

Editorial

During this period, the BBMP presented a budget for 2011-12 which was truly an exercise in building castles in the air. With hardly Rs. 3,500 crore in its hands, the BBMP presented a budget for more than Rs. 9,000 crore. This kind of budget preparation is totally violative of the principles of budget formulation that BBMP is supposed to adhere to as per the Karnataka Local Fund Authorities' Fiscal Responsibility Act (KLFAFRA) and the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan already prepared for BBMP in 2007-08. BBMP did not also conduct the mandatory public consultations under the above Act before formulating the budget. CIVIC conducted a consultation inviting slum-dwellers' associations, representatives of the homeless, the differently-abled and other marginalised to demand an urban poor focus in the budget. But sadly, none from the BBMP, either the elected representatives or officials, deigned to attend the consultation. However the heads/representatives of the city units of the various political parties did attend the consultation.

A public hearing on the Health Systems in Bangalore brought to light the travails of urban poor women when they try to access health services at state government or BBMP maternity homes. The absence of public health standards for urban areas, the lack of doctors and other health personnel, necessary equipment and medicines are driving the urban poor to private health providers. This is giving a reason for public health providers to further reduce the services citing lack of demand.

A significant success achieved during this period was a meeting facilitated by CIVIC of the members of the Federation of Community Development Societies with the Lead Bank Manager of the SJSRY scheme. The meeting resulted in the Lead Bank manager issuing a circular to all bank managers not to ask for surety against loans under the SJSRY and to dispose all loan applications within a time-frame of one month. This has already been given effect to in many zones of BBMP, much to the relief of poor women seeking loans

for self-employment under the scheme.

CIVIC facilitated preparation of the Annual School Development Plan by the School Development & Monitoring Committees of the Cox Town Government Primary & High School which resulted in the school being painted, doors, windows, fans and switches being repaired, dust-bins being bought for the classrooms and toilets, debris in the compound being removed, and details of school grant and expenditure being painted on the notice board - an illustration of what people's participation can achieve.

City-Level Events:

Public consultation on "BBMP's Budget: Expectations of Citizens" - 22nd July 2011



From left: Mr. Srinivas Kumar, Advisor, Fiscal Policy Institute, GoK, Mr. J Alexander, President, Bangalore City Unit, KPCC, Mr. N.V. Krishna Kumar, General Secretary, Media and Communications Wing, Janata Dal (S), Mr. S. Sadananda, Director, IDPMS, Mr K. Prakash, Secretary, Bangalore City Unit, CPI (M) and Mr. Ramakanth, President, Bangalore City Unit, Lokasatta, on the dais during the public consultation

In the background of the upcoming BBMP budget for 2011, a public consultation was organised on "BBMP's budget: Expectations of the citizens". Mr. S. Sadananda, Director, Initiatives for Development through Participation of Marginalised sections (IDPMS), chaired the event. Mr. J Alexander, President, Bangalore City Unit, KPCC, Mr. N.V. Krishna Kumar, General Secretary, Media and Communications Wing, Janata Dal (S), Mr K. Prakash, Secretary, Bangalore City Unit, CPI (M) and Mr. Ramakanth, President, Bangalore City Unit, Lokasatta, were the chief guests.

Sri Manjunatha Raju, Chairman, Standing Committee, Taxation and Finance, BBMP, who had accepted to represent BBMP, however, didn't turn up for the meeting.

Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee of CIVIC, detailed the provisions of the Karnataka Local Fund Authorities' Fiscal Responsibility Act (KLFAFRA) and Medium-Term Fiscal Plan to which BBMP was required to adhere while formulating the budget. Several elected representatives contacted were totally ignorant on these laws and still believed that budget preparation was a secret process which could not be discussed with citizens. She highlighted findings of the audit reports which had disclosed discrepancies, such as works passed without the commissioner's approval or council's sanction, works allotted through secret tendering or without calling tenders, no mention of work details, etc. The audit report of BBMP's works for 2011 showed that more than Rs 6,000 crore worth of unauthorised work had taken place, out of which Rs 3,500 crore worth of works were non-existent. BBMP owes Rs. 6000 crore to contractors for these unauthorised works which is a gross violation of the rules.

She pointed out that the 2010-11 budget's focus was more on road infrastructure rather than on basic services for urban poor (BSUP). She stressed that priority needs to be for BSUP and for complete utilisation of money that is allocated under SC/ST sub-plan.

Mr. Madhusudan, of KKNSS, presented the quantified demands of slum-dwellers for land and housing, health infrastructure, education, credit, social security and for insurance and demanded Rs. 963.50 crores for BSUP. Ms. Rajani of IGSSS, demanded Rs. 50 crore to provide night shelter with water and toilet facility to the urban homeless people, as Karnataka government has submitted an affidavit to the Supreme Court that it would build the required number of shelter homes by October 2011. Ms. Rashmi of the Association for the Differently-Abled pointed out that BBMP lacks even statistics about differently-abled persons in its jurisdiction which prevents proper formulation of programmes and schemes for them. She insisted that BBMP should allocate adequate budget for the differently-abled adults and children for their medical care, social security and educational and awareness programmes. She also demanded that support for self-employment to establish small enterprises,

purchase two-wheelers, etc., should be provided to them.

