

## Editorial

During this period, the need for building strong networks at city and state level to carry on the advocacy work more effectively was realized. These are activities that go beyond what was planned and budgeted for in the project proposal. In all sectors, health, education and SJSRY, we have been able to link up with existing networks or create new ones.

In health, new links were forged with the Janarogya Andolana – Karnataka, which is the State-level People's Health Movement. A Bangalore Urban District chapter was forged under CIVIC's leadership which after a public hearing has been advocating changes in the Urban Health Systems at State and Bangalore Urban district level.

In education, CIVIC networked with the State-level Campaign Against Child Labour-Karnataka to jointly give suggestions on the new Right to Education rules being framed by the State and interact with the SSA Director and Secretary to Government, Primary Education, to advocate the changes/inclusions to the draft Rules. Networking was also attempted with a Federation of SDMC member at city level which is yet to bear fruit. After a public hearing, advocacy about the strengthening of SDMCs is being undertaken at state level.

In SJSRY, CIVIC has undertaken the pioneering task of federating all the Community Development Societies at City level. After a public hearing, the recommendations that emerged are being submitted through the federation to the highest State-level officials in the Urban Development department and Directorate of Municipal Administration to bring about State-level changes.

At the ward level, pioneering Participatory Planning, Budgeting and Social Auditing activities were undertaken in Sagayapuram ward where CIVIC works.

A State-level seminar organized by CIVIC in January 2011 focussed on the implementation of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act across municipal corporations in Karnataka and on the upcoming bills on Bangalore Metropolitan Region Governance and Community Participation. CIVIC initiated a campaign on the Community Participation Law to bring in necessary amendments to provide genuine space for public participation in urban governance through this law.

State-Level Seminar on “74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (Nagarapalika Act) and Ward Committees in Karnataka: Status in 2010 and Future” - 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011



Mr. N.L. Narendra Babu, MLA, Addressing the audience. (On dais, from left) Dr. Anil Kumar, Asst. Prof. ISEC, Mr. A. Ravindra, IAS (Retd.), Urban Affairs Advisor to CM, GoK, Mr Prakash secretary, CPI(M).

Though more than 17 years have elapsed since the passage of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) (Nagarapalika Act) on decentralized urban governance, its implementation across the State leaves much to be desired. CIVIC organized a one-day State-level seminar on “74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) and Ward Committees in Karnataka: Status in 2010 and Future”.

Mr. Gururaja Budhya of Urban Research Center presented the current status of implementation of 74<sup>th</sup> CAA in city corporations across the State. The key issue raised in this session was that regular elections to the local bodies are not being held. There are fund constraints and the ULBs are dependent on grants. Non-devolution of funds, functions and functionaries as per the 12<sup>th</sup> Schedule is conspicuous. Formation of ward committees is not taking place. No platform for public participation exists. The demand was that urban local governance should be strengthened by decentralizing powers from MLAs and MPs to municipal councillors.



*Mr. Ravindra, IAS (Retd.), Urban Affairs Advisor to CM, GoK, releasing the Book 'Inclusive & Participatory Development through 74<sup>th</sup> CAA'. Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj and Mr. Gururaja Budhya are also on Dais*

Dr. A Ravindra who chaired the session observed that MLAs and MPs are reluctant to part with their power and share it with local governments. The public should make MLAs promise before elections to give more power to local bodies and agree to consult citizens on all matters. He also stated that unless nagarapalikes augment their revenues, it would be difficult for them to function. The book written by Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj, 'Inclusive & Participatory Development through 74<sup>th</sup> CAA' was released by Dr A. Ravindra.

Mr. Harish Kumar, Chief Coordinator of CIVIC, next made a presentation on "Community Participation Law (CPL) - proposed and practical". CIVIC obtained a copy of the Bill which had been drafted without being publicised as per the Right to Information Act and presented it before the audience. Explaining the lacunae in the proposed CPL bill, Mr. Harish Kumar pointed out that the Bill mentioned the word 'community participation'

only once in the whole document. Though the proposed law intended to provide space for community participation, the law was drafted without any say of the community. The participants at the seminar demanded that the government should redraft the bill and allow genuine community participation in local governance.

In the third session on the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Governance Bill, Mr. Ashwin Mahesh, Urban Research Strategist, GoK, explained that the proposed Bill envisaged the extension of the Bangalore Metropolitan Region (BMR) to three districts, namely, Bangalore Urban, Bangalore Rural and Doddaballapur. Many participants, especially the elected representatives of Bangalore rural and Doddaballapur district, opposed inclusion of other districts into the BMR stating that it would affect rural livelihoods and lead to extension of the land mafia into their agricultural lands. They were also concerned that extended industrial activities would affect local farming and independent farmers would become mere wage workers on their own land under this industrial mafia. Mr. Krishna Kumar, former Advisor to the Governor who chaired the session, warned against giving too many powers to nominated members on the MPC. He brought out the several loopholes in the Bill and stressed the need for the authors of the Bill to go back to the drawing board and re-frame the Bill.

