

Community-led Participatory Budgeting in Bangalore: Learning from Successful Cases

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Urban Studies, 2002
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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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at the

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ABSTRACT

Urban India is rapidly growing, and in cities like Bangalore, the dramatic changes have both positive and negative impacts. Citizens express concern about the capacity and credibility of local government and corporate sector in leading local development. In contrast to rural India where the 73rd amendment helped spur citizen participation in local decision-making, in urban India there have been limited channels for citizens to participate in governance outside of the electoral process.

In 2001, a civil society organization, Janaagraha, launched a participatory budgeting campaign aimed at improving local governance through engaging citizens in local infrastructure planning. The campaign resulted in citizens' budget priorities being approved in over twenty percent of the city's wards. Large-scale participatory budgeting has traditionally been an initiative of ruling parties using the apparatus of the state. As a civil society initiative, the participants faced the dual challenges of mobilizing citizens to produce good plans and convincing local government that their plans were legitimate.

This thesis aims to answer two questions. First, what were the attributes of the associations and political and spatial factors of the communities that were successful in a 2001 participatory budgeting campaign in Bangalore? Identifying these success factors can provide tools to other communities in the previously uncharted territory of local participatory budgeting in urban India. Second, did the campaign strengthen or sidestep local democracy? This question looks within "success" to uncover the impact on existing political relationships and shed light on the effect of the campaign beyond infrastructure.

To answer these questions, case study-based qualitative analysis in six Bangalore communities was conducted. Based on these cases, factors for ward-level success included limited political history or entrenchment, both for the elected official and physical ward in addition to committed leadership that had prior engagement with local government. The participation in the campaign was not representative of the population at large and did not result in pro-poor outcomes that have been the hallmark of other participatory budgeting initiatives. However, it strengthened representative democracy and institutionalized collective action instead of individual clientelist relationships.

These answers suggest that citizens can successfully initiate participatory planning and budgeting campaigns, and they are not exclusively the domain of ruling state parties. The thesis concludes with recommendations for community-based organizations that want better neighborhood-level

outcomes and a more significant role in decision-making. As community participation is institutionalized in India, understanding how citizen's groups can be effective both internally and in partnership with local government may contribute to improved urban governance and outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Citizen participation in local governance.

As the twentieth century saw the world gain more democracies each decade, people around the globe probed their governments and fellow citizens to question the quality and strength of their political systems. In the face of rapid and dramatic changes brought on by globalization and urbanization, traditional representative democratic processes may neither be the only nor best avenues for citizen input. The vote or voice of each individual is at the heart of democracy, so people return to that foundation, considering how increased citizen participation in decision-making could make state-led outcomes more equitable or efficient. While participation is often celebrated as a good in itself, efforts to engage lay people more in decision-making are commonly perceived to foster better citizens and lead to improved governance.¹

In India, the world's largest democracy, these questions are even sharper. Democracy is barely sixty years old, and while the nation is politically stable, it is deeply divided by language, caste, class and religion. There is a widening chasm that separates the life of the urban professionals in Bangalore from slum dwellers living in the shadows, to say nothing of the rural poor. A common political system aims to serve each of them, but frequently disappoints them all.

Bangalore has become the symbol of modern India, the India challenging China for superpower status, the India with extraordinary intellectual talent and a thriving

¹ Gaventa (2002)

middle-class.² Bangalore's technology industry and reputation as a comfortable city made it a popular destination for Indians returning from work in East Asia and the United States.³ This return migration was frequently cited as a reason for its potential to be superior to other Indian metros in terms of development and governance. Bangalore is also increasingly described in a more nuanced way, an Indian city with great potential, but one hobbled by absent or shoddy basic infrastructure.⁴ Beyond the traffic and uneven electricity that concern the corporate class, the slums in Bangalore lack water supply, public toilets and drains, and most residents simply want legal housing status.⁵

In 2001, Janaagraha (meaning The Life Force of the People) was launched as a citizens' movement to improve local governance in Bangalore through participatory democracy. One of the core assumptions of Janaagraha's founders was that urban Indians felt disenfranchised from their political system, which led to reduced community trust and collective action, a limited sense of citizenship and inequitable outcomes in local government decision-making. They saw the daily corruptions for city services as both a symptom and a cause of deep disengagement, where citizens focused on beating the system to meet their family's needs. In response, Janaagraha developed their first campaign to try to bring people back to government by using slick advertising, addressing a tangible and common urban problem and declaring a lofty vision of changing India in twenty years.

² Fareed Zakaria "India Rising" Newsweek 3/6/07

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11571348/site/newsweek/> (last visited 4/20/2007)

³ NDTV (Bangalore) "Reverse brain drain: NRIs return fuelled by idealism" Sunday, 12/19/2004

<http://www.ndtv.com/morenews/showmorestory.asp?slug=NRIs+homecoming+fuelled+by+idealism&id=65426#>

and Salil Tripathi "The Bangalore Boomerang" Guardian Unlimited 09/11/2006

⁴ Business Week "The Trouble with India" 3/19/2007

⁵ CIVIC and Jana Sahayog, *A Study on Bangalore Mahanagara Palike slums* (2002)

Its first campaign, Ward Works, was a unique exercise in civil society-led participatory budgeting for neighborhood-level infrastructure funding. During the four-month campaign, Janaagraha volunteers provided Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) with the tools to prioritize local infrastructure projects and engage with the local elected official to see their priorities met. Prior to this, the local government spent these local funds completely at the discretion of the Ward Corporator and many citizens felt that important works were neglected or poorly implemented year after year. The goals of this campaign were to increase the voice of citizens in local decision-making and improve the roads, sidewalks and drains in residential neighborhoods.

In Ward Works, communities had varying levels of resident participation and success in seeing their plans developed and realized. Out of 100 wards in Bangalore, 66 wards had some residents show interest in the campaign and 32 of those wards had active participation of multiple groups of residents. Of these participating wards, 22 had success in seeing the citizens' priorities chosen as the list of works to be done in their communities. A total of 10.7 Crore rupees (\$3.5 million USD) was prioritized with citizen input out of the total allocated 50 Crore rupees (\$10.3 million USD).⁶

Buoyed by the participative spirit promoted by the Janaagraha movement, residents across Bangalore have reacted confidently to the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) budget and are hopeful of contributing their lot to ensure prompt implementation of the proposals.

Over the past three months, residents' associations from many wards were preparing for the budget, systematically and scientifically. Assisted by Janaagraha, they had listed their ward works, made estimates, and prioritised the works in a participative manner. Many of them have already contacted their corporators and are working with the respective

⁶ Throughout this paper, the Indian rupee to U.S. dollar conversion rate (48.73 rupees to 1.00 dollar) is based on the exchange rate on March 19th, 2002, the date that the Bangalore City Corporation Budget was released for the year the Ward Works campaign occurred.

engineering departments. For them, the budget now has a new meaning to it, a new purpose.

Residents contacted by *The Hindu* displayed a greater degree of awareness of the budget, hitherto unheard of. "Our prioritisation work is over. Our corporator, B. Muniraju, has been very cooperative and has accepted our proposals, promising to be with us," Ms. Sumati Rao, a resident of Malleswaram and Secretary, Swabhima Initiative, said.

For the President of the Girinagar Welfare Association, Damodar, the proposed Rs. 93.8 lakh allocation for new wards, such as his, was welcome. "In most layouts of this ward, there are no tar roads, no underground drainages. This amount should help," he felt. Through the Janaagraha initiative, his association had worked out about works for about Rs. 72 lakh. "Since the budget has only Rs. 50 lakh for that purpose, it would have to be cut."⁷

Janaagraha and the active residents were proud of their rapid achievement, having had such an impact on local spending through an initiative that was barely six months old. However, the numbers above demonstrate that the exercise was neither a complete success nor failure in engaging residents across the city. In addition, even in the wards with active participation, the participation may have been limited to a few of the neighborhoods in the ward. Janaagraha followed this campaign with other important initiatives to reach their goal of improving local governance through citizen participation. While some Resident Welfare Associations continued the Monthly Review Meetings and a second phase participatory planning exercise was held, there was never a comprehensive analysis of why Ward Works had greater impact in some communities than in others.

⁷ The Hindu, "BMP budget enthuses residents", 3/19/2002

1.2 Participatory planning and budgeting.

Participation is no longer a radical alternative to traditional public sector decision-making, but is now intricately woven in discourse of development and democracy.⁸

John Gaventa, one of the most prominent international participation experts describes four trends in participation since the 1960's.⁹ In the 1960's and the 1970's, the focus was on marginalized people in social and liberation movements using participation as a strategy to challenge power. By the early 1980s, participation in development was mainstream and was cast as the involvement of beneficiaries and users (as customers) in choosing an option from a list of standard development choices. In the coming years, the involved participants widened from beneficiaries to "stakeholders", which included every person and institution that was affected by the project. From the late 1990s through the present time, participation has become more rooted in the democratic state, and participants are seen as exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and taking a step toward good governance, not just a good project outcome. Both the shift from radical to mainstream and from a project-based to comprehensive governance approach characterize the image of participation in Bangalore by the turn of the century.

Increasing citizen participation can happen in any space where decisions are made about the public sphere. These decisions are often made by local government actors, but can happen at the state or national level or by international development agencies. With this research, I am focusing on participatory planning and budgeting, increased citizen involvement in ongoing and local neighborhood development that is financed by tax

⁸ Ranjita Mohanty and Rajesh Tandon Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion: Issue in Participatory Citizenship Introduction (2006)

⁹ Gaventa, John Perspective on Participation and Citizenship Chapter 2 Participatory Citizenship: Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion (2006) Ed. Ranjita Mohanty and Rajesh Tandon

revenues or other normal state funding.

The state-led campaign in Porto Alegre, Brazil, one of the most well-known and highly regarded cases of participatory local budgeting inspired Janaagraha's founders to initiate Ward Works. The Workers Party-initiated Participatory Budgeting was in 1989 in Porto Alegre. It was welcomed as a change from traditional patronage politics in municipal administrations and billed as a way for marginalized people to have a louder voice in public expenditures. The campaign was successful in leading to major infrastructure improvements, particularly in low-income communities, and it has been replicated all over Brazil.

While the United States has a fabled history of democratic institutions and processes, such as New England Town Hall meetings, much of the modern participatory planning developed as a response to urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 60s. Urban renewal was initiated to remove “blight” from major cities and bring major transportation and infrastructure projects, frequently on the ashes of demolished neighborhoods. The idea of the expert rational planner determining city form without community involvement was challenged during this period and aggressive calls for inclusion burst from communities that felt under attack. Informal community groups in targeted communities rose up in opposition to the government’s actions and the lack of resident involvement in the process, and were successful in some places (Greenwich Village, New York), but not in others (West End, Boston). President Johnson’s Model Cities Act of 1966 included the requirement for maximum feasible citizen participation in the planning phase of major

infrastructure projects.¹⁰ This helped leverage resources from community planning, which with time became further institutionalized and professionalized, with greater input for citizens in planning decisions. However, many of the active voices today have been hired to work on behalf of the community and are not residents themselves.

While participation has been used in the cases described above as a response to an ineffective, corrupt or repressive government, it can also be in reaction to perceived government capture by corporate or other civil society interests. This was increasingly a concern in Bangalore, known as the Silicon Valley of India. The wealthy and influential Information Technology industry has high infrastructure demands to serve its ex-urban office campuses, and frequently threatens protests and relocation to Hyderabad or Chennai to draw attention to their interests.¹¹

Interestingly, Bangalore today has several similarities with the urban renewal period in the United States, a point that is also reflected in the naming of the most significant new urban development body in the nation, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. The government has more revenue to fund major projects than at any other time in recent history, suburbanization is increasing among the middle-class and elite urban and major transportation infrastructure in being built for better linkages between cities and within cities to accommodate growing auto-ownership.

¹⁰ William Peterman Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development: The Potential and Limits of Grassroots Action Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA 2000

¹¹ *Times of India* “Azim Premji ko gussa kyon aata hai?” 7/18/2003

1.3 Case Study Analysis of Ward Works campaign.

The questions that led to this research came from working with residents in Bangalore neighborhoods and wanting to better understand why some communities engaged and were successful with this campaign, why others tried but failed and why many ignored the effort. Janaagraha's initial goal had been for the entire city to be involved. They felt that major change in governance could only come from comprehensive involvement and subsequent improvement in both quality of life and in governance rather than a patchwork of citizen-Corporator cooperation.

The campaign process was quick, and did not allow significant time for reflection or considered course correction. Notably, Janaagraha followed Ward Works with a series of different campaigns, and never attempted to repeat Ward Works. They did not put their efforts toward reflecting on why some wards succeeded or failed, but instead focused on citywide initiatives that did not rely on mass involvement from each neighborhood.

I have used a quantitative case study approach as it provides an opportunity to closely investigate the behavior of participating residents and the factors that led to success in the appropriate, local context. I selected six target wards, four which were among the most successful in the campaign (based on works prioritized and implemented), one that was active in the campaign but failed to receive the Corporator's approval and a final ward that tried to join the campaign, but couldn't engage enough residents.¹² My discussions with participants in the process are the primary resource,

¹² Finding an accurate figure for the amount spent on specific works (by road address and project type) in each ward in the 2002-2003 Budget was not possible within the scope of this paper. To determine which wards had a high number of their works accepted, I have used the Prioritized Citizens Work List and corroborated the accounts of community leaders with full-time Janaagraha volunteers who worked in each community.

supplemented by conversations with Bangalore-based civic and urban development experts, activists, journalists, Janaagraha volunteers and media accounts.

This thesis aims to answer two questions. The primary question is: *What were the attributes of the associations and political and spatial factors of the communities that were successful in a 2001 participatory budgeting campaign in Bangalore?* Success in the budgeting process was defined as local residents developing a citizen's budget that was accepted by the local Corporator and having those funds allocated correspondingly. Success, as measured by allocation of funds to a community-prioritized list of projects occurred in 22% of the city wards. Understanding why these residents' groups were able to complete the budgeting and prioritization process and obtain government approval can be valuable in assisting other community groups in Bangalore and across India work more effectively with local government and provide practice-based data to the participation field.

By using a case study model, I hope to identify the internal features of community processes:

- Who led and participated in the participatory budgeting process?
- What was the residents' history of community organizing?
- What was the campaign process? How was the road surveying conducted?
What was the prioritization process?

I will also look at contextual factors outside of the community group:

- Political background and role of the ward Corporator

- Spatial features of the ward/ Infrastructure development level
- Social features of the neighborhoods in the ward

The secondary question is: *Did the Ward Works campaign strengthen or sidestep local democracy?* A highly contentious debate among Bangalore activists, urban planners and politicians is whether Janaagraha's campaign and the growth of RWAs in Bangalore is having a positive or negative effect on local democracy.¹³ Scholars of participation, even those who support it have questioned whether participatory democracy processes “risk undermining existing forms of representative democracy”.¹⁴

Janaagraha proponents claim that deepening engagement in planning processes and citizen education about the costs and procedures of infrastructure makes them more engaged and better citizens who can hold the government accountable. Opponents, such as former Mayor Chandrasekhar, counter that Janaagraha is an outlet for elite residents in RWAs to create a “parallel government” that bypasses the existing system, rather than participating in party politics, voting and making direct requests of the local elected official.¹⁵ While improving local roads was important for Janaagraha, their primary goal for this campaign was to have citizens be educated about and engaged with local government, so analyzing the impact on local democracy is essential.

This question is not only relevant from the ethical or moral perspective of a democratic society, but has also been suggested to be part of good governance. For participation to have lasting impact and develop a vibrant political community, emphasis

¹³ Janaki Nair. *The Promise of the Metropolis: Bangalore's Twentieth Century* New Delhi, Oxford University Press 2005

¹⁴ Gaventa (2006)

¹⁵ *Times of India* “BCC Council attacks ‘interfering’ Janaagraha” 10/30/2003

should be placed on strengthening democratic institutions rather than bypassing them by increasing interactions between individuals and government.¹⁶

This is an important case and topic for research in 2007 for several reasons.

Bangalore is one of the fastest-growing large cities in Asia and has garnered international attention for its successful Information Technology (IT) industry and innovative non-profit sector. Within India, it is sometimes perceived as the epitome of the 21st century economic development of the nation, yet it still struggles with the challenges of cities across rapidly urbanizing India: insufficient infrastructure, growing slums and increasing traffic and pollution. Scholars and activists have expressed concern about what they see as a corporate-led development track that does not consider the needs of the majority of residents; so better understanding the nature of citizen participation in 2001 will shed light on the actors in Bangalore's development.¹⁷

Participation and governance are two of the most prominent topics in international development have been. Good governance is considered the necessary backbone for successful implementation of policies and development projects.¹⁸ Participation, involving citizens directly in decision-making, is also being promoted in local budget-making and infrastructure development projects in countries around the world. Janaagraha's primary goal in working with RWAs was to help them formalize participation in ward-level budgeting with the goal of improving local governance. The most well documented instances of participatory budgeting and planning are of state-

¹⁶ Gaventa (2006)

¹⁷ Benjamin, Solly and Bhuvaneswari, R. "Democracy, Inclusive Governance and Poverty in Bangalore" Working Paper 26 University of Birmingham May 2001; Nair (2005)

¹⁸ Daniel Kaufmann, Aart Kraay, and Pablo Zoido-Lobatón "Governance Matters: From Measurement to Action" World Bank 2000

sponsored processes. Identifying the challenges that were overcome in this community-driven process, of both succeeding in budgeting and winning legitimacy for the idea, will provide valuable lessons for neighborhood and city-level community groups who seek greater voice in planning and budgeting. In addition, participation scholars have called for increased practice-based research that takes into account the political, social, cultural and historical realities that contextualize a participatory planning exercise to supplement idealized democratic theory.¹⁹ Where participation actually results in the allocation of resources toward the vision of citizens it helps encourage further participation, therefore greater documentation of the practical outcomes of participatory democracy together with the process contributes to the field.²⁰

Finally and most importantly, citizen participation in local decision-making is becoming more institutionalized in urban India. In the five years since the Ward Works campaign, its chief architects, Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan have transitioned to advising state and national government on urban policy. In particular, as a Technical Advisor for the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission Ramesh helped design a mandate for urban local bodies that requires cities to commit to community participation to receive new infrastructure funding from the national government. This will open up the institutional space for greater citizen involvement in local decision-making, thus making greater understanding of success factors among citizen groups valuable to both government and community leaders. This research would be valuable for all stakeholders in a community participation process including neighborhood groups,

¹⁹ Andrea Cornwall “Spaces for Transformation? Reflections on issues of power and difference in participation in development” Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation Zed Books London 2004

²⁰ Gaventa (2006)

NGOs as well as urban-focused researchers in India.

1.4 Roadmap.

The remainder of this paper analyzes communities in Bangalore to help answer the stated questions.

Chapter 2 provides context for the case studies, beginning with the political, associational and planning history of Bangalore, followed by important aspects of Indian democracy. Next is a discussion of participation and civil society literature, which help provide a broader framework for these questions. The chapter concludes with principles of Janaagraha and the Ward Works campaign strategy and goals.

Chapter 3 consists of case studies about the Ward Works campaign from each of the targeted wards, based on interviews with multiple stakeholders.

Chapter 4 provides cross-ward analysis of community activity in Ward Works, highlighting patterns and differences across the case studies in response to the questions about attributes and contextual factors for success and the effect of the campaign on local democracy.

Chapter 5 concludes the paper and looks toward future citizen engagement with recommendations for community efforts.

2. SETTING THE CONTEXT

At the dawn of the 21st century, Bangalore was becoming a major global city, almost synonymous with outsourcing and economic globalization. In the decades before, Bangalore had been known as the “Garden City” of India, a relaxed city with temperate weather that attracted middle-class retirees. It did not have a trace of the development or intensity as India’s four primary cities: Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi and Chennai.

Rapid economic changes spurred on new private and public development in the city and altered the local power structure. Residents had mixed opinions on the changes. While the city was clearly more prosperous and able to do new projects major development projects were rarely focused on existing residential neighborhoods. This city is in a period of flux, an opportune moment for new discussions and processes to take shape.

This chapter includes the following sections that together provide context for understanding the Ward Works campaign in Bangalore, including planning, political and social histories of Bangalore. Section 2.1 traces the history of neighborhood development and community associations in Bangalore. Section 2.2 provides background on the structure of urban governance in India and recent developments toward greater citizen participation. Section 2.3 is a brief review of literature on democracy, participation and the civil society landscape in India, with special attention to effective implementation of participatory democracy strategies. Finally, section 2.4 describes the founding principles of Janaagraha and the citywide process of the Ward Works campaign.

2.1. Bangalore History.

Early History: Tale of Two Cities.

Bangalore (Bengaluru in the local language of Kannada) was founded by Kempegowda in the 16th century, but it had minimal physical expansion for nearly 250 years while the nation's major cities grew. The city also suffered the limited availability of water due to its elevation and distance from major rivers and its economic activity was limited to collection of surplus from Karnataka's countryside.

The history of Bengaluru/Bangalore is a story of two separate cities: a five-century old western part where most Kannadigas lived and the eastern part, the British-occupied Cantonment, that is no more than two centuries old. Early development on the Cantonment side had “broad, straight tree-lined avenues”, parks, roads planned for wheeled vehicles and homes built on spacious two to three acre plots with proper drainage.²¹ In general, the European parts of Bangalore were strictly zoned and designed for single use. In sharp contrast, the City (as the Western side was known) was characterized by unplanned mixed-use development with densely packed houses and narrow roads developed for pedestrian traffic. The City municipality was founded in 1862, the Cantonment nine years later in 1871.

Planning the City.