Ms. Savitha of Child Rights Trust, speaking on behalf of children demanded safe pathways for children to cross roads, children's libraries in every ward and ramps in schools to help differently-abled children. Mr. Sivashankaran, President of the Federation of North-East Residents' Welfare Associations, narrated how they had conducted participatory budgeting in Sagayapuram ward. They had charted out three prioritised work lists with a total cost of Rs. 19.23 crore, by conducting several street meetings. This was submitted to the BBMP through the councillor. Contrasting their budget with that prepared by BBMP for Rs. 395.35 lakh for a different set of works without any citizens' consultation, he wondered for whom BBMP's budget was prepared. Mr. Sivashankaran said that it was high time BBMP looked at the needs of the people and made necessary changes in their planning and budgeting process to fulfil the felt-needs of the citizens.

Mr. N. V. Krishnakumar, JD(S), felt that the BBMP lacks technical and financial capability to undertake huge infrastructure projects and that it should restrict itself to social development works such as education, health, sanitation, etc. When asked to state his stand on road-widening, he said that JD(S) was against road-widening and damaging the environment. He estimated that the amount required to procure land for slum-dwellers was more in the range of Rs.3000 crore rather than the estimation of KKNSS of Rs. 900 crore. He pointed out that a share for BBMP in the State's transportation tax is mandated by law but is being violated and BBMP is not getting the money.

Mr. J. Alexander, President of Congress City Unit, promised to convey the suggestions made at the meeting to the councillors of his party. He agreed that the budget should be realistic and has to reach the people living in slums to improve their living conditions. He felt that the municipality's primary responsibility job was mere housekeeping and it should concentrate on providing good roads, footpaths, mosquito control measures, controlling dog menace, etc. He asked people to organise themselves to get the maximum number of their demands met.

Mr. K. Prakash, CPI (M), stated that BBMP's budget for the previous year had been 31% unrealistic. One needed to question why and for whom many of the programmes were formulated. BBMP seemed to

prepare its budget only for those who wanted to loot money. He questioned why the mayor was provided with Rs.150 crore as individual discretionary fund and the necessity for this when there was already a contingency fund. He also stressed that BBMP and the councillors have to be empowered with powers to frame policies and programmes as stated in the 74th CAA for the development of the city.

Mr. Ramakanth of Lokasatta wanted the report of the event to be sent to BBMP as no elected representatives had come forward to participate in the meeting. He lamented that there is no data with BBMP on the doctor-patient ratio, teacher-student ratio, road length, number of differently-abled, etc, within its jurisdiction. Data is essential for budget preparation and first a zone-wise survey needs to be done in all the eight zones to collect relevant information. He questioned the rationale of BBMP making its budget dependent on money garnered from schemes like Akrama-Sakrama, which was money collected for illegalities perpetrated by citizens.

Mr. Sadananda, Director, IDPMS, stated that it was very unfortunate that the Chairman of the Standing Committee, T&F, elected representatives and officials of BBMP had not participated in this important meeting. The 73rd Amendment had strengthened the gram panchayats and zilla panchayats; similarly the 74th Amendment had to strengthen the local urban bodies. Participation of citizens in planning the budget was not possible and did not become important when no ward committees were formed. He also highlighted that though the 2010-11 budget document used the term 'bottom-up budget' many times, no bottom-up approach was seen during formulating the budget. Similarly, other words such as transparency, efficiency and accountability are also used without understanding their meaning as there is no participation from the public.

Recommendations on BBMP Budget

The recommendations that emerged during the meeting were submitted to the BBMP Commissioner, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, ruling party leader, opposition party leaders and the Chairman of the Standing Committee (Finance and Taxation), to consider them while preparing the budget. Key recommendations were:

1. The State government should take effective initiatives to strengthen the local urban bodies in

line with the 74th Amendment to ensure participation of citizens in planning the budget by forming Area Sabhas and ward committees as required under the Model Nagararaj bill that has been circulated by the Ministry of Urban Development.

