ELECTIONS TO BANGALORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

An Experiment to Stimulate Informed Choices

S. Manjunath

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTRE
BANGALORE
ELECTIONS TO BANGALORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

An Experiment to Stimulate Informed Choices

S. MANJUNATH

MAY, 1998

Public Affairs Centre
Bangalore
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Choose the Right Councillor Programme' was an initiative of the Public Affairs Centre in collaboration with other organisations in Bangalore. This effort drew immense benefit from the conceptual inputs provided by Dr. Samuel Paul, Chairman, PAC. My colleagues at the Centre were a major source of support and assistance. A special note of gratitude in this regard to Sita Sekhar for helping me make sense of the numbers and Gopakumar for editing the manuscript. The effort would not have materialised but for the wonderful energy and commitment of many residents; I thank all resident groups, CIVIC, BET and the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike for making this exercise a success.
Elections to Bangalore Municipal Corporation
An Experiment to Stimulate Informed Choices

Introduction

Do you know who your ward Councillor is? If this million rupee question is asked of people in large cities and metropolises, most would respond in the negative. This mirrors the ignorance of citizenry who do not recognise the significance of the fact that the local civic body is the arm of the government and civic administration closest to them, a point of contact. The rare persons who do respond in the affirmative are either apathetic or cynical about politicians being corrupt. Most city dwellers seem to neither understand nor appreciate the institution of local self-government, the role of ward councillors, and their importance in the development and civic management of their neighbourhood in particular and the city in general. Lack of proactive participation of people in political processes at the urban grassroots is a key factor that has contributed to urban chaos. Cynicism and apathy cannot carry the urban communities too far. The selfish and nonchalant attitude of citizens should give way to a more constructive civic sense. And the sooner the better!

There is no doubt that governing and managing the rapidly exploding metropolises and other urban centres in India has become increasingly complex owing to unprecedented and ill-planned growth. Provision and maintenance of basic civic amenities have virtually broken down. Our civic bodies seem to be ill-equipped to handle the situation, mainly due to lack of adequate financial resources and the capacity to manage existing resources efficiently. This has been compounded by excessive
control and interference of higher levels of government in the functioning of local bodies.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 (Nagarpalika Act), seeks to decentralise municipal administration and empower institutions of urban local self-government by providing financial autonomy. By stipulating that ward level committees be created to manage and develop local areas, the Nagarpalika Act gives scope for people to participate more actively in the management of their neighbourhood, a factor which is central to improving the quality of life. Participation of residents is bound to improve the efficiency of civic bodies since it calls for greater transparency and accountability. **That an elected representative plays a critical role in this transformation cannot be overstated.** Therefore, electing the right candidate is of paramount importance. Citizens cannot afford mistakes in exercising their franchise, for they will then have to pay for it by having to put up with a non-performing leader for 5 long years. Who then, is the **right candidate**? How does one go about choosing him or her? The current electoral system gives no answers to such questions and it is up to citizens to organise themselves and make an effort to collect information about all candidates contesting an election. Without this, it is extremely difficult to choose the right person who would effectively represent local interests in the Municipal Corporation and would work sincerely towards resolving related problems. Neighbourhood residents’ welfare associations are appropriate agencies to carry out this task of informing voters about their candidates.

Bangalore, with a population of over five million as recorded in 1996, is inarguably the fastest growing city in India. The quality of civic amenities and infrastructure has been steadily deteriorating for a range of reasons, the more important ones being the multiplicity of agencies involved in the provision and
maintenance of basic services, poor co-ordination among these agencies, lack of vision on the part of planners, poor civic consciousness in citizens and lack of political will to implement policy decisions. The 1996 elections to the Bangalore City Municipal Corporation were significant in that they were the first elections held after the enactment of the 74th Constitutional Amendment. As is usual before elections, many grandiose proposals for improving infrastructure facilities were being aired. Several organised citizens' groups with different perspectives were striving to achieve a single goal - an improvement in the quality of life in the city.

