

Dear friends of CIVIC,

It has been a long time since we communicated with you. That was because CIVIC was in the process of ending its last cycle of projects and starting a new three-year cycle. We are happy to inform all of you that CIVIC has expanded its staff and activities. With our previous work experience, in this cycle our work would focus more in two wards and two urban poor neighborhoods in each of these two wards. Given the growing disparities in the City, CIVIC has felt it imperative to focus much more on issues of the urban poor than earlier.

CIVIC has received grants from FORD Foundation and the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. Under the FORD grant we hope to:

- Promote pro-poor measures in service delivery
- Increase transparency and accountability in service delivery to the urban poor
- Strengthen processes of decentralization to enable urban poor to participate in city governance

Under SDTT Grant, we hope to:

- Build models at ward level for strengthening capacities of citizens' groups to effectively participate and collaborate in and monitor municipal functioning
- Build models at slum level for empowering poor groups to understand their rights and entitlements and thereby gain enhanced ability to claim their rights

CIVIC in the previous cycle had established a working relation with the NGO Forum for Street & Working Children – a network of 31 NGOs working on the ground in Bangalore city. Now the same network is being leveraged to carry out the current activities.

CIVIC has got into a working understanding with two NGOs – Mythri Sarva Seva Samithi (MSSS) and Association for Promotion of Social Action (APSA). They will facilitate CIVIC's intervention in two sites – Deshyanagar Urban Poor Neighbourhood (in Fraser town – old BBMP area) and in Rajeev Gandhi Urban Poor Neighborhood (in KR Puram – new BBMP area).

A comprehensive questionnaire has been developed for the detailed socio-economic survey to benchmark the progress in living standards/service levels with CIVIC's intervention in these two urban poor neighbourhoods. In Deshyanagar the survey is almost complete.

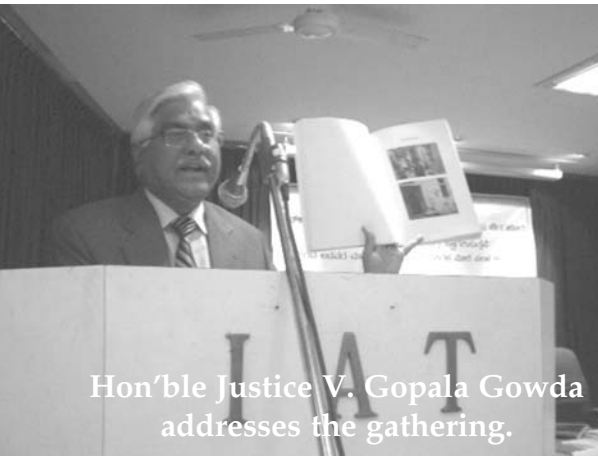
The models of intervention created will be later up-scaled to about 30 urban poor communities in as many wards. We will be working towards ensuring five basic rights of the marginalised in these communities: the right to food, water, education, health, livelihood and the use of the 18% grant for the SC/ST Sub-Plan. We will be using the tools of awareness creation, right to information, interactions with officials, public hearings, advocacy on policy issues and networking at city, state and national levels to achieve our goals. .

We will not be giving up our traditional activities of organizing city-level meetings on topical issues, implementation of 74th Constitutional Amendment, formation of ward committees, Metropolitan Planning Committee, JnNURM, etc.,

Events Conducted by CIVIC from January to June 2009

Highlight: Release of "Pilot Slum & Urban Homeless Study" of CIVIC - 28th February 2009

CIVIC in Association with the NGO Forum for Street and Working Children, released its 'Pilot Slum and Urban Homeless Study', commissioned by the then Special Commissioner (Resources) of BBMP, Mr. Sandeep Dash, IAS. The study was released by Hon'ble Justice Sri. V. Gopala Gowda, Judge, High Court of Karnataka & Chairman, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority. In his speech after



Hon'ble Justice V. Gopala Gowda addresses the gathering.

releasing the study, Justice Gopala Gowda asked NGOs to utilize the Supreme Court judgement in Common Cause Vs Union of India to

"book cases against the civic bodies and the officials who head it" when they fail to perform their statutory duties in fulfilling the basic needs of citizens. He offered the services of the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority in training NGOs to use the judgement to get effective results from civic bodies.