2. Handing over the functions of education and health back to the State government is against the 74th Amendment. Rather the local administration should be given enough power and independence to provide these services efficiently at local level.
3. Rules should be framed for the Karnataka Local Fund Authorities' Fiscal Responsibilities Act (KLFAFRA)-2003 to bring realism and sanctity to the budget. The Act provides a framework for managing expenditure consistent with revenue by formulating the budget realistically and minimising deviations.
4. To make the whole process of budget preparation and implementation transparent, BBMP should hold at least two meetings annually with civil society organisations residents' welfare associations on annual budget preparation and should involve them in reviewing and evaluating it through social audit as per the KLFAFRA-2003 Act.
5. A Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP) should be prepared along with the budget for a period of five years which ensures a proper procedure for preparation, submission and audit of the accounts as well as proper scrutiny and adherence to the audit reports and publication of financial document and annual report.
6. The MTFP should be the source document for annual budget preparation and BBMP should not deviate from it as and when it likes.
7. A Budget Control Cell should be set up as per the recommendation of the MTFP to check the formulation of programmes and schemes that give false hopes to citizens.
8. BBMP should adhere to its responsibility as recognised by the MTFP to provide Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) in the 325 slums in its jurisdiction and to provide decent livelihood to the urban poor.
9. Adopting the "whole city" approach as required under the State's MoU under JNNURM, BBMP should earmark and provide seven services such as security of tenure, housing at affordable prices,

water and sanitation and the universal services of the government – health, education and social security to all the slums.

10. Necessary amendments need to be made to policies and laws to enable BBMP Council to have its say in framing policies and programmes for the city rather than the State government.
11. BBMP should be allowed to frame programmes independently as stated in the 74th Amendment and should not function merely as a post office. It would then be able to do development work.
12. Internal and external audits of the BBMP accounts should be conducted every year to check the discrepancies in work allocation and in inviting tenders for work.
13. Strict action should be taken against the officers who approve work without the approval of the Commissioner or sanction of the BBMP council or allot works either through secret tendering or without calling for tenders.
14. A pre-budget paper should be prepared by analysing short and long-term needs, to set out priorities and cost estimation, to highlight the fiscal and expenditure reforms.
15. Chairman of the Standing Committee should take care to reduce the over-estimation of revenues to the extent of 40% and make a more realistic estimation.
16. An Expenditure Management Committee should be set up to review the status of expenditure from time to time and to look at the proposals and ensure the sources of funds for it.
17. More budget allocation should be made for providing basic services for urban poor rather than allocating more budgets for road widening.

Panel discussion on “Unique ID System: Pros and Cons” - 16th September 2011

CIVIC and CfAR jointly organised a panel discussion on “Unique ID system: Pros & Cons” on 16th September 2011 to provide more information on the UID programme to grassroots level civil society workers as they had no information on this programme and its future consequences. Mr. Ashok Dalwai, IAS, Regional Deputy Director, UIDAI, Mr. Prabhakar, PRO, E-Governance department, Government of Karnataka, Mr. Somashekhar, V.K., Managing Trustee, Grahak



From left: Mr. Prabhakar, PRO, Dept. of E-Govt., GOK, Mr. Ashok Dalwai, IAS, Regional Deputy Director, UIDAI, Mr. Somashekhar, V.K., Managing Trustee, Grahak Shakti, and Mr. Mathew Thomas, civic activist, during the panel discussion on UID

Shakti, and Mr. Mathew Thomas, civic activist, were the panelists at the consultation.

Mr. Somashekhar of Grahak Shakti stated that the UID programme lacked transparency and raised doubts on its relevance. He opined that the programme was unconstitutional as it lacked the consent of parliament. He expressed his concern at the waste of a huge amount of money in case the UIDAI Bill was rejected by parliament. As the data was being collected by multinational companies that had a foreign base and origin, the personal details of the citizens might be leaked. When a citizen could get 15 kinds of identity cards for his identity proof, Aadhaar would end up being yet another identity card, he felt. He wondered how the biometric identity would be matched in case people lost one of their identity proofs such as fingers or eyes accidentally. Though the programme was supposed to be for the benefit of the poor, he felt that the poor would lose nothing as they could access benefits with another card with them. Rather, the UID may become a hurdle to access the benefit of schemes, if they lost the card or if any damage occurred to their biometric identification which would again deny them access to benefits. He felt that the whole purpose of the programme itself was not clear and hence he opposed it.

Mr. Mathew Thomas, civic activist, stated that India had considered UID a prestigious programme while the same project had been rejected in England for fear that citizens would lose their privacy and independence. He narrated the history of how this programme had taken birth in India. Though the government stated that the objective was to prevent terrorist activities, the hidden objective was to make

profits for the market. Section 6 of Chapter 2 of the proposed UIDAI Bill stated that the Aadhaar card was not a proof of citizenship or a means to seek any benefits.

However, in Section 22, subsection 2 of Chapter 3, it was stated that all the data had to be collected, entered and stored by the UID, through the UID and for the UID before the Bill is passed. This meant that all the information recorded under it would be retrospectively legitimised, which was an insult to the citizens. He too opined that though the programme boasted that it was for the benefit of the poor, it had only the market as focus.