A plague ravaged Bangalore's population in the late 19th century, which hastened the interest in stricter neighborhood planning in the name of public safety. All new residential extensions from late 19th century were built according to a “chess plan” and with the principle of a separation between work and home including Malleshwaram

²¹ Nair (2005) p.46

which was planned in 1892, creating a third neighborhood type after old City and Cantonment.²²

There were two significant factors involved in planning of these new communities. First, these communities were built as ‘model hygienic suburbs’ with proper drainage and greater distance between houses than the City area. Second, social hierarchies were explicitly built into site planning. Within neighborhood layouts, caste and class determined who lived where, with best sites going to Brahmins and different communities separated by blocks. “Malleshwaram similarly had eight blocks, one for each ‘particular section of people’ based on religion, caste and language.” If the poor did not live in their allotted sections, members of the upper castes opposed their presence in planned areas.²³ Members of upper caste councils also restricted conversion from large plots to smaller plots on the grounds of “caste unsuitability”.²⁴ Caste shaped spatial dynamics more in planned areas than in older neighborhoods areas where there were longer bonds of occupation and limited planning; town planning reflected social difference and promoted it.

In 1949 both City and Cantonment were brought together under a common municipal administration. “Yet,” according to historian Janaki Nair, “the integration of these two distinct linguistic, political, and economic cultures, and their spatial identities remains an unfulfilled task to the present day.”²⁵

²² Nair (2005) p. 50

²³ “Brahmins raised vociferous opposition to the grant of building sites to the ‘untouchables’ of the Queen’s Sappers and Miners, forcing municipal authorities to allot new sites well away from Brahmin neighborhoods.” From Nair (2005) p.52

²⁴ Nair (2005) p.53

²⁵ Nair (2005)

The 1950s in Bangalore was the site of the rapid growth of the public-sector industry: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Indian Telephone Industries, Bharat Electronics Limited and others set up in eastern and northern outskirts of the city. By the seventies it was the hub of public sector industry in India. Subsequently, defense and space research Indian Space Research Organization and Central Power Research Institute arrived, followed by a complementary private sector (electronics and electrical, engineering, automobile, technology manufacturing). These jobs created Bangalore's now notorious large middle-class, but obscured the parallel development of a large informal sector.²⁶ This economic development led to the creation of another major community type: public industry housing. Most of the major industries built adjacent low-density, amenity-rich residential townships for their workers. They could rarely contain all staff, and were frequently shadowed by unauthorized layout construction by workers in neighboring villages. To regularize their illegal status and obtain municipal services, site-holders formed themselves into residents' associations beginning in the 1960s. The 1950's through 1980's also saw the rapid rise in slums in Bangalore. A 2002 study of Bangalore slums found that 64% of existing slums began during this period, with people squatting on Bangalore City Corporation land.²⁷ In many cases, slums predate the planned neighborhoods around them.

From two divided large towns with a population of less than 500,000, it became a big city by the 1970s, a metropolis in 1980s and world-known city of more than 5.5 million by late 1990s. City officials and residents have long been reluctant to acknowledge the growth and address the change in city stature. Nair's historical account

²⁶ Nair (2005)

²⁷ CIVIC and Jana Sahayog (2002)

finds complaints since the 1960s that mirror today's complaints that the city is getting too big, too crowded; and losing its green space.

"Those who are dismayed by, and are perhaps fearful of, the baffling directions taken by urban democracy, seek comfort in a far more placid and restrained past, and strive to recreate this moment not just as the ideological level but through new institutional mechanisms."²⁸

A constant challenge in 20th century Bangalore has been its roads. According to Nair, "bad roads have become a metaphor for corruption, for the impossibility of being 'modern' and for the intractable problems posed by legal claims over land use in the city." Roads remain a middle-class concern, since the lower-middle class and poor prioritize basic infrastructure such as water supply, toilets and housing which remain elusive for one third of Bangaloreans. Road improvement and the development of flyovers has been a key battleground for middle-class residents and the corporate sector that wants ease of travel, though flyovers have cut through neighborhoods and evicted thousands of business owners since the 1990s.

Community and Associations.

Two overlapping trends led to the rise of new association types in Bangalore. Starting in the 1930's, a steady stream of immigrants came to work in the city, bringing new languages and cultures from north and south India. Kannada remained dominant, though other Southern languages were spoken on the Cantonment side and the use of English expanded. As people lost faith in the vision of democracy set out at Independence, particularly as a sharp rise in government corruption was perceived by the middle-class, new civil society organizations flourished by the 1960s and 70s.²⁹ The mid-

²⁸ Nair (2005) p. 79

²⁹ Varma, Pavan K. The Great Indian Middle Class Viking Books New Delhi 1998

20th century saw a rise in caste associations in Bangalore, originally created to help people secure state benefits and urban social mobility. Caste associations defined both politics and philanthropy, for example, boarding houses based on caste.

“If caste and community defined modes of philanthropy, and even determined who the beneficiaries would be, other modes of public involvement sought to disavow caste and community as markers of social status or identity. This was not without its ironies, for the newly evolving public life was restricted to certain castes and classes in ways that would fashion the very content of the imagined nation. Indeed, participation itself was clearly linked to the privileges of caste and class in the city. It is no coincidence that those who passionately embraced a liberal ideal of citizenship were exclusive in ways that were rarely voiced or even acknowledged.”³⁰

Significant associations of the time were often non-partisan, but had a relationship to the state, presenting themselves as watchdogs or countervailing forces against local governance. One major organization reflects the direction of the time. The Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs was comprised of mostly Brahmin men and billed itself as a group of “non-partisan, non-communal and independent citizens” that focused on educating themselves through philosophy study circles and lectures and defined citizenship independent of party politics. They conducted civic surveys of sanitary conditions, amenities and neighborhood infrastructure from 1948 through the 1970s and advocated for the creation of rate-payers associations.

In the 1980s, caste and language formed that basis of new groups focused on identity-based citizenship that provided a sense of rights and belonging for locals. Kannada Shakti Kendra was major organization of the pro-Kannada movement. They began as a moderate group lobbying for jobs to be given to Kannadigas in 1980s, but

³⁰ Nair (2005) p.68

became more aggressive and anti-Tamil and Muslim and moved toward violence in a series of agitations and brutal riots.

Neighborhoods were being defined as strictly residential space by associations “which inaugurated a new phase of civic activism by mobilizing an altogether different social class.” The idea that the neighborhood is the site to address municipal concern energized hitherto apolitical sections of the city (middle-class retired people and women) and privileging the homeowner/taxpayer as participants in Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs). Their form of activism was non-confrontational and uncontroversial in its demands. CIVIC started in 1992, “distanced itself from the more contentious issues among the urban poor that might have deployed electoral politics to its advantage, and also from modes of civic mobilization in the past that involved modes of mass agitation.”³¹

21st Century Bangalore: Dreams of Silicon Valley.

The seeds of hi-tech Bangalore were sown in the early 1980s with a Texas Instruments campus, and by the year 2000, nearly three thousand software development, information technology and IT-Enabled Services as well as business process outsourcing (such as call centers and medical transcription) facilities were located in the city. The location of space for the tech park campuses was guided by availability of large tracts of land and was placed at the outskirts of the city, though rural residents whose agricultural land has been acquired and homeowners in formerly residential neighborhoods launched complaints by that the new economy shows scant regard for zoning laws. To house the new economy workers, there has been a boom in both high and low-density gated

³¹ Nair (2005) p. 117

communities with private infrastructure (24 hour water and electricity, privately maintained interior roads) and exclusive leisure space (playgrounds, swimming pools, gyms, grocery stores).

Economic changes have led to international attention for Bangalore, and aspirations by politicians, developers and others to make it a world-class city, with Singapore as the model touted by Chief Minister S.M. Krishna. Toward this end, Krishna founded the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) to guide state-controlled municipal agencies toward more efficient service delivery. New economy leaders were appointed to the Task Force that was headed by Nandan Nilekani (CEO of Infosys Technologies) and including members from corporate sector (including Ramesh Ramanathan) with the goal of increase Public/Private Participation for city development.

While the BATF was not directly linked to the World Bank or other International Finance Institutions (IFIs), their use of corporate rather than political language and tools and their unelected positions concerned many activists and local elected officials.³² BATF proposed the interests of corporate sector and emerging middle and upper classes at the heart of future urban development, with improved governance as a key goal. Observing similar developments in multiple Indian cities, Social Watch India describes the trend of “the competitive, go-getting approach promoted the selective involvement of the seeming ‘best and brightest’ as the sole leaders and inheritors of the world-class city”.³³

³² Asha Ghosh “Public-Private or a Private Public: Promised Partnership of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force” Economic and Political Weekly, Commentary Section, November 19, 2005

³³ Amitabh Behar et al. Social Watch India: Citizens Report on Governance and Development 2006 National Social Watch Coalition New Delhi 2006

2.2. Urban Governance in India.

Under British rule Indian states were managed by Governors who reported back to the British Parliament (though Bangalore, as a part of the Princely State of Mysore state was ruled by a native leader). Lord Ripon is considered the “founding father” of urban local government in India, as his 1882 resolution positions municipal authorities as units of self-government. These municipal corporations were to play two major roles: first, as the instrument of local democracy that would take policy decisions, and second, to deliver adequate public utilities and civic amenities. At the time when the system was created, however, the municipal corporations placed more emphasis on good urban administration than good government.³⁴

Commissioner System.

Municipal Corporations are the urban body structure for the largest cities and negotiate directly with the state for funding and large project planning. Bangalore follows the ‘Commissioner system’ governance structure, which takes its name from the role of the state-appointed city administrator (selected by the Chief Minister from among officers of the Indian Administrative Services across the country). The Commissioner is the chief executive of the Bangalore City Corporation. Although the Municipal Corporation is the legislative body that creates policies for the governance of the city, the Commissioner is responsible for the execution of the policies. The Commissioner is appointed for a fixed term of five years as defined by state statute, but they are often transferred to another position before the end of a term.

In such a system the Mayor in the Municipal Corporation is chosen through

³⁴ Marina R. Pinto Metropolitan City Governance in India Sage Publications 2000 New Delhi p.225

indirect election by the councilors from amongst themselves for a term of one year. The Mayor lacks executive authority due to the British roots of the system: during the Raj, the administrator was the representative of the colonial power. In this context, the indirect election of the Mayor combined with his short one-year tenure renders the position that of a figurehead. Councilors debate policy issues, take action through the committee structure, and have control over annual local infrastructure spending in their ward.

According to a recent study of India's four major metros (Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi and Chennai), local government is failing in its role as a vibrant democratic body that engages the city.³⁵ This failure has left a void, one that civil society organizations have hoped to fill through their own work or by prodding government to improve.

Participatory Planning in India.

73rd and 74th Amendments.

As India moved closer to independence and self-governance, Mahatma Gandhi advocated *Panchayati Raj*, a decentralized form of government where a village is responsible for its own developmental affairs, as the foundation of India's political system. *Raj* means government while *Panchayat* refers to a village's body of elected representatives. It was sporadically adopted during the 1950s and 60s as state laws were passed to establish Panchayats, but truly gained hold when the Indian Constitution was amended through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 to accommodate the structure nationwide. The system entails three tiers of local governance, at the district, taluk and village levels. The *Panchayat* governs with participatory *Gram Sabhas*,

³⁵ Mayraj Fahim, "Local government in India still carries characteristics of its colonial heritage"
http://www.citymayors.com/government/india_government.html (last visited: 5/20/07)

community meetings at which concerns are discussed and major issues are decided among the entire village. While it has not been universally successful, Karnataka was the first state to adopt all elements of the 73rd amendment and remains one of the most responsive states toward rural citizen participation.³⁶

The 74th Constitutional Amendment of the same year proposed more authority to urban local government including: establishment of Ward Committees in cities, establishment of district and metropolitan planning to create development plans, reservation of 1/3 seats for women and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SC/ST)³⁷, and adding a schedule of development functions to municipal authority (urban planning, roads and bridges, construction, water supply and public health).

Attempts to create a more participatory and empowered local government have been less successful in urban localities. In Karnataka, for every 380 rural citizens there is one elected official, but in urban centers the ratio is 3400 citizens to one elected official. In major cities like Bangalore, that relationship is even more threadbare, with one representative for 42,000 citizens.³⁸ No formal vehicle for participation functions for citizens in urban India. Ward Committees (citizens appointed to govern some local matters) exist on paper, as the additional layer of local government that would be closer to the citizens, but they have had minimal success across the country. At the time of the Ward Works campaign, there were 30 Ward Committees for 100 wards in Bangalore,

³⁶ The Hunger Project, “The Panchayati Raj Campaign” <http://www.thp.org/sai00/india/campaign.htm> (Last visited: 4/8/07)

³⁷ The Constitution of India accords special status to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes communities because as a result of being outside of the Hindu caste system, they have faced social and political oppression for generations. Scheduled Castes, also known as Dalits make up more than 16 percent of India’s population, while Scheduled Tribes or Adivasis make up 8 percent.

³⁸ Ramesh Ramanathan, Institutionalising Citizen Participation in Urban Governance White Paper 2004 p.5

some of which never held meetings. "The weak and undemocratic structure, lack of access to information, lack of empowerment with funds, functions, functionaries and facilities made decentralisation of 'ward committees' largely unfruitful in Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP), according to CIVIC.³⁹

Decentralization in Karnataka.

Between 1987 and 1991, the newly elected Janata Dal party decided to back up their populist claims with a program of major fiscal decentralization (forty percent of state budget) to districts and villages. It was billed to enable planning from below, and there was an increase in small projects, but larger projects never got off the ground due to lack of planning knowledge and a focus on the Corporator's discretion. An evaluation of the short-lived experiment (which ended when the Congress party regained power) found that men participated more actively, the wealthy did not dominate the process and the Scheduled Caste people were as likely to petition the government, but rarely succeeded and were absent in non-official meetings.⁴⁰ The authors also note that Karnataka has more lively civil society than other states, and that decentralization galvanized associational activity.

Campaign for People's Planning in Kerala.

Kerala is a small south Indian state bordering Karnataka that won acclaim for a state-led participatory planning project. The People's Planning Campaign was launched in 1996 by the Left Democratic Front state government to empower local communities to

³⁹ CIVIC, "Functioning of Ward Committees in Bangalore" White Paper 2001

⁴⁰ Richard C. Crook. and James Manor Democracy and Decentralization in Karnataka (Chap. 15) Democracy in India ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2001

prepare local development plans. Gram Sabhas implemented the process, and the campaign focused on engagement of rural poor including women and SC/ST members.⁴¹ 100,000 local volunteers in each district, mostly teachers and retired people, were trained to guide communities through the planning workshops. At the end of fourteen month, 30 to 40 percent of the state budget was decided through this decentralized planning process for twelve development sub-sectors including infrastructure, service delivery and production. The program has been widely regarded as highly successful in local community planning and resulting in pro-poor outcomes much like Porto Alegre in Brazil.⁴² It was continued by the rival political coalition (Congress) when they assumed power.

Bhagidari in Delhi.

Bhagidari, “the Citizen’s Partnership in Governance” was a state-sponsored campaign initiated in 2000 by Congress Party Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit in New Delhi to engage Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in problem solving at the neighborhood level. Participation of residents in unauthorized settlements was not sought. RWAs and Market and Traders Associations (MTAs) were invited to work with government agencies on water, electricity, garbage collection, parks and trees, crime and encroachment prevention through large workshops with agencies. A comprehensive evaluation of the campaign has not yet been undertaken, however many of the actual activities of the partnership were using the RWA as a tool to inform residents of agency

⁴¹ LDF is a regional political coalition of Community Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and other leftist parties

⁴² Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, “Relocation participation within a radical politics of development: insights from political action and practice” Chapter 10 Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation Zed Books London (2004) p.162

actions or co-production of maintenance tasks.

Into the context of strong state decentralization, unpredictable local government and weak links between citizens and elected officials came a civil society-led participatory budgeting exercise. To provide additional context before the case studies in Bangalore, I will next consider a portion of the existing body of knowledge on participation.

2.3. Democracy, Participation and Civil Society in India: Literature.

The questions I raise in this thesis are informed by practice, both observing and working with community leaders in Bangalore between 2002 and 2004. While Ward Works was inspired by prior initiatives, it did not fit into a mold. It was focused on participatory budgeting, like in Porto Alegre and Kerala, but not led by the state. Led instead by a non-governmental group to help citizens engage more with government, it took no ideological or political stance, and did not focus on creating pro-poor outcomes. Consequently, the Ward Works campaign case does not fit neatly into an existing literature, but connects both to scholarly work in many areas including participation, community organizing and civil society. While the campaign was based on engaging citizens in government budget-making and was inspired by Porto Alegre, because it was civil society-led process rather than state-led I give less prominence to participatory budgeting literature. In the end, I find the framework and questions of the participation literature most pertinent, looking closely at the links between participatory democracy and governance.

Participatory Democracy.

Participation is typically considered as avenue for marginalized people to engage in decision-making that they are shut out of in the traditional processes.⁴³ The Ward Works experiment diverges from that typical model in two significant ways. First, in case of Bangalore Resident Welfare Associations, the participants are not socially or economically marginalized. However, they feel that local government is highly ineffective and inaccessible, therefore requiring citizen participation as a method to express their needs as marginalized citizens. Frustrated by prior unsuccessful attempts to obtain local infrastructure improvements, they felt politically weak, particularly in the face of “vote banks” of slum dwellers that are alleged to control the electoral process. The second part of the problem with employing the traditional notion of participation of providing a space for marginalized actors to challenge elite-dominated government institutions is that Bangalore’s local elected officials, the Municipal Corporators, are not part of the global or national elite. Economically they are low- to moderate-income, they are often not college-educated or English speaking and they are rarely connected to the new Bangalore economy. The privileges and power that they do hold are based on local commercial and landholdings.⁴⁴ In fact, some scholars note that Corporators’ local control is increasingly under attack from state power, which is more closely connected to global corporate interests.⁴⁵

Within the participatory literature, there are two types of ways to look at effectiveness. First is whether or not the project resulted in an outcome, including the

⁴³ Mohanty and Tandon (2006)

⁴⁴ Benjamin and Bhuvaneswari (2001)

⁴⁵ Nair (2005)

quality of the outcome. There is less focus on whether or not participation “works” in this way, because in most of these project-based cases there is *an* outcome. The second question, the one more frequently asked is, was the participation “empowering” or “transformative”?

The vast community organizing literature does raise various factors for success in community-driven initiatives to engage, persuade, and challenge the state. However, this literature is often very case-specific (most of it drawn from Western city cases) making it difficult to draw useful comparisons. In addition, some in the field even question the efficacy of community organizing.

Many scholars interested in the second question assume that any participatory process can have an outcome, but that the goal is a broader transformation of power relations and governance. This perspective of a participatory exercise often builds upon the landmark analysis of Sherry Arnstein and her 1969 “Ladder of Citizen Participation”. Starting from Manipulation and Therapy on the low end of the spectrum up to Consultation in the middle and Citizen Control at the top, her analysis creates a simple hierarchy for participatory exercises based on the level of agency and power that citizens have. One particularly comprehensive and valuable framework for looking at the potentially transformative nature of participation is Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright’s Empowered Participatory Governance (EPG) model. In the model they outline the institutional design principles that lead to participatory campaigns that make a transformative impact. Using their principles and attributes, I have assessed the Ward Works campaign with the following chart. The first three points are principles that Empowered Participatory Governance experiments share with each other, the next three

are institutional properties of the cases and the final one is the enabling condition or context for success.

1.	Addressing a tangible and specific area of practical public concern	YES: Roads and drains are tangible, however only a priority for middle class who have basic needs met
2.	Empowered involvement of ordinary, affected citizens and officials close to them	YES: No “experts” involved, process included volunteers educating residents about infrastructure basics so they could make informed choices, government focus was on local elected official
3.	Solve problems through processes of reasoned deliberation	YES: Prioritization process was deliberative and aimed at coming to consensus
4.	Devolve power to local action units	YES: Ward Works budget has been devolved by municipal government to the 100 ward Corporators
5.	Local action units not autonomous but linked to each other and centralized higher powers	YES: Implementation is done by BCC, they wouldn’t implement technically unfeasible projects ⁴⁶
6.	Experiments colonize and transform existing state institutions	YES: Goal of making this permanent part of local government process through ward committees (now <i>ward sabhas</i>); MRM became required
7.	Enabling conditions: Literacy; rough equality of power between participants	NO

This model is useful for the Ward Works campaign because Janaagraha was deeply concerned with the long-term transformative impact of the campaign. They were not concerned with the concrete and tar for the roads, but used roads as a “tangible and specific” issue to engage residents in the renewing of the democratic covenant. The

⁴⁶ For example, the Bangalore City Corporation did not implement items that were planned under another major spending package that was already planned.

authors state that EPG experiments “are participatory because they rely upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation and empowered because they attempt to tie action to discussion”.

Governance.

Governance, the process of decision-making and implementation, is a critical entry-point to discussions of development on national and increasingly local levels around the world.

Reforms in governance are often in managerial terms, and the question is, do the requirements of “good governance” conflict with democratic control of government by citizens. Observing this new “agenda”, Sarah Joseph perceives a change in the politicization of public office, a switch away from representative democracy toward “consumer management”.⁴⁷

In their Bangalore-based analysis, Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari concur about a pro-governance but anti-government phenomenon and distrust the effect of elite citizen participation.

“In this situation it is hardly surprising that in Bangalore... richer groups almost always view lower level bureaucratic levels and local politicians with suspicion and as being responsible to subvert ‘planned development’ by what is popularly called ‘politicisation’. In recent times, this same elite, under the rubric of promoting ‘good governance’ and ‘transparency,’ aim to counter this situation including supporting steps to dilute the efficacy of municipal organization as a political entity.”⁴⁸

This framework Janaagraha never advocated “reforming” government or defined

⁴⁷ Sarah Joseph, “Democratic Good Governance: New Agenda for Change” *Economic and Political Weekly* 26(12) 2001 pp.1011-1014

⁴⁸ Benjamin and Bhuvaneswari (2001)

better governance except to say that it would be responsive to its citizens. But because the initiative started outside of government, within civil society, it risked facing charges that it was trying to limit or manipulate democratic processes.

NGO led-participation and its limitations.

Another challenge with framing this case neatly in the literature on participation or community organizing is that Janaagraha does not fit into a neat organizational category. It had no external funding, no mission statement and as a brand-new entity, its functions were evolving. However, it did have a functioning headquarters, a full-time staff (though labeled volunteers) and printed a newsletter and other publications. While it functioned more like a local NGO, it claimed to be a social movement. Using either label is imperfect since both categories encompass such a broad range of organizations with varied ideologies, functions, funding and administrative structures not to mention levels of representation of the population.

