

Minutes of CASUMM's Bellandur Small Group Meeting - 13th September 2007

The meeting started with Rajan introducing CASUMM and what it does and also about the project which is supported by CIVIC. and what it focused on. He also mentioned the purpose of this small group meeting. He said that the project aimed at looking into issues like water supply, infrastructure, health, services etc in the Bellandur Gram Panchayath area.

Rajan's Presentation:

Based on the research conducted by CASUMM, Rajan outlined the following.

Bellandur has been the only GP partly within the boundaries of Bangalore's Outer Ring Road constructed 1999 onwards. The ring road was also aligned so as to split the main village Bellandur. In 1995 the 7 CMCs and 1 TMC were formed around Bangalore. But for Bellandur GP in 1994 itself a 20 member panchayath was elected and in place. This was a panchayth which with a vision of planned development and responsibility to the citizens and electorate was able to provide services such as water supply and sewerage etc as well as solidwaste management and roads in a phased manner. These services reached a majority of the population.

Key issues observed.

While services in the bigger village Bellandur and the neighbouring villages improved overall, the planned delivery of services was interrupted by the formation of BBMP.

The main citizens concern of water supply and cleanliness was systematically managed so as to maintain a quality of life comparable to only the richer localities / layout in the core areas of Bangalore.

While the handover of 110 villages to BBMP was notified in January 2007 the Dept of RD&PR decided to complete the transfer of property taxes, accounts, budgets and records only after March 31st 2007 i.e. the close of the financial year. Which means that the complete merger of villages took place only in F Y 2007-08? So the expenditures were de facto stopped and the panchyath cased to exist and a complete Governance Vacuum was created.

Property Tax related

	Development Charges	Property Tax Rates
House Sites/DC Converted	Rs.25,000/acre	15 paisa/ sq ft + 61% cess *
Commercial Site	Rs.45,000/acre	25 paisa/sq ft + 61% cess
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* cess – 31% + 30% (water cess)

3 bill collectors in Bellandur GP

2187 properties on register in Bellandur village

1 bill collector in Aralur, Ambalipura villages, 1475 properties on register

Water supply fully connected in Bellandur village

90 % covered by sewerage in Bellandur village

In Kariyamana Agrahara, where basic amenities are less, roads are unpaved, but water supply exists. The property tax is 4.5 paise per sq. foot and cess is 24%. Under the panchayat, the cess was 61%. Under BBMP, the development charges are 4 ½ lakhs per acre, earlier it was 25-40,000 per acre (this data is uncorroborated because instructions from BBMP not available regarding these changes).

Water related

As of now, the Bellandur panchayat gets its water supply from 5 borewells at the neighbouring Dodkenhalli panchayat and are pumped to a storage tank in Bellandur (and chlorinated), from where they are supplied to houses through piped water supply scheme.

There are only metered individual connections now, no public taps since 2003. In fact we were shown the storage tank as well as the connections that supply to individual houses with meters on the pipes. All homes in Bellandur have meters, as do homes in Ambalipura.

Water rates

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The water quality of the borewells in Bellandur and Kariyamana Agrahara villages has been checked by the Panchayat and a notice been issued to boil and use the water.

No. of borewells and depth? Average borewell depth in Bellandur village has gone down from 150 – 200 ft to 800-1000 ft

Rs.250/- to Rs. 300/- per tanker charged for water supply, substantially increases in the summer due to seasonal variations.

High end developments such as Intel campus and Eco Space campus. Eco space campus has 11 buildings. Water is supplied through tankers – 20-25 tankers per day @ Rs.35 – 40 per Kilo litre. No supply from BWSSB. Water is treated at 9 STPs, with the capacity of 1 KL per STP. For non potable uses 650KL is used per day, including treated water. All used for gardening, landscaping, toilet facilities.

For drinking water purposes, each company has their own supply, including canned water. 11-12 borewells in campus all of which are dry for which water harvesting, recharging of borewells are being attempted. Processes like reverse osmosis are being tried to make bore well water soft and drinkable.

Roads:

In Bellandur village concrete roads have been constructed in a phased manner after construction of sewerage and drainage. Subsequently main roads have been tarred. This process began in '96-'97 with the development of sewerage. Any observation of the village roads displays excellent

drainage and road infrastructure facilities covering all village pockets. This is in contrast with Kariyamana Agrahara where the roads are not tarred.

Ring road is a corridor of 6 lane road with one service road on each side. Land acquisition started in '95-'96 by BDA, which led to a struggle opposing the ring road by the Raitha Jagrithi Horatta Sangha, which was formed in 14 villages on both sides of the ring road from Sarjapur rd to Old Madras rd in 1996. Ring road construction began for this stretch in 2000 and completed by 2003. On 250 metres on each side of the road, development zone which has been acquired by BDA for the ring road has created a spurt in the construction of high end commercial and residential buildings, which include auto showrooms, interior decoration shops, clubs for eg Country Club, restaurants, international schools and colleges. This led to an increase in land prices and led to real estate speculation. Bellandur village was split by the ring road.