Mr. Prabhakar, PRO, e-governance department, GoK, explained the procedure to get an Aadhaar card. Mr Ashok Dalwai stated that that there was nothing illegal about the programme as it had been implemented as per Government of India orders and all procedures were being followed. As a mere employee, he expressed his inability to answer why parliamentary sanction had not been obtained before the programme was implemented. However, he assured that the biometric information recorded under this programme could not be misused by anybody as there were sufficient checks to prevent misuse. Currently, there were millions of persons in the country who could not prove their identity due to lack of sufficient address proof, etc. The UID would ensure that people in any part of the country could prove their identity through their biometrics. He narrated how a bank could be operated at a remote village by a shop owner, SHG member or a social worker by having a biometric identifier that would help the people in money transactions. He assured the gathering that the programme was for the benefit of the poor and that it would help them in accessing different schemes.

However, the participants were not convinced by Mr. Dalwai. They went on questioning the statutory status of the programme. They questioned what measures had been taken to protect and prevent the hijacking of the personal information of millions that were being recorded.

Health:

Public consultation on the Public Health System in Bangalore - 7th July 2011

A public consultation was organised on the Public Health System in Bengaluru. A booklet prepared by Mr. Ramachandra K.V., CIVIC coordinator, that

included information on various health schemes and on health care facilities in the primary health centers, was released. Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj presented an analysis of the Section 4.1.b suo motu disclosures under the Right to Information Act of the State-run primary health centers and hospitals and BBMP health centers, pointing out their deficiencies. Mr. Ramachandra K.V. presented the study that was conducted on four health centers - two under the jurisdiction of BBMP and two under the State health department. He highlighted the splintered health services being provided in the BBMP area by the BBMP, the State health department, the Directorate of Medical Education and the ESI, all of which did not add up to an effective primary health care system. He pointed out the lack of jurisdictional clarity between the several agencies administering health, the lack of manpower, equipment, services and medicines and difficulties faced by the poor in accessing health services and various schemes and the non-applicability of Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) in the urban centers.



From left: Ms. Asha Kilaru, CIVIC Trustee, Ms. Akhila Vasan, Health Researcher, Mr. Premdas, Convenor, JAAK, Dr. L. T. Gayathri, Chief Health officer, BBMP, Mr. Ramachandra, project coordinator, CIVIC, and Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee, CIVIC releasing the book on health services.

Dr. L. T. Gayathri, Chief Health officer, BBMP, promised to rectify the suo motu disclosures under Section 4.1.b. of the Right to Information Act of the BBMP health centers immediately. She gave an assurance that if any specific complaint was registered with her regarding any health issue, she would immediately act upon those complaints. She shared the concern that currently no doctors are keen on taking up jobs with BBMP or government health centers as they feel that the salary offered to them is very low. She informed that medicines including anti-rabies medicine for dog

bites are available in all health centers. However, high-tech medicines and tonics are not available at the health centres and have to be bought outside. She also stated that programmes are undertaken to eradicate mosquitoes that cause chickungunya and dengue in all BBMP areas.

Dr. Narayan, Deputy Director, Nutrition and Community Health, in the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare, also stated that unless specific problems are brought to the notice of higher authorities of the department it would be difficult to solve them. He stated that it was not fair to escalate a few anecdotal problems to the entire state. He felt that creating awareness among the community would solve most of the problems. The department is continuously doing several awareness programmes through all media including television.

Dr. Chandrashekhar, Taluk Health Officer, K.R. Puram, stated that in KR Puram both the primary health centre and general hospital are in the same compound and people directly go to the general hospital. Thus activities prescribed for the primary health centre too are handled in the general hospital. But the problem in these health centers is that the ratio of population to the health centers is three times more than what is stated in the IPH standards. There is only one gynaecologist and all people demand the specialist's services.

Ms. Akhila Vasan, independent researcher on public health, stated that the event had provided good information on the urban health system scenario. Ms. Asha Kilaru, CIVIC Trustee and health researcher, noted that to provide quality health care the attitude of service providers towards patients would play a major role. However, many of the slum-dwellers present at the meeting had stated that many doctors don't even touch the patients before treating them. This would not build any confidence in them. She also mentioned that conducting grievance redressal meetings is mandatory for officials and not optional.

Mr. Premdas, health activist and member of Janaarogya Andolana-Karnataka (JAA-K), who presided over the meeting, noted that though people are paying three times the fee that they used to pay earlier, they are not able to access proper health services. Unless the system was functional, whichever scheme was implemented would be wasted. He stated that more than 90% of the essential medicines are not available in the health centers. Bangalore city has one

crore population where a majority of them are poor. He stated that such dialogues should be conducted regularly to rectify problems.

Case Studies presented at the Public Hearing:

Sultana, a 27-year-old woman shared the experience of pregnant Gulnaz Begum at BBMP's Jagajeevan Ram Nagar Referral Hospital. Though she was having labour pain, the doctor at the hospital refused to admit her saying that there was still time for her delivery. But Gulnaz Begum delivered a baby at her home within one hour after returning from the hospital. When she travelled back to the hospital for further treatment, the doctor refused to admit her stating that the delivery had not happened in that hospital. She was denied access to other health facilities such as the "Madilu Kit" as well.