NGOs have faced the strongest backlash from anti-participation writers. While recognizing the diversity of NGOs, writers Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan note that “NGOs face severe limitations in seeking to be genuine agents of transformative development through participatory approaches”⁴⁹ Reasons for weakness of NGOs include their limited scope to change wider systems of power and poverty, their temporary or project-based status and the lack of direct accountability mechanisms.⁵⁰

Janaagraha’s founders frequently referred to the campaign as part of a social

⁴⁹ Hickey and Mohan (2004) p.163

⁵⁰ Nyamugasira W. “NGO and advocacy: How well are the poor represented?” Oxfam GB, Carfax Publishing Ltd. 1998

movement that belonged to everyone, not an NGO that they saw as narrow and proprietary. However, the term social movement holds a strong connotation in the developing world and in India. In developing nations, social movements are frequently typified as standing in resistance to development, as raised in Pramod Parajuli's research.⁵¹ This reflects the characterization of the term in India, where "social movements are challenging the premises of development", with the women's movement, forest conservation movement and anti-dam movement as the models.⁵² This was absolutely not the case for Janaagraha, which in no way questioned the larger trend of development, and with their focus on roads and one founder's link to BATF, they could easily be characterized as supportive of existing development models. The use of the term 'social movement' by Janaagraha rankled leftists in Bangalore who found this an unfair appropriation of political language for an apolitical group. Parajuli's second characteristic of social movements as uninterested in capturing state power but instead in reinvigorating civil society to help meet their needs and to make democracy more participatory does fit Janaagraha.

Civil Society, Class and Politics in India.

Like any society marked by deep inequalities including caste, class and gender, some people will always be "better equipped socially and materially to actualize their citizenship rights".⁵³ However, unlike in many democracies like the United States, in India, the lower the caste, income, and education of an Indian, the greater the odds that he

⁵¹ Hickey, Sam and Mohan, Giles (2004) p.166

⁵² Parajuli, Pramod Chapter 8: Power and Knowledge in Development Discourse: New Social Movements and the State in India Democracy in India ed. Jayal, Niraja Gopal Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2001

⁵³ Mohanty and Tandon (2006)

will vote.⁵⁴ While Bangalore has been mythologized as a middle-class city, in part due to the well-paying public-sector industry jobs, it too has great wealth and severe poverty.

I have already discussed the typical vision of participatory citizenship as integration of the marginalized and about altering the relationships between the powerless and dominant in society in deciding the public good. The fact that middle-class urban Indians can feel marginalized from politics is an important contextual factor, and has its roots in recent political history.

Before discussing this further, it is valuable to define “middle-class” in the Indian context. The term ‘middle-class’ in India is often used loosely, as a distinction from conditions of poverty or as a proxy for education, occupation or consumption patterns. However, there is an important distinction within the population of 300 million “middle-class Indians” between the lower middle-class, who are often employed in low to middle level jobs in the public sectors and the upper middle-class comprised of professionals in the private sector. However, the terms upper-middle class and elite are frequently eschewed for the broader term middle-class, even when the population being described is among top earners in the city or country.⁵⁵ Many scholars also fail to make this

⁵⁴ Ashutosh Varshney “India’s Democratic Challenge” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2007

⁵⁵ From India Together (August 2003): “With a per-capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) under US \$1000, India is often regarded as a poor nation. 46% of the income is accounted for by the top one-fifth of the people, while the lowest one-fifth accounts for only 8% of incomes. Even this breakdown presents only an incomplete picture; in fact the top 10% alone earns 33% of all income. This large-scale deprivation has a curious companion - a grossly incorrect understanding of what the term ‘middle class’ means. The median family income in India is approximately Rs.4500 a month. By its conventional definition, the middle class includes families whose incomes lie between 75% and 125% of the median. Families with monthly incomes over Rs.6000 are thus above the ‘middle class’ line, and families earning more than Rs.8000 or 9000 a month are certainly among the top fifth of the nation. Still, among the urban salaried class that constitutes most of the audience for media outlets, many believe themselves to be members of the middle class. What’s more, with proficiency in English largely confined to those who can afford private education, nearly everyone who can fluently say ‘middle class families like mine’ is almost certainly part of the economic elite.” <http://www.indiatogether.org/photo/2003/class.htm>

distinction, which can complicate any argument linking class and democracy. With that important caveat, this paper will continue to use the broad term middle-class, though in the case studies I will refer more closely to occupation and civic engagement and draw conclusions from those details rather than relying on the generalizations in literature.

In The Great Indian Middle-Class, Pavan K. Varma describes the foundation of contemporary Indian political and civic life as fomented during the struggle for independence. Urban, educated elite ran the Indian National Congress, the primary independence movement organization, which became the dominant political party post-Independence. The author states that the poor were only encouraged to be devotees of Gandhi, not agents of change, and that the middle-class was hesitant about revolutionary action.

Constitutional protest, interspersed with the occasional phases of more radical agitation, always non-violent and led by their own ilk, was an acceptable strategy of political agitation, for it worked towards desired goals without the social upheaval that could erode the middle class' hegemony over events.⁵⁶

Today, according to Varma, civic culture has become disenchanted with the political process, and middle-class Indians feel that they are being shortchanged by the state.⁵⁷ Specifically, the middle-class feel literally outnumbered by the poor and that the electoral system is permanently weighted toward the empowered poor. The fact that the majority of poor continue to live in economically and even politically precarious positions (lack of property rights) does not help sway the opinions of many middle-class about their 'power', but is seen as a symptom of the political short-sightedness of the

⁵⁶ Varma, Pavan K. The Great Indian Middle Class Viking Books New Delhi 1998, p.72

⁵⁷ Varma (2005), p. 123.

poor.

Significantly, this feeling of disgust has prompted very few people from the traditional bastions of the middle class- the bureaucracy or professional groupings- to seek to change the existing situation by venturing into politics themselves. The excuse for this coyness is that the world of politics is far too ‘dirty’ to allow ‘good’ people to enter or survive...The comment of Bernard Shaw that politics is the last refuge of the scoundrel is perhaps the most widely shared perception of the middle class.

Increasingly, through the media and civic organizations across major cities, middle class individuals are claiming that the “Indian middle class is a distinctive social group with its own set of social, political and economic interests that must be actively represented”.⁵⁸

Because some middle-class residents felt a desire to reclaim control over politics they may have been less inclined to bridge the necessary chasms to engage the urban poor as equals in this campaign. By creating spaces for participation to occur without addressing the unequal power relations may reduce the potentially democratizing effect of community participation.⁵⁹ This was the downside for most of the Ward Works campaigns and Janaagraha in general; they made modest attempts to be inclusive, but not enough to facilitate the creation of a pro-poor agenda.

According to Bangalore historian Janaki Nair, in an interview, different class groups use different strategies and tactics to obtain public resources, stemming from and reinforcing their relationship to electoral politics.

Very distinct way in which middle-class deploy their power: use of law,

⁵⁸ Leela Fernandes India’s New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis 2006 p.139

⁵⁹ Gaventa (2006)

attempt to influence policy, hence the desire to want to study planning documents and understand the planning process. The formal requirements of any plan is that it invites public responses, usually it doesn't happen because people are busy and don't understand the planning documents. That has changed, now more people are understanding. Planning and policy are not available as a space for poorer people. The poor would approach the councilor who can resolve or at least keep threats at bay. There is a very distinct way that these two classes operate. One operates more with law and policy, other would be closer to Corporator because they would intervene.

The political relationship between the urban poor and urban local government has been the source of debate, with opinions on the relationship ranging from exploitative clientilism to deliberate political bargaining that result in pro-poor outcomes. Examining Bangalore, Benjamin and Bhuvaneswari introduced the term “Politics by Stealth”, referring to the sophisticated political knowledge that some slum dwellers use to “play the institutional levers of the system” for their benefit.⁶⁰ This theory comes as a response to the more widely held view that “vote bank politics” (where politicians see slums as large blocs of votes to be won, possibly due to social factors such as caste, language or religion) is exploitative of poor people and doesn't result in any material improvements in the conditions of poor neighborhoods.⁶¹ A 2002 study of slums in Bangalore more closely endorses the popular theory.⁶² Ninety-seven community leaders in slums responded to the question about the interventions of politicians in solving slum problems. 81% of the leaders said the politicians were more focused on “Controlling the people than solving problems”. Other common responses included “Visit only during elections” and “Indifferent to slum problems” while only 10% of leaders surveyed felt that politicians were “Sincere in solving problems”. Despite a different method of interaction with

⁶⁰ Benjamin and Bhuvashwari (2001)

⁶¹ This use of the term vote-bank was coined by sociologist M.N. Srinivas in his 1955 paper *The Social System of a Mysore Village*

⁶² CIVIC and Jana Sahayog (2002)

government, Bangalore urban poor population also feels underserved by local government.

2.4. Janaagraha and Ward Works



Janaagraha's Founding.

Janaagraha was founded in 2001 as a “movement” to improve public governance through participatory democracy. The first vehicle for this goal was resident participation in neighborhood based budgeting and planning. Janaagraha has aimed to foster in residents an interest in working collectively to address public problems and give them the tools to engage effectively with elected officials.

“Janaagraha is not an institution: not an NGO, a registered society or a trust. At its core, it is an idea.”⁶³

The term Janaagraha is an invented one, taking its roots from Satyagraha that Mahatma Gandhi coined during the struggle for India’s independence in the early 20th century. Satyagraha meant “Satya”- “agraha”, or the moral force of truth, while Janaagraha means “Jana” plus “agraha”, or the life force of the people. In addition to its name, Janaagraha often borrowed the language and imagery of Mahatma Gandhi, claiming that this period was India’s second struggle for independence. Its non-confrontational and community-oriented approach drew from the venerated ideal of non-violence and communal effort.

⁶³ Ramesh Ramanathan, Janaagraha Introspection Document July 23rd, 2003; At a volunteer and community retreat in summer 2004, Janaagraha decided to shift towards a more traditional NGO model and has become JCCD: Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy since 2005.

The movement was founded and fully funded by Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan: a couple born in Bangalore who had work in banking and architecture respectively, in the United States and United Kingdom. They moved back to Bangalore in the late 1990s with a vision to create the type of social and political infrastructure that existed in the U.S., as they saw it, the foundation upon which the material and public goods of Western cities sat.

Their vision for engaging citizens in government, inspired by New England town meetings and Porto Alegre, paralleled the shift in discourse from participation as a tool for implementation of development to the focus on improving governance.

Upon his return to India, Ramesh consulted pro-bono for the Bangalore City Corporation to create a Fund-Based Accounting System and was appointed to the Bangalore Agenda Task Force. He felt he had made important internal changes to government accounting, but that citizens did not know what to do with the new information about municipal spending. One core assumption was that urban Indians felt alienated from their political system, which had led to reduced community trust and collective action, no sense of citizenship and inequitable outcomes in local government decision-making.

He and his wife intended for Janaagraha not to be another small NGO doing discrete projects, of which there are thousands in Bangalore, but to distinguish themselves with a massive advertising campaign with celebrity endorsements in addition to grassroots strategies such as handbill flyers and community meetings, in hopes of engaging the entire city. Their message was that citizens had to engage more

with local government if they wanted improvement, but that “government” and “people” were caught in a vicious cycle of mistrust. Ramesh visited dozens of Resident Welfare Associations spreading the message that residents must transcend the current pattern of “electing and forgetting” to “electing and engaging”. In the first few months, they also held some large city-wide events with speakers and endorsers who could draw crowds and confer legitimacy like the Chief Minister of Karnataka and Vishnu Vardhan, a famous film actor. In 2001, after describing Janaagraha’s inaugural press conference, a neighborhood-focused website described Janaagraha with great enthusiasm:

JANAAGRAHA, in many ways, is THE road to a better life. All one has to do to come on board is join a citizen community (e.g. Resident Association) and spend just 3 hours in completing a specially designed Field Report.⁶⁴

Janaagraha’s Approach.

Janaagraha aimed to distinguish their approach and activities in the sphere of participatory democracy in seven ways:

1. Focus on local government, rather than state or national level. The local level is where individual citizens can have the greatest impact, and yet is often dismissed in favor of discussing national-level politics.
2. Role of citizen as “partner” rather than “customer”. Citizens have a right to be part of decision-making as well as responsibility toward their government. They should not be passive recipients whose participation is only to demand improved services.
3. Emphasis on problem solving rather than ideology. Janaagraha is

⁶⁴ <http://www.koramangala.com/jana/default.htm>

stauchly non-partisan and rarely ideological, with a narrow focus on solving public problems effectively.

4. Focused, professional approach. Despite not having an organizational structure to hire a staff, Janaagraha ran their volunteer program like a company with full-time, six-day workweeks, timesheets for hours worked and held volunteers accountable for daily and weekly deliverables.⁶⁵
5. Strengthening of citizen communities at the ward level, rather than individual action. Perhaps the most important tenet of Janaagraha's approach is that citizens are not being encouraged and trained to engage one on one with elected officials and bureaucrats (which many residents were doing before), but to first work together with neighbors to identify common issues, and then to address the officials as a cohesive group.
6. Stress on “constructive engagement”: neither aggressive confrontation nor toothless collaboration. Residents and elected officials should meet on a more equal playing field and work together for the common good, not against each other or with a veil of mistrust.
7. Inclusiveness and universality, not divisiveness or targeting. Janaagraha founders believed that bringing different social class groups to the same table from the beginning, rather than segregated mobilization would lead toward a more cohesive and better outcome and reduce class friction in the future.

⁶⁵ Many full-time volunteers were paid a small stipend.

Because of their approach, they attracted individual and associations that followed a functionalist approach to community participation.⁶⁶ Janaagraha's dogged lack of ideology and focus on results attracted people who had given up on electoral politics, but alienated some of those who cared about larger social justice issues or questioned the pattern of Bangalore's development.

In Janaagraha's glossy brochures, they used cartoons to express the relationship between the common man (in traditional South Indian dress) and the local elected official.

In Image #1, the “Romantic Idea of Democracy” The common man sits in the throne while the official (wearing a crown) fans him reverently. In Image #2, the “Ground Reality of Democracy”, the elected official sleeps on the throne sleeping wearing a sign that reads “Do not disturb” while the common man reads from a page of grievances. Finally, in Image #3 (below) “Participatory Democracy”, the common man and elected official sit on basic chairs across a table from each other, both reading a list and talking eye to eye.

⁶⁶ Heather Fraser “Four different approaches to community participation” Community Development Journal (2005)



Source: www.janaagraha.org

Criticisms of Janaagraha.

- Apolitical and technical: Some Bangaloreans claim that it ignored issues of power and politics when those were highly relevant. While Janaagraha recognized that the urban poor had additional barriers to participation, during the first campaign they did not have a proactive strategy to reduce those barriers or include residents from slum area. They wanted to leave it up to communities, but ultimately Janaagraha criticized for the overwhelming middle-class participation. Beyond class, other criticisms have been launched that by promoting a ‘rational’ and non-confrontational approach at all times, they belittled other political strategies. This is a common critique of participatory development, that they take a technical approach to what should be political processes.⁶⁷
- Corporate Image and Approach: Janaagraha’s 1 Crore rupees (USD

⁶⁷ Hickey and Mohan (2004) p.4

\$205,212.00) marketing campaign that included billboards, newspaper advertisements made a major impression on observers, but many people, particularly existing NGOs were put off by the corporate-style branding of a so-called “social movement”. That feeling was intensified by the fact that Ramesh and Swati both came from the private sector and that Ramesh was a member of the Bangalore Agenda Task Force, a group of elite corporate citizens facilitating public/private partnerships and more efficient urban service delivery. The well publicized use of advanced technology, white-collar volunteers and rigid meeting structures were process-related manifestations of the image. This contributed to the theory that Janaagraha was merely a “Trojan horse” bringing a neo-liberal urban agenda.⁶⁸

- Language: While Janaagraha published all official materials in English and Kannada (the state language), Janaagraha-led meetings were mostly in English and neither of the founders spoke Kannada fluently at the beginning of the campaign. In addition, half of Bangaloreans speak another regional language instead of Kannada or English, and neither the Janaagraha newsletter nor forms were ever printed in the other three major South Indian languages.⁶⁹ Within neighborhoods and RWAs, various languages were spoken that fit with the local leadership, but the organization was quickly pegged as “English-speaking” and therefore elite-focused.

⁶⁸ Benjamin, Solomon The “Lifestyle Advertisement and the Marxist Manifesto as Trojan Horses in a City of Stealth” *Institute of Social Studies Trust, New Delhi (2005)*

⁶⁹ Seema Dargar ‘City Government, Budget Analysis and People’s Participation in India. The Experience of Bangalore’ White Paper Centre for Budget and Policy Studies June 2003

Ward Works.

Ward Works was the first campaign, named after the small part (six percent) of the municipal budget that covers roads, sidewalks, streetlights and drains at the ward-level in Bangalore. Each of the city's 100 wards receives a local development grant from the city government for spending on roads, sidewalks, side drains and streetlights. An average grant is 50 lakh rupees (\$109,500 USD), though it can be high or lower depending on the ward population and the level of development (older wards receive less funding). This grant has traditionally been spent at the sole discretion of the elected ward Corporator. Frequently, projects that some citizens perceived as essential were not completed year after year. The goals of this campaign were to educate citizens about local spending, and increase the voice of citizens in local decision-making.

For most residents who participated, improving the infrastructure of residential neighborhoods was the primary goal, not increased civic engagement for its own sake. Janaagraha chose to focus on roads, sidewalks and drains for a number of reasons. First, road infrastructure is tangible, has a definite timeframe and progress can be monitored easily. Second, these projects fit within the budget at the smallest administrative unit, the ward. For issues like health care centers or schools, stray dogs or garbage collection, the management occurs across wards (such as sub-city jurisdictions including "Health Wards"), creating a lack of clear accountability between service provision and a local elected official. Finally, roads had been a constant source of concern, particularly among the middle class, as Janaki Nair noted, a metaphor for development and modernity.

To launch the four-month campaign, Janaagraha founders and volunteers went around the city explaining the campaign to Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs),

telling them that each person needed to give 2 hours per week to walk along their neighborhood roads identifying problems and then create their own community list of projects to be completed by government engineers. Janaagraha then equipped interested individuals and RWAs with the tools to prioritize local projects and engage with the local elected official to see their priorities met. Tools for the process included: infrastructure surveying worksheets (Appendix A); survey training; government standard cost estimates of all infrastructure works and space to meet and discuss community needs, in addition to capacity building support.

Each ward and neighborhood defined its own process, with inputs from Janaagraha, but there were variations across the city with regard to the execution of the campaign.

Ward Works Process Timeline.

Ward Works Process Timeline	
Dec 2001	<p><i>Citizen Awareness, Enlistment, Survey Orientation and Training</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertising campaign and petition to inform Bangaloreans about Ward Works ▪ Founders and volunteers visited RWAs and other community groups to enlist participation ▪ Janaagraha developed and disseminated training video to explain process of conducting surveys and sent volunteers to help RWAs
Dec 2001 to Jan 2002	<p><i>Field Work (Surveying the Roads and Filling in Field Report Forms)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community leaders picked up empty Field Report Forms⁷⁰ to give to residents ▪ Community splits up the streets in the ward to survey ▪ Residents, usually in groups of two to three walk down each street filling in the form (i.e. counting potholes, measuring the length of unpaved sections) ▪ Resident return the form to the community leader

⁷⁰ A copy of the Field Report Form is attached to this paper as Appendix A. The Costed worksheet that Janaagraha created from the citizens' forms is attached to this paper as Appendix B.

Dates	Activities
Jan to Feb 2002	<p><i>Compilation Of Surveys, Delivering them to Janaagraha Office for Costing, Outputs Of Citizens' Ward Works Costs returned to communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community leader brings collected forms to Janaagraha office ▪ Janaagraha volunteers enter each citizen-identified problem into a database which helps determine the cost to remedy the problem per the government cost schedule ▪ List of all citizen problems with the estimated cost was returned within two weeks to community leaders
Mar 2002	<p><i>Ward Works Negotiations & Prioritization within wards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaign participants in each ward meet for at least one (but sometimes three or four) meetings to prioritize among the list of works for the first budget. Corporator frequently involved <p><i>BMP Budget With Citizen's Voice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Official government budget released

Campaign Outcome.



Source: www.janaagraha.org⁷¹

⁷¹ This image is used in Janaagraha's materials and displays the "Pyramid of Participation". At the base is 2.5 lakh or 250,000 people who signed a card or petition endorsing the idea of the campaign. There was active engagement in 32 out of Bangalore's hundred wards and 22 had success. Immediately after the campaign, fourteen wards began monthly review meetings with their Corporator, BCC Engineers and other officials to continue citizen engagement in local development

In Ward Works 2001, communities had varying levels of resident participation and success in seeing their plans developed and realized. Out of 100 wards in Bangalore, 66 wards had a few residents show some interest in the campaign and 32 of those wards had active participation of multiple groups of residents. Of these participating wards, 22 had between partial and total success in seeing the citizens' priorities signed by the Corporator as the list of works to be done in their communities. In total, Rs. 10.79 Crore (\$3.5 million USD) was spent on projects prioritized by citizens, twenty percent of the budget. 14 of these wards persisted and followed the campaign with Monthly Review meetings with various agencies and government officials to ensure the work was implemented to the citizens' satisfaction.

Having described the history of Bangalore and urban local government, the founding of Janaagraha and citywide launch of Ward Works, the next chapter will reveal the detailed process and outcome of the campaign in each of six wards.

3. CASE STUDIES

This chapter consists of Ward Works campaign case studies. Before the case studies, I have provided a brief introduction of the key questions that were asked and the research methods used.

Key questions.