Much of his anger was triggered by the absence of the chiefs of civic bodies at



Shri Bore Gowda, Commissioner, KSCB; Hon'ble Justice V. Gopala Gowda, Shri Bheema Convenor, NGO Forum, and Shri Venkataraju Chief Engineer, BWSSB.

the event, especially the BBMP, which had commissioned the study. Justice Gopala Gowda commended CIVIC for the excellent study which had also compiled the international, national and legal frameworks for each of the basic rights. BWSSB Chief Engineer Mr. Venkataraju assured NGOs that water connections would be provided to whoever registers their names with the BWSSB by March 31st.

Dr. P Boregowda, Commissioner, KSCB, appreciated CIVIC's effort in bringing out a study on the city's poor. He said that a survey has been conducted recently to send data to the central government to request for funds to provide these slum dwellers a minimum living standard. He stressed the importance of community and NGO participation to secure the rights of the poor. He voiced his concern over eviction of the poor from prime locations in the city due to shooting up of real estate values and added that slum dwellers need to be protected from such trends. He appreciated JNNURM's adoption of a whole slum approach.

Interventions at Deshyanagar urban poor neighbourhood.

Interaction with Deshyanagar Community regarding BSUP-NURM project – 1st April 2009.

CIVIC has selected Deshyanagar urban poor neighbourhood in Fraser Town as one of the areas for its intensive work. It held an extensive community interaction with the residents of Deshyanagar on the proposed BSUP-NURM housing project at Deshyanagar in which all the families of the neighbourhood participated. CIVIC shared with these families the 'Guidelines for the Process of Formulating the DPR' under the BSUP-NURM, as prescribed by the Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation. CIVIC shared with them the content of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) provided by the KSCB to CIVIC under the Right to Information Act (RTI). During the discussion it was revealed that Deshyanagar DPR has been drawn up without participation of the beneficiaries and the people don't know anything about the Rs.6.23 crore project being



Meeting with KSCB officials regarding implementation of JnNURM project in Deshyanagar – 3rd June 200p.

implemented for them. Even the implementation process is happening without people's participation.

The meeting with Karnataka Slum Clearance Board (KSCB) officials was to get details on the JnNURM-BSUP housing project that is being implemented by them in Deshyanagar neighbourhood. The residents had sought clarifications on 16 points in their letter and had made seven requests. One of the major requests was that KSCB should provide transit stay arrangements to the residents immediately, before beginning any construction work. The KSCB Commissioner had deputed the Technical Director of KSCB, Mr. Sannachittaiah to answer all the queries. The Technical Director along with the Executive Engineer and Assistant Executive Engineer came for the discussion. He stated that he would answer only those points which came under his purview and that the remaining points would have to be responded to by the Commissioner himself.

He promised that transit stay arrangement would be made by Monday 8th of June in the vicinity of Deshyanagar. The project would be completed in 12 months and handed over to the people by May 2010. He directed the EE and AEE to hold official weekly meetings on Saturday evenings with the residents and provide all details and assured the residents that he would come for a monthly review meeting where all the details of the progress of the project, budget and expenditure would be shared with the people.

However, KSCB failed to provide transit stay arrangements but began construction of one block. CIVIC had to petition the Karnataka Information

Commission for the failure of KSCB to provide information as per its request on the right to life and liberty of the slum-dwellers pushed to the pavement

without transit stay arrangements. The KIC directed the KSCB to provide transit stay arrangements. CIVIC also moved the Karnataka Human Rights Commission for the violation of the right to life of the slum-dwellers. The enquiry is in progress.

Interventions on the 18% SC/ST Sub-Plan of BBMP

Discussion on the utilization of the 18% SC/ST Sub-Plan by BBMP - 3rd March 2009

Dalit Bahujan Movement, supported by CIVIC, conducted a one-day discussion on BBMP's utilisation in 2008-09 of the 18% SC/ST Sub-Plan of BBMP at Senate Hall, Central College., attended by several officials and Dalit groups. Chief Guest, Sri Dwarakanath, Chairman, Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission, commended the programme which he said helped to review progress and to plan further actions on behalf of SC/STs. Mr. Rame Gowda, Deputy Commissioner (Welfare), explained that in view of the protest by Dalit groups on 12.01.09, the Commissioner, BBMP, had held a review meeting on 20.02.09 and gave strict instructions to all Zonal Jt. Commissioners to implement the 18% Sub-Plan.