'CHOOSE THE RIGHT COUNCILLOR' (CRCP) was an experimental effort by Public Affairs Centre to assist residents' groups to collect and disseminate information about candidates contesting elections to the Bangalore City Corporation (BCC) in their respective wards.

The focus here was two-fold. First, to make the electoral process more transparent so that the electorate could make an informed choice. Second, to mobilise public opinion and action towards creating a 'demand' within civil society for the revitalization of polity and society. More than a political exercise, the intention of CRCP was to enable citizens' groups to internalize major findings from efforts, and to strengthen the capacity of these organisations.

This paper has two parts. Section I describes the conduct of the exercise placing special emphasis on the processes involved. Section II analyses the findings and identifies the major 'learnings'.
Section I
Planning, Strategy & Conduct

Planning

In June 1995, the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP), or the Municipal Corporation, completed its term. The State government appointed a Municipal Administrator to carry out the functions of BMP until fresh elections were held. A year later, there were newspaper reports that elections to BMP were going to be held in July 1996. The Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a non-profit organisation striving to improve the quality of governance in India, responded with ‘Choose the Right Councillor Programme’ (CRCP). PAC drew upon a precedent it had set by conducting a similar experiment in collaboration with Deccan Herald, a local Daily, during the Parliamentary Elections of 1996. In June 1996, PAC organised an Open House Meeting with representatives of fifteen residents’ associations in Bangalore. The objective of this initiative was to:

- Test the applicability of the idea and the concept
- Identify and mobilise interested residents’ organisations
- Design the methodology
- Devise strategies.

The response was overwhelming. The group decided that PAC should play a central role and as a first step, would formulate a draft questionnaire and circulate it among the participant groups for comments and suggestions. However, the Government’s decision soon after this to postpone these elections indefinitely, disrupted the planning process. In the last week of September 1996, the poll schedule was finally announced and elections were to be held on 27, October 1996. By this time, PAC had drafted the questionnaire.
On 8, October 1996 PAC organised the second Open House Meet to discuss the action plan with objectives similar to the first Open House Meeting. Representatives of about 13 residents’ organisations participated. Draft questionnaires were circulated in advance. There was a brief introduction to the Nagarpalika Act (74th Constitutional Amendment) with special emphasis on Ward Committees.

The entire process of planning and implementing CRCP was participatory. PAC and two other NGOs, CIVIC and the Bangalore Environment Trust (BET), played a supportive and facilitating role. CIVIC is a voluntary initiative working to strengthen citizens’ efforts towards achieving a decent quality of life in Bangalore, while BET works on the conservation and revival of Bangalore’s environment. Residents’ organisations representing eight wards of BMP participated.

Strategy

Key elements of strategy used were:

- Identifying and sensitising interested neighbourhood organisations to play a proactive role in local government elections by collecting relevant information about candidates contesting BMP elections in their wards.
- Wide dissemination of information about candidates in the wards. The format was designed to provide the voters with a cross-comparison of information about different candidates regarding various issues, in order to elicit a positive and informed response from them.
- Creating a network of these neighbourhood organisations towards collective follow-up action for improvement in the quality of life at the ward level.

The strategies were operationalised by constituting a core group consisting of PAC, CIVIC, and BET to oversee the
implementation of the programme. A *Draft questionnaire* was designed to obtain comprehensive information about the candidates, as well as to provide a comparative analysis to the voter. Questions covered a wide range of issues and were classified in three sections.

I. **Personal details**

Name, age, education, occupation, gender, whether resident of ward, main source of income, annual income, current value of immovable assets, tax payment details, criminal record if any.

II. **Public service record**

Political affiliations - past and present, whether previously contested elections to Panchayat/ Municipal Council/ City Corporation and the results, past achievements in constituency.

III. **Priorities and Commitments for the ward and the city**

Candidates were asked to list out three most important problems concerning their ward and Bangalore city. This section also sought to test candidates' awareness of the Nagara Palika Act and their commitment to participatory decision making processes in their ward.