In the fourth session on Inclusive & Participatory Development through effective implementation of the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA, Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee, CIVIC, suggested how inclusive growth could be effected by creating human development and social infrastructure indices and socio- economic data-bases of every ward and city, developing Performance Management Systems (PMS), outcome-based planning linked to human development goals with corresponding outcome indicators. Mr G.N. Nagaraj, Member, State Secretariat, CPI (M)-Karnataka stated that Indian democracy lacks decentralization of power to local bodies. Every nagarapalike should own all resources coming in its jurisdiction, while contrarily in Bengaluru, power over resources and decision-making has been split between various authorities and boards. He also demanded more rights and money to Nagara Sabhas.

The report of the seminar was prepared and was

circulated to the participants and the chief guests of the seminar. The report was also submitted to the government with a requisition to reconsider both proposed bills, the Community Participation Law and the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Governance Bill based on the recommendations of the seminar.

### Campaign for a better Community Participation Law:

Though the flaws in the proposed Community Participation Law were discussed during CIVIC's state-level seminar and a unanimous decision to press the government to make necessary changes in that Bill was taken, it was passed in the Assembly without any discussion on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011 when the Opposition was holding a Dharna outside the House. However, CIVIC consolidated all the recommendations that emerged during the state-level seminar and wrote a memorandum to the Chief Minister, Law Minister, MLAs, etc., of Bangalore to reconsider the Bill before forwarding it to the Governor for his consent. But the Bill was sent to the governor without any changes. CIVIC wrote to the Governor requesting him to withhold his assent to the Bill and ask for amendments. CIVIC also requested RWAs of Bangalore and the participants of the state-level seminar to also write to the Governor, Chief Minister, Minister of Law, etc. requesting inclusion of their recommendations. Many RWAs and participants forwarded the letter to the governor, etc. supporting CIVIC's recommendations. Though Mr. Suresh Kumar called for discussions on the Bill on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011, no other civil society groups except CIVIC were invited to this meeting and the discussion did not bear any fruit. The Bill got the consent of the governor and it was gazetted.

Not losing confidence, CIVIC organized a press meet and also a brainstorming session for all civil society groups at Ashirwad on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2011. It was decided to have a number of small meetings in various parts of Bangalore and also spread awareness about the Bill in other city corporations to build a state-wide network and demand necessary amendments

on the passed bill.

### Panel Discussion on "Potable Water in Bengaluru: Today and Tomorrow" - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011

Given the fears of privatization of Bangalore's water supply as a result of the visit of the US Water Trade Mission to the city, a panel discussion was organized on the issue. Mr. Narayana, Chief Engineer, BWSSB, and Mr. Rajendran Prabhakar of the People's Campaign for the Right to Water were the panelists and Mr. S. Vishwanath, Trustee of CIVIC, presided over the discussion. Mr. Narayana gave the history of water supply in Bangalore city. Presently BWSSB is catering to 7.50 million people over 800 sq.km area with 910 MLD of water which provides 90-100 liters per capita. He briefed on the BWSSB's long-term and short term measures to augment water supply to the city. The Slum Development Component envisages facilitating the implementation/improvement of piped water supply and sewerage to the urban poor in Bangalore city with a view to enhancing the health and living conditions of slum dwellers. This project covers 362 slums in the core area of the city covering over one lakh households.

Mr. Rajendran Prabhakar stated that steps are being taken by the government to hand over all water supply utilities in the State to private companies, especially multi-national companies. The Campaign would hold a protest when the US Water Trade Mission visited Bangalore during 28 February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011. He opined that the US Water Trade Mission wanted to exploit the US \$ 50 billion water market in India. The core concern of activists was that the Karnataka Urban Drinking Water and Sanitation Policy, 2003, is utterly supportive of such commodification and privatisation of water.

He also highlighted that in consonance with this policy, the Government is already privatizing water services partially in Mysore, Hubli-Dharwar and other urban centres through non-transparent and coercive tactics of agencies, such as the Asian Development Bank, TATA JUSCO, etc. He stated that though the methods often used to promote privatisation proclaimed that the purpose was to favour the poor, the actual intent was really to commodify water and thus deny the poor their fundamental right of access to water.

Mr. Kshithij Urs, of Action Aid, asked Mr. Narayana to clarify BWSSB's stand on privatization to which Mr. Narayana answered that only the operation and maintenance would be outsourced to check unaccounted water and that sources of water would not be privatized. Answering another question he said that public and community taps are being closed to reduce unaccounted water. The audience protested against these steps as being anti-poor and against the fundamental right of citizens to water.

Consultation on the draft tender on Solid Waste Management (SWM) of BBMP - 16th March 2011

Fresh garbage tenders were being planned for the city but the draft tender guidelines had not been publicized as per Section 4(1)© of the Right to Information Act while formulating the same and no public consultations were planned by BBMP. CIVIC obtained a copy of the draft tender guidelines and organized a public consultation on them. Ms Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee, CIVIC, presented the garbage tender's lacunae vis-a-vis Central and State policies/guidelines. Ms Sandhya Srinivasan of the SWM Round Table pointed out the need to establish dry waste collection centres and composting units in each ward to make them zero garbage zones.