Nagamma of Kengeri, narrated that when she took her pregnant sister to the Kengeri Maternity Home, the doctors refused to treat the patient and asked Nagamma to take her to Vani Vilas Hospital. They were able to get the ambulance, but were not able to get any nurse or attender to help shift the patient to the ambulance. Nagamma took the profusely bleeding pregnant sister herself with no nurse or doctor to attend to her in the ambulance, risking the life of mother and child. The patient delivered immediately after reaching Vani Vilas Hospital.

Rashmi of APD stated that BBMP was not providing any health facilities to the differently-abled children. In the past few months, eleven differently-abled children had died due to severe health problems. There was no facility for such children at the primary health centres and many of these children had died while being taken to the speciality hospitals. She also informed that out of thirty six severely affected children, a few would die if immediate action was not taken.

Pushpalatha of Rajiv Gandhi Nagar castigated officials and asked them to close down the hospitals if they could not provide adequate manpower, equipment, medicines or services to run them efficiently and serve the poor.

"Major recommendations that emerged during the consultation"

- All health centres/hospitals should provide all their suo-motu information under the RTI Act in the form of a booklet to the public.
- Primary health care should be made a function

of the urban local body. The health facilities that are splintered in the BBMP as health centers, family welfare centers, maternity homes, dispensaries, etc, should be brought under one roof to provide primary health care as per the IPH standards with respect to population and area covered, infrastructure, manpower, equipment, medical tests and services.

- Suitable measures should be adopted to ensure that the benefits of various schemes such as Prasuthi Araiike, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Madilu kit, reach the real needy beneficiaries.
- The jurisdiction of all health centers should be clearly established so that field workers, such as ANMs or link workers, have clear knowledge of their areas to visit the community regularly and give awareness on various schemes, facilities available in health centers, good nutrition and child care.
- Arogya Raksha Samitis should be formed in all health centers and community given membership in them.
- A grievance redressal cell should be established in all health centers with designated staff to handle the grievances of the public immediately.
- Toll-free numbers of the control room and zonal offices should operate properly all the time and should provide solutions during emergencies rather than merely providing another number for the public to call.
- Health centers should provide an ambulance and a staff member along with it to assist the patients while shifting them to referral or tertiary hospitals.
- Birth certificates should be issued at all health centers irrespective of where the delivery happened.
- All 270 essential medicines as per the WHO lists should be made available in the health centres.
- Physical examination of patients by doctors should be made mandatory to ensure quality health care.

Follow-up Grievance Redressal Meet (GRM) at Primary Health Center, New Bagalur, and Cox Town Maternity Hospital - 19th August 2011.

A follow-up GRM was organised in the New Bagalur and Cox Town Maternity Hospital to provide information on immunisations and other schemes in health centers. Ms. Gangamma, ANM, stated that every Tuesday they visit the community but no community member responds to them. She advised them to take all immunisations by getting a card paying Rs.5. Information on when and which vaccination is to be given to the children was also provided to the community and they were asked to send their children to Anganwadis to get more benefits in the future.

"Formation of Janaarogya Andolana - Karnataka, Bangalore Urban Chapter" (JAAK):BU

CIVIC, a part of the Right to Food network, and the CDS network of SJSRY, has now initiated work with the health network, Janaarogya Andolana- Karnataka (JAAK). After the public hearing on health, CIVIC initiated a Bangalore chapter of JAAK, Bangalore Urban (JAAK-BU) to address health rights in the Bangalore Urban region. Organisations working on health sector in the Bangalore urban region are the members of this city network. It has held several meetings and it has been decided to prepare a report on the current scenario of health services in Bangalore city. It was also decided to track the budget of BBMP on health.

Ward-level activities

Participatory Budgeting activity in Devasandra Ward



Mr. Veerasha, A.M. of CIVIC presenting the participatory planning document prepared for Devasandra ward

Initiating the training, Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj stated that, in a democracy, a ward budget should be prepared as per the felt needs and priorities of the people; but this is not being followed now. Participatory budgeting would increase transparency and accountability. Priority should be given to providing basic amenities such as food, health, education, water and sanitation and livelihood over road-widening and flyovers. She illustrated how participatory budgeting was done in Sagayapuram ward by including all classes of people in the ward in the process. This participatory budget gave priority (80% share of the budget) for works that were needed by the poor of the ward as compared to 20% for the well-off areas.

These lists were handed over to BBMP by the Councillor of the ward. However, when the ward works were announced, it was found that the budget prepared by BBMP was totally different from the one prepared by the people. Only about 25% of the people's demands had been included. Mr. Veeresh informed the residents that as per a BBMP circular, budgeting should be done with people's participation as per the suggestions of ward councillor which includes the demands of the public. Mr. Patil stated that APSA and CIVIC would assist them in identifying and listing the needs of the local people. Responsibility for the various activities was shared among the community members.