**Data Collection and Dissemination**

Given the nature of the experiment, the core group felt that residents' organisations were better equipped to collect data through interviews with the candidates and to disseminate it in a standard format. Distribution of a leaflet was considered the most suitable form for disseminating this information. PAC prepared a sample which provided a cross comparison of candidates and this was finalised by the core group. PAC collected information from eight wards and printed 3000 leaflets.
in English and Kannada for each ward. Ward maps and lists of polling stations were used to clarify geographical boundaries of wards and to avoid duplication of information.

**Neighbourhood Newspaper:** An interesting phenomenon in recent times in some localities of Bangalore is the birth of neighbourhood newspapers primarily introduced for commercial advertising and distributed free of cost to the residents. These newspapers such as *Times of Indiranagar* and *Times of Malleswaram*, have also been highlighting civic problems in the neighbourhood thus becoming an effective tool for civil society organisations in the wards. *Residents’ groups of two such wards convinced the editorial board of these newspapers to disseminate information about the candidates in their neighbourhood.*

**Public interaction with candidates:** Questionnaires completed by candidates had their signatures as testimony to the facts and views put forth by them. In addition, Open House Meetings with all candidates in a given ward were suggested for greater transparency regarding information provided by them through interviews. Considering the time and effort involved, it was left to the groups to decide whether to organise these meetings in their wards. Three groups volunteered. Dissemination of leaflets preceded the Open House meetings in order to make interaction between candidates and citizens more meaningful.

**Final List of candidates:** Prior to the last date for withdrawal of nominations, there were, on an average, 20 candidates in each ward. Many of them were either *dummy*, or *rebel* candidates who would trade with the potential winners to withdraw nominations. According to the poll schedule, the final list devoid of these extraneous elements would be available just eight days before the polling day. This also meant that candidates had only seven days for canvassing and campaigning. Even after the withdrawal of nominations, the
average number of candidates in a ward was ten. Chasing these busy persons, explaining the experiment, interviewing them, processing the voluminous data, printing and disseminating 18,000 leaflets, and then organising open house meetings. All this within eight days time was an extremely rigorous and ambitious task.

_Identification of residents organisations:_ The complexity and need for an intense and speedy effort was explained to all the participants at the Open House. Out of twelve, residents' groups in eight wards volunteered to participate. Having a large volunteer base was a decisive and important factor in making this commitment.

_Plant of Action (see annexure I):_ The following information was circulated to all the groups eight days prior to the polls:

- A time-table of activities with an emphasis on rigorous and speedy effort
- Copies of questionnaires in Kannada and English and a list of polling stations in each ward in order to identify geographical boundaries for dissemination of leaflets.
- A list of suggestions for conducting the interview and collecting data.
- A list of suggestions for effective dissemination of leaflets

_Conducting the survey

_Day one_

- The final lists of candidates with their addresses for each of the 8 wards were obtained from the Offices of Bangalore Mahanagara Palike.
- This, questionnaires in English and Kannada and lists of polling stations were distributed to groups from 8 wards to
help facilitate dissemination.

- A set of guidelines for conducting interviews was also provided.

**Day two, three and four**

This was the most critical period. It was unbelievable that all the 8 wards had completed the interviews in just three days, given the speed with which this exhaustive work had to be done. In some wards there were more than 20 candidates. In all, more than 100 candidates were interviewed. Surprisingly, the candidates were receptive and co-operative. Many of them perceived this exercise as widening their publicity campaign! The questionnaire was filled and signed by the candidates as an endorsement of the information and views given by them. *The enthusiasm of the residents' groups was simply incredible.*

**Day five and six**

At PAC, the data pouring in from seven wards was processed, collated and translated. The entire PAC team was at work. Leaflets in English and Kannada were printed in thousands and delivered to the respective groups. *We had some tense moments - printing and proof-reading errors are common when one is printing a variety of data, but in this case we could not afford any mistakes. In one instance the party affiliation of a candidate was printed wrong. In another ward, the entire information about a prominent candidate was missing. These errors were rectified in time through a press release and reprinting of pamphlets. In one case leaflets were manually corrected by the members of the residents' association.*

**Day seven and eight**

The leaflet was designed to give the reader a cross comparison of the candidates across various issues at a glance. In Malleswaram and Indiranagar wards, the neighbourhood
newspapers, Times of Indiranagar and Times of Malleswaram, were invaluable for printing and dissemination of information. This exercise has revealed the immense potential of such newspapers in reaching out to a small community. In other wards leaflets were distributed by the volunteers of residents’ groups.