Ward/Neighborhood Type: What was the condition of the ward? What type of neighborhoods made up the ward? Wards in Bangalore typically contain between 5 and 15 distinct neighborhoods. Their relative level of development is a function of multiple factors including: “age” of ward (year of inclusion into BCC), ratio of planned to unplanned areas, presence of major commercial property. Almost all wards, including the ones in this study, have varied levels of development within the ward and have residents from every socioeconomic class. The newer wards typically include well-planned layouts housing middle-class homeowners, several slums housing 50 to 300 families.

Community Organizing History: How does the community’s history play a role in the level of resident mobilization, interest in and competency to complete the campaign? What activities have residents engaged in so far?

Participation and Leadership: Who participated (gender, class, age, occupation and education) and who led the effort?⁷² This often points to the agenda and priorities of

⁷² While questions about caste, ethnicity and religion were not primary to the research, I may include comments from residents who raised the issue persistently. These are three very important components of Indian social, political and civic life, but considering the other variables addressed within participation

participants. Since older, middle-class homeowners traditionally populate RWAs, there is particular attention to whether they included lower-income people from informal settlements.

Corporator Relationship: What is the nature of the relationship between the participants and the Corporator? The Corporator has discretion over how to spend the funds allocated for Ward Works every year, approximately 50 lakh rupees (\$103,000 USD), the only discretionary funding available to local elected officials. This campaign was the first time that residents had formally requested control over this spending. No community could “succeed” in the campaign without agreement from the Corporator.

Even within this diversity, wards do have defining characteristics. To provide valuable analysis of citizen participation across the city of Bangalore, I carefully chose wards for the case study analysis. I identified these four wards for the following reasons:

- Most successful: Wards 7, 54, 68 and 100 completed all steps of the Ward Works process and had a significant amount of their citizen-prioritized works certified by the Corporator and included in the actual Bangalore Program of Works.
- Representative participation and leadership: These four wards were representative of the demographic of the campaign participants and leadership across all the successful wards.

(geographic, language, gender and socioeconomic class) this paper does not have the scope to comment insightfully on those criteria.

- Geographic representation: Of the 22 successful wards, most are concentrated in the south, east and northern areas of the city, typically planned layouts and revenue pockets several kilometers from the central business district of Bangalore.
- Relationship to Janaagraha: Not all of the residents who participated in the Ward Works campaign continue to be involved with Janaagraha activities. Solely consulting wards that continue to work with Janaagraha might have resulted in a skewed perspective, so the selected wards are varied in their continued involvement with the organization.

Looking at the characteristics of failed wards can sharpen the observations and analysis of activity in successful ones. Because of Janaagraha's tight record-keeping and continued relationships with many communities that were successful, it was easier to choose a representative sample among the successful wards than the failed wards. Among failed wards with no participation, it was very difficult to find people who remembered the campaign. Where Resident Welfare Associations are weak, it is difficult to contact current or past leadership. The two failed wards were chosen to represent:

- A ward that fit among the 66 wards that “participated” but not the 32 “active participation” wards, meaning that at least one person wanted to do the campaign but could not mobilize further support, and
- Another ward that fit within the 32 “active participation” but not the 22 “successful wards”, meaning that multiple people were involved, they completed every step of the campaign, but had no funds allocated to their

priorities.

Data Collection.

I use a case study analysis because it provides an opportunity to closely investigate the behavior of participating residents and the factors that led to success in the appropriate, local context.

Formal interviews were conducted between May and August 2006. I interviewed most stakeholders for one to two hours. I had multiple meetings with the community leaders and observed RWA or ward-level meetings. Within the target wards, I chose the first interview subjects because they had been recognized leaders of the campaign. I subsequently aimed to identify other residents, with varying levels of participation. The primary methods for identification were: (1) from list of residents in Janaagraha's database of over ten thousand people, (2) suggestions by Janaagraha staff, (3) suggestions by another participant, and (4) solicitation at a public meeting. I actively sought to speak to a broader range of people than suggested only by the community leader. I also interviewed the Corporator in all the successful wards. The majority of interviews were conducted in English, but a few interviews were conducted in Kannada, Tamil or Telugu with the assistance of a translator.

In addition to Ward Works stakeholders, I interviewed several observers including: (1) Bangalore-based civic and urban development NGO staff from Citizens Voluntary Initiative for the City (CIVIC) and Environment Support Group, (2) Journalists focused on city and state politics from three daily newspapers in Bangalore and, (3) Bangalore-based academics and historians. All of these stakeholders have observed the

broader implications of citizen participation in Bangalore, both for development and civic culture. These interviews were supplemented by analysis of local government records and media accounts of infrastructure spending and citizen participation.

Considering that wards have tens of thousands of residents, there are undoubtedly perspective that have not been captured in this research. To answer the key research questions I gathered information rich with local context at the expense of the broad impressions of a larger sample of residents.

3.1. Ward 7.

History of Ward and Prior Community Action.

Ward 7 is made up primarily of two large neighborhoods: Malleshwaram, an upper-middle class residential neighborhood and Yeshwantpur, a local transit hub with commercial development and a large slum. Malleshwaram was one of the first planned residential communities around Bangalore, known now as a “heritage” locality. The predominantly affluent and Brahmin neighborhood was the site of beautiful, large bungalows and temples. Two community leaders described their long-time neighborhood as having many assets, such as “huge sites, good roads, friendly and helpful people”. But the neighborhood is going through dramatic changes as developers are converting many of the large, single-family bungalows into three to four story apartment buildings. Despite having had better infrastructure than other parts of the city for decades, the old roads, sidewalks and sewers are being stressed by a growing local population. The community leaders, both life-long residents of Malleshwaram, describe more than just a strain on infrastructure, but also a change in atmosphere because of growth of apartment buildings. They feel that this has led to a “cultural change” particularly with people moving in from

northern India.

Yeshwantpur includes several informal settlements, temples and shops, in addition to the informal residential settlements. The long-time resident-activist in the community, notes that the drainage system, water and electricity supply were absent several years ago, but after community organizing and constant pressure on the local elected officials and Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, the leader estimates that 75% of basic amenities are now available, despite the sub-standard housing conditions and a lack of paved internal roads.

Describing the challenges he faces in governing Ward 7 over the last five years, the Corporator B. Muniraju claims that the funds allocated for repair and tarring of roads, footpaths, drains were insufficient. As the Chairman of the Finance and Tax Committee he increased the budget to be allocated for the next term.

The differential development of the ward is a key feature, as “there are certain localities which have greater needs than others” (such as the slums of Yeshwantpur) due to historical infrastructure deficiencies. The budgets for the extra needs were allocated from the Member of Parliament (MP) grants for their constituency.

Involvement with Janaagraha.

In October 2001, Janaagraha founder Ramesh Ramanathan and Chief Minister S.M. Krishna spoke at the inaugural at the large Palace Grounds about the need for RWAs to become more engaged in local governance. Four attributes of Janaagraha impressed the Malleshwaram Swabhimana Initiative (MSI) leadership. The residents were first impressed that this new initiative had authority approval, which in their mind

conferred it greater weight than other ideas. Second, they highlighted the support from the State rather than municipal government. These points suggest that the residents are not completely anti-political, but are dismissive of local politics. In particular, they felt that because of the Chief Minister's approval the initiative "had to happen, whether local government was willing or unwilling". This perspective fits with the impression of some Bangalore activists that the middle-class and elite connect more to the state, which is has increasing control over local development.⁷³ The effects of this include reduced local government control over major development projects.

Third, they were attracted to Janaagraha's "scientific" and "rational" approach to improving governance, more about precision than about passions. Finally, community leaders noted that Janaagraha's massive advertising campaign got people excited in a way they never could have on their own. MSI was one of the more active RWAs in the city in 2001, so Janaagraha did not pull them out of dormancy but provided new tools for their ongoing work and helped draw in new participants. They also worked with CIVIC, Swabhimana and are open to any new, non-partisan initiatives that further their goals.

Leadership/Participants.

While the initial vision of Ward Works was for multiple RWAs across the ward to work together, one active Association, the Malleshwaram Swabhimana Initiative dominated the project in Ward 7. MSI is a membership-based association (lifetime membership of Rs. 500/\$10.00 USD) with monthly general meetings.

⁷³ Saldahna, Nair interviews

The membership is balanced between men and women, but mostly older homeowners.

“Only such people [homeowners] have the belonging feeling. Unless you feel that you belong to an area, you don’t want to improve. But some professional people are working on precise projects. For them attending meeting is waste of time.”

The group of community leaders had two things in common, first, they are all “old residents of Malleshwaram” and second, they share a prior history of community success through door-to-door garbage collection in the 1990s. The leaders can easily be described as joiners. They have belonged to other social and civic organizations since their youth and have connected with people from the “middle-class to the well heeled”. The leaders, and many other active participants come from privileged backgrounds and claim to have been exposed to civic involvement before Janaagraha and Swabhimana got started. Their parents and grandparents erected temples, schools and hospitals. They say, “almost all people here have had some sort of affluence right from the beginning. Have given money to people who are underprivileged. Education level and exposure makes us different from other residents’ groups.” They tend to view working for/with people of lower socioeconomic background through the lens of charity rather than for collective gain.

Many of the same women worked together in 1997 to formalize garbage collection by organizing door-to-door collection and separation for composting. After the initial success with garbage (a scheme that the local government discouraged after 2000), they began thinking about local issues more broadly and started a local candidate forum during elections in 1998, the first of its kind to be televised in Bangalore. Swabhimana

was founded soon after, and they decided to found a Malleshwaram chapter and use that as the active residents' vehicle in the area. Swabhiman soon worked to reduce water connection charges for apartment building residents, a process that brought them into frequent contact with the Commissioner.

The community leaders, both homemakers, claim to walk everywhere (to run errands, meet friends within Malleshwaram) and therefore are aware of every change. "We are in constant touch" and always call each other if they notice anything different. Their participation in ward development seems to be a part of their lifestyle rather than just a project.

"As a community we are very strong, we have carried things forward because we have personally identified with Malleshwaram and personal preference are of little consequence to us, the common goal is Malleshwaram."

"All of us come from backgrounds of people who have done work for Bangalore"

Approximately twenty to twenty-five residents were regularly involved in Ward Works, only three of whom were men. All were over age of 45, long-term residents of Malleshwaram and homemakers from an affluent background. Typically they were involved in other civic activities as well.

Two MSI leaders are dismissive of the other RWA in Malleshwaram, claiming that the mostly male group "refused to collaborate". Bucking the historical trend of women's exclusion from public and political activity in India they believe that women are more naturally inclined to do neighborhood planning work because they stay in the home and community throughout the day and are more attuned to creating a better

future.⁷⁴

"We had a lot of comments about the fact that we are a women's group (though men are involved). It happened because we were the ones sitting here at home. We didn't want to put up with the garbage dump. It got to the point where enough was enough. We had time on our hands. Women in any culture tend to get more involved in issues than the men do. Women want to better themselves and want a better life for their children. That's how the whole process starts."

The RWA leadership perceives they are more politically savvy than slum dwellers, and claim that "they [slum dwellers] take everything as whatever stated, where as we question them a lot". This perception, typical for middle-class residents who perceive that vote-bank politics are the extent of political involvement of slum dwellers, is not true in the case of Yeshwantpur. Over the last twenty years, the area has progressed from no basic amenities to today having electricity and water service, some toilets and drainage. According to the community leader there, they had a systematic approach with local agencies that has shown results.

We prioritized the community agenda in the meeting, and decided that the drains are first priority, from basic needs like drain, water, electricity. For years, meetings were held in the evening and decisions were taken as to who is going to which office the next morning. As they needed funds to travel by bus and other expenses, each household contributed around Rs. 2. Funds were released from the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, and we also got an electricity connection and toilets. {Getting the drains} was a difficult task.... I was standing all the time with the workers there and getting them to work giving them directions.

Not only had residents in Yeshwantpur already participated in a similar, though less structured process to improve their area, but they had succeeded against the odds of their concentrated economic disadvantage and perilous citizenship status as unauthorized

⁷⁴ Ranjita Mohanty Citizen Participation in Development: Issues of Identity, Inclusion and Voice Chapter 3 Participatory Citizenship: Identity, Exclusion, Inclusion (2006) Ed. Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh

settlement dwellers. While they were not strongly connected to the MSI members, the weak ties between two groups, each with some collective efficacy may have strengthened their power vis-à-vis the local government.

Corporator.

B. Muniraju is from Yeshwantpur and was elected for the first time in 2000 in a reserved seat for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) candidates. He was born in the ward and involved with politics since his youth, though he was an electrical contract worker by profession. Looking back at his five-year term, he boasts of achievements including constructing a new Corporation school and a park, fixing broken streetlights, placing toilets in a slum and increasing job training for poor women. Like many local elected officials, he actively attends local school events, and language and caste-based festivals like Kannada Rajothsava, Kempe Gowda Day and Vyshya Community Organisation.

The active ward leaders describe feeling disappointed when the new Corporator was elected because he was an “uneducated fellow” from a “backward community” who could not read English. They perceive it as a significant drawback that Ward 7 was a “reserved” ward in the last two elections. “In 1995 it was reserved for women, in 2000 it was SC/ST. We hope that the next one is general because we want someone who can read the budget document and understands the 74th amendment.” One community leader accuses him and the Congress Party of election tampering.

Despite their negative feelings, a group of them went to his house days after he was elected and presented him with a bouquet of flowers as congratulations. The RWA

President spent time in his first few weeks of office walking with him through the ward and inviting him for events. “Since he knew he had little awareness he was more willing to work with us. When he became Corporator he didn’t know anyone other than me to give instruction,” she says now. Reserved candidates are often outside of the political mainstream enabling the RWA to guide him initially the way a party has done for traditional candidates.

The community leaders claim that Corporator felt threatened by the entire process, but still participated more than those from other wards. “And our Corporators really didn’t like it, because it came down to the point of why have a Corporator?” He was the only Corporator to attend the first two Janaagraha meetings.

Ward Works Process.

During the Ward Works campaign, the Malleshwaram neighborhood of Ward 7 was fully surveyed according to the community leaders. They claim, with some frustration, to have “called those people” in Yeshwantpur, who subsequently attended meetings only sporadically. The leader of that group (a female shop owner) felt that because Malleshwaram Swabhimaana Initiative spoke English throughout their meetings, while the slum residents spoke Kannada and other local languages, that they could not fully engage in conversation. The MSI leaders told her that unless they came, their ideas and concerns would not be represented, echoing the core idea of Janaagraha that all residents should come and speak for their own neighborhood. However, this is also a manifestation of the theory that in environments of unequal power relations, creating public spaces for participation, without addressing other forms of power, or attempting to

equalize them, does not promote democratic change.⁷⁵ They suggested she start her own Swabhiman chapter, but she chose not to. This leader in the slum community agreed that the MSI members were open to slum concerns and received the survey that was given, but said that she did not participate in prioritization.

During the prioritization stage, a group of approximately fifteen people deliberated at various sessions over three weeks and discussed all the issues and came to consensus about which works to prioritize. They held multiple meetings on different days and times addressing the same issues to ensure a good outcome.

Despite the discussion of several multi-session participatory prioritization meetings described by multiple members, the former RWA Secretary described a less participatory conclusion to the process. At the key meeting for residents to present their vision, the Corporator was over one hour late. All residents except the two association officers left the venue, so when the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Corporator and other officials arrived, the officers alone expressed the citizen's wishes and told the members subsequently. The former Secretary claims that this was the most important moment in the campaign, and while effective, does not fit the participatory ideal of the campaign.

The Corporator describes the relationship between he and the residents as cordial and "participatory", which he defines as looking into their complaints, regardless of the wealth of the complainant. He claims that after announcing a new development agenda he is open to suggestions at any time. The Corporator was clear in stating that, "they

⁷⁵ Gaventa (2006)

[residents] do not participate in the budget making or prioritizing as to which project or area of work must be taken up immediately, it is all done by the administrative authorities.” With these comments, he disregards some of the work that the MSI residents’ group claims to participate in, and suggests that the only legitimate participation is through him. The local BCC Executive Engineer stated that the experience of residents, many of them highly educated, is useful for developing a plan of action and therefore they entertain their suggestions. But the engineer also described citizens “very non-interfering” in the course of work.

Outcome.

Ward 7’s Prioritized Citizen Works List was unique in that only one organization was listed as the sponsor for each of the 238 projects identified. In addition, the prioritization was completed incorrectly, and over one hundred works were ranked number one, though at current allocation rates it would take twenty years to complete all of those works.

The participants saw only fair improvements in road quality in the first two years, despite having their list accepted into the Program of Works (POW). They attribute this discrepancy to a lack of people monitoring the quality of roads being done. They claim this was in part due to fear, since “the strata of people who put tar of the roads are capable of manhandling you and beating you brutally to death”, the sentiment testifies to the perceived social divide between the RWA participants and low-wage construction workers. Another barrier to monitoring is that the contractors control implementation schedules and quality, and residents claim they make a lots of money by providing poor quality on roads and through bidding process corruption. They also claim that the

Corporator was not necessarily committed to implementing what he signed in the POW, because as a reserved candidate who will likely only have one term, that he needs to get the spoils of office more quickly. Slum residents also did not notice a physical improvement in their area after the campaign.

The RWA members did, however, notice an improvement in local government responsiveness, which paid off recently. In 2005, when BCC engineers had an extra 25 lakh rupees (\$51,000 USD) for this area, they called Swabhiman and asked what projects to fund. The RWA leaders took a day to look back at the Ward Works list, make some updates and sent it back to them asking them to complete the initial priorities. “We haven’t made an overhaul of the system, we have just make some inroads,” they say optimistically.

To the question of which mattered most, getting good roads or good governance, the participants believe there was a balance. “Both, equal, in the sense if there is good governance, good roads and infrastructure can follow,” one RWA leader noted. They felt that they were always making progress on improving governance, though slowly, but that there is cause for optimism and hope for the future. Each month was a significant step. They have succeeded at many of the challenges that Janaagraha set for communities: increased awareness of government functioning, instead of individual complaints they changed to working as a collective of residents, and an enhanced their feeling of ownership over the ward.

The Corporator’s assessment of the outcome was that Janaagraha was a good organization initially with which he cooperated, but the relationship soured when he

claims they went too far in their role. He claims that Janaagraha was given a contract of data entry, which they treated as a contract to draft the budget, which led to the withdrawal of Corporators working with them.

3.2. Ward 54.

History of Ward and Prior Community Action.

Ward 54 is one of the largest in the city, with almost twice the average ward population at over 82,000. Most of middle-class layouts that make up much of Ward 54 are recent developments; several Resident Welfare Associations members began building their houses, in what was an unserviced, peri-urban environment in the late 1990's. Banashankari 3rd Stage is a planned layout that has seen rapid development, while unplanned areas with only mud roads and no drains continued to lag behind. Residents estimate that 50% of roads were paved at the time when the campaign started.

The neighborhoods grew in popularity after the peripheral Ring Road that traversed the community was finished in 2001. It is a highly residential ward, but a new retail zone along the Katriguppe Main Road is becoming a hub for shopping in southeast Bangalore. Girinagar is an older neighborhood that predates the Ring Road, a dense middle-class neighborhood with well-maintained parks. Nine mid-sized slums, with a combined population of about 8,000 people are spread throughout the large ward, and face problems including broken sewerage lines, lack of garbage collection and insufficient toilets, health clinics and schools.

The primary community leader, a small and soft-spoken retiree from Girinagar, claims a 22-year history of community organizing and advocacy. Mostly notably, he

helped lead an agitation for piped drinking water for his neighborhood, a struggle that finally found success in the High Court in 1992. More recently, a group of residents independently organized a two-day tax fair to create awareness about paying property taxes.⁷⁶ The residents of Girinagar did not partner with local government, but officials were aware of his activities and the leader was a frequent visitor to government offices. His activities frequently confronted government, but in a manner that engaged him with it rather than alienating him from it. Other RWAs (twenty-five in all) bloomed with each new layout and had been working independently before Ward Works, and for the first time they agreed to work commonly on a single campaign.

Involvement with Janaagraha.

Like in many wards, most of the residents first heard about Janaagraha through advertisements. The community leader, ever connected to civic activities in Bangalore, called many RWA leaders around the ward to come to a Ward Works training session soon after the launch.

One resident, the homemaker mentioned above, claims that Janaagraha quickly changed the way she approached her community. Like her, many residents of Ward 54 were inspired by the larger ideal of citizen participation.

Instead of sitting at home grumbling about things and having no impact, the way is to work with the ward and the Corporator to have more impact. This idea impressed me and that is why I got involved. The whole idea of citizen participation was impressive. Previously used to get involved in our own little way, individual RWAs working and fighting for same thing didn't get much result. But when all come together and fight for mutual cause the officials see that [citizens] are not just fighting for their own street, but fighting for something away from them, and they

⁷⁶ Bangalore has very low property tax collection rates. In 2000, property tax collection processes had recently changed to require citizen self-assessment.

start to believe in them.

The leadership, who had more experience with civic activity, was attracted to the sophistication of Ramesh and Swati's approach. They found it different from other city organizations and liked the neat and "beautifully organized" way that information was presented.

Participation and Leadership.

The participants in the campaign came primarily from the existing twenty-five Resident Welfare Associations. Most were older, middle-class men, including many retired public sector or civil service employees. Most of the participants were native Kannada speakers and all meetings were held in Kannada. The majority of active residents were homeowners who had lived in Bangalore for most of their lives.

A third of active participants were women, all of whom came through ladies associations affiliated with RWAs. One woman, a homemaker who has increasingly taken a leadership role, claims that women in this part of the city are more "orthodox and religious" than women in Malleshwaram and other parts of Bangalore, which might explain their reduced participation. Other neighborhood women claim that one person from each household is sufficient for participation, and that is typically the man.

Women who lived in three of the slum areas also participated in some of the early meetings. According to the community leader, they were hesitant at first and needed to see that the campaign had no "political or economic agenda", but joined once some trust was established. They were less concerned about roads, but instead focused on water supply and neighborhood safety, and the community leader helped them talk to

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board officials to solve the water shortage. However, their participation ended abruptly, as it was reported to various participants that political officials threatened the women.

The community leaders boasted wide representation from all geographically areas, but appreciated the functional value rather than as a signal of greater democratic legitimacy. Having active members across the ward enabled them to survey and later monitor works in all corners of the ward, which they perceived as critical to their success.

