that surround them. CIVIC protested along with other NGO's in the specific instance of the national games complex in koramangala. Along with the environmental studies students of Mount Carmel College, CIVIC undertook a study of bellandur promised to clean up the lake and be monitored by the citizens.

A handbook on government schemes for the urban poor

It is a fact that most of the urban poor are unaware of the government schemes that exist - for them. It is unfortunate that these



Book release by Smt. Rutmanorama and Smt. Lakshmi Venkatachalam

facilities don't reach the most deserved. It is also observed that most of the time the allotted budgets are either retuned or utilized somewhere else. Keeping this in mind CIVIC has compiled a booklet on the existing schemes to be used as a ready reckoner for the benefit of the urban poor.

Nagarika Kriya Vedike

CIVIC is facilitating the common platform, Nagarika Kriya Vedike (Citizen Action Forum) where NGOs, CBOs, RWAs, organizations, institutions, associations and citizen concerned with city issues come together to discuss and deliberate. The objective is to be proactive on these issues and constructively engage the city government and service providers.



Submission of memorandum to His Excellency, Governor of Karnataka, On 74th amendment to constitution

Civic Activities

CIVIC aims to broaden and strengthen its activities in the coming years by undertaking the following

- Participatory ward committee-level interventions.
- Encourage pro-poor planning and involvement of urban slum dweller's and citizens in ward-related programmes.

Recommend and facilitate establishment of one ward-committee for every ward in all corporations and municipalities and support their transparent democratic functioning.



Workshop for ward level association members

Information and better services for the urban poor

- Educate slum dweller's associations on the right to information Act and the various schemes and services available to them.
- Facilitate a social audit on services and schemes by holding public hearings in ward sabhas.



Slum level workshop on Right To Information Act

- Publicize findings through a report and use it to bring in changes.

Setting up Metropolitan Planning Committee

- Recommend and facilitate the setting up of a metropolitan planning committee as required under the 74th Amendment with involvement and contribution of elected representatives, citizens, citizens' association, and slum dwellers' associations.

Urban local governments, infrastructure development & impact on urban poor

- Analyze the spatial and socio-economic effect on the poor living the areas of huge proposed infrastructure development in the peri-urban areas around Bangalore and Mangalore.
- Disseminate the findings of these studies.

Governance reforms, multilateral funding and conditional loans in Karnataka

- Analyze data about the impact of loans and investments from the world Bank and ADB on local governance issues and the poor, and fiscal and governance reforms process and finance of the state.
- Disseminate findings among civil society partners (NGO's, CBO's and slum dwellers' association).

Since its inspection, CIVIC has found it fit to champion the cause of people and their environment, bringing together people from various walks of life, encouraging their participation in governance, and promoting awareness of their rights and social responsibilities. By fostering the spirit of public participation in important social issues, CIVIC has succeeded in making both citizens and officials partners in the greater cause of local urban governance.

Trustees of Civic Bangalore

Sl. No.	Name	Position
1.	Shri T. Sriram	President
2.	Smt. Katyayini Chamaraj	Executive Trustee
3.	Smt. Dr. Padmini .R	Trustee
4.	Smt. Asha Kilaru	Trustee
5.	Dr. Manu Kulakarni	Trustee
6.	Shri Abraham Kuruvilla	Trustee
7.	Shri S. Vishwanath	Trustee
8.	Shri K.T. Suresh	Trustee
9.	Smt. Manjulika Vahj	Trustee