Three wards organised public meetings bringing all the candidates together on a single platform. Each candidate was given equal time to address the residents of the ward about his/her plans and priorities. Logically, this should have been followed by a discussion comparing statements made with information given earlier by candidates which was published in the booklets. However, time was a major constraint.

**Review meeting**

A review meeting was held to help share experiences of participant groups and to formulate an agenda of action in the future. The meeting also aimed to strengthen and widen the network of residents’ groups which had been formed in the process of CRCP. Two important suggestions which emerged were:

- Regular follow-up meetings of citizens with the elected Councillor of a given ward to evolve a participatory mechanism for the management and development of the ward.
- Awareness workshops for elected representatives on Nagarapalika Act.
Section II
Outcomes of the experiment

Proactive participation is indeed possible!

CRCP is proof that organised citizens’ groups can indeed play a positive and proactive role in the electoral process relating to urban local self government, provided specific ways of doing so are identified. The following observations are indicative of this:

• In one of the participant wards, it was reported that a few candidates withdrew their nomination as a result of probing by citizens.

• Almost all the candidates interviewed, were very cooperative and enthusiastic and many of them perceived the programme as widening their own publicity campaign.

• Since the programme called for cohesive and intensive voluntary work from members of neighbourhood organisations, it has strengthened the groups both structurally and functionally.

• For the participant citizen groups, the programme provided for a paradigm shift in their focus and strategy. Drawing from their experiences in this programme, some groups expressed that advocating for systemic and process-oriented changes is far more effective and sustainable than advocating for ad hoc and piece-meal solutions. CRCP is unique in that this is the first time in Bangalore, if not in the country, that citizens’ groups attempted a practical intervention to bring about transparency and accountability in the electoral process of urban local bodies. The significance of this was reinforced at the review meeting where all groups present pledged to continually monitor the developmental activities of the Councillors in their respective wards.
• One other important factor is the catalytic role played by the Public Affairs Centre in providing technical and financial inputs which are critical in such an endeavour. CRCP is a shining example of collaborative citizen action involving a range of voluntary organisations, including consumer groups, operating at the neighbourhood and city levels.

• CRCP has created a network of participant citizens groups which could strengthen existing initiatives for collective action towards improved systems in the management of the city.

• Whose Vote is it Anyway?: Based on CRCP, this short film captures the essence of the experiment and provides valuable and interesting insights on its concept, strategy and conduct. A powerful advocacy instrument, the film describes the process of collecting and disseminating information through leaflets and neighbourhood newspapers by proactive and critical citizen groups. The film which is educative and interesting could be used as an effective aid to stimulate ordinary citizens to make informed choices in elections, and to encourage organised groups to undertake similar efforts in other parts of the country.

Candid Speak: Making Sense of the Information Collected
(See Annexure II for details)

Data collected by interviewing candidates of 11 wards has been analysed. The primary objective of the analysis is to throw light on the type of candidates fielded in current urban local body elections. The findings could interest political parties in providing guidelines for selection of candidates in future. Following are some of the highlights of the analysis:
Personal Profile

Age

Only 20% of the candidates are in the age-group of 20 to 30 years. This indicates the need for mobilising civic leadership from among youth.

Education:

Post-graduates and professionals constitute only 6.4% and 7.4% of the candidates respectively. This is a matter of serious concern. In future, wouldn’t it be desirable to see more educated and professional candidates contesting elections to the local bodies?