Mr. Gangadhar Swamy, Executive Engineer (SWM), BBMP, made a presentation on how BBMP could earn money from garbage rather than spend more than Rs. 300 annually on it. Mr. Venkatesh Shekhar, Environmental officer (MSWM), Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, also participated. Mrs. Almitra Patel, Member, Supreme Court Committee for Solid Waste Management, who chaired the event, suggested that in slums, incentives should be given to the slum community itself to collect the waste from the area and give to the contractors. Mr. Manjunatha Reddy, Chairman, Standing Committee on Health, BBMP, who was the chief guest, agreed to look into all the suggestions given before finalizing the tender.

The key recommendations that emerged during the consultation were submitted to the BBMP Commissioner, Mayor, Chief Engineer (SWM), UDD, etc. BBMP reworked its tender and it was observed with gratification that more than 70% of the recommendations were incorporated to the draft tender.

The outcomes and challenges that emerged while CIVIC worked at the grassroots were shared at city level in public hearings on

PDS, Education and SJSRY. The recommendations that emerged during these public hearings were documented and submitted to concerned officials to act upon them to bring systemic changes in these departments.

Ward-level Activities:

Follow-up on the Social Audit of SC/ST housing project in New Bagalur:

The report of the social audit that was conducted on the housing project for SC/ST in New Bagalur Layout (Sagayapuram Ward) during 2009-10, and presented in the public hearing held in December 2010, was submitted to the Mayor, Commissioner, Deputy Mayor, Chairmen of the Standing Committees on Social Justice, Appeals, Finance and Taxation, Joint Commissioner (Welfare), Chief Engineer and Chief Accounts Officer, BBMP, to take action on the findings and remove the opaqueness and malpractices that were plaguing the implementation of the project. It is being followed up through RTI applications by seeking the action taken report on the report submitted.

CIVIC organizes "Janaspandana" programmes

As per the BBMP circular dated 21.04.2010, mandatory ward-level Janaspandanas are to be conducted every first and third Saturday of all months under the chairmanship of the ward councillor. Since these were not being held, CIVIC collaborating with different civil society groups conducted four Janaspandana programmes at different wards namely, Sagayapuram, Devesandra, Lingarapuram and Nagawara. Though councillors were invited to chair the Janaspandana programmes, councillors of Sagayapuram, Devasandra and Nagawara didn't turn up. At Lingarapuram, Mr. Ganesh Reddy, husband of the councillor, Ms Lavanya, represented her in the meeting. However, officials of BBMP, BWSSB, Police (Traffic), participated in the programmes. To the Janaspandana organized in Nagawara, officials of BMTTC were also called.

Grievances were presented to concerned officials beforehand to act upon them. On the day of the programme, officials provided the status of the grievances that were already submitted to them. Fresh list of grievances that emerged during the event were recorded and submitted to the officials to

take action.



*Number of officials participated in Janaspandana conducted at different ward.*

At the Janaspandana held at Devasandra ward, Mr. Veeresh, Project Coordinator of CIVIC, stated that though grievances were photo documented and submitted to the officials, no action was taken on them except by the veterinary department. He also stated that even public didn't communicate with CIVIC whether the grievances they submitted were resolved or not. He clarified that his intention was not to blame either officials or community for this, it was rather to resolve all grievances of the public.

Mr. Ganesh Reddy asked the families living in slums to apply for housing and assured them that he would get their applications approved. He also accused officials of having rejected the applications for pensions that were submitted by him due to minute mistakes in the names of beneficiaries in their identity cards. He promised to speak to the tahsildar and revenue inspectors about it by calling a meeting.

Water - People's participation platform in BWSSB mooted

### Grievance Redressal Meetings (GRMs) with BWSSB

CIVIC organized Grievance Redressal Meetings (GRM) on water at Ramamurthy Nagar (East-5 Sub-division) along with the local RWA on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2011, in Sagayapuram along with JAGO on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2011, and at Lingarajapuram ward in partnership with FEDINA on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2011. Concerned BWSSB engineers were present on all occasions. Ms. Tejaswini Rajanna, Councillor of Ward 25, was present as the chief guest at Ramamurthy Nagar.

At the beginning of every event, CIVIC presented the charter of citizens' rights of BWSSB, the grievance redressal system available in each sub-division, and the mobile numbers of all the officials concerned so that the community would be empowered to demand their rights.

The major grievances that emerged during all the

events were that of infrequent water supply or of no water supply altogether for up to 2 years and one public tap serving 20-40 houses, etc. Some complained about low pressure in the water lines leading to unequal water distribution within the area resulting in over-use of water by a few families and some facing water scarcity. Regarding low pressure in pipes, officials assured the communities that they would solve the problem within two-three months by installing appropriate valves. A few members complained about getting bills without water supply. Regarding heavy water bills, officials stated that as the community had refused to pay the monthly bills because they had not received adequate water supply, the bill amounts had increased with interest. Armed with knowledge of their rights, residents demanded that BWSSB supply water through free tankers to the areas where there was inadequate water supply as an alternative remedy.