Mr. M. Venkatesh, Convenor, Dalit Bahujan Movement, questioned how dalits who were illiterate, unemployed and asset-less, could avail of schemes which required them to provide beneficiary contribution of Rs. 40 - 50,000, surety against loans, IT returns and PAN cards. If BBMP had built houses for dalits and given them title deeds, they could have provided surety. Mrs. Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee of CIVIC, said that in addition to making proper allocations for the 18% Sub-Plan, it was equally essential to make its expenditure also

binding on officials and link their salaries to their performance in this regard. Mr. Rajendran Prabhakar of MAARGA called for the training of community monitoring groups to conduct social audits of the 18% Sub-Plan. Mr. Baburao Mudbi, Commissioner, Social Welfare, stated that the state had a budget of Rs. 3,000 crore for SC/STs and the department was being computerized to enable quarterly performance review. Mr. E. Radhakrishna, Jt. Commissioner (Welfare), BBMP, promised to implement all the suggestions.



April 2009 - 18% program :

During the month of April, Dalith Bahujan Chaluvalli organized meetings in various SC/ST colonies in Ward 34 in Vijayanagar Assembly Constituency and Ward 36 of Govindarajanagar and Rajarajeshwarinagar Assembly Constituencies of Bangalore. The aim was to provide details of the meeting held on 3rd March 2009 and the demands that were put forward to BBMP officials. Details of various schemes and projects that were planned for the SC/ST community utilizing 18% SC/ST- SCP budget of 2009-10 were also disseminated.

Meeting with BBMP officials regarding the planned SC/ST Jatha -25th May 2009

On 25th May, Dalit Bahujan Movement members met the Deputy Commissioner (Administration), BBMP, regarding their planned Jatha on 26th May, to draw attention to the non-implementation of their demands submitted to the BBMP Commissioner on 26.03.2009. The DC agreed to call a meeting on 3 June 2009 wherein all the officials of various departments would attend and report progress on implementation of the 18% Sub-Plan.

Based on this assurance, a symbolic Padayatra was organized on 26th May, wherein 100s of SC/ST activists participated. The Jatha started from Deepanjali Nagar and ended at BBMP. A memorandum was submitted to the Deputy Commissioner (Admin) requesting reimbursement of educational costs of SC/ST students, providing houses, allocating land for building houses for SC/ST under the 18% Sub-Plan, etc. After his assurance, the protest was ended.

Review meeting of 18% SC/ST Sub-Plan – 3rd June 2009

As promised by the DC (Admin), a review meeting was called by BBMP on 3rd June 2009 on the 18% SC/ST Sub-Plan. However, instead of the officials reporting progress on the implementation of demands already submitted, the Jt. Commissioner (Welfare) asked Dalit Bahujan Movement activists to comment on the plans prepared by BBMP for the year 2009-10 and give suggestions for their improvement. Activists protested that the whole purpose of the meeting had been vitiated and the meeting ended in a stalemate.

Interventions on the Right to Information Act

Meeting with Principal Secretary, DPAR, Janaspandana Cell, by CIVIC and Kria Katte 18th Feb 2009

In this meeting of the Karnataka Right to Information Activists' Forum (KRIA Katte) with the Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms,



KRIA Katte activists meet Secretary, DPAR, Janaspandana Cell

Janaspandana Cell, which is in charge of implementing the Right to Information Act, a time-bound action plan was discussed and the department promised to take up necessary actions. Quarterly review meetings were fixed to monitor progress. The key issues raised were: the need for proper suo motu declarations under Section 4(1)(b) of the RTI Act by all departments, recommendation to the High-Power Committee to include information on RTI in the school syllabus, using video-conferencing facility available at district level to conduct KIC hearings, compulsory appearance of PIOs for hearings and compulsory hearings by First Appellate Authorities.

Workshop on RTI for poor neighbourhoods - 25th March 2009

AVAS had organized a training workshop on RTI for the people from urban poor neighbourhoods at United Theological College. CIVIC provided information to the



gathering on the RTI. Two Information Commissioners, Mr. Thippeswamy and Mr. Virupaksha also participated in the programme.

Meeting with the Commissioners of Karnataka Information Commission - 28th March 2009

CIVIC and KRIA Katte met the Commissioners of the Karnataka Information Commission (KIC) to discuss the issues faced by RTI users and suggest remedial actions. Review meetings as and when necessary were agreed upon by the Commission. The key issues discussed were: proposed programmes/facilities by the Commission using GOI funds and suggestions for the same, data on the pendency of cases and ways to improve clearance, upgradation of web-site with cause list and orders of KIC, and direction to GOK to provide specific budget allocation to each department for creating awareness on RTI and its effective implementation as per the direction of GOI.