Occupation:

53% of the candidates are self-employed or business people, and 13% are ‘social workers’, thus constituting a total of 66%. This throws up interesting questions:

i) Do social workers and business people have more time than others to serve people?

ii) Is politics increasingly seen as a profession, business activity, a money spinner? Since one has to invest capital resources for a period of five years to obtain (purchase) a ticket to contest elections, does winning a seat provide an opportunity to earn returns on investment, with interest?

Candidates’ Record of Party Affiliations:

If the number of candidates who left a political party to contest as independents (20%) and those who originally contested as independents (25.5%) are added, we find that almost fifty percent of candidates are without any party affiliation. Does this indicate that local issues are not being attended to sufficiently by
major political parties? Is it also an indication that independent candidates are better equipped to deal with the local ward level issues and concerns? Results of the elections held for civic bodies in the rest of Karnataka in 1995 justify this argument to some extent. Almost a third of the total seats were won by independent candidates. When percentages of those who joined a party after being independent candidates, those who changed party affiliation after being elected and those who left a party to contest as independents (rebel) are added, we get a total of 42 - are these candidates jumping jacks without loyalty to any ideology or institution but only interested in serving their personal interests?

- **Profile of Civic Responsibility**

The Civic Responsibility Profile intends to give information about candidates' understanding of civic bodies, the duties of Councillors and the relevant laws that govern municipal administration.

**Candidates' understanding of the functions of a Councillor and BMP**

One of the questions in the interview sought to know which three issues candidates would attempt to resolve on a basis of priority if elected. This would reflect the duties, rights and obligations of a Councillor. 47% of the candidates' responses to these questions neither reflected the duties of a Councillor nor were concrete(?). Only 7% seemed to have understood the functions and duties of a Councillor and BMP.

**Awareness about the 74th Constitutional Amendment or Nagarpalika Act**

The Nagarapalika Act enacted by the Union Parliament in 1992 and subsequently passed by the State Governments seeks to
decentralise powers to Municipal bodies. It also stipulates constitution of Ward- level Committees in cities which have a population of 3 lacs or more. These ward-committees are intended to be units of urban administration easily accessible to citizens. The spirit behind this landmark legislation is to make urban local bodies transparent, accountable and participatory, and to strengthen them financially and constitutionally. Levels of awareness of these aspects would indicate the candidates’ knowledge of the structure, functions and the challenges faced by urban local self-government institutions in general. Almost 55% of the candidates were unaware of the Nagarpalika Act!

There is no doubt that these findings on the civic profile of candidates indicate an urgent need for civic training for the newly elected Councillors.

Lack of transparency and accountability in the electoral processes is perhaps the one ill which has plagued the Indian political system the most. The Indian Constitution does not have the Right to Recall as in some Scandinavian countries. This virtually leaves citizens with no tools to check erring elected representatives. Though Choose the Right Councillor Programme is not a complete answer to this lacuna, it does highlight the need for informed decision-making in exercising our franchise if we are to move in the right direction. CRCP is an experiment which serves as an important first step towards increasing transparency and people’s participation in the electoral process. Together they marched to the polling booths armed with information!
ANNEXURE I

Time table/Plan of Action
circulated to the participants of CRCP

18 Oct  1. Briefing at Swabhimana Cell, c/o Dr.Jayachandra Rao, Additional Health Officer BCC, N.R.Square Bangalore-2

2. Distribution of questionnaires,( Kannada/ English) / leaflet format, list of polling stations /polling areas in each of the participating wards, finalised list of candidates for each ward and Nagarpalika Act posters

19 - 21 Data Collection/ interviews / Open house meetings by the residents’ groups in the respective wards

22 Please ensure that the filled up questionnaires reach PAC office before 11 a.m on 22nd October. Only then will we be able to process and print the leaflets

23 - 24 Process of data at the PAC office
Printing and delivery of leaflets

25 - 26 Distribution of leaflets by the volunteers of residents’ groups in their respective wards

27 Polling

28 - 29 Get together for a review

• Data collection/interviews - some suggestions (19 - 21 Oct )

• Try and meet the candidates preferably with a prior appointment

• Ensure that the data collection team comprises of some senior citizens and women
• Try and interview all the candidates. Try contacting each of them at least once. Maintain a record of all your attempts to contact the candidates.