Recommendations that emerged from the community and CIVIC during the consultation:

- While preparing the budget, priority should be given to the works of public need.
- Budget should be allocated to basic amenities on priority.
- The activities should be planned for social development and justice.
- BBMP should make allocations for the 18 points in the 12th Schedule of the 74th CA in its budget.

The participatory budget in Devasandra ward was done by conducting nine area-wise meetings and three priority lists were prepared. All the areas, including Aadeema Masidi, Aachari Bande, Singaiana Palya, Triveni Nagar, Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Sanjaynagar, J.C. Layout, Netravathi Layout and B. Narayanapura, were studied before preparing the participatory budget to analyse the needs of each area.

Focus group discussions were conducted in all these areas to list out the priorities of the local people. This was marked on the ward map by prioritising the lists. In this activity, works related to different departments of BBMP (such as engineering, environment, revenue, health, veterinary, excise, traffic, horticulture, electrical), BESCO, BWSSB, BMTC, Depts. of Food & Civil Supplies, Health, Public Libraries, and Women & Child Development, were included.



Devasandra Ward community members handing over the participatory planning document to the BBMP officials

A programme was organised on 22nd September 11 for the submission of the budget by the ward councillor to BBMP officials. However, though the ward councillor herself gave the date for the programme, she was unable to attend it.

Janaspandana to address problems of wards

CIVIC facilitated Janaspandana programmes at Sagayapuram and Nagawara wards on 16th and 27th July 2011 to address grievances of the ward. Grievances were collected beforehand and submitted to concerned departments. Officials from concerned departments participated in the programme and responded to the submitted grievances and also the oral grievances that were raised during the Janaspandana. During this Janaspandana, BBMP's budget for Nagawara ward and the list of works that have been sanctioned were also shared with the community.

Food

Grievance Redressal Meets to address the issues in PDS

A follow-up GRM was organised at Rajiv Gandhi Nagar to address the issues that were not addressed by the food inspector in the PDS system. Though earlier GRMs were able to solve many problems, the

community is finding it difficult to get major problems addressed, such as malpractices in weighing, getting new BPL cards and Antyodaya cards, adding new names in the ration cards, display of information boards in front of shops, etc. Mr. Venkatesh, Food Inspector, stated that just as many problems had been solved, gradually other problems also would be solved. Many women complained that helpers in ration shops were drunk while at work and behaved badly with cardholders. Mr. Venkatesh, APSA, commenting on the idea of cash transfers mooted in the Food Security Bill in place of food grains, exhorted the gathering not to accept cash in place of grains as the amount of money given would not fetch them the same amount of grains in the open market.



Mr. Venkatesh, Food Inspector (2nd from left) and shop owners at the grievance redressal meet at Devasandra ward, K.R. Puram

Continuing the expansion of CIVIC's work on the PDS to other areas, Grievance Redressal Meets (GRM) were organised in Old Byappanahalli in collaboration with Fedina on 21st July 2011, in Andrahalli in collaboration with Dalith Bahujan Movement (DBM) on 3rd August 2011 and at Priyankanagar on 23rd August 2011 by CIVIC. The objectives of these meetings were to give awareness to communities on their entitlements under PDS and to redress their grievances. The grievances were all common in all areas. Most of the grievances related to malpractices in weighing grains and measuring kerosene, not getting full entitlements, shopkeepers forcing the community to buy commodities other than food grains distributed under the PDS. Officials promised to solve all the problems.

Work with the Right to Food Campaign (RFC)

CIVIC continues to facilitate the Bangalore Urban District Chapter meetings of the Right to Food

Campaign-Karnataka (RFC-K). RFC-K supported and participated in the protest organised by the Janavadi Mahila Sanghatane on 13th August 2011 demanding universalisation of the PDS system and withdrawal of the new BPL survey and cash transfer in place of food grains. In the same vein, RFC-K planned for a larger protest against the issue and conducted a press meet regarding the National Food Security Bill on 21st September 2011. The protest was done in front of the Food & Civil Supplies (F&CS) Commissioner's office, on Cunningham Road on 23rd September 2011. Many RFC members from all over Karnataka took part in the protest and submitted a memorandum to the Joint Director, F&CS.



RFC protested in front of the Food & Civil Supplies (F&CS) Commissioners Office on Cunningham Road

“Mahiti Kirana” -Dissemination of CIVIC's work over community radio station “Radio Active”

Radio Active, a FM community radio station is collaborating with CIVIC to disseminate information on urban poor issues and CIVIC's activities. As part of this, a weekly programme slot named “Mahiti Kirana” has been provided to CIVIC. In the first phase, Ms. Kathyayini Chamaraj spoke on CIVIC's work on the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and the Right to Information Act. Then the programme focused on CIVIC's work on the Right to Food. The programme provides awareness on the issue holds dialogues with community members and conducts a live programme for listeners. The response from the audience has been good till now. Radio Active and CIVIC will continue covering all issues that CIVIC is working on.