Land:

KIADB took 170 acres in its possession in 2000-2004, out of which many lands are under litigation and some have already been bought, for eg 30- 40 acres by Mantri Developers. First major spurt in land prices happened in 2001. During 1993, the cost of the land was around Rs. 2.5 lakhs per acre and by 1995, it went upto Rs. 45 lakhs. By 2001, the price rose upto Rs. 60 lakhs to 70 – 75 lakhs per acre. Since 2006 – 07, the price is calculated per sq.ft and is now ranging from Rs.3,500/- to Rs.4,000/-

Big real estate groups like Mantri, Sobha, Salarpuria, Sun City, Primal Developers, Prestige are big land owners/builders in this area now. They have developed approx 400 acres in Bellandur GP area. This spurt of growth has brought in skilled, semi and unskilled migrants from places like MP, Rajasthan, Orissa, W.Bengal, TN, AP and also North Karnataka and other lesser developed places in Karnataka.

Rental prices have increased substantially due to the presence of high end real estate projects in that area.

Electricity:

In the Eco Space campus, the capacity/load is 1500 to 3500 KVA. 9 out of 11 buildings in the campus has DGs in the range of 625 – 1200 KVAs. This is due to many incidents where all the safety equipment tripped. There has been a decrease in power cuts in the last one year or so.

Governance issues:

In 1994, after the 73rd amendment was implemented, elections were held for 20 members to Bellandur GP, consisting of 5 villages – Bellandur (10 members), Ambalipura, Kariyamana Agrahara, Aralur and Devarabisenahalli. 10 members from remaining 4 villages.

Bellandur is one of the 110 villages that have newly come under BBMP jurisdiction as of 16th January 2007 (while the draft BBMP notification wanted to include only 70% urbanized villages it was changed to 30% for the final notice). A 20 member Bellandur Gram Panchayat (GP) elected in 2004 has been dissolved and in its place currently is Bellandur sub-division now runs 11 villages incl a few from two other panchayats. The BBMP Bommanahalli zonal (old CMC) office headed by Joint Commissioner Venkataramana Nayak with all other staff. One Corporator will now replace the 25-30 elected panchayat members. This is indicative of how decision-making power is now being concentrated in the hands of few under BBMP.

Under the BBMP, Bellandur would be a sub division in the Bomanahalli zone, headed by an ARO. There are four sub divisions in this zone including Bellandur. Eleven villages come under

Bellandur sub-division – Bellandur, Ambalipura, Haralur, Doddakanneli, Junasandra, Kaikandrahalli, Kasavanahalli, Agara, Iblur, Chikka Bellandur, Bhoganahalli.

Jagannath's Presentation

Ex Panchayat President and local leader, Mr. Jagannath Reddy, was called to speak after that on the 73rd constitutional amendment in Bellandur and the transition to BBMP. He started by describing what the 74th amendment meant and how the local bodies were meant to govern under that and areas they were meant to cover. BBMP was formed including 111 villages. ULB elections have not been held since BBMP's formation. There used to be 10 members in the Bellandur panchayat earlier, now under BBMP there will be one corporator for 40,000 people.

Karnataka along with few other states have performed well under the panchayati raj system. Ward sabhas were set up at the Bellandur Panchayat which was an initiative of Jagannath Reddy. This was then followed at the state level. The rights under the panchayati raj system were briefly touched on. Reservations are there in the wards / panchayats for SCs /STs and also 33% for women. This reservation rotation should continue to be in place for 20 years at a time and revised after that similar to MLAs election reservations. In Anekal it has been the same reservation for 60 years.

He ended speaking about the Bellandur Lake and the campaign that has been run to save it, including the case filed in court since 1996 and which is now with the Lok Adalat .

Participants Responses:

After this, the meeting was opened to responses by participants, which brought forth the following:

- Concern and some indignation expressed by one participant on the system of reservation criteria for 20 years.

- On Cauvery water - There was a committee set up earlier on this and there was some progress. But after the set up of BBMP, there is no progress in this as well as other areas such as roads. Information on this must be provided by CASUMM to the authorities

Vinay Baindur explained that the next stage of Cauvery bulk water supply is expected it will be received only in 2012 when water can be supplied to households. This will still not cover 110 villages now added to BBMP. A new scheme must be put in place for that. Rajan made the point that forget peripheral areas, even in the BMP area, the status of delivery of health, water and other services is still bad

- IT and BT cos are coming to Bangalore and to this area, but how was this impacting the development of these areas? After BBMP spent so much money on providing facilities, land etc to these companies, how much employment has been provided by these companies to the locals? Information on this again needs to be given by CASUMM to the government.

- The IT/BT companies mostly belong to foreign countries. The government keeps saying that there has been development and growth because of these companies, but how much of that has been for the common man/locals?

There was also general unhappiness shared on BBMP and its formation. Vinay at this point said that all the panchayats, which were to become part of BBMP, passed resolutions for joining BBMP. To which one participant said there was resistance from some panchayats, though not all.

At this point many people except Jagannath Reddy and Janardhan Reddy left to attend a function, which closed the meeting. Both of them had a discussion with us after that largely around the

issue of elections. The points that came up were how it was only mostly people with money could contest elections. Jagannath recounted how voters were bribed with items such as saris, money (Rs.500 per person) etc. So it's very difficult for people with service orientation to contest and win elections. There was also some discussion on the local body and MLA systems.

Key Issues in Bellandur to raise at small group meeting at Bellandur, Aug 25

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CASUMM

Collaborative for the Advancement of the Study of Urbanism through Mixed Media