• Use either Kannada or English questionnaire depending on the candidate’s choice.

• If the candidates do not co-operate, don’t get upset, always try and be polite and do not force it on them.

• Explain the following and seek his/her co-operation
  i) The objectives of the programme
  ii) The structure of the Questionnaire

1. There are 2 options in using the questionnaire
   a. Candidates themselves can fill up the questionnaire in which case please check whether all the questions have been answered in the specified format
   b. you can ask questions and simultaneously fill up the questionnaire.

   In any case, please ensure that the candidates sign at the bottom of the questionnaire. Information from questionnaires without signatures of the candidates will not be published. Wherever the respondents refuse to answer/ dodge please write ' refused to comment ' in the space provided for a given item.

2. There are four types of questions:
   a. Mere statement of facts such as name, age, education and so on.
   b. Yes/no type
   c. Multiple choice questions- the candidates are required to choose and put a tick on any one of the 4 answers given.
   d. Open ended questions : ( items 2.4, 2.5, 3.1) try and avoid
long answers. Let the answers be of one line each.

3. Emphasise that information thus collected will be widely disseminated in English & Kannada through leaflets
   - Some candidates may dodge the issue by asking you to leave the questionnaire with them to be collected later. Avoid this situation by reiterating that the whole exercise takes only 20-25 minutes and that answering is very simple.

- **Distribution of leaflets: 25-26 Oct.**

Leaflets will be printed by PAC only if the completed and signed questionnaires reach PAC office before 11 a.m. on 22nd October, Tuesday. For each ward 3000 leaflets of A3 size with English & Kannada back to back will be printed.

Care to be taken to avoid spilling over of information from one ward to another as it may confuse the voters in the latter. Hence please make arrangements for distribution of leaflets in the polling areas as mentioned in the list of polling stations for each ward.

Organise a bunch of young volunteers from amongst the members of your organisations, motivate them to distribute to every alternate house at least in some streets. Leave a bunch of leaflets each at some shops, restaurants, provisions stores, fair price depots and so on, to be picked by people who visit these places.

Wherever there is a neighbourhood newspaper such as Times of Malleswaram or Star of Koramangala, discuss with the editor/publisher about the possibilities of publishing the data through their newspapers.
CANDID SPEAK: Making Sense of the Information Collected

Data collected through interview schedules from candidates of 11 wards has been analysed. The primary objective of the analysis is to throw light on the nature of candidature for urban local body elections, as it exists in the prevailing situation. The findings may be of interest to political parties as these could provide some guidelines for the selection of candidates in future.

A profile of the wards: Though only eight wards participated in Choose the Right Councillor Programme, we managed to interview candidates from three additional wards. Incidentally, these 11 wards proved to be representative of the 100 wards of BMP. They are not only geographically distributed but are also representative of the different categories of reservation such as women, backward class, SC & ST, general and so on. Total number of candidates interviewed were ninety-four.

Results: Results of the analysis could be classified under three types of profiles - Personal, Public and Civic Responsibility

Personal:

Personal Profile draws from the demographical information.
i) **Age-wise Composition of Candidates**

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Indicated</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most candidates are in the age group 20 - 50, while 38.3% are in the age group of 30-40, closely followed by 22.3% in 40-50 category. Only 20.2% are in 20-30 age group which indicates the need for mobilising civic leadership from amongst the youth.

ii) **Gender**: 75.5% of the candidates are males while 24.5% are females. In general, Constituencies reserved for women reported fewer number of candidates as compared to other categories and there were hardly any women candidates in other categories. The recently enacted Nagarpalika Act stipulates 30% reservation for women in urban local bodies. This doesn't imply a restriction on women who would like to contest from other wards.