While several active residents reported spending several hours a week on the campaign, including coordinating efforts, one leader stood apart from the rest. The experienced community leader from Girinagar reported spending four to five hours a day, seven days a week on community activities. He frequently made the one to two hour trips to the Janaagraha office by moped or public bus. Known among Janaagraha volunteers as one of the most dedicated community activists in the entire city, he has been involved with several other city improvement organizations including Public Affairs Centre, CIVIC, Swabhimana and Voices, which helped him meet more people. Other residents claim that his reputation of selflessness, expressed by a willingness to push for projects in neighborhoods and blocks far from his own, has earned him a great deal of trust and made him ideal for the multi-stakeholder coordination needed for Ward Works. This leader describes his work and outlook:

We [Girinagar RWA] don't ask anything for ourselves. We look wherever there is a problem. We genuinely support other area representatives. We have helped other areas with water supply issues. That spirit, that genuineness was found by the officials. We never confront. We never take up a fight. We make it one of agenda points that no one is supposed to accuse others, that is part of our success. When

you step up for a cause, citizen participation, we shouldn't be quarreling amongst ourselves.

He is proud of the fact that all communities cooperated and did their own surveys, and he helped out wherever participation was weaker. He was the leader of what he calls an “excellent team” which included at least four other very active people from other neighborhoods who helped with strategy and outreach. Many of them had backgrounds in social and charitable activities, or were retired engineers or civil servants.

Despite the leader’s attitude, other residents report that some participants were still quite selfish, only participating when they saw a benefit for their road.

Corporator.

D. Venketeshamurthy was the Corporator in Ward 54 during the Ward Works campaign. He was starting his second term for Ward 54, and had previously represented adjoining Ward 55. According to the community leader, he is an effective and cooperative official who came to any meeting he was called for, including early meetings with Janaagraha volunteers.

The Corporator’s account of his own accessibility to residents is verified by his constituents. According to all parties, he is open to discussion and gives a fair hearing to everybody, though takes his own decision. Some of the Ward Works participants were hesitant about interacting with him at first, feeling like “there is a screen when you talk to politicians”, because they are “not open”. But during the campaign, several residents’ perspective changed. The same resident who felt deceived by politics in the past noted that this campaign “forced” him to interact with the Corporator and now he thinks the Corporator is a pretty good guy who will help everybody when he can.

In learning more about the process behind infrastructure financing and implementation, the residents became increasingly sensitive to the Corporator's constraints and opportunities, and felt that the campaign could genuinely help the elected officials and not simply be a countervailing force against his wishes.

Ward Works meant that the Corporators could not concentrate only on areas that he liked, had to give attention to others who were represented. No one was pressing sufficiently to make him look at all areas. The collective bargaining gave him opportunity to look at everything. If I just sit in my house, he cannot visit every house. Makes it easier when many are organized. If you sit together and the facts are all out can make a better decision.

Some are still disappointed with his capacity or interest in implementing projects, and claim that stage is "where politics comes into it". One active resident from Chanamakere, a middle-class layout, describes the frustrations of dealing with politics.

Planning cannot work according to what you want. It has to be guided by everybody, which a normal educated man does not relish. An uneducated man will do it, but he doesn't know the final objective. So it is tricky situation, we cannot simply depend on educated or rule out uneducated.

Ward Works Process.

The residents of Ward 54 launched the campaign with a traditional Indian community mobilization activity, a Ward Yatra (political march) and the crowd of about 300 residents walked through the unpaved and damaged streets of the community. The active participants were educated about the process of local government spending and trained to do surveys, which they subsequently shared with others. There was a functional pyramid hierarchy, from the Ward leader, to RWA leaders, down to active members, and the Janaagraha methodology was followed closely. Each neighborhood did its' own surveying of roads and filling out field report forms. The community leaders visited all the neighborhoods during the surveying to provide assistance and also get a sense of the

ward's needs.

During the prioritization phase, five to ten people from each area came to deliberate, for a total of about a hundred participants. While participants in every phase of the campaign are self-selected in each ward, here the leaders noted that they "took important people from every local corner" to help prioritize. These "important people" may or may not have been representative of the RWA or community at large, but it is a distinction from other wards. The Corporator also participated in some of the prioritization sessions, so when he was asked to sign the final list it was not a surprise, but works that he had also agreed upon. The participants focused on prioritizing the works that were needed, not the amount that it would cost. They were prepared that it would take more than one budget cycle to meet all of their needs.

Outcome.

Active participants in the Ward Works campaign say that it was an unequivocal success, both as a step toward improved governance and in contributing toward improved local infrastructure. Within the next two years after the campaign, they claim that nearly all of the roads were tarred, in addition to streetlight repairs and other improvements that were requested. While the campaign was focused on roads, the tone of engagement and empowerment of citizens to be vocal about infrastructure concerns spread to other areas as well, and the community leader continue to work successfully to expand local water supply.

Multiple residents feel that the number of participants and the information they learned through Ward Works helped them to monitor effectively, the nexus of the road

projects and governance.

The greatest thing that has happened is that all over the ward we have representatives and we can monitor things. The supervision part of this is important. If something is not included we can figure out what to do and monitor each step. Probably we are acting as watchdogs, which is keeping him alert. Whatever files we require they give us, there is no hide and seek, there is transparency.

With regard to governance, residents echoed the comments made in other wards that being with Janaagraha provided them with some clout and intimidated officials. “If you say you are from Janaagraha they [officials] will listen, they know you will be persistent,” noted one older active resident. One female resident who became active at the end of the campaign believes that their ward has entered a positive “cycle” of interaction, in which both residents and officials become “serious” about projects, a cycle that is fed by government transparency and citizen awareness.

According to the community leader, “the biggest way to measure our success is that our numbers didn’t dwindle, they continued to increase during and after the campaign.” This is one indicator in which Ward 54 far surpasses other successful wards. This campaign was an important catalyst for increased involvement from RWA members in Janaagraha’s future campaigns and in local ward development through the creation of the Abhaya Federation of all RWAs in the ward. Because of the increasing numbers of participants at the end of the campaign, residents here successfully monitored contractors’ work and were highly satisfied with implementation.

3.3. Ward 68.

History of Ward and Prior Community Action.

To travel through Ward 68 is to see the extremes of Bangalore development. The ward is comprised of several neighborhoods in southeastern Bangalore including Koramangala, Ejipura and Ashwini Layout. Formed in 1960s by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) to meet increased housing needs in the city, it is now has established residential layouts as well as luxury commercial activity and IT businesses. This part of the city is adjacent to the Electronics City campus and has seen rapid growth in the last fifteen years. It is a “New” ward, incorporated into the Bangalore City Corporation in 1995.

Koramangala is among the wealthy and well-developed neighborhoods in the city, and is a growing destination for high-end shopping and dining. While currently strained by IT businesses opening on residential streets, it is well planned with sufficient infrastructure.

Ejipura, like many Bangalore neighborhoods, began as an unplanned ‘revenue pocket’ and the city is slowly improving the infrastructure after charging residents a ‘betterment tax’ in 1995. State government developed large housing blocks in the Ejipura neighborhood, yet the area still lacks proper roads and drains. Residents of Ejipura claim that infrastructure projects that exist on paper often don’t materialize on the ground. Priorities for development included road pavement, drains and streetlights for entire area.

Ashwini Layout is better planned, but still lacks fully paved roads. The residents of this area are middle and upper-middle class, and used their private resources in the late

1990s to construct a few of their own roads since the city was unresponsive to their continued demands. All households contributed based on their plot size (average 4000 rupees, \$82 USD) and paid a contractor to pave the road. Frustrating to residents, the Bangalore City repaved the entire road a few months later without consulting them.

Ward 68 has seven slums with a total population of more than 9,000 residents, nearly 25% of the ward's population. Because the slums have yet to be officially "declared" by the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, they have very limited infrastructure: only one has water supply and a school, none have community toilets or health centers.

Interestingly, the ward's developmental variance did not pose a barrier with regard to resident mobilization for Ward Works. This ward had broad participation from across its varied neighborhoods, despite the fact that they had never worked together.

Ward 68's residents had been driven to coordinated community action before Ward Works. In the mid-nineties, the state developed the National Games Village, a large housing complex in Ward 68. Building this super-structure required filling a lake and elevating the blocks around it, which quickly led some nearby areas like Ejipura to experience frequent and severe flooding. After months and years of requesting improved drainage from the BCC the residents became increasingly agitated. They frequently met in neighbors' houses to discuss the health and transportation problems caused by the flooding and strategized how they would demand better services. Because the issue was urgent and created hardship, men and women from all classes and ages were involved and the outlook and strategies toward government became increasingly confrontational.

The Ejipura New Extension RWA was founded in response to the flooding crisis, and its former leader contrasts the community organizing during that period and Ward Works:

[During the] hardship faced by flooding, we didn't have to go to residents. Everyone was saying, 'what can we do?' We just needed to organize. You cannot organize lots of people for beautifying a footpath as we could for water issues. With Janaagraha it got reduced to compelling people to participate, often during working days. Unless they were deeply committed they could not participate.

Agitation by the residents, such as blocking major roads during rush hour and bringing 150 people to the engineer's office finally resulted in the government erecting a wall to stop the flooding.

Involvement with Janaagraha.

A part-time Janaagraha volunteer (and an IT professional) presented the campaign to a group of Ejipura residents one evening. He questioned the community leaders about their confrontational approach toward authorities and suggested that they could be more effective if they were armed with more information about city infrastructure and using a more collaborative approach. Some in Ejipura did not find what he presented as useful for their needs; the flooding and need for drinking water were "life and death" issues for them, and roads were not a top priority. Moreover, they had fought the government for so long that they resisted the idea of collaboration. However, one leader did say he appreciated Janaagraha's "large picture" approach. Some residents from Ashwini Layout had been invited to Janaagraha's inaugural event, and were attracted to the ideas of greater transparency and that citizen prioritization. Many had felt disempowered, believing that only people with personal connections to engineers or elected officials could get work done. Despite having had some success at obtaining needed infrastructure,

both groups of residents had hoped for an easier and more effective form of interaction with local government.

Participation and Leadership.

Resident involvement in surveying was fairly broad, however, a few individuals coordinated the majority of the Ward Works activity. Most neighborhoods had a few people who were interested and involved in the road surveying work, and at the outset about fifty to sixty people were involved across ten RWAs. However, one community leader claims that after a few weeks of work, participation was reduced to five to ten people doing all the roads in this ward and that some outside volunteers had to help. Each active RWA had one or two leaders that joined that ward-wide core committee which led the campaign. Core committee members were typically professional men, middle-aged and above, including two civil engineers who helped educate others about infrastructure.

Two residents from different neighborhoods led the entire campaign. Both community leaders worked full-time outside the home throughout the campaign, atypical for most ward leadership during the campaign. The first community leader was born in Bangalore, but had built his house in Ejipura only six years before the campaign began. At the time of the campaign he worked as an undersecretary to Karnataka state government. He helped lead his neighbors to demand improved drains to reduce flooding. The second leader was a marketing professional in the public-sector industry, who lived in Ashwini Layout. He had spent the previous few years trying to engage government as an individual through letters, but found that ineffective.

The Ejipura-based community leader noted the difference between people who participated in the anti-flooding protesting and those in the Ward Works campaign. During the protests, when people's lives were constantly disrupted by rising water in their streets, everyone was involved: young and old, men and women from the various socioeconomic classes in the neighborhood. Ward Works, he said, appealed to "middle-and upper-middle class, older, well-educated and information-savvy people". He felt that many residents could not relate to the highly structured Janaagraha approach, and that they found it irrelevant. Ejipura residents also expressed the sentiment that city engineers are paid to identify the road problems, and that they didn't feel it was their responsibility. Slum dwellers did not participate directly, but the roads in one slum were surveyed and one staff member of a local NGO (Association for Promoting Social Action) participated in meetings "on behalf" of the slums, though it is unclear what mechanism, if any, was in place for him to inform or hear from the slum residents during the campaign.

Corporator.

The relationship between the Resident Welfare Associations and the Corporator began during the local election in the year 2000. This ward was designated as 'reserved' for SC/ST, and in this case local Janata Dal party political leaders chose an allegedly illiterate construction worker to run. According to residents, when a reserved seat is announced a "dummy" is put up for local landlords and political leaders to manipulate. The main opposition candidate was a known criminal strongly opposed by many RWA members. Seeing the construction worker candidate as the better of two bad options, they brought him to a meeting to talk about their concerns about local roads: "We said we would work with him if he would agree to help, and then he won by three votes. This was

one thing that gave us success and played in our favor.” After winning the very close election, knowing he had the votes of RWA participants, the new Corporator was very cooperative with them. The community leaders introduced him around the ward, helped him communicate more effectively and in return developed a positive relationship.

A community leader contrasted governance in his ward with the adjacent ward. “Where the Corporator is weak, someone can take over. In Ward 67, where the Corporator is strong, he will not even entertain work done by an association.” He further defined “strong” as a “strong thug” who is not democratically popular but has coercive control over a sufficient number of voters. This provides one theory for why Ward 67, which had many active participants across class and neighborhood boundaries, was ultimately unsuccessful in the Ward Works campaign. Despite community mobilization, the Corporator didn’t entertain their participation or their plan.

Ward Works Process.

The many RWAs in Ward 68 had never worked together before the campaign, but they quickly convened, divided the ward for surveying and formed a core committee to work with one to two members from each RWA. Community leaders spent much more than the “only 2 hours per week” promised by Janaagraha to improve their wards through citizen participation. The two most active people estimate that they spent 12-14 hours per week during the campaign. The core committee visited the entire ward before holding the prioritization meeting. The residents claim that they never had any official meeting with Corporator, but because of their favorable relationship, their leaders spoke frequently with him, “we kept him engaged, but [it was] not negotiation.”

The residents had identified a total of 7.8 Crore rupees (\$1.6 million USD) worth of works across the entire ward, and the Corporator agreed to give them 18.5 Lakh rupees (\$38,000 USD) while planning to spent the remaining 26.5 lakh rupees (\$54,000 USD) at his discretion (mostly spent in slums). They lobbied the Corporator for control of 70% of Ward Works funding for their priorities, but claim that the political party stepped in to reduce the amount. In this case, the Corporator agreed to give them a certain amount of money, regardless of the items they prioritized (as distinct from presenting the priorities to the Corporator and asking him to approve or choose from the best works, regardless of the cost).

The core committee found it difficult to prioritize, and finally chose works in the least developed, but planned areas (not slums). As a result, the residents from wealthy areas of Koramangala allegedly walked out during prioritization, frustrated that they would not get funds to upgrade their footpaths. Similarly frustrated, the NGO coordinator that represented slum residents was unhappy that funds were promised to the RWAs and felt that more money was needed for essential infrastructure in slum areas. Interestingly, this was the only ward where an association of slum dwellers (from Indira Gandhi slum) had their projects listed on the official citizens' list of works.

Outcome.

Ward 68's Prioritized Citizen's Work List is notable even among successful wards at fulfilling the stated campaign goals. First, it represents almost all formal neighborhoods and twelve Resident Welfare Associations. Second, it is the only one that officially lists works in a slum (rather than assuming that the Corporator will handle it with additional funds). Finally, they had a technically good list that ranked 210 road and

drain projects in a systematic fashion.

“Ward works was a success in our ward,” one community leader said definitively. “Janaagraha helped us to more precisely work, rather than conflict. It was more effective.” Active residents reported an absolute improvement in local infrastructure quality and process transparency after the Ward Works campaign. They perceive that their monitoring reduced collusion between the Corporator and the contractor, a phenomenon that had reduced the quantity and quality of project execution. However, they don’t attribute better local outcomes solely to their local efforts, but as the result of a comprehensive movement for “better quality of life” which involved local RWAs, Janaagraha, CIVIC, Swabhimana, Public Affairs Centre and the Right to Information law, which together, frightened elected officials into action. They claim that the Corporator and local engineers knew that if they did not listen that active resident would take an issue to a higher government authority.

Their successful efforts in 2002, however, have not produced a permanent change in the residents’ relationship with the Corporator or the level of civic engagement among residents. The same leaders who reported working closely with the Corporator now claim that he is misusing funds and no longer communicates with them regularly. The leaders also state that a lot of people still choose not to participate in fundamental democratic processes, saying that it is below their standard to vote. “They think by giving an annual subscription to RWA their work is over; the officers should do the work for them,” complains a frustrated community leader.

Institutionally, there has been growth. The Ward Works campaign led to the creation of one of the first ward-wide Federations of RWAs in 2002, called FORWARD 68. The leader of the Ashwini Layout RWA stopped participating with Janaagraha because of the time commitment, but he increased his local activities and holds monthly federation meetings with local officials and service providers to address concerns quickly and cooperatively. They continue to meet with and write to the BCC engineers, sometimes using the original citizens prioritized list of works.

3.4. Ward 100.

History of Ward and Prior Community Action.

Sanjaynagar, the final ward to be added to the Bangalore City Corporation in 1995, changed rapidly in the decade before Ward Works. The ward is a mix of old villages and public sector industry and government colonies like Judiciary colony, Postal Colony and Aircraft Employee's Cooperative Society (AECS). In addition to public sector employees, the faculty and researchers at the Indian Space Research Organization, Indian Institute of Science and major hospitals have homes in the area. After 2000, it quickly attracted more residents looking for more space and affordability (particularly compared to Malleshwaram to the south), and because it adjoins the new Outer Ring Road, it is easy for professionals to commute to suburban IT campuses around the city.

The prestigious and well-planned “Dollar Colony” is also a draw, named because its’ homes were marketed toward Non-Resident Indians who had Pounds, Dinars or Dollars to purchase the house. This is the neighborhood that Janaagraha founders Ramesh

and Swati Ramanathan live in with their family.

When many residents moved in during the 1990s, especially to the unplanned streets in between the colonies, the roads were all unpaved and there was no connection to water or underground drainage. Residents who moved to new area needed permits, piped water and improved bus service, and they banded together to meet those needs, often forming Resident Welfare Associations. One homeowner who moved here in 1996, credits residents' with the rapid local changes.

First when we moved here there was only one vegetable shop, the roads were not properly laid, very difficult during rainy season, no water connection. Now so many shopping complexes, three new hospitals, and in 1998 water pipes were connected. That was a result of pushing by community. There was no forum like Janaagraha, just local residents coming together to say this must get done. It was done as a collective effort.

The Corporation began meeting the needs of homeowners by the late 1990s, with the active engagement and constant prodding of ward residents. One community leader lamented the short attention span of his neighbors.

RWAs have done quite a bit of work. There were basic needs, like water, power. They were in need of those things. They all participated, but the minute basic needs are met, people stop participating.

Ward Works renewed the engagement of neighborhood-based RWAs that had been dormant for a few years, and brought them together for the first time. This was a particularly striking because the ward had been fragmented by insular employee-based colonies and the planning and community activity had remained very separate.

The three small slum areas of the ward have narrow streets and limited amenities, but their greatest concern has been the difficulty obtaining ration cards to buy subsidized

food.

Involvement with Janaagraha.

Since Ramesh and Swati lived in this ward, they were personally active in reaching out to residents and ensuring some participation in the campaign. The city-wide campaign was launched with a Ward *Yatra* through Sanjaynagar, led by a well-respected Kannada-language writer. That was followed with a meeting for RWAs in a local school to describe the campaign and initiate the actions. The leader of the AECS Colony, one of the largest in the ward, was intrigued by the campaign, particularly the focus on information and data. Another resident felt that the campaign was a good idea, “the participating citizen is the one who can make a difference, based on my experiences around the world.”

One woman who had been involved in several charity efforts throughout her adulthood was inspired by the vision and actions of the Ramanathans. She loved the focus on the residential community, rather than some of the caste-based activities she had seen before. In addition, she was personally impressed by Ramesh’s decision to give up a “plush job” to return to his “motherland”, much like her own husband had done.

Participation and Leadership.

Approximately sixty people participated in the campaign, two each from the many about twenty associations. While the campaign leaders estimated thirty Resident Welfare Associations in the ward, the Corporator claims there are over 110 associations that lobby for works and government attention. They began having meetings in the RMV Club, an exclusive member-ship based social club (though it allows the rooms to be rented for

public use) that some of the participants belonged to. Participants were mostly upper-middle class, male homeowners over age 55, though a few women and young professionals were also involved. As residents hailed from all over India (few were Kannadigas), English was the primary language of meetings and distributed materials.

Residents from the slums areas did not participate. The community leader seemed perplexed at the lack of participation from those areas. “See, I don’t know whether it was our mistake or what. I have the ability to talk fluently in five languages so I thought I could just go over there and make them to come”. This leader had connected to several activists in the slum communities in the past with their struggle for ration cards, and he had gone to some of their social events as well. He later learned that they felt uncomfortable coming to the RMV club.

The leader of the Ward Works campaign was the President of the AECS layout, though he is not an aircraft employee. He moved to the ward a few years before the campaign, from Malleshwaram. As a manager of hundreds of workers on the tea plantation, he claims to have cultivated leadership skills and tried to improve the lives of his employees through a savings scheme. After the ward *Yatra* to launch the campaign, he claims that everyone looked to him and asked him to lead it. Campaign participants emphasize that his strengths are his non-confrontational approach and his willingness to reach out to different types of people.

Other active participants generally had a history of prior activity, either through RWAs or auxiliary Ladies Associations. Some had participated in social service work for the urban poor, such as sponsoring education for children or free school lunches, but had

not worked with low-income people for a common goal. Many of the participants also had ties to other countries, like the US, a trait that some have observed to spur them to action, but also a hinderance to consistent participation. Several professionals had recently returned from working abroad or were planning to move. Among the older residents, their children lived in the U.S., U.K. or other countries and they would go for extended visits.

Corporator.

The Ward 100 Corporator, Mr. D. Venkatesh was a first term Corporator who had been elected in an SC/ST reserved seat. He is more politically independent than most, as a member of a small faction of the Janata Dal party, but still has supporters. He was born and raised in this area, from the period when it was a rural settlement. His prior occupation was farming with his family and he was involved with a *Sangha* (association) in villages.