*Residents of Nagawara ward sharing their grievances with Mr. Chalapathi, AE, BWSSB*

Some residents demanded that new borewells should be dug in the area to improve water supply. However, officials stated that as the ground water has dried up, it would be a waste to dig more borewells. Officials also pointed out that insufficient water supply are also due to stealing of cables of borewells in some areas. Residents then suggested that wells and tanks of the area should be de-silted and rainwater harvesting measures to recharge ground water in the area should be undertaken. Officials promised to visit the places where there is improper supply of water and redress the grievances. They informed citizens that anybody could come to their office and get their grievances solved during 6.00 am to 1.00 pm any day.

Community members suggested that regular monthly Janaspandana programmes should be conducted to resolve problems and also demanded that they should be informed about budget allocations and expenditures of the department. They also demanded that BWSSB should change old pipe lines and curb unauthorized water connections put the information on tariffs on the web.

#### Resident gets water connection within 24 hours

Agnesh Babu, a resident of Vivekananda Road, stated that he had applied for a water connection three months earlier, but till date his house had not been given a connection. The concerned valveman was demanding a bribe to provide the connection. He asserted that his application was kept pending as he refused to give that bribe. Though he had complained about this to concerned officials none of them had acted upon his grievances. Yet he had been receiving a water bill regularly from the date he applied for a water connection. Strangely, officials had answered that the billing starts from the day of receiving an application and not from the date of initiation of service. He questioned how he could be charged when service had not been provided. When he discussed this issue with CIVIC coordinator, Ms. Jyothi, she collected all the bills he had received and visited BWSSB office seeking clarifications on the bills. Within 24 hours after her visit, officials informed Agnesh Babu that it was not necessary to pay the bills and gave the water connection too.

Mr. Ganesh, husband of the councillor of Lingarajapuram Ward, representing his wife, stated that officials are not responding to elected representatives too. He blamed them for their inefficiency which led to non-implementation of several BBMP works. He suggested that officials should visit all places where problems are more and get them solved. He also promised to verify and solve the issue of the 32 water bills with huge arrears. He assured the community that he himself would supply water through free tankers to the areas with deficient water supply and suggested that committees should be constituted in each road to ensure that no one wastes water.

Ms. Salma Sadikha, representing BWSSB, provided information on the JICA project which is envisioning providing water and sanitation to 362 slums. The task of surveying to identify families that are devoid of individual water and sanitation

facilities and mobilizing the communities has been given to four NGOs in PPP mode. Mr. Harish Babu of Mythri Sarva Seva Samiti, one of the NGOs selected under the PPP, stated that MSSS has already provided two community toilets and individual water connections to 400 houses in the area.

Mr. Shivashakaran of JAAGO suggested that BWSSB should have long-term and short-term plans to solve the problems at different levels. He also suggested that the community should conduct regular monthly meetings, document the issues and submit them to BWSSB to get them solved.

Ms Kathyayini Chamaraj pointed out the lack of fora for people's participation in decision-making in BWSSB and for resolving grievances in a timely manner, whereas other government agencies had these. For instance, the food department had vigilance committees and the education department had School Development and Monitoring Committees. She asked that these people's participation platforms within BWSSB be set up at every sub-division level. This suggestion was welcomed by BWSSB officials.

#### Food – Interactions with Special Investigation Officer of Lokayukta on PDS

##### Public Hearing on PDS - 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2011



*Dr. Balasubramaniam, Special Investigating Officer on PDS for Lokayukta, addressing at public hearing on PDS. (From Right) Ms. Sudha, convenor, RFC, DD, FCS & CA, Dr. Hullur (Central Division), Mr. Y.J. Muralidharan, MT, CREAT, Shri Vijayakumar DD, FCS&CA (South Division) are on the dais*

As convenor of the Bangalore Urban District Chapter of the Right to Food Campaign–Karnataka, CIVIC organized a public hearing on the Public Distribution System (PDS) on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2011. Dr. R. Balasubramaniam, Founder, Swamy Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) & Special Investigating

Officer on PDS for the Lokayukta, chaired the programme. Mr. Y.J. Muralidharan, Managing Trustee, Consumer Rights Education & Awareness Trust (CREAT), Mr. Clifton D'Rosario, State Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioners on Right to Food, Ms. Sudha, Convenor, Right to Food Campaign – Karnataka and Deputy Directors of the Dept. of Food & Civil Supplies, Dr. Hullur (Central Division) and Shri Vijayakumar (South Division), were the chief guests for the event.

Ms Sudha requested Dr. Balasubramaniam to focus on critical issues that affected judicious distribution of food grains to the needy poor through the PDS. She also requested him to give recommendations against cash transfer in place of food grains. A booklet on PDS and a 'Compendium of government orders and circulars on PDS' prepared by Mr. K. V. Ramamurthy, Project Coordinator of CIVIC, were released by Dr. Balasubramaniam.