Sri K.K.Mishra, Chief Information Commissioner, and other Commissioners interact with members of KRIA Katte

Meeting with the Commissioner and heads of departments of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on RTI -4th May 2009

CIVIC and KRIA Katte met the Commissioner and heads of departments of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) to discuss the implementation of RTI by BBMP. Of the complaints registered with the KIC, the largest number was filed against BBMP. It was brought to the notice of the Commissioner that ineffective implementation by BBMP of the suo motu declaration under Section 4(1) of the RTI Act has given rise to the several complaints burdening the KIC. The Commissioner promised to put Section 4(1) (a), (b), (c) and (d) information of all departments at all levels on the website of BBMP within 7 days. He agreed to restructure and decentralize the RTI cell, train PIOs and keep a separate budget for the RTI implementation among other things. He admitted that the BBMP has no property register since 2000 since the BATF had put an end to the manual register before the computerized alternative was put in place. The total properties known to BBMP is about 3.5 lakh whereas 6.5 lakh property owners had paid property tax this year. It is estimated that there are not less than 21 lakh properties in BBMP area. Imagine the revenue if all properties were registered!

As a result of the meeting, in the very next week, the BBMP gave half-page advertisements in the newspapers



Dr. S. Subramanya, BBMP Commissioner, listens to KRIA Katte activists

calling for objections from citizens on its proposal to fell trees on Hosur-Lashkar Road and CNR Rao Circle, in fulfillment of Section 4(1)(c) of the RTI Act.

Interventions on Right to Food

Awareness programme on the Public Distribution System - 18th June 2009



CIVIC along with CREAT organized an awareness programme on the Public Distribution System (PDS) on 18th June 2009. Sri. Shivaprakash, Deputy Director, Central Zone, Dept. of FCS&CA, was the chief guest. During this occasion, CREAT released 4 booklets on PDS which were released by Mr. Shivaprakash and Ms Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee, CIVIC. Mr. Harish of CIVIC presented the Citizens' Charter of the Dept. of Food & Civil Supplies to the audience. Mr. Shivaprakash stressed the need to ensure food supply to the poor. Ms Kathyayini Chamaraj, Executive Trustee of CIVIC, asked the audience to be aware of their rights under the PDS and use the toll-free helpline if they had any grievances. Finally, Mr. Y. G. Muralidharan of CREAT said that lack of awareness in the public, lethargic functioning of the officials, problems of PDS shop-owners

and pressure from the local representatives on PDS shop-owners to supply commodities as per their demands made the system corrupt. He also said in Gujarat to stopped distributing wheat started distributing wheat flour instead to check the selling of wheat to the black market. Also PDS shops are allowed to sell other commodities such as soaps, shampoos, etc. also which are not part of PDS so that by selling such commodities the owner can make some profit and will not enter to malpractices. He said the West Bengal Government has requested the central government to dismantle the PDS system and directly supply the commodities to the beneficiaries. In planning committee, a discussion is floating on dissolving PDS and instead providing money to the beneficiary. He requested NGOs, SHGs and others to think over these aspects as common people will not be able to act on these issues. He said in Tamil Nadu all the PDS shops are owned by government and run by cooperative societies in which PDS is operating smoothly and problems are minimal. He also proposed that one model shop could be developed to show how it can work properly. But he also said that department of FCS&CA or any political leaders should not intervene or pressurize this shop. He stressed that the objective of PDS is to provide minimum food requirement of the family under subsidized price to the poor families. He also suggested the audience to practice to give written complaints.

Public Interest Litigation on Road-Widening

Several hearings were conducted by the Karnataka High Court on the road-widening case in which CIVIC is a competitor along with ESG. The High Court had set up an Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Yellappa Reddy to hear the parties. The Karnataka High Court Legal Services Authority (KHCLSA) was to be approached in case of any grievances. On 6th January 2009 the Karnataka High Court Legal Services Authority (KHCLSA) ruled in favour of the petitioners that the Empowered Committee had no authority to order tree-felling and that this authority was in fact vested with the KHCLSA. It further ruled that the legal issues raised by the petitioners could be gone into only by the High Court Division Bench. It referred the matter back to the High Court.

CIVIC participated in a protest organized by Hasiru Usiru at Lalbagh West Gate against the tree-felling for Metro on 26th April 2009. CIVIC participated in a protest and public meeting organized by Hasiru Usiru with BMRCL MD, Mr. Sivasailam, at 30th Cross, Nanda Road, on 10th May 2009, where alternative alignments of Metro were presented to him. Finally, an interim order was given by a bench of the Chief Justice allowing the BBMP to



proceed with road-widening after following all relevant laws, including the KTCP Act and Karnataka Preservation of Trees Act. Later, the Court ruled that the BMRCL could also proceed with tree-felling for the Metro after taking permission from the Tree Officer, BBMP.