Mr. Venkatesh participated in the initial Ward *Yatra*, stating that it was his responsibility and useful as a politician. “I should participate in any activity that is beneficial to the public,” he said, “also, participating in such programmes is advantageous for functioning as a Corporator.” He felt that the ward received insufficient resources for its task of upgrading infrastructure for a large ward on the edge of the city.

Some upper-middle class residents of the ward were blunt about the stereotypes that they held of the Corporator before meeting him.

We have a very low opinion of most politicians. It is with contempt that we talk with them or interact with them. We assume they are goons and we interact with them in the same way, we want to be pleasantly

surprised. But it never happens. Whether it is a Corporator or a Minister I feel them all to be the same.

The community leader met Mr. Venkatesh because of Ward Works: he invited the Corporator to join the inaugural Ward *Yatra*. He found the Corporator to be a “very nice person” who has participated in necessary meetings and cooperated to the best of his ability. Another AECS layout resident who knows the Corporator has greater respect for his work, which attributes in part to his long community ties.

We tried to interact with [slum residents], to pull them up, but it was of no avail as we spoke English. In this regard, he [the Corporator] has done a wonderful job by making them understand through the vernacular. Today the anganwadi (child care) workers enroll their children in the schools. He has been responsible for this. I have seen 2-3 Corporators before him, but his participation with the people is so good, only because he was born and brought up in this very area.

Like the other Corporators, he expressed his accessibility, noting that residents have his mobile number and that he makes visits to all parts of the ward on a regular basis to observe any problems.

The community leader in this ward knew that the Corporator was an important but not omnipotent ally, but reported on the constellation of stakeholders to get a project implemented. There are twelve laborers and three Corporation engineers working on this ward. According to the community leader who talks with all of them, “the Engineer is becoming helpless when it comes to control over workers because the Corporator will ask them to do one task, then the state Member of Legislative Assembly will ask them to do another task.” In this way, laborers get pulled in three directions, from the city bureaucracy, state elected officials and the Corporator. This complicates the picture of how a project travels from plan to approval to implementation, because regardless of the source of project funds (all three actors have separate sources), the same laborers would

be employed to complete the task.

Ward Works Process.

Sixty people participated in the surveying, after being given a stack of forms and a map of their assigned roads in their locality. There was a planned structure for who would complete each area, but residents were flexible to fit their own schedules. A few of the larger colonies, such as AECS and LIT had greater participation, and some streets and slum areas were not surveyed. One homemaker took pleasure in joining her husband to survey the roads when he returned from work and their newborn was sleeping.

I liked the way they started off, taking a census of bylanes and small streets, taking care of residential localities. Usually only the commercial properties are taken up. Everyone came out [of their houses] and got to know us, that we were involved. And some made fun of us, but knew it was good. I thought just being aware was a beginning.

The community leader took the Field Report Forms back to Janaagraha for costing. The same people who completed the surveys stayed involved for the prioritization. During these meetings at the RMV club, the group chose from among 60 works worth nearly 7 Crore rupees (\$1.4 million USD) as first, second or third choice projects. The wards with high participation and leadership, like AECS, had the highest priorities and greatest number of works chosen.

Outcome.

The participants in the Ward Works campaign deemed it a great success. Not only did the Corporator agree to their vision, but they witnessed rapid implementation of the projects they had prioritized. In mid-2002, they were very confident and projects were getting done ahead of schedule. Within the first year or so, 60-70% of the original works were implemented.

All this prioritizing makes a lots of sense because we had a lot of experience trying to get things done. Within a year or two of this movement, the road was finally laid. And it gave people courage to come out of their houses and monitor, and check the thickness of the asphalt and that it had been laid properly. To that extent it has been a success story.

Initially it was very satisfying, two months after we finished the surveys we saw the main potholes that we mentioned became perfect. So we said, “this is our work”, so we kept coordinating with each other about other issues. Then we said this is something here for staying.

Some people lost steam for monitoring and attending meetings after the first few months and participation. Community leaders claim that many were impatient that the last few prioritized works were not completed, which reduced their confidence in the association. “People lost faith in collective and focused again on just getting their own road fixed.” In the long run however, the ward has been successful in developing a federation of RWAs, FORWARD 100, an accomplishment they credit to Janaagraha.

In addition, several residents gained respect for the Corporator and increased their interaction with him. Through more conversation with him and increased knowledge about the local government, they had a more nuanced understanding of his limitations. The community leader explained that Corporators have limited say over execution, and are often outranked in those decisions by the BCC Executive Engineer or State-level Ministers, despite the fact that the Corporator is most directly answerable toward the public. In Postal Colony, after six months without piped water they had been very frustrated with the Corporator. Instead of fighting with him, as they had in the past, they organized one hundred residents, led by the Corporator to visit the Commissioner to address the problem, since it was not in the Corporator’s direct control.

3.5. Wards 74 & 91

History of Ward and Prior Community Action.

Ward 91 is an old part of East Bangalore, covering neighborhoods that were part of the old Cantonment area of the city. It includes both the residential and defense land of Frazer Town and highly dense and very popular Russell Market. As an old community, like Malleshwaram, infrastructure like paved roads exist throughout the ward, but are in decline and require continued upkeep and repairs. Like other diverse East Bangalore neighborhoods, Muslims make up a high proportion of residents, and the neighborhood erupted in communal riots in 2006, a rare occurrence, but one that highlights tensions under the surface.

Ward 74 is known as a partial ward, the combination of old neighborhoods and newly annexed neighborhoods. The strictly planned layouts are products of public-sector industry housing development, like multi-stage Hindustan Aeronautics Limited housing in the 1960s and 1970s. Most layouts have solid infrastructure including paved roads and covered drains.

In 1997 Residents Initiative for a Safe Environment (RISE) began an active, fee-for-service garbage composting initiative that garnered international attention. A few retired residents including an architect and engineer, who would later become involved with Janaagraha, initiated the program to help keep their neighborhood clean. They hired 12-14 employees and taught them how to compost using an innovative cart and reached a peak of 1200 households serviced each week. The project was shut down in 2003 when they community leaders claim that the waste management contractors threatened them over the loss of customers.

Involvement with Janaagraha.

Like in many wards, the community leader in Ward 91 first learned about Janaagraha through advertisements. Since Janaagraha's office was also in East Bangalore he easily attended a few meetings and met with volunteers. He liked the idea of citizens working together for neighborhood improvement, in part because of his scant respect for the local elected official.

The primary community leader in Ward 74 was involved in the creation of Janaagraha. Ramesh and Swati had contacted him because of RISE's successful composting initiative and thought they were an ideal RWA to have as early adopters. He helped create the training video that all other wards used to learn how to do surveys and organized Janaagraha presentations for residents in his ward. The community leader, who was retired, spent nearly every day at Janaagraha's headquarters for months. His neighbors eventually told him, "you are shifting your focus, we haven't fixed our footprint yet", consequently he reduced his time at Janaagraha. He and other community leaders found the concept of Janaagraha to be "excellent...but has not resulted in any tangible difference to residents".

Participation and Leadership.

The Ward 91 self-appointed leader was a life-long resident of the neighborhood and was notably different from many of the other leaders who were married, older middle-class men, retired from professional careers. This leader was a single middle-aged activist, who had struggled alongside tribal people in Andhra Pradesh against forest degradation and state oppression. His activism and other work often took him out of Bangalore, and he ultimately blamed his erratic schedule for making it difficult for him to

organize residents effectively. However, within Bangalore, he boasted that he had single-handedly secured major infrastructure improvements because of a good relationship to the Commissioner. Perhaps due to his personal self-interest he did not have much to gain from working with others. He liked the idea of community planning, but didn't need it.

In Ward 74, the leadership and active participants fit in the traditional pattern of retired professionals, mostly men, from the middle-class layouts (not from the many small slums in the ward). The leaders claim they "did not have access to" slum dwellers, and therefore could not get them involved. They mentioned language as a barrier toward greater inclusion since all of their meetings and documents were in English. Eleven RWAs were contacted and briefed about the Ward Works campaign, and as they started the campaign, they formed Citizens Forum of Ward 74, a federation of residents' groups. They claim that multiple RWAs working together for the first time did not pose any problems, which they attribute to the social homogeneity.

It was all positive; they followed leadership, no problem. They were all living in the same kind of area, same kind of population. If they had been from the slum then there would have been some kind of friction. But here we didn't do that.

Corporator.

In Ward 91, the Corporator, A. R. Zakir was a young, popular 2nd term Corporator and a life-long Congress party member and candidate. He has received political mentorship a powerful Congress leader from East Bangalore. An active Corporator, he has placed "no spitting" and other signs with his name all over the wards and has invested significantly in park improvements, such as Freedom Fighter's park in Frazer Town.

N. Muni Reddy was a novice Corporator from the Janata Dal (U) party who was “raw” at the time of the Ward Works campaign. He respected the community leader and would come if he called, but would not respond to most other RWA residents. The community leaders worked with him when they felt it was required, which was a higher level of interaction than they had with any previous local elected official. He attended the inaugural event of the campaign, but had retreated by time the prioritization meetings were underway. According to the residents, the Corporator said, “you people didn’t vote for me”, and ignored them for that reason.

Ward Works Process.

In Ward 91, the campaign never fully got off the ground. The active resident claims that he called several dormant RWAs, but the leaders had stopped being active and could not tell him who to follow up with. He organized two community meetings to launch activity, but turnout was very low. Two individuals helped him complete some of the Field Report Forms, but they could only survey a few streets. After sending the completed forms to Janaagraha for costing, they did not collect the documents for prioritization.

Ward 74 had a very short and efficient process during Ward Works; in fact they came the closest to any ward studied, to completing the surveying in the way that Ramesh and Swati described it in pamphlets. Approximately fifteen to twenty people surveyed all the roads, each spending two hours per day for ten days. The leader collated the surveys and sent them to Janaagraha. After they were returned with cost estimates, one prioritization meeting was held. Interestingly, more people came to prioritization, about eighty, than had surveyed, which the leaders found problematic. These people had “no

long commitment” and would come for the meeting, voice a complaint, request funding and then never return.

Outcome.

In both communities, the leaders felt that the Ward Works program was not a success. In Ward 91, the active resident claimed that the Corporator’s connections to “thugs” who owned much of the commercial real estate in Shivajinagar did not create a welcoming environment for civic engagement to flourish. This echoes the point made by a community leader in Ward 68 who perceived that strong citizen participation would only flourish and be valued in a ward with a “weak” Corporator. The attempted leader from Frazer Town immediately returned to getting works done based on personal relationships to senior-level bureaucrats, starting with the major road in front of his house.

Despite participation throughout the four months, nothing from the Ward 74 citizens’ work list made the official list of works. “They [officials] have their own agenda, our list meant nothing to them,” said the community leaders. Despite their negative impression of the Corporator’s responsiveness and local government fiscal efficiency, they do not believe it was the Corporator’s fault that the campaign failed. Instead they blame fellow residents for not pushing hard enough, “as citizens we needed to be more vocal, we failed in doing that”, they now say. This happened in part because some residents expected Janaagraha to come to their rescue and push an agenda through. Citizens would show up to a meeting and there would be no immediate result, which discouraged potential participants. In fact, the community leaders praise Ward Works for increasing their interaction with the Corporator.

The original RISE leadership, which lost its garbage collection program, has realigned its work to fit the local market and political situation. Since that service was filled by the government contractor, they have moved to local traffic management and nighttime security within the layout and charge households 100 rupees (\$2.00) per month. Their relationship with the Corporator remains cordial, but they only ask him about neighborhood level concerns and prefer to talk directly to the contractor about infrastructure issues.

4. CROSS WARD ANALYSIS

Having described the Ward Works processes across six successful and failed wards, in this chapter I will interpret and compare information across the wards to uncover patterns of context and behavior that led wards to successful outcomes. I will examine the same questions and themes discussed in each ward, including: ward/neighborhood type, participation and leadership, community organizing history, relationship with the Corporator, and other issues. Finally, I will argue that Ward Works had a constructive rather than destructive impact on democracy in Bangalore's successful wards, despite imperfect process and inequitable outcomes.

4.1. Ward/Neighborhood Type.

Three of the four successful wards targeted for this study were only incorporated into the city of Bangalore in 1995, while only one was an old part of the city, founded in the late 19th century. This is an adequate reflection of all wards that were successful in the campaign. Most active participants lived on residential streets, rather than mixed-use, neighborhoods. The “failed” wards targeted for this study were an old ward and a partial ward.

Four possible themes emerge for why new wards were more active and successful in the campaign. First, in older wards there is a longer urban political history. The Corporators have more clout (and ability to keep their ward off the “reserved list”), deeper roots with political parties and interest groups such as business leaders and landlords. As a Corporators’ power is typically closely connected to local land transactions and local commerce, those with jurisdiction over a more established part of

the city might have more entrenched political interests to respond to.⁷⁷

Second, residents of neighborhoods with strong histories may have a more difficult time identifying with an entire ward. While the ward is the legal administrative boundary, the term had rarely been used in English-media or among middle-class civil society; the neighborhood instead was far more prominent. In Ward 91, the activist interested in Ward Works had grown up in Frazer Town and felt very connected to that neighborhood, but he did not reach across the ward to the smaller neighborhoods like the SK Garden layout or lower-income Pottery Town, which limited his ability to find interested residents. Similarly, the women of Malleshwaram found success in their own neighborhood but were the most paralyzed with regard to cross-neighborhood outreach. For them, the neighborhood is so meaningful; it was hard to reach across the seemingly insignificant boundary of the ward.

As a community we are very strong, we have carried things forward because we have personally identified with Malleshwaram and personal preference are of little consequence to us, the common goal is Malleshwaram. –Ward 7

For those in newer wards (and many of them were more recent residents), the ward boundary was more familiar because post-annexation in 1995, the ward number was placed on road signs to note that the recently peri-urban areas now belonged to the city of Bangalore. In Wards 54, 68 and 100, they had never worked across the ward prior to the campaign, but had little difficulty reaching across geographic boundaries and were more likely to express excitement about the idea of citizen participation as a good process, or improving Bangalore, rather than a deep connection to their neighborhood.

⁷⁷ Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari (2001)

Third, in newer wards, current residents began working collectively over obtaining basic needs such as the *khatta* (account of property assessment needed for building house) and piped water connection, such as shared visits to the Corporation or joint letters. Many RWAs in new wards were started by such basic actions. While they may have disbanded after a few months of activity, they have the shared success as a recent memory.

The fourth, but related point is that new wards typically have greater development need. Even in areas with high cost homes like Dollar Colony in Ward 100, road and drain infrastructure may not be complete. The problems they face often impede easy transit and in extreme cases promote flooding or poor sewerage drainage that can cause serious health problems. These types of needs are more pressing for most people than potholes or broken sidewalks due to deterioration.

4.2. Community Organizing History.

Janaagraha brought many new features to the civic landscape of Bangalore including citywide marketing and networking, a uniform process and high-quality tools to identify problems and estimate their costs. These helped reinvigorate (but not create) community organizing among middle-class residents for neighborhood improvement.

Each of the successful wards had a history of prior community activity, typically involving the community members who led the Ward Works efforts. In ward 68, the recent housing development led to severe flooding that affected middle-class and poor residents. They mobilized for months to demand the government mitigate the situation and eventually the government built a wall to block the flooding. This aligns with the

well-known tenet of community organizing, espoused most famously by Saul Alinsky in Rules for Radicals that small successes help community groups come together and build trust for longer-term community actions.⁷⁸

However, prior community engagement did not guarantee success. In Ward 74, the residents in the upper-class neighborhoods managed successful fee-for-service garbage pick-up campaigns. Though organized by only a few individuals (who hired garbage collectors) who were creating a private service to fill in a government gap, they saw it is a community project. In this case, the prior community activity had intentionally sidestepped local government. In contrast, in successful wards like 54 and 68 residents confronted the government for months and years about poor conditions. Their agitations were confrontational, but ultimately state-affirming, because they operated within the paradigm that the government held the necessary power to meet their needs and they would subsequently push the state. Ward 7 also had a fee-based garbage collection project in the late 1990s, but that was one of several community activities, some of which involved local government.

4.3. Participation and Leadership.

Having a committed leader, and a support team of two to three very active members was a common feature of successful wards. The roles good leaders played included: identifying and inviting RWAs and individuals to participate, holding a strategy meeting to plan surveys, training residents to conduct surveys, checking completed surveys for quality, helping residents do surveys (in neighborhoods other than their own), going to strategizing meetings at Janaagraha, collecting and dropping off materials at

⁷⁸ Alinsky, Saul Rules for Radicals Vintage Books New York 1971

Janaagraha office (as far as one hour away from some wards). The active leaders in the target wards had all emerged as elected leaders (either President or Secretary) of an RWA in their ward, and had a prior history of action on behalf of a group.

Another common feature of successful leaders, they all were willing to make community activism a part of their lifestyle, not just a side project. From the women of Ward 7 who would call each other at the first sign of a new road problem, to the Ward 54 leader who spent a few hours every day, they were committed far beyond the advertised “2 hours per week”. In Wards 91 and 74, the community leaders took a more limited outlook, which was reflected in their limited outreach to residents and the Corporator.

Participation was neither uniformly homogenous nor heterogeneous in successful wards. However, there was no ward where the participation in the campaign reflected the demographics of the entire ward, particularly in relation to socioeconomic class. Diversity was least reflected in the age of participants; the vast majority of participants were over 55. More men participated than women, but women led in Ward 7 and were involved as active members in Wards 54 and 100.

RWA members in some wards, particularly 7, 74 and 100, consciously or not, erected several barriers to participation from urban poor groups. In response to a question about involving the urban poor, a participant from Malleshwaram in Ward 7 defended their use of English and attempts to be more inclusive.

For the convenience sake we talk in English- not that we are all Oxford educated or something, and we speak different mother tongues, still they haven't come so far, then there is no point in going on after them when it is not having any effect and when here as it is the roads are very bad, and here we are tax-payers and we are eligible for good roads, good

sanitation, good footpaths to walk.

Wards where the meetings were conducted in Kannada had a larger and more heterogeneous participation than those where English was the primary language spoken. Language itself may have been a proxy for other commonalities or divisions. In Wards 54 and 68 where Kannada was spoken, the leadership was comprised of middle-class public sector employees or retirees. In contrast, many of the leaders in the English-only neighborhoods were upper-middle class. In addition, these residents often belonged to and held meetings in exclusive membership-based clubs. While the meetings were public, the location may have signaled that some residents were less welcome.

However, even in Ward 54, some participants noted the limited participation from the slum areas and claimed that it was not sinister, but a normal occurrence considering the pressures facing poorer residents.

Not that Janaagraha serves elite interests, but elite have time to participate while others are too concerned with day to day. Like only the man who is comfortable can become a poet, the working man cannot think of being a poet. Depends on priorities. If a man is working all the time, do we really expect him to come to Janaagraha movement? You need at least 2 hours of leisure.

A leader in Ward 68 felt that Janaagraha was ultimately an anti-poor process that catered to the pro-development interests of the corporate sector and international finance institutions.

Multiple Bangalore-based academics, activists and journalists assert that there have not been significant cross-class social or political movements in decades if at all since Independence. So the fact that Janaagraha did not succeed in this area is not a surprise. An observer of increased citizen participation over the last decade, the Metro

Editor of the Times of India (a popular English-language newspaper), sees the same outcome, but does not feel that it needs defending.

Some people think that they are elitist, that there will not be lower-income groups. Yes, in a way that is true, but I don't find fault with that, because you have NGOs working on Dalits. The BATF people, the Janaagraha people are all those who have had success in life, they look at things in a different perspective. For them to connect with people who have not had success in life would be difficult, it would take time to evolve, for people to evolve. But I would like to put the onus on the educated class, the affluent class to ensure that everyone comes to their standards. And not do the same dirty things that uneducated people are doing.

Particularly since the campaign was aimed at citizens directly controlling public funds and space, the representativeness of participants is significant, particularly for the impact on democracy. An additional concern, raised by Bangalore activists like Leo Saldanha of the Environmental Support Group, is that middle-class and elite residents use the purported legitimacy of participatory exercises for their demands at the expense of the poor.

New wealth has new aspirations, which are born from a global setting and a globalized conditioning. They start making demands that initially seem to be all very generic and in the public interest, but when you look carefully they all come from a very elitist perspective. Pushing that through middle-class channels and civic action clouds the elitist action as middle-class actions, but that distinction is slowly coming apart now, such as demands for golf courses.

Having more class and caste diversity does not appear to be a factor in determining whether or not a ward was successful by the terms defined by Janaagraha, however it is a factor in reaching the ideal of democracy.

4.4. Corporator Relationship

The reaction of the Corporator to the citizen plan determined the basic success or failure of the campaign (from the perspective of this study). I intended to assess contextual factors external to the Ward Works program, such as the party the Corporator belonged to, their number of terms and perceived efficacy. In addition, I also examined the relationship that developed between the community leaders and Corporator over the course of the campaign, which turned out to be more important than the external factors.

A recent local election preceded the Ward Works campaign by a few months, therefore many of the Corporators were new or freshly re-elected as the campaign began. In three of the four highly successful wards (compared to one third city-wide), the Corporator seat was reserved for SC/ST candidates, who were all new to elected office. The leaders of Ward 7 summed up the opinion of several community members I spoke to when describing their own Corporator, belying both their perception of the individual and social background, “If you call his house, from the way the people talk you can tell his standard, he is from a backward community. I have nothing against the backward community but still, if they have good culture they can really come up.” They consider it a “drawback” that Ward 7 is currently a reserved ward, first for women and this term to SC/ST, so the choice of candidates is “extremely limited”.