Mr. Ramamurthy presented the study findings on the poor functioning of vigilance committees and Ahara Adalats (grievance meets) in the Food & Civil Supplies Dept. Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj made a presentation on the prevailing confusion regarding the income criteria for identifying the poor (BPL) and the government's varied exercises for drawing the poverty line. She suggested that a minimum wage amount fixed as per criteria evolved by the 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Labour Conference covering all basic needs should be considered as the poverty line.

Dr. Balasubramaniam suggested holding such programmes at community level to reach more people. He gave details regarding the scope and limitations of his investigation on the PDS. He requested civil society members to obtain his report under RTI after its submission to the Lokayukta and to file a PIL demanding action on the report and pressing for implementation of the recommendations.

Commenting on the statement of the food minister accepting the existence of bogus cards, that caused Rs 100 crore loss to the government every month, he said that "acceptance of guilt would not absolve anyone from their responsibility". If such things had happened in any other country, the officials responsible would have been prosecuted or dismissed from their position. He questioned the officials on the dais as to how Rs 100 crore losses were incurred every month when total budget fixed for the PDS was Rs 850 crore. He said that the

investigation was meaningless when the department itself was accepting the misappropriation.

On Karnataka distributing only 23 Kg of food grains per household under the unit system instead of 35 Kg as directed by the Supreme Court, he said that the state government itself was practising corruption. He recommended local procurement and distribution of food grains such as ragi and jowar. Mr. Y. G. Muralidharan, Managing Trustee of CREAT, suggested that SHGs or NGOs could run a few model fair-price shops and demonstrate how the problem could be solved. He felt that many of those who had APL cards and wished to have BPL cards were actually eligible only for APL cards, as per existing criteria.

Mr. Clifton D'Rozario asked communities to demand PDS as their rightful entitlement and not approach ration shops as beggars. He wondered why if people could attend meetings leaving their jobs, other Deputy Directors (DDs) of the food department could not attend them though it was part of their duties. On NGOs/SHGs running ration shops, he said that implementation of such rights-based schemes should be a government responsibility. He suggested that such programmes should be held in slums where more people could participate.

Mr. Vijaya Kumar, South Zone DD, said that effective public participation was the way to solve problems in the PDS. He referred to a decision taken in the Vidhana Soudha a few years ago to allow grama sabhas to rectify beneficiaries' lists. In this process, only 600-700 names were removed from the list of BPL families but around 50 lakh names were added as BPL beneficiaries. He said that vigilance committees should be formed by people themselves. He requested all card holders to call DDs on the toll-free number to air their grievances as it would be difficult for a DD to check all 1.5 lakh card holders.

Grievance Redressal Meet on PDS in  
Lingarajapuram, Bangalore -  
*19<sup>th</sup> February 2011*

A grievance redressal meet (GRM) on the PDS was organized at Lingarajapuram in collaboration with Fedina. Food Inspector Mr. Hanumanatharayappa, PDS shop owners Mr. Ravi and Mr. Mani participated in the programme. The objective of the GRM was to discuss the anomalies in the PDS,

create awareness on the Citizens' Charter of PDS and discuss the problems faced by the community with the officers directly. Mr. Ramamurthy highlighted the details of the proposed National Food Security Bill to the community. He also explained the Supreme Court's directions on PDS to the people.



*Food Inspector Mr. Hanumanatharayappa (Right), Janakiaymma, President, Karnataka senior citizens forum, PDS shop owners and Mr. Ramamurthy KV of CIVIC during GRM at Lingarajapuram*

The grievances raised by the community were on not getting complete entitlements, deficient weight of food grains, having temporary cards or APL cards instead of BPL cards, not being able to include new names in the ration card, non-issuance of food grains to APL cards, etc.

Food inspector, Mr. Hanumantharayappa, agreed to look into the grievances. On the request for issuing more quantity of sugar during festival months and issuing food grains to APL cards, he stated that he would convey the message to his higher authorities.

**Bangalore Chapter of Right to Food Campaign-Karnataka launched – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

To intensify dissemination of information and activities of the Right to Food Campaign-Karnataka (RFC-K), the State Core Committee suggested to its members to form district chapters of RFC-K. CIVIC agreed to form the Bangalore Urban District Chapter and called a meeting of NGOs/CBOs working on the issue of food in the district to form the district committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January' 11. It was decided to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month regularly. As per this decision, Bangalore Chapter is

regularly meeting at CIVIC office to discuss and plan its activities. Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj is the convenor of this Bangalore Chapter.

A meeting was organized by the Bangalore Chapter on 14<sup>th</sup> February 11 with Dr. Balasubramaniam, Director, Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement, and special investigation officer for Lokayukta on PDS, to understand the scope of the study on PDS under the special investigation. Dr. Balasubramanyam requested RFC-K to obtain a copy of his interim report under the Right to Information Act immediately after its submission to the Lokayukta. He also requested RFC-K to disseminate the details of the report by conducting press meets, etc. RFC-K accepted to provide its support to Dr. Balasubramanyam in whichever district he chose to visit.