iii) **Whether Residents of Ward**: Ward is the nearest (for People) unit of municipal administration in major cities. It is only a matter of common sense that a candidate should be sufficiently knowledgeable about the ward, in order to be an able representative of people from a given ward. Whether or not a candidate is a resident of a ward could be one of the important criteria to make a decision in this regard. In the
present study, 81% said they were residents of ward, 14% said they weren’t, while 5% have not indicated their place of residence.

iv) Distribution of Candidates by Income

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group (Per annum)</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50,000</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 to 75,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75,001 to 1,00,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1,00,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Income</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About 47% of the candidates are in the income group of less than Rs.50,000, while 22.3% are in Rs.50,000 - 75,000.

v) Distribution of Candidates by Value of Assets

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of Assets</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2 lacs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 6 lacs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 lacs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 10 lacs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Assets</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21% reported no assets, 20% have not indicated, 18% are in the group of *less than 2 lacs*, 18% are in the group of *2 to 6 lacs* and 17% are in the category of *more than 10 lacs*.

**vi)**  Tax Payment Details of Candidates  
**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Tax</th>
<th>Candidates who pay</th>
<th>Candidates for whom tax does not apply</th>
<th>Candidates who do not pay though they are in taxable category</th>
<th>Candidates who have not indicated their status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income tax</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Tax</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income Tax: 25.5% have declared that they pay income tax. (in fact two of them had enclosed documents supporting their claim), while 58.5% claimed non inclusion within the tax bracket and 6% have not responded.

Property Tax: 43.6% have declared that they pay property tax, while 44.7% claimed that they were not taxable and 10% have not responded. The significantly higher percentage in this category as compared to the former, demands greater attention and probing.
### Educational Background

#### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literate upto Primary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto Middle School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSLC/HSc</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College but not Graduate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate(general)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate(general)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate(professional)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate(professional)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26.6% have either completed high school or dropped out while in the high school 21% have reached college but didn’t complete and 26.6% are graduates. Post graduates and professionals constitute 6.4% and 7.4% respectively. This is a matter of serious concern. In the coming years, wouldn’t it be desirable to see more and more graduates, post graduates and professionals contesting elections to the local bodies?
53% of the candidates are business people or self employed, followed by 13% 'social workers' thus a total of 66%. This is very interesting for the following reasons:

a) It could mean that social workers and business people have more time than others to serve people

b) Politics is increasingly seen as an occupation/profession/business activity/a money spinner. Since one has to invest capital resources for a period of five years to obtain (purchase) a ticket to contest elections, winning the same will provide an opportunity to earn back the investment with interest.
Public Profile

i) Candidates' Record of Party Affiliations

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the same party</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed party</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined party after being</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left party to contest as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent candidate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you combine the percentages of those who left a party to contest as independents (20%) and those who contested as independents (25.5%), we find that almost fifty percent of them are individuals without any party affiliation. Does this indicate that local issues are not being attended to sufficiently by major political parties? Also is it an indication that independent candidates are better equipped to deal with the local, ward level issues and concerns? Results of the elections held for rest of the civic bodies of Karnataka in 1995 does justify this argument to an extent. Almost one third of the total seats were won by independent candidates. If you combine the percentages of those who joined party after being independent, those who changed party and those who left party to contest as independents (rebel), we get a total of 42% who could be termed as jumping jacks who do not seem to be loyal to any ideology or institution, but are only interested in serving their personal interests.
ii ) Past Experience in Public Bodies

16 % of the candidates, had previously contested one or the other elections to a public body in the past out of which 6.4% had been elected.

iii) Criminal Record

In response to a question in the interview, none of the candidates said they had a criminal case against them in the past or present. However, there were newspaper reports that 15% of the candidates contesting elections to BMP had a record of committing one crime or the other. This is a shocking revelation. In one particular ward, the interviewer was taken by surprise, when a candidate from an x party produced documents proving the criminal record of another candidate from a y party.

Civic Responsibility Profile

Civic profile is intended to provide information about candidates with regard to their understanding of civic bodies and duties of Councillors and the relevant laws that govern municipal administration.