CIVIC Executive Trustee, along with members of ESG and Sanmathi met the Private Secretary to the Governor and presented a memorandum against the ordinance issued for sale of Lalbagh land to BMRCL and other issues. The team also met Mr. V. P. Baligar, Principal Secretary to the CM, on the alignment of metro and sale of Lalbagh lands to BMRCL, on 21st May 2009.

Cleansing of Electoral Rolls and “Meet the Candidates” programme for Bangalore Central Lok Sabha Constituency

CIVIC, in association with Shanthinagar Residents’ Development Association (SHRED) and Vote Bengaluru, had made a comprehensive analysis of the nature of structural errors in the electoral rolls. It submitted recommendations for cleansing the electoral rolls by making the Polling Booth Areas (PBAs) geographically unique and contiguous. The State Election Commission (SEC) accepted the nature of errors pointed out and also the recommendations and implemented them in Shanthinagar Assembly Constituency as a pilot project. It is now replicating it across the whole of BBMP and the State as a successful model and it is being proposed for possible adoption as a national model.

CIVIC Executive Trustee made a presentation of this successful intervention at the 4th National Meeting of the Association for Democratic Reforms in Mumbai on 31st January 09 at which all the three Central Election Commissioners were present.

Before cleansing picture shows splintered polling booth areas in Shanthinagar ward



After cleansing picture shows contiguous polling booth areas in Shanthi nagar ward

CIVIC, along with SHRED, facilitated the dissemination of information on candidates and the holding of a “Meet the Candidates” programme for Bangalore Central Lok Sabha Constituency on 19th April 2009.

A one-day workshop was organized jointly by Dalit Bahujan Chaluvalli and CIVIC on the “Rights and Duties of Members of Parliament” just before the Lok Sabha elections. Dr. D. Jeevan Kumar, Professor of Political Science and Director of Gandhi Research Centre, Bangalore University, the chief guest of the event, highlighted the key features of the Indian Constitution, the roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament in representing their constituency in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Other meetings

Pre-budget meeting with BBMP on 3% budget for physically and mentally challenged – 16 January 2009

CIVIC organized a brainstorming with the Association for Physically Challenged (APC) and the NGO Forum in the morning to arrive at recommendations on the 3% budget for the physically and mentally challenged in BBMP budget for 2009-10. CIVIC along with APC and members of NGOs working with the physically and mentally challenged participated in a pre-budget consultation organized by the BBMP Jt. Commissioner (Welfare) at BBMP in the afternoon. The recommendations arrived at in the morning session were presented to the Jt. Commissioner by CIVIC.

Meeting with ABIDE member Ashwin Mahesh and RWAs on Bengaluru Governance Bill - 27th April 2009

Mr. Ashwin Mahesh, Member of ABIDE, explained the salient features of the Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2009, prepared by ABIDE, incorporating provisions for direct election of the Mayor, councillors holding different portfolios, and having a set of Commissioners to head sectoral departments. CIVIC's critique of the Bangalore Governance Bill was circulated which stressed on the lack of provisions regarding a Metropolitan Planning Committee for Bangalore and institutionalised structures for addressing the needs of the urban poor. Mr. N.S. Mukunda, President of Citizens' Action Forum, stressed the need for incorporating provisions for public hearings to bring in people's participation.

A talk by Mr. Vikram Soni – 14th January 2009

On 14.01.09, a live on-line talk on "The Living Natural Resource Site for the City: A Ground Level Answer for Climate Change", a practical guide to reclaim and sustain nature, by Mr. Vikram Soni was organised by CIVIC at Ashirwad in collaboration with the Centre for Budget & Policy Studies (CBPS). Vikram Soni, a physicist, has worked equally on several campaigns to conserve Delhi Ridge and the Yamuna floodplains. The on-line site is one of a kind - a comprehensive site on urban natural resources. It details and maps areas of great living natural resource value and equips the citizen to understand, visualise and evaluate them. It gives new, creative, perennial and non invasive solutions to secure the water, air, and forest of cities, worth billions of U.S. 'dollars' per year.

Lecture by Prof. Angotti on "Community Planning confronts Global Real Estate" - 24th Mar 2009

Dr. Tom Angotti, Professor, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, Hunter College, City University of New York and Visiting Professor at NIAS, delivered a lecture on "Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate". Prof. Tom Angotti provided examples, in the context of New York City of how communities, notably of the urban poor, have used community planning mechanisms to plan for their areas, especially in the context of neo-liberal forces forcing a particular top-down form of planning for cities..

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