**Health – Grievance meets activate maternal and child health services**

**Grievance Redressal Meet at General Hospital and Primary Health Centre, K.R. Puram - 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

A follow-up Grievance Redressal Meet (GRM) was organized at the General Hospital and Primary Health Centre, K.R. Puram. Community members from Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Sanjay Nagar and Triveni Nagar participated and shared their grievances. Mr. K. Shivakumar, District Health Education Officer, Dr. Ansar Ahmed, AMO, of General Hospital, Mr. Shivakumar, Assistant AMO, Mr. V.E. Parameshwar and Ms. K.C.Vanaja, Junior Health Assistants from the primary health centre represented the health centers. Along with CIVIC team, Mr. Lakshapathi, Director of APSA, Mr. Patil and Mr. Venkatesh of APSA also participated in the programme.

The objective of this GRM was to discuss action taken on grievances submitted during the November GRM, hurdles faced by the community in getting health services from health centres, and the status of formation and functioning of Arogya Raksha Samithi in the General Hospital. Ms. Sowmya Bharadwaj of CIVIC provided details on the current status of grievances submitted during previous GRM.

The vital issue of formation of Arogya Raksha Samiti which the Health Education Officer and AMO had accepted to form had not yet been undertaken. When clarification on this was sought, the officials



stated that as the AMO had been transferred and a new AMO had taken charge, it had not been possible to form the RKS. They again assured the gathering that it would be formed with new members within a period of one month. However, formation of the Arogya Raksha Samathi has not yet been initiated and it's still pending with officials. CIVIC is trying hard to push this issue as a priority so that the community gets a legitimate platform to solve their grievances within the public service delivery point.



*Mr. K. Shivakumar, DHEO, Dr. Ansar Ahmed, AMO, Mr. Shivakumar, Asst. AMO, Mr. V.E. Parameshwar, Mr. Lakshapathi, Director, APSA, Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj ET, CIVIC during follow-up GRM.*

A list of fresh grievances was also collected from the community and shared with the officials. Officials of the hospital stated that many grievances are due to lack of adequate infrastructure, human resources and equipment in the hospital as per the population of the area. They stated that there is a need for one more hospital to attend to all patients in a satisfactory manner. Officials also agreed to conduct the next GRM in the hospital premises itself, which is yet to happen.

#### **Grievance Redressal Meet at Primary Health Centre, New Bagalur Layout -30<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

A follow-up GRM at the primary health center of New Bagalur Layout was organized on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Community members of Deshyanagar and Bagalur Layout participated in the programme. ANM Ms. Gangamma and link workers represented the health center. Ms. Prabha, Anganwadi worker of Deshyanagar also participated. Along with CIVIC, Ms. Glory of GRACE and Ms. Shivarajamma of MSSS also participated.

Mr, Ramachandra of CIVIC presented the citizens' charter of the health center which included the details on admission of patients, users' fees,

available health and laboratory facilities, various maternity schemes, etc. He also provided information on the functioning of the anganwadi and services available there. He provided the job descriptions and duties of the staff of primary health center and anganwadi too.



*Mr, Ramachandra Project Coordinator, CIVIC, ANM Ms. Gangamma, Ms. Prabha, Anganwadi worker, Mr. Harish Kumar, Chief coordinator, CIVIC in the GRM at New Bagalur Layout Health Center*

This was followed by a discussion on grievances faced by the Deshyanagar community. Key issues were lack of treatment and facilities to pregnant women and children and non-issual of Mother Card to pregnant women which prevented them from getting any benefits from the health centers. Officials assured the participants that they would conduct a house-to-house survey and register all pregnant women and provide them with Mother Cards. They agreed to provide suitable awareness on primary health and proper nutrition to pregnant and infants including vaccination too. They sought cooperation from the communities for such activities.

ANM Ms. Gangamma stated that the doctor of that health center is in charge of three health centers, and hence she visits the center twice a week only which is hindering provision of proper health services. She informed mothers of the days when check-ups of pregnant women and vaccinations are done. She gave the assurance that Mother Cards would be issued on the very first visit of a pregnant woman and those possessing one would be given treatment at less cost. She asked all mothers to avail themselves of the benefit.

Education – SDMC and parents' meetings usher improvements in schools

## Public Hearing on Government Schools - 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011

A public hearing was organized by CIVIC on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to share and discuss the issues of education system at city level. Mr. Vasudeva Sharma, Executive Director, Child Right Trust, presided over the event. Ms. Veena Naik, Joint Director (Admin) and Ms. Rekha, Block Resource Officer, of North Zone-03, Mr. Prakash, DDPI office, Bangalore North Zone, Education Department, Mr. Abraham Kuruvilla, Chairman of CIVIC- Bangalore, were the chief guests. A booklet on government schools prepared by Mr. D. Venkatesh, Project Coordinator of CIVIC, was released by Mr. Vasudeva Sharma.



(From Left) Mr. Prakash, DDPI office, Bangalore North Zone, Education Department, Mr. Abraham Kuruvilla, Chairman, CIVIC, Mr. Vasudeva Sharma, ED, Child Right Trust, Ms. Veena Naik, Joint Director (Admin), Ms. Padmini, Trustee, CIVIC during Public hearing on Education.