I ) Candidates’ understanding of the functions of a Councillor and BMP

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Commitments</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect duties of corporator but is vague</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect duties of corporator and is concrete</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not reflect duties of corporator but is concrete</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not reflect duties of corporator but is vague</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the questions in the interview schedule sought to know the three important issues that candidates would try and resolve on priority if elected (which in turn would reflect the duties, rights and obligations of a Councillor). The responses to these have been classified into the following 4 categories with a sample response each:

i) **Reflect Duties of Corporator, but is Vague**: A typical response is, *Roads, streetlighting, garbage clearance*. These are the main functions of Municipal Corporation. However, mere statement of these without mention of how he/she would go about doing things and without identification of problem areas in the ward shows the vagueness. 37% constitute this category.

ii) **Reflect Duties of Corporator and is Concrete**: Only 7% belong to this category. For instance, talking of roads, some had even mentioned the particular stretches of roads to be repaired and street lighted.

iii) **Do not Reflect Duties of the Corporator but is Concrete**: Only 3% of them stated commitments which did not reflect either the duties of the Councillor or the functions of the BMP such as providing ration cards, building temples, improving public transport etc.

iv) **Do not Reflect Duties of the Corporator but is Vague**: This constitutes largest group with almost 47%.

### II) Awareness about 74th Constitutional Amendment or Nagarpalika Act

**Table 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness level</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully aware</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Aware</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29
The Nagarapalika Act enacted by the Union Parliament in 1993 and subsequently passed by the State Governments seeks to decentralise and bestow constitutional guarantee on the Municipal bodies. It also stipulates the constitution of Ward level Committees as the nearest and easily accessible units of urban administration in cities which have a population of 3 lacs and more. The spirit behind this landmark legislation is to make urban local bodies, more transparent, accountable, participatory and to strengthen them both financially and constitutionally. Level of awareness about this could be an indicator of candidates’ knowledge of the structure, functions and the challenges/problems faced by urban local self-government institutions in general.

Two multiple choice questions were framed to test the candidates’ level of awareness:

a) 74th Constitutional Amendment is also known as ................................ the correct response is Nagarapalika Act

b) The most important feature of 74th Constitutional Amendment is..................................... the correct response is Ward Committees

- Answering both questions correctly was interpreted as full awareness: only 39% were fully aware.

- Answering the first correctly and the second wrongly was interpreted as partially aware: 5% were partially aware.

- Answering both incorrectly was interpreted as unaware: 55% were unaware.

The findings regarding the Civic Profile, no doubt, point out the importance of civic training for the newly elected Councillors.
### ANNEXURE III:

**ELECTIONS TO BANGALORE MAHANAGARA PALIKE 27.10.1996**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WARD NO. X</th>
<th>CONSTITUENCY: Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SL. NO</td>
<td>Name, Age &amp; Political Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mr. A, 31, Ind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ms. B, 45, Party G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

@ - Refused to answer

Views and facts put forth here are as described by the respective candidates.

Issued in Public Interest By: AD Nagar Civic Forum.

Supported by Public Affairs Centre, CIVIC & BET.
Your Support Counts!

Public Affairs Centre (PAC) carries out its work with financial support from donor institutions and individuals. Your contributions will make a difference and help us to sustain our activities. Contributions to the Centre may kindly be made through cheques/demand drafts drawn in favour of Public Affairs Centre Bangalore. These contributions within India are exempted from Income Tax under Section 80G.
Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the cause of improving the quality of governance in India. PAC’s focus in this regard is primarily on areas in which the public can play a proactive role in improving governance. PAC undertakes and supports research on public policy and services, disseminates research findings, facilitates citizen action support for collective action and provides advisory services to state and non-state agencies.

Public Affairs Centre
578, 16 ‘B’ Main, 3rd Cross,
Block 3, Koramangala,
Bangalore-560 034.
Telefax : 5520246 / 5525452 /
5525453 / 5533467 / 5537260
Internet mail : pacindia@vsnl.com
Website : www.pacindia.org