The party that the Corporator belonged to did not have an impact on their willingness to approve the citizen’s prioritized projects. The four target wards are led by members of the four major parties in Bangalore, Congress, BJP, Janata Dal (U) and Janata Dal (S). Community leaders sometimes felt that “the party” wanted to exert control over the Corporator, but that was felt in multiple wards and no participant

described one party as being more or less supportive of Ward Works. This confirms the finding in a 2001 case study analysis of governance in Bangalore, which noted that local politics in Bangalore is centered on individuals' political bases, rather than strict party affiliations.⁷⁹

2001 Electoral Outcomes for Ward Works-period Corporators

	Turnout (%)	Winning Candidate (%)	Total (%)
Average for All Wards	44.9	43.3	19.3
Average for 4 Success Wards	35.5	31.6	10.8

Looking at the four very successful wards compared to all wards, the Corporators had won in wards with a lower turnout, a smaller percentage of votes for the winning candidate and an average of only one in ten potential voters having cast a ballot for him. This suggests that these Corporators had a very weak political base, potentially because each was a reserved candidate.⁸⁰ Coming in with this limited political strength may have contributed to their receptiveness to active residents who came to speak with them. In Ward 68 they anticipated this effect before the Ward Works campaign and helped an underdog Corporator get narrowly elected.

Initially we didn't want to take a political stand, choose a party. So we said we would not support the party, but we brought him here to talk about participation and wanting help with roads. We said we would work

⁷⁹ Benjamin and Bhuvaneswari (2001)

⁸⁰ Reserved candidates are likely to have a weaker political base because a ward will only be designated for a reserved seat a few months before the election, and so individuals with no political background or name recognition in the community will have only a few months to gather support. In addition, they are seen to only have one term to govern, regardless of their competency, because more established, non-Scheduled Caste candidates will return to power.

with him if he would agree to help, and then he won by three votes! This was one thing that gave us success, played in our favor. –Ward 68

Community leaders who were ready to take on the role of advisors to the Corporator, talking with him about a range of topics beyond Ward Works, were successful. In Wards 7 and 54, the community leaders continued to work on water supply issues during the campaign. The Ward 68 leaders claim to have helped the Corporator with his public speaking skills. While residents in all wards in this study, derided their Corporator due to perceived stupidity, corruption and “backward” behavior, all the leaders in successful wards expressed their willingness to put their personal feelings aside and work with the Corporator.

When Corporator was elected we were all put off because he was an uneducated fellow he cannot read English. We went to his house right after he was elected. We went with a bouquet, though we wanted to go with a bat. We took him to our meeting and we took him to Janaagraha two to three times. He was the only Corporator in the beginning to have attended the Janaagraha meeting. Real reason I'll tell you- he was told by his party, “we [the party] will see that you win, but getting public support is your issue. [Before the election] he was hardly known even in his own community. But as we picked up along with the Ward Works he also picked up. We improved relationship. Whenever I call him, he attends. I have distributed his phone number to many people. –Ward 7

In many cases this led to a genuinely improved impression of the Corporator, while in others it was purely functional.

One quality that was frequently mentioned by both participants and Corporators was openness and accessibility. Each Corporator, while now they have placed distance between themselves and Janaagraha stated very clearly that they would listen to everybody, they were available by cell phone or could talk while on regular walks through the community. Residents noticed that. In ward 54, the community leader identified the official's “ability to mix with people” and “to maintain friendly

connection” as important strengths.

The relationship with the Corporator was not simply based on the RWA accepting the Corporator, but relied upon the Corporator responding favorably to the community leaders. In their interviews, Corporators placed great emphasis on fair treatment to everyone regardless of class or location. When the RWAs were seen as trustworthy and fair brokers for a wide swathe of people, rather than a narrow interest group, this gave the Corporator a positive impression. In Ward 68, the Corporator spoke highly of the community leaders, and the leaders described their respectful negotiation.

Later on, when we pushed for works- we pushed for 70%- we said its ok- you use 30% for what you want- we do not claim to be 100% representative. None of the associations can. He said he needed to take care of certain areas, we said ok. Because of that equation he agreed to give us 17-18 Lakhs. He wanted to give more, party stopped him. There is a certain portion (18%) for SC. I told him not to eat into that amount. So we worked out with him to ensure that our money didn't come from that. –Ward 68

4.5. Impact on Democracy

Of all of the criticisms against participation more broadly, and against Janaagraha specifically, the one that is the most damaging is the suggestion that their participatory campaign actually weakened democracy. This charge suggests that at best, the initiative was poorly planned and implemented, but that at worst, the initiative was targeted at reducing the power of the legitimate political system to benefit an interest group.

Scholars like John Gaventa have noted that this is a critical factor for the transformative impact of a participatory initiative. For participation to have lasting impact and develop a vibrant political community, emphasis should be placed on strengthening democratic institutions rather than bypassing them by increasing interactions between

individuals and government.⁸¹

To answer this question, I have looked at how the campaign contributed to or detracted from various components of democracy in the wards where it succeeded. I began with selected definitions of “democracy” from the 2006 Random House Unabridged Dictionary.⁸² I also include an additional important question, addressing the urban middle-class citizens’ relationship to local elected officials.

Did the Ward Works campaign promote political or social equality among all citizens?

There are several facets of equality that could be assessed or measured. To look at the impact of the Ward Works case in Bangalore, I am considering three measures: (1) Social equality, (2) Equality of access to decision-makers and, (3) Equality of outcomes.

Campaign observers, middle-class participants and the Janaagraha founders are all in agreement that the campaign participants tended to be middle-class and elite, with limited participation from lower-income residents. Each stakeholders’ response to that fact is slightly different, however.

While Ramesh and Swati claim they intentionally did not target one class group and that they do place value on having people from all communities at the table, they are not apologetic about the fact that the elite were engaged, in fact they see that as a worthy goal because as citizens, the rich too have a moral obligation to participate.

At the upper end of the social strata, there is a dangerous trend emerging: there are many among the urban elite in India who are skipping around the world, taking the best of each country, essentially as free-riders,

⁸¹ Gaventa (2006)

without paying the price that is necessary to build the fabric of democratic decision-making that got this quality-of-life in the first place. This is one of the less understood phenomenon of the free-rider globalists, who are not citizens anywhere, and therefore never feel the pain of participation, who takes the roads, the schools, the airports, the garbage trucks all for granted, as they merrily skip from one country to another, blissfully ensconced in their personal lives... Paying for the grease does not give anyone the right to opt out of the messy work of maintaining the democratic engines.⁸³

Many middle-class community leaders framed the idea in a similar way. As leaders, most had been engaged before Janaagraha arrived, but felt that many of their neighbors had shirked democratic responsibilities and were happy that Ward Works gave them a concrete process to be involved with. This perspective on the focus on the middle-class and elite for the campaign is that instead of trying to help these interest groups better secure their rights as citizens, the campaign was geared toward pushing them to undertake their responsibilities as citizens.

However, even if the participatory campaign did have a generalized positive impact on increasing the political responsibilities of the elite and middle-class, the exercise was real and impacted the allocation of state funds. One community leader in Ward 68 found the impact to be “anti-poor”.

As far as their impact of what they do, to a certain upper class of people it helps, helps corporate sector. The crumbs are there for the others, the primary focus is upper class. Better in terms of transparency and accountability, systemization of things- more professional outlook. Coinciding with need of globalization, where given the funders need transparency and accountability. From that perspective, Janaagraha is dead on target.

This indictment is echoed by a long-time social activist Leo Saldanha, who claims that Janaagraha's campaign is a part of a larger shift in discourse about urban

⁸³ Ramesh Ramanathan Institutionalising Citizen Participation in Urban Governance White Paper (2004) pp.6-7

infrastructure needs and governance.

In the mid-nineties, there was still talk about allocation of resources to urban poor. Now papers only have complaints about middle-class issues like roads and flyovers: the greater proportion of money is going to making those people comfortable from their doorstep home to workplace, it has nothing to do with water, public housing, education or public hospitals, why is there no investigation in the corruption in public hospitals and schools.

In his opinion, the increased discussion about and resource allocation to roads and sidewalks reduces much needed attention to the needs of poor residents.

In terms of social equality, or moving the neighborhood or Bangalore toward a more socially egalitarian society, the campaign did not have any notable impact as reported by participants. However, to examine the equity issues more precisely would require a longitudinal analysis of the implementation of works across neighborhoods. Some middle-class residents felt that they were finally receiving their fair share of public allocation, while others felt that it reduced needed expenditures to urban poor communities.

With regard to equality of access, accessing the campaign itself (and the decision-making process that it connected to) was not egalitarian in all wards and included barriers such as language and meeting location. However, the prior access that slum dwellers had to elected officials was not altered, and no Corporator used the Prioritized Citizens Work List exclusively to plan for the ward. The campaign did equalize access in one important way. Ward Works provided a comfortable way back into politics for many and encouraged the middle-class to do what the poor had been doing already: leveraging numbers of people instead of personal connections, collectively determining the priorities

and pushing as a common group, not pressing their own needs without a larger context, and recognizing political and fiscal realities and working within them rather than just complaining from the outside. If residents were to continue to use this process, rather than exercise personal influence as many had before, it is a sustainable change toward improved democracy.

Did the Ward Works campaign promote government by the people?

The status quo in Bangalore before 2001 was of an unresponsive local government. As the research in Bangalore slum neighborhoods revealed, residents felt that Corporators did not truly have their best interests at heart. According to the Times of India city editor who had been covering local government, they were disconnected from the middle- and upper-classes as well.

There are two dimensions to this whole thing. One is what the people want, the other is what the politicians do. There is a total disconnect.

In increasing the voice of citizens in government decision-making and promoting rather than suppressing the wishes of residents, the campaign was successful. In wards 7, 54, 68 and 100, it succeeded here in facilitating citizens involvement in local budgeting. Participants, even the least active among them, became more educated about government functioning and confident about raising their voice.

The Times of India city editor sees a change since Janaagraha's first campaign and notes that more people are participating in governance and holding the government accountable. One community leader from ward 68 stated it simply:

A lot of RWAs were sleeping and they were woken up by Janaagraha. It will grow. More people are paying attention.

In Wards 54, 68 and 100, the residents developed federations of RWAs across the ward within two years of completing Ward Works. Institutionalizing the participatory infrastructure is a lasting impact of the campaign.

One concern however, is that the narrow set of issue that the campaign focused on is trivial, and not connected to the major governance issues of the time. In this case, the campaign might be a waste of time because the issues are just “housekeeping” according to Janaki Nair, but at the worst, it could be a diversion or distraction from the major expenditures and policy decisions facing people’s lives. This concern is raised about participatory initiatives often, but here it is not convincing as a major flaw with Ward Works. First, the issues of roads and drains are a significant source of expenditure and matter deeply to many residents (as raised before however, not urban poor residents). Second, there is nothing about this campaign that was aimed at reducing citizens’ participation or interest in issues beyond their roads. In fact, Janaagraha encouraged residents to expand their new interest and confidence in local government functioning through financial accountability campaigns and they promoted the use of the Right to Information law. The fact that most middle-class residents did not immediately join more radical movements or address major policy issues here is clearly a remnant of a long historical relationship to politics rather than a signal of distraction because of focus on roads.

Did the Ward Works campaign strengthen representative democracy?

This question has raised the most concern for Janaagraha, and other participatory exercises that are not state-sponsored. Without question, the campaign threatened the hegemony that Corporator’s held over ward funds, and its creation implied that the

Corporators were not optimally effective. Janaagraha's founders were careful not to ever state negative impressions about Corporators in general or as individuals, and frequently framed the Corporator as a necessary partner to citizens in ward development. Corporators were invited to many of the inaugural events. This, however, was not enough to satisfy many Corporators who were put off by the initiative. Parallel to that, the positive spin on the role of the local elected official was not always enough to change the perceptions of middle-class resident. The city editor from Times of India provides a vivid illustration of the impression of the Corporators.

If you go and ask anyone, who is your Corporator, they probably don't know. If they do, they won't know where his office is, when you can meet. Even if they do and go meet him, they won't be able to converse with the fellow, the level of the Corporators is so absurd, they are not educated, have no vision, he is of the level of a sweeper. If you ask the former Chief Minister, he'll say the Corporators are a bunch of jokers, more of an impediment than a helping hand.

Looking only at the successful wards, there are several instances of a changed outlook to the local elected official. In Ward 54, the campaign changed several participants' position toward government. One man admitted that Ward Works forced him to talk to the Corporator, and now he thinks the Corporator is "pretty good" and "mixes with everyone". In Ward 100, residents who started by yelling at the Corporator for poor water connection changed their tactic to working with the Corporator and going together to meet the water provider for improved service. That type of collaboration between middle-class residents and a Corporator was not common.

On the other hand, in Ward 7, where the residents did work with the Corporator, but never came to respect him, the leaders are planning major voter registration and turnout drives for the next local election specifically so they can increase their voice in

the electoral process. As discussed earlier in this paper, middle-class and elite residents do not have high levels of electoral participation, and if the campaign had an indirect impact on that it is another step towards strengthened participation in India's democracy.

In all target wards, the Ward Works campaign brought more people in contact with the Corporator, increased residents' knowledge about his constraints and required them ultimately to seek his approval. Wealthier, English-speaking residents have traditionally used bureaucratic contacts to have their infrastructure or service delivery needs met, and this campaign altered that for some residents in the target wards.

The view about the impact on democracy depends on whether the observer thinks that having elite individuals participate in politics is good or bad. For those who think it is good, like Janaagraha's founders, because by exercising their responsibility they can make government more responsive, then the impact on democracy is positive. For those who think that direct engagement between the elite and middle-class might be bad because they could capture state resources (that may have gone to the poor), then the impact on democracy appears problematic.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the findings from the case studies, I have come to the following conclusions about what contextual factors and community behaviors were useful in Bangalore's 2001 participatory budgeting campaign.

- New wards provide more fertile ground for participatory budgeting than old wards
- Prior community engagement that is state-affirming, rather than state-avoidant provides a solid foundation
- Committed leadership matters
- Engaging the Corporator as a partner in all ward issues, and not as a rubber stamp on the "citizens list" can result in meaningful collaboration

For the remainder of this chapter, I will describe Janaagraha's evolution and highlight three significant events and trends that impact Bangalore and participation. Following that, I provide basic recommendations for civil society actors interested in participatory planning with local government. The paper concludes with final thoughts about the impact of the Ward Works campaign on local democracy.

5.1. Bangalore 2007 and beyond.

Bangalore has continued to grow and develop rapidly since 2002. Among other changes, the name has officially changed from Bangalore to Bengaluru (like other major Indian cities which have returned to local language names) and the city has grown by approximately 50%. Here I will underscore three major developments that impact participation and governance in the city, and briefly describe the direction Janaagraha has

taken since Ward Works.

Janaagraha 2002-2007.

Directly after Ward Works, Janaagraha launched two citywide campaigns aimed at having greater impact on governance and drawing in more participants who had not been attracted to the participatory budgeting campaign. Public Record of Operations and Finance, the PROOF campaign, was aimed at financial transparency at the city level and resulted in the first quarterly financial statements delivered by an Indian city executive in a public forum. They also began a campaign to improve the delivery of micro-credit loans and training to the urban poor by working with poverty-focused NGOs and self-help groups in slums around the city.

In 2003, they returned to participatory planning at the Ward level with the Ward Vision campaign which was a more intense campaign with only ten wards that chose to participate in the multi-workshop visioning, costing and prioritizing sessions that ended in complex vision documents spanning 25 issues. Having learned somewhat from the Ward Works campaign, Ward Vision was more deliberate about avoiding polarizing locations and sought input from the urban poor and being multi-lingual.

Janaagraha had completed these campaigns with the same volunteer-based, social movement “non-structured” approach. After a reflective retreat in 2004, the group decided to formally become an NGO called the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy. As JCCD, they have shifted from a campaign-focused approach to more advocacy on national governance issues and social and economic research. The framework and resources for ward-based civic engagement remain, and are now led by a

council of neighborhood leaders, including from wards 54 and 100.

All of the communities that succeeded in the Ward Works campaign continue to be active in neighborhood improvement. Recent projects have included verifying the quality of voter registration lists and mobilizing residents to vote in local elections, suggesting a clear shift from the historical anti-political nature of the elite and middle-class. In Ward 100, the women who were active in the federation FORWARD 100 worked alongside female slum residents to get ration cards from the Food and Civil Service Board, and finally succeeded. In Wards 7 and 54, the Bala Janaagraha program for school children from government schools has been a success.

Political Backlash (2004).

The 2004 state elections in Karnataka changed the political atmosphere in Bangalore. While Bangalore had been transforming into a global IT hub, people around the rest of the state faced economic hardship. Between 2000 and 2006, around 8,600 farmers committed suicide in Karnataka.⁸⁴ Suicide in this context is commonly the final resort of highly indebted farmers who see no possible improvement in their financial condition and who in suicide can provide their surviving family a small pittance through the state compensation. It is a horrific indicator of a major rural poverty problem, an issue that many felt was ignored by the pro-growth Indian government and Karnataka government in particular. According to polls, a majority of Karnataka voters felt that the State government had given more importance to urban areas and had neglected the rural

⁸⁴ *Rediff India Abroad* “More farmer suicides in Karnataka than Vidarbha” BS Bureau in New Delhi July 11, 2006 <http://www.rediff.com/news/2006/jul/11farmer.htm> (last visited: 05/03.07)

areas.⁸⁵ That sentiment, along with a national anti-incumbency trend contributed to S.M. Krishna's loss of his Chief Minister seat.

S.M. Krishna had been a champion of Bangalore and stayed personally involved in its development strategy, having stated that he dreamed Bangalore would become like Singapore. To that end, he had initiated the Bangalore Agenda Task Force to facilitate public/private partnerships. BATF was disbanded immediately after his loss, which symbolically at least, reduced the role of the corporate sector in governance.

JNNURM (2005).

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is an urban infrastructure financing body that requires several conditionalities for cities to receive funding. It is in response to the increasing importance of urban areas in India, which have historically received insufficient funding from the state and national governments.

JNNURM Mission Statement:

The aim is to encourage reforms and fast track planned development of identified cities. Focus is to be on efficiency in urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, community participation, and accountability of Urban Local Bodies/ Parastatal agencies towards citizens.⁸⁶

There are many mandatory reforms required by the JNNURM that are worthy of debate, aptly identified by Kathyayini Chamaraj in 2006, but in closing this paper I will focus on the community participation component.⁸⁷ One of the mandatory reforms at state level is enactment of the Community Participation Law which institutionalizes

⁸⁵ *The Hindu*, "State by State Election Analysis" May 20, 2004
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/elections2004/verdict2004/stories/2004052000400400.htm> (Last visited: 5/4/07)

⁸⁶ Government of India, JNNURM Overview

⁸⁷ Kathyayini Chamaraj, "Mission not accomplish-able" 29 July 2006 IndiaTogether website
[http://www.indiatoggether.org/2006/jul/gov-jnnurm.htm](http://www.indiatogether.org/2006/jul/gov-jnnurm.htm) (last visited: 5/4/07)

citizen's participation in development of city plans and creates *Area Sabhas* beneath Ward Committees which would help prepare the Ward Budget and Plan.

Ramesh and Swati frequently stated that their larger goal was for the idea of Janaagraha to transform India in twenty years. With that larger vision in mind, and their disinterest in repeating a campaign, their work in Bangalore was in part an experiment to prove that greater civic engagement with government was both feasible and desirable. Scalability and replicability were important to the founders in developing any of their campaigns for this reason.

"Janaagraha has advocated the institutionalisation of citizen participation with the Government of India, which has resulted in the inclusion of Community Participation Law as one of the mandatory reforms under JNNURM. Now the onus will be on State Governments to pass the law within the Mission period 2006-2011."⁸⁸

Through JNNURM, Ramesh, who is a Technical Advisor to the body, has successfully institutionalized increased community participation in local governance in statute. Only time will tell if this will occur in practice, both due to government successfully implementing the community participation law and citizens rising to the occasion, attending meetings and nominating leadership. Reasonable questions also remain about whether JNNURM's neo-liberal reforms such as repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling Act and encouraging privatization of public services contradicts the spirit of citizen engagement in local decision-making. Additionally, complaints about the lack of representative participation in JNNURM-related planning activities have been raised in Bangalore and other cities.

⁸⁸ Janaagraha website <http://www.janaagraha.org/node/1299> (Last visited: 5/4/07)

Growth of Bangalore (2006).

In April 2006, the Bangalore City Corporation annexed smaller town on the outskirts to create the Greater Bangalore City Corporation and manage an additional 50 wards. These areas range from small villages to peri-urban settlements, and have very limited infrastructure. This decision, voted on by the Corporators faced some public opposition, specifically focused on the city's capacity to govern these underdeveloped areas, when it has not sufficiently brought amenities to all of the "new" wards added in 1995. The fact that local elections for Corporators, which were supposed to occur in November 2006, continue to be delayed indefinitely because of the change is not promising for governance in the near term.

However, considering the findings of this paper that "new" wards are a more hospitable ground for participatory planning, this may present a positive opportunity for citizens to engage in ward development.

5.2. Recommendations to Community-Based Organizations and Resident Welfare Associations.

Inclusion.

Reduce practical barriers to universal participation. This includes holding meetings in the local and/or dominant language of residents so that most people are able to listen to the proceedings and give their opinions. It is not simple to manage multilingual participation, but if one language must be dominant it should be the language that is accessible to the majority of residents, with time allowed for translated discussions if needed. Understanding the language needs of citizens also includes understanding the basic literacy. If literacy or numeracy skills vary widely in the community, the planning

process should provide a way for everyone to understand the choices (focus on verbal rather than written communication, for example).

Another practical matter that can impact turnout is the location of the meetings; they should be central within the jurisdiction or rotating locations. The meeting space should be a socially neutral location (“neutral” may depend upon the community), such as a government school rather than country club or religious institution.

Even if campaign is narrow, leaders need to at least listen to concerns of others. If the campaign is about roads, that may not interest 30% of the population, but by finding out their concerns and promising that they will be addressed the next time, they may engage in the first campaign too, or at least provide their informed consent. Even better, engage a wide range of citizens in determining the priority issues for participatory decision-making.

Inclusion may also include education about the topic areas. It cannot be assumed that everyone understands basic civil engineering for a road infrastructure discussion. Tools should be provided to provide a basic foundation for all citizens, this will not only improve their decision-making capacities but also perhaps increase their confidence to voice their opinion about a topic.