Radio Active: Frequency- 90.4 - Timings: Every Friday 11.30 AM to 12.00 noon; Repeat programme: same day at 5.00- 5.30 PM

Education

CIVIC facilitates Samudayadatta Shaale

The Education Department under the Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana (SSA) has directed all schools to conduct a programme called "Sammudayadatta Shaale" (School goes to the Community). This programme happens thrice a year: in June when schools commence, and in October and April when exam results of children are given. This facilitates the participation of parents in their children's progress in school. One such programme was facilitated by CIVIC in the Cox Town government primary school on 1st October 2011. Chief guest Ms. Thriveni, Lecturer, Matadadalli PU College, JC Nagar, expressed her disappointment with the poor participation of parents in the meeting. She advised all parents to visit the school at least once a month to know about the progress of their children in the interest of a better future for their children.

Improvements to infrastructure of Cox Town High School

Under the Rashtriya Madhyamika Shikshana Abhiyana (RMSA), a grant of Rs 26,000 was sanctioned to Cox Town High School for the financial year 2010-11. Facilitated by CIVIC, the SDMC inspected all classrooms of the school on 13th of June 2011 and listed issues that need to be rectified and requested the head-teacher to address them. When the head-teacher did not act upon the request, a complaint was given to the Commissioner, Education Department, the Deputy Director, North district and the Director, RMSA, with photo documentation of the inadequacies of the school's infrastructure. After a week, an RTI was filed asking for the action taken report on the complaint. After they received the RTI application, the Deputy Programme Coordinator (DyPC) and the Block Education Officer (BEO) - North 3 jointly inspected the school and gave directions.

However, as the complaint was given to the Deputy Director, Public Instruction, he too issued notice to the BEO and DyPC asking for an explanation within seven days as to why they had not done their duty of inspecting and giving directions to the school on the utilisation of the budget to improve the school infrastructure, prior to receiving a complaint by an individual on the status of the school.

Based on the inspection report of the DySP and BEO, a direction was given to withhold the salary of the head-teacher of the school for not having fulfilled her duty.

Conducting regular parents' and SDMC meetings

To strengthen public participation platforms in the schools where CIVIC works, CIVIC facilitated parents' meetings and School Development and Monitoring Committee meetings regularly. These meetings helped SDMCs to prepare Annual Plans for the schools' development and utilisation of budgets. Parents were also enabled to track their children's progress. In the SDMC meeting of Cox Town Primary School held on 30th August 2012, the SDMC planned for budget utilisation for repairs of toilet doors, salary for ayah, purchase of first-aid box, mops, toilet brushes, tube-lights, computer covers, etc., that were needed in the school. Mr. Thyagaraj of Cox Town Welfare Association volunteered to donate the salary of Rs. 3,000 for the computer teacher monthly. Next day itself a computer teacher was appointed to the school.



SDMC at the Cox Town primary school preparing the annual plan

RTI Success story: CIVIC was able to get a directive to form SDMCs in BBMP Schools

CIVIC sought information from the BBMP education department on its grievance redressal mechanism. When no reply was received, a complaint was filed with the Karnataka Information Commission (KIC). When the Commission issued a notice to the BBMP education department to attend the hearing, the department replied to CIVIC stating that the information sought did not come under its jurisdiction. During the hearing, CIVIC shared the circular of the State Education Department on the SDMCs' role in State schools and its impact. The KIC ruled that as per Chapter 7 of the Karnataka Education Act 1983, all education institutions should have SDMCs, including BBMP. Based on this ruling, BBMP, during the meeting of its Standing Committee on Education and Sports, decided to form SDMCs at ward

level with 11 members and sent the proposal to the BBMP Commissioner for approval. When this was again followed up by CIVIC, BBMP has replied stating that it has given directions to all BBMP schools and colleges to form SDMCs and that the schools and colleges have already formed them.

SJSRY: Livelihood

To develop an empowered community to campaign for better implementation of the SJSRY scheme, CIVIC organised zonal grievance redressal meets at Dasarahalli, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, East and Yelahanka zones of BBMP. The Community Development Society (CDS) members and Resident Community Volunteers (RCVs) participated in the meetings and the concerned zonal Community Organisers (COs) and Community Affairs Officers (CAOs) represented the government.

The objective of these zonal meets was to give awareness to communities on the SJSRY scheme and its guidelines; to present CIVIC's study on the Actuals Vs Guidelines of SJSRY; to create awareness on the roles and responsibilities of COs and CAOs to communities; to discuss the grievances of the CDSs of each zone and to identify the reasons for such grievances; to discuss the difference between the budget allocated Vs budget spent for SJSRY by the BBMP during the financial year of 2010-11; and to present the community's and CIVIC's recommendations for better implementation of SJSRY in each zone.