Mr. Venkatesh presented a study on the differences in the functioning of four government schools before and after the intervention of CIVIC. He highlighted the improved participation of SDMC members in the functioning of the school after their capacity building through awareness programmes.

Ms. Nagarathna, of Paraspara Trust, presented their efforts at developing a few government schools as model schools. Paraspara Trust was able to develop 10 schools as model schools in Malleshwaram zone with the support of the community, the education department, various organizations, SDMC members, teachers and children. She expressed her concern regarding the decision of the government to close around 500 government schools stating various reasons in the academic year 2009-10.

Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj presented the shortcomings in the suo-motu disclosures of these four schools under section 4.1.b. of RTI Act. She

narrated that though a Residential Bridge Course had been opened for drop-out children of Deshyanagar, all efforts to bring those children to school went in vain as the department had no protocol to ensure that children attended school. The organization running this bridge school has provided information that there are 70 children in that school whereas actually only 8 children were attending. However, as per the departmental guidelines, a bridge school can admit only 30 children.

SDMC members shared their experiences as SDMC members. One SDMC member said that as president of SDMC he had signed a blank cheque as per the instruction of the head-teacher of that particular school. Another member shared how SDMC members who voiced their concerns about the school's malfunctioning were targeted by the Hms.

Mr. Prakash and Ms. Veena Naik promised that they would discuss the issues with higher authorities and take action. Mr. Prakash stated that it was astonishing that a SDMC president was so ignorant as to sign on a blank cheque. Ms. Veena Naik said that if a written complaint on any official of the education department was given, she would take action as every public officer is accountable for his errors. She also suggested that model participatory SDMCs should be developed. Ms Kathyayini Chamaraj countered this saying that the meeting was called to ask higher officials to bring about systemic changes to prevent such happenings rather than to target individual misdoings.

Mr. Vasudeva Sharma stressed the need for community awareness and participation in improving school functioning. In the new RTE Act too there is no emphasis on quality education. He called for a larger discussion to frame clear guidelines on what constitutes a 'quality school'. He also questioned how a private school which ensures 100% first classes in examinations by providing admission only to children capable of scoring 90% could be called a quality school. Children who were not capable of getting admission in such private schools were the ones joining government schools and these government schools had the responsibility of training such students and getting good results. He asked everyone to work to resolve problems of the education system.

Recommendations that emerged during the

public hearing are:

- ⌚ A circular should be sent to all head-masters asking them to conduct SDMC and parents' meetings regularly as per rules, failing which severe action would be taken against them.
- ⌚ Children whose parents complain regarding poor infrastructure or poor functioning of schools should be protected from victimization by teachers.
- ⌚ A complaint box should be kept in all schools so that children can write their complaints and put them into the box. SDMCs should act upon these complaints.
- ⌚ No fee should be collected from children without giving receipt. The details regarding all budgetary allocations and expenditures of the school should be displayed on a notice board. Monitoring of implementation of approved schemes should be done by the SDMC / department.
- ⌚ SDMC members should be provided with suitable timely trainings, allowance to attend meetings and identity cards as proof of their membership in SDMCs.
- ⌚ SDMCs should prepare the school's action plan at the start of every academic year.
- ⌚ Directives should be given to head-teachers to facilitate regular social audits of school budgets by SDMCs.
- ⌚ Education department should provide training on the Right to Information Act to all its PIOs including head-teachers.
- ⌚ Information under Section 4 of the RTI Act should be made available in all schools and offices to the public in booklet form.

### SDMCs become more active

With repeated efforts and follow-ups, SDMCs in most of the schools where CIVIC is involved are functioning actively. The meetings are conducted regularly in all SDMCs to monitor school's activity. SDMC members have become aware of their roles and responsibilities. Memos regarding meetings are now being regularly issued by the headmaster. SDMC presidents are now refusing to sign blank cheques. HMs used to take decisions on how to spend the school grants and merely inform the SDMC of decisions taken. SDMC members are now asking how decisions are being taken without their knowledge and consent. During regular monthly meetings they discuss about the problems of the

school and give applications to the BEO requesting him to take action.

SDMC members are now asking for accounts of all funds and expenditure of the schools from the head-masters. They are now taking decisions on how these should be spent.

Boards are being painted in the schools to capture their income and expenditure so that it is visible to all parents. They even conducted social audits of school accounts and took detailed account of school infrastructure at the time of starting of the new academic year and submitted an Annual Plan for action by BEOs.

Through such activities, the schools are now equipped with play materials for children, have separate toilets for girls and boys and have purchased necessary cleaning equipment for toilets. SDMCs are now taking the responsibility of construction works of the schools by themselves.

### Parents voice grievances at meetings



*Active participation of parents in parents' meeting at school*

Parents' meetings are also being conducted regularly in all schools to bring in systemic changes. Teachers are now listening to the grievances of children through their parents and are responding to solve them. As a result of parents voicing that toilets were dysfunctional in schools, now schools have separate toilets for both boys and girls. The children are also provided with drinking water and mats to sit on while having lunch. As a result of parents raising the issue of children not being provided play equipment to play with, HMs has started giving these to children.