Community history.

Like the well-known IAF mantra, small successes can get people engaged in longer-term projects that might not see immediate results. Busy people need a reason to take time to participate; it helps if you can point to something that has resulted from past efforts. Not all prior community activity is alike however. Community projects that

replace or privatize state functions, ignoring elected officials or government rules might not be the best training ground for participatory budgeting.

Leadership.

Leaders play a critical role in setting the tone for a community project. Leaders should be willing and able to give significant time to such a campaign, incorporating it to their life rather than seeing it as a small discrete project. Leaders are best when they have broad “cultural competence” and can (and want to) build relationships across barriers such as language, class, and caste. In addition, they need to be able to imagine themselves in others shoes enough to see priorities beyond their own neighborhood boundaries.

Relationship to Corporator.

Corporators who are not deeply entrenched in the party system or a local gang might be easier to work with because they still need to develop a political base. The RWA might be able to play an advisory role, but must be able to talk to him about more than just the campaign. Develop a genuine relationship and understand the Corporator's limitations and needs.

5.3. Conclusion

Also, the community should allow for flexibility in getting needs met so the Corporator can still maintain political relevancy and ensure genuine representation. It is the responsibility of the Corporator to serve the needs of all people, and citizens' groups need to be honest with themselves about how representative they are, and allow the Corporator to serve other.

The campaign's most significant weakness was its inability to connect with a

broader range of Bangaloreans, from all classes, ages and ethnic backgrounds. That lacuna limits the legitimacy of their prioritized lists (a fact that local officials understood and responded to by allotting only a percentage of the funds to the citizens' lists). That fact also exposes some of the limitations of being led by an NGO, in this case one with elite leadership and a corporate brand image that appealed to a segment of the city.

However, that weakness does not make the campaign itself regrettable. In commenting on participatory initiatives in a city that has many challenges to face, letting the perfect be the enemy of the good does not help the city to improve. Ward Works provided an entry point into politics, encouraging the middle-class to work collectively and understand the context of local governance when aiming to improve their community. In practicing group planning and deliberation for road infrastructure, using heretofore unused and atrophied muscles of local democracy, the residents have increased their capacity to effect change on behalf of a range of issues. The subsequent development of federations of RWAs provides a participatory infrastructure that can work on various issues, and would be well served to include self-help groups and associations in informal settlements as well. Further opportunities to engage across neighborhood and class lines could result in more equitable outcomes that both serve people's needs and improve the quality of local governance.

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APPENDIX A



Janaagraha Team up for a Better Bangalore

1380

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Page 1

Field Report Form

- The sheets are divided into two columns. The Field report will be filled at spot, the recommendation can be filled in after completing the field report.
- Use the back of the sheet for rough working.
- For footpaths and drains, decide which side is to be "A" and which is "B" before you start.
- Always work in pairs. This will act as a double check and one person can measure while the other enters the data in the form.

Association Information

Name of the Association _____

Name of contact person K. K. Ravi

Contact address EV 107, Vijayanagara, Opp. ISRO HQ, Near BEL Road
RMV II Stage, Bangalore 560094

Contact number 3412695 Date of reporting 2/2/2002
(day/month/year)

General Information

Ward No. 100 Zone _____

Locality RMV II Stage

Name of Road/Street-Main-Cross 1st Main Road, A.G's Colony

From (door no./site) Mayuri Restaurant To (door no./site) Bhramari Maruti Service, 49 Krishnappa layout Length of the Road(mts) 570

Section 1

Recommended to be filled after completing Section 3.

Obstructions

Other particulars pertaining to roadway

Type	On the Road (Nos.)	On the Footpath (Nos.)
Trees	*	5 65
Man-holes	6	5
Electric transformers	0	0
Debris		
<u>Others</u>		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Description	Remarks
Vehicle parking	
Garbage bins	Nil
Road lighting	Adequate
Road humps	One, unpainted
Presence of valleys (rainwater collects)	
<u>Any other particulars</u>	<u>Large open drain across road near ISRO HQ</u>

Section 2

To ensure accuracy of information, please read this section, and inspect your road before filling in the data.

Use the following drawings for easy reference

Fig. 1

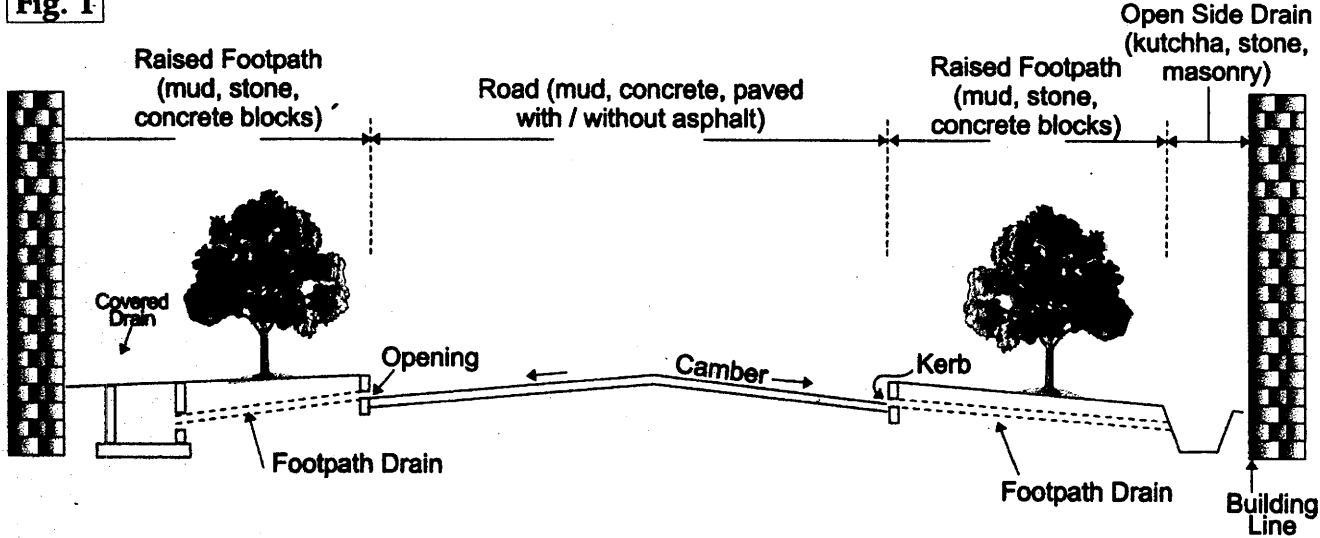


Fig. 2

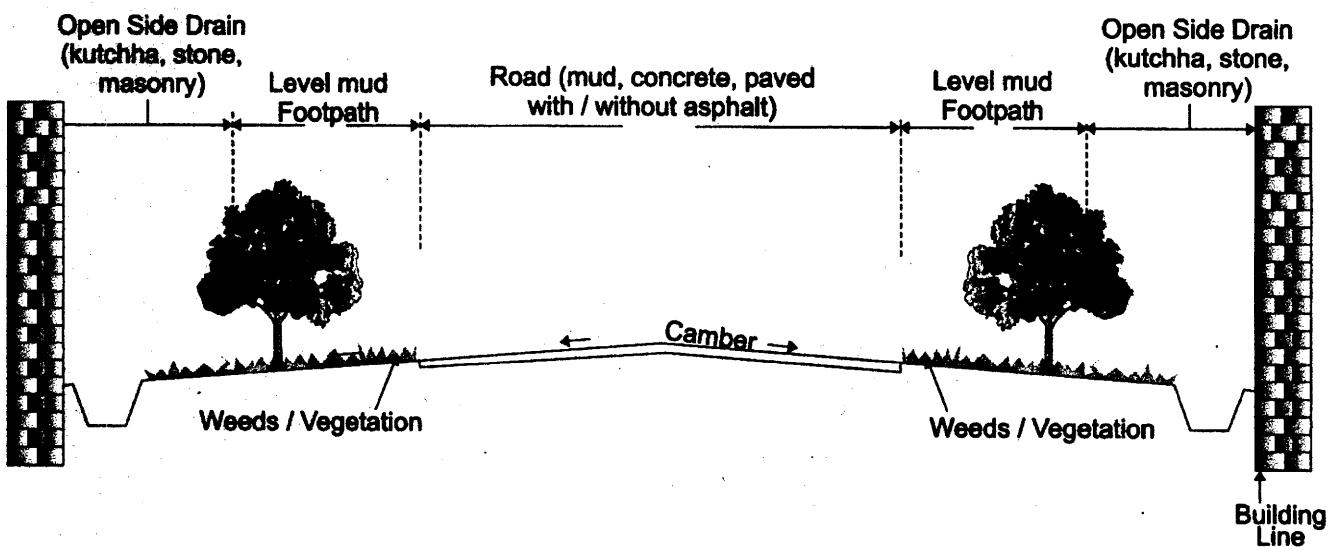
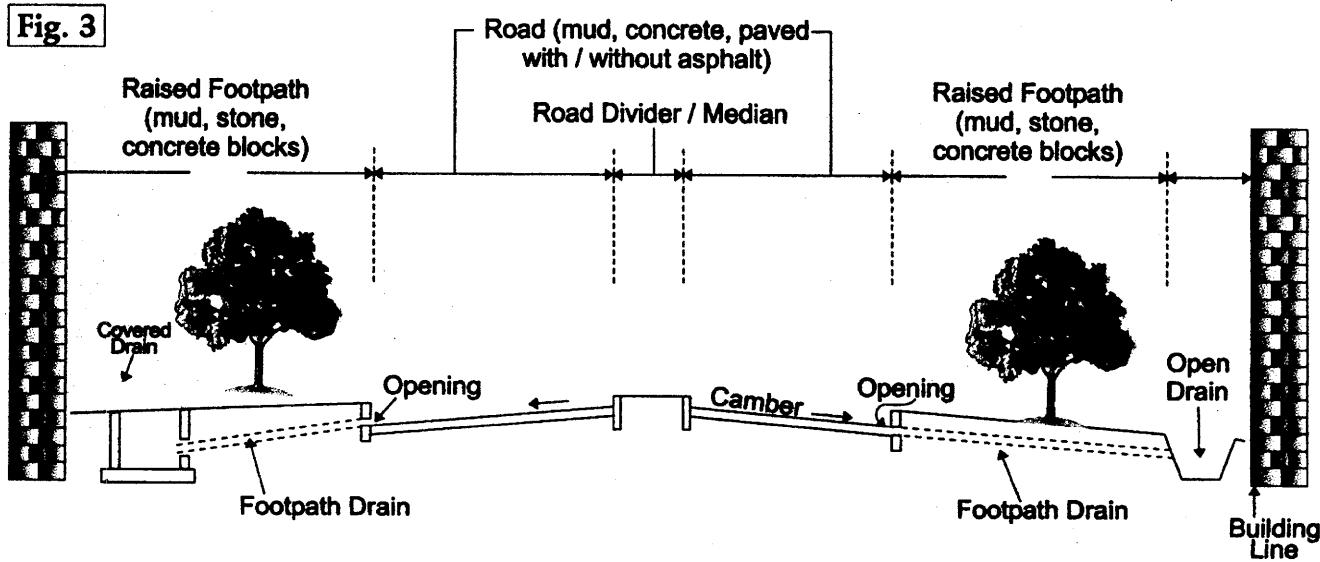


Fig. 3





Condition of local infrastructure

Section 3

(Include as many sub-stretches as necessary. Max. length of each sub-stretch should be approx. 500 metres)

Section 3.1 : Roads

From	To	Length (m)	Width (m)
Mayuri Restaurant	Bhramari Maruti Service	570	7

Gradient (slope along the length of the road)

Flat from ISRO till Bhramari Maruti Service Gentle Steep from Mayuri Restaurant till HQ

Number of pot-holes	Small(< 0.5 m)	Large(> 0.5 m)
Shallow	12	36
Deep		2

Large erosions on Road no.	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	7
Length(m) of each	6	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	
Width(m) of each	3	4	2	3	2	2	1	1	
Depth (S-Shallow D-Deep)	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	

Depressions or humps due to road cuttings (across or along the road)

Length(m) of each	7						
Width(m) of each	1						

Camber (arch across the width of the road)

<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nil (except for a small section)
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

Number of Large Depressions to be filled (greater than 0.5m wide)	1
---	---

Section 3.2 : Footpaths

Mayuri Restaurant

Side A	Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Width (m)	0.5 - 1
--------	----------	---	-----------------------------	-----------	---------

Type of Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/> Raised with Kerb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level with the road
------------------	---	---

Type of surface	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Earth	<input type="checkbox"/> Stone Slabs	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Block
-----------------	---	--------------------------------------	---

ISRO HQ

Side B	Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Width (m)	0.5 - 1
--------	----------	---	-----------------------------	-----------	---------

Type of Footpath	<input type="checkbox"/> Raised with Kerb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level with the road
------------------	---	---

Type of surface	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Earth	<input type="checkbox"/> Stone Slabs	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Block
-----------------	---	--------------------------------------	---

Total uneven surface area	0-25%	26-50%	> 50%
---------------------------	-------	--------	-------

Side A

Side A			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------	--	--	-------------------------------------

Side B

Recommendations for Improvement

3.1.a Satisfactory and needs no repairs. Yes No

3.1.b Generally satisfactory - needs attention only on some portions. Yes No

390 m from Mayuri till ISRO

3.1.c Poor condition. Yes No

(250 m)

3.1.d Road surface has pot holes of sizes as indicated. Needs correction. Yes No

3.1.e The exposed sub-base is eroded in patches. Needs strengthening of these patches and asphalting. Yes No

3.1.f Depressions / humps that need to be corrected due to road cutting. Yes No

3.1.g Uneven road surface due to poor patching. Re-asphalting required. Yes No

(180 m from Bhramari)

3.1.h Stretch has only the sub-base (layer of compacted stone jelly). Requires asphalting. Yes No

3.1.i The sub-base in the entire stretch has eroded. Needs strengthening and asphalting. Yes No

3.1.j Camber (cross slope) needs correction. Yes No

3.1.k Depressions and undulations on the road surface to be corrected. Yes No

3.1.l Leaking water/sewerage pipes need to be repaired/replaced. Yes No

3.2.a Remove vegetation on earth footpath and provide concrete blocks. Yes No

3.2.b Level/Reset/Replace uneven paving. Yes No

3.2.1 Kerb Stones

3.2.1.a Are improperly fixed and need correction. Yes No

Condition of local infrastructure

Recommendations for Improvement

Section 3.3 : Road Drainage

3.3.1 Side Drains (along the length of the road)

If not applicable, tick here and go to the next section

Side A Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (at 55 m from Mayuri)
Type of construction:	55 at 55 m from Mayuri Ignore	
<input type="checkbox"/> Masonry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone slabs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kutchha
Does the Side A drain have Cover Slabs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Side B Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (at 110 m from Mayuri)
Type of construction:	110 at 110 m from Mayuri	
<input type="checkbox"/> Masonry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone slabs	<input type="checkbox"/> Kutchha
Does the Side B drain have Cover Slabs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Condition of Drains

Side A

Number of Points of Water Stagnation in drain due to Improper Slope						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Number of missing links in side drain (Length in metres)	1	2	3	4	5	6
	13	6	55			

Entire length of the drain blocked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full
------------------------------------	---	--

Sections of drains blocked	1	2	3	4	5	6
Partial (Length in metres)	45					
Full (Length in metres)	4					

Number of Points where the drain is damaged	Side	Bottom
	1	1

Side B

Number of Points of Water Stagnation in drain due to Improper Slope						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Number of missing links in side drain (Length in metres)	1	2	3	4	5	6
	180					

Entire length of the drain blocked	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full
------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

Sections of drains blocked	1	2	3	4	5	6
Partial (Length in metres)						
Full (Length in metres)	18					

Number of Points where the drain is damaged	Side	Bottom

3.3.1 - Side drains

3.3.1.a Correct slopes as water stagnation is Yes No observed at certain places.

3.3.1.b Provide missing links to side drains. Yes No

3.3.1.c Desilt side drains and clear garbage/debris. Yes No

3.3.1.d Flooring and sides of drain are Yes No damaged at locations and need correction.

3.3.1.e Side drains are kutchha need stone, Yes No sides and base

excluding missing links

In the missing links,
it is not clear whether
there is no drain, or
it has been filled up
with mud.

excluding missing link

Condition of local infrastructure

Section 3.3 : Road Drainage

Condition of cover slabs over side drains
(Please put in the total for both Sides A and B)

If not applicable, tick here and go to the next section

Number of damaged cover slabs that need to be replaced	
Number of points where cover slabs need to be Reset	

3.3.2 Shoulder Drains (across width of footpath-from road leading to side drains)

If not applicable, tick here and go to the next section

	Side A	Side B
Are the shoulder drains present		
Number of shoulder drains		
Number of entry points and shoulder drains choked		

3.3.3 Culverts (cross drains under the road, i.e across the width of the road under survey)

If not applicable, tick here and go to the next section

Number of existing culverts	3
Locations of Culverts missing at valley/lowest level of road causing water stagnation (if applicable)	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Condition of Culverts	Condition (A, B, C or D)
Location	
1. Near ISRO HQ	D
2. "	D
3. "	D
4.	
5.	

A = Good | B = Partially damaged | C = Fully damaged
D = Partially blocked due to silting or debris or garbage

Culvert cover slabs

Type of slab	<input type="checkbox"/> Stone	<input type="checkbox"/> RCC
Number of culverts where cover slabs need to be replaced		- NA - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of culverts where cover slabs need to be reset		- NA - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Number of culverts higher than road level		Nil
Number of culverts lower than road level		N/A

Recommendations for Improvement

3.3.1.f Provide drain covers along the entire length of the side drain Yes No

3.3.1.g Replace slabs wherever broken. Yes No

3.3.1.h Reset cover slabs where holes / depressions / undulations cause water logging. Yes No

3.3.2 - Shoulder drains

3.3.2.a Missing on some stretches - needs to be provided. Yes No

3.3.2.b Clear entry points that are blocked. Yes No

3.3.3 - Culverts

3.3.3.a Clear culverts of debris/silt/garbage and other obstructions. Yes No

3.3.3.b Culverts damaged need repair Yes No

3.3.3.c Re-conduit service lines cutting across culverts. Yes No

Cover slabs over culverts

3.3.3.d Cover slabs are damaged and need to be replaced. Yes No

3.3.3.e Gaps between slabs observed - slabs need to be reset. Yes No

3.3.3.f Cover slabs not level with the road - slopes need to be corrected and made Yes No

APPENDIX B

ENS' WORKS LIST



Information : Individual
Name : Mr.K keshava rao
: 3412695

Name : 100 Sanjaynagar
: North
Name : M. Venkatesh

Field Report ID : 100-Ind/1/
Form No : 1,380
Record No : 2/2/2002
Date of Reporting

Navy Recommendation: 3.1.d Road surface has pot holes of size as indicated. Needs correction.

<u>Work Type - Sub Type:</u> Road Works - Asphalting	<u>BMP Work:</u>	Road Works	to	1st main road,AG's colony	
tching of Pot-holes	273/40	CUM	1,320.50	1.88	2,483.86
viding bituminous concrete of 40mm thick	269/36	CUM	2,122.00	0.96	2,026.93
					Rs. 4,510.79
<u>Navy Recommendation:</u> 3.1.j Camber[cross slope]needs correction.	<u>BMP Work:</u>	Road Works	to	1st main road,AG's colony	
<u>Work Type - Sub Type:</u> Road Works - Asphalting	271/39.1	CUM	1,320.50	112.22	148,184.86
ression filling/levelling course/camber correction	265/32	CUM	1,360.00	149.63	203,490.00
viding bituminous macadam base and binder course compacted to 75mm thick	269/36	CUM	2,122.00	79.80	169,335.60
viding bituminous concrete of 40mm thick					Rs. 521,010.46
					Road Works Total :Rs. 525,521.25

Navy Recommendation: 3.2.a Remove vegetations on earth footpath and provide concrete blocks.

<u>Work Type - Sub Type:</u> Footpath Works Repairs to unpaved footpath	<u>BMP Work:</u>	Footpath Works to	1st main road,AG's colony	
ting and clearing vegetation	325/1.2	SQM	0.53	285.00
th excavation (upto 1.5m, hard soil) and conveying earth up to a distance of 5 Km	247/I/1.2	CUM	100.65	85.50
vide Interlock pavers	163/I/6.1	SQM	450.00	570.00
				Rs. 265,256.63
				Footpath Works Total :Rs. 265,256.63

Navy Recommendation: 3.3-1.b Provide missing links to side drains.

<u>Work Type - Sub Type:</u> Drain Works - Formation of drains	<u>BMP Work:</u>	Drain Works	to	1st main road,AG's colony	
rth excavation (upto 1.5m, hard soil) and conveying earth up to a distance of 5 Km	247/I/1.2	CUM	100.65	132.48	13,334.11
viding granite slabs (75mm thick) and fixing in cm 1:8 for box drain drain A	417/4	SQM	139.00	414.00	57,546.00
					Rs. 70,880.11

mary Recommendation: 3.3.1.c Desilt side drains and clear garbage/debris.
Work Type - Sub Type: Drain Works - Formation of drains
esilting of drains

BMP Work	Drain Works	to	1st main road,AG s colony
Nil	CUM	90.00	64.13
Nil	CUM	90.00	153.90
			Rs. 19,622.25

mary Recommendation: 3.3.1.d Flooring and side of drain are damaged at location and need correction.
Work Type - Sub Type: Drain Works - Repairs to slopes
move and stacking of BS slabs
oviding granite slabs (75mm thick) and fixing in cm 1:8

BMP Work	Drain Works	to	1st main road,AG s colony
177/53	SQM	43.99	2.75
41/7.4	SQM	139.00	2.75
			Rs. 503.22

mary Recommendation: 3.3.3.a Clear culverts of debris/silt/garbage and other obstructions.
Work Type - Sub Type: Drain Works - Formation of drains
esilting of drains

BMP Work	Drain Works	to	1st main road,AG s colony
Nil	CUM	90.00	9.07
			Rs. 816.48
			Drain Works Total :Rs. 91,822.06