Mr. Lakshmikantha, CIVIC coordinator, stated that CIVIC's study has revealed that the institutional structures, such as Urban Poverty Alleviation Cells at State, district and city levels to act as single-window delivery systems for urban poverty alleviation schemes, etc., have not been constituted as required. Even today, the 1998 BPL survey details are being used to identify beneficiaries. BBMP or the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) has not attempted to prepare any booklet/IEC material on the SJSRY scheme in Kannada for the usage of communities.

Women are being made to run from pillar to post to get their loans sanctioned. They are being asked to show assets and existing businesses, which means that only the already well-established will be given loans. This also defeats the entire objective of the scheme which is to reach those who are genuinely

poor, asset less, unemployed or under-employed. No Self-Employment Advisory Services (SEAS) are in place to advise the women on how to frame project proposals, how to run a business or do marketing, etc. Hardly any skill trainings/courses are being organised. Officials are concentrating on BBMP welfare schemes and neglecting the SJSRY scheme.

The Urban Community Development Network (UCDN) component of the scheme is hardly understood. Its aim of establishing linkage between the Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of women and the local government to enable the women to prepare action plans to bring about development of their areas is hardly happening. Awareness programmes for the women on their rights under various schemes of several government departments are not being arranged under the UCDN.

Community members raised their grievances on non-availability of loans, their problems with banks, officials not identifying appropriate beneficiaries, etc. Officials who attended the meetings promised to solve all the issues that were raised.

Meeting with Lead Bank Manager

Following the zonal grievance redressal meets, CIVIC called a city-level meeting inviting all CDSs of all zones to discuss the problems faced in the banks. The main problems faced by the beneficiaries were in getting information on the status of their applications, not knowing when the amount would be sanctioned to them and banks demanding surety for sanctioning loans. In this meeting it was decided to meet and give a memorandum to the District Lead Bank Manager to solve the problems that were faced by CDS members.

The suggestions given in the memorandum are:

1. Bankers should compulsorily attend the monthly meetings of the CDSs of which they are a part.
2. They should advise women on how to submit acceptable proposals before collecting loan applications.
3. They should register all applications, provide proper acknowledgments with application number to loan applications received, provide timely feedback on the status of the loan applications and the reasons for acceptance/rejection of the applications to the women.

4. Under no circumstance should poor women be made to run individually to banks and from pillar to post seeking feedback, clarifications, etc., on their applications.
5. All transactions with bankers, receipt of applications, providing acknowledgements, feedback on status of applications and reasons for acceptance or rejection of applications should happen in a transparent manner during the monthly meetings of the CDS, in the presence of all stakeholders, including BBMP officials and NGOs, to establish accountability of the bankers to the CDSs and in turn, to the poor women.
6. The Monthly Programme Implementation Calendar (MPIC) of the bank (as required to be prepared by all departments as per Central government directives) showing activities along with physical and financial targets to be achieved in every month with regard to the SJSRY should be prepared by the bankers and provided to the CDS.
7. Written responses should be sent to the applicants seeking modifications/clarifications, etc., if necessary, to the applications, in order to make them acceptable proposals. Written

replies with proper justification for approval/rejection should be sent within time-frames.

8. All loan applications should be processed as per the MPIC within a fixed time-frame of maximum three months. Release of loan amounts, revolving funds and subsidies should also happen within definite time-frames as per MPIC.
9. In any case, the whole cycle of issuing loans and subsidies should be completed within a single financial year. The same women should not be made to submit fresh applications year after year for lack of proper response from the banks.
10. Surety should not be demanded under any circumstances violating the Centre's guidelines. Peer pressure of the group for re-payment of the loan should be the only surety.
11. A portion of the loan amount should be allowed to be used for paying advance rent for shop, etc., that the women intend to open.
12. Prior experience or evidence of having conducted business should not be demanded as the purpose of the scheme is to make fresh entrepreneurs out of the unemployed.

JOIN CIVIC TODAY AND SUBSCRIBE TO CIVIC space

Name : Mr. / Ms.

Address

Age : Occupation :

Tick appropriately in box :

I would like to be involved in CIVIC's activities only as a donor.

I would like to attend CIVIC's meetings / panel discussions, etc.

I would like to volunteer my time for CIVIC.

Newsletter subscription (per year)

Individual : Rs.200/-

Residents' Welfare Association : Rs.200/-

Individual Life Subscription : Rs.2000/-

Organizations / Corporates : Rs.2000/-

Cut out this portion and send along with a crossed cheque in favour of CIVIC Bangalore to :

CIVIC Bangalore, #6, II Floor, Kasturi Apartments, 35/23 Langford Road Cross, Shantinagar, Bangalore-560025

Tel : 2211 0584, 41144126 E-mail: info@civicspace.in Web: www.civicspace.in