Livelihood - Federation of Community

Development Societies (CDSs) under SJSRY mooted

Public Hearing on SJSRY - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011

A public consultation on Swarna Jayanthi Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) was organized at city level on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Shri Purushotham, Joint Director (Welfare, BBMP), Ms. Jayanthi, Joint Director (Development) Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA), Shri Anselm Rosario, (Director, MSSS), Shri M. Venkatesh (DBM) were the chief guests. All Community Organisers (COs) and Community Affairs Organisers (CAOs) of BBMP also participated in the event.

CIVIC's analysis of the Central guidelines on SJSRY Vs the lacunae in the actual implementation of the scheme was presented. This analysis has highlighted the lack of an Urban Poverty Alleviation Authority in the State and of a single-window system for urban poverty alleviation schemes at local body level; lack of manpower to implement the scheme; absence of training of CDSs and Neighbourhood Groups; irregular meetings of CDSs; the non-usage of even the meagre funds set apart; the absence of micro-business centres and entrepreneurial trainings; etc. An information booklet on SJSRY prepared by Mr. M. Lakshmikantha, Project Coordinator CIVIC, was released during the event.



*(From Left) Mr.Lakshmikantha, Project Coordinator, CIVIC, Mr. M.Venkatesh, DBM, Ms. Jayanthi, JD, (Development), DMA, Mr. B.FPatil, JC, (South), BBMP, Mr.Purushotham, JD, (welfare, BBMP), during SJSRY booklet release*

During the discussion, community members complained that Community Development Societies were not constituted as per the guidelines. CDS members expressed that the members are not updated with minutes of meetings, circulars, budgets of the scheme, beneficiary lists, etc.; that

bankers are not attending meetings, not giving feedback on loan applications; asking for collateral and the prior existence of on-going business to provide loans, etc.

As SJSRY is being implemented as per 1998 survey data of BPL families, many families then declared as BPL have moved to APL from BPL category but are still availing benefits under the scheme, while needy BPL families are unable to get benefits. Hence there is a need for re-survey for identification of the real poor in the city. Moreover, the area coming under BBMP has been increased from 200 sq kms to 800 sq kms which now includes a few rural parts. Hence a new survey of BPL families is necessary to include the poor of these rural areas, the slums left out in the 1998 survey and the poor added to BBMP after 1998 in the scheme.

The programme also had a discussion on the poor utilization of funds during the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11. The Deputy Commissioner (Welfare), BBMP, assured the gathering that he would make his COs and CAOs prepare action plans with time-lines along with CDSs. As per the Deputy Commissioner's assurance, action plans were prepared by all CAO and COs for implementation of SJSRY within one month of this meeting.

The recommendations that emerged during the public consultation were submitted to the Commissioner, BBMP, and Additional Commissioners of all BBMP zones. These are being followed up to ensure implementation of the same.

The recommendations that emerged during the meeting are:

1. Officials should prepare action plans for the scheme with time-frames in consultation with all community members.
2. The budgets allocated for SJSRY should be utilized in the same financial year and disciplinary action should be taken on those officers who do not implement the scheme appropriately.
3. The applications sent by applicants from different zones to the BBMP head-office /banks should be approved within a fixed time-frame of one month.
4. One CO should be appointed for each ward to work exclusively on the SJSRY scheme.
5. BBMP should help the beneficiaries in getting skill and entrepreneurship trainings, backward and forward linkages for their

- businesses, etc., by setting up micro-business centers.
6. BBMP should provide space for marketing the products of the poor beneficiaries under SJSRY by reserving some shops in the commercial complexes of BBMP.
  7. Neighbourhood groups, neighbourhood committees and community development societies should be formed as per Central guidelines.
  8. Representation should be given in the CDS to each ward coming under its jurisdiction and one CDS should be formed for every 10 wards.
  9. CDSs should meet every month as per the guidelines. Bi-annual general assemblies of all members should be held which should be attended by the zonal joint commissioner to listen to feedback and give suggestions and directions.
  10. CDS members should be provided with travel allowance for attending meetings.
  11. Letter-heads and identity cards should be given to CDSs for their use.
  12. The maximum age limit of 45 years to apply for loan and subsidy under SJSRY should be extended.

13. Strict action should be taken on bankers who ask for surety for sanctioning SJSRY loans.
14. Bankers of that CDS jurisdiction should attend the monthly CDS meetings regularly and provide feedback on applications approved and reasons for rejection of loan applications, if any.

The Joint Director (DMA) promised that she would discuss with higher officials regarding payment of TA to CDS members and also for conducting a new survey to identify suitable beneficiaries for the SJSRY scheme.

The recommendations that emerged at the consultation were listed and a memorandum prepared and submitted to concerned officials by members of CDSs along with CIVIC. The public hearing show-cased the need for the formation of a city-level network of CDSs to pressure government to bring policy-level changes. Recognising this need, CIVIC facilitated the formation of an informal city-level federation of SJSRY community development societies on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011, which is yet to be registered.

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