Greater Bangalore Governance Options

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Public Affairs Centre
Bangalore
2007
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This paper reflects the deliberations of a PAC working group consisting of Samuel Paul, KRS Murthy and S. Krishna Kumar. S. Krishna Kumar is a former Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Former Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka.

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GREATER BANGALORE
GOVERNANCE OPTIONS

Everything in the world has changed except our thinking.
– Albert Einstein

Instead of judging our way forward, we need to design our way forward. We need to be thinking about ‘what can be’, not just about ‘what is’. – Edward de Bono

Introduction

The Government of Karnataka (GoK) has constituted Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) for Greater Bangalore (GB) by merging Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) with the local bodies of 8 outlying cities/towns and 111 adjacent villages. The decision has been taken keeping in view their population, population density, local revenues from tax and non-tax sources and non-agricultural employment. With this, the geographical area of GB goes up from 225 sq. kms to 800 sq. kms and the population covered from under 6 to about 8 million spread over 140-150 wards. The decision was notified on 2nd November '06 and the general public given a month’s time to file their objections and suggestions. The final notification was issued on 16th Jan. 2007. With this BBMP has come into being.

The notification indicates that BBMP is being constituted so as to:

(a) Improve and coordinate infrastructure development for road and transportation network, water supply and UGD, Solid Waste Management, etc.;
Greater Bangalore - Governance Options

(b) Upgrade quality of urban civic services;

(c) Strengthen administrative capacity to ensure better enforcement of various rules/regulations as also better coordination in service delivery;

(d) Optimize expenditure on establishment, etc.

Various stakeholders had expressed opinions for and against the proposed merger. However, not many responses appear to have been received. Newspapers had reported that Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) were seeking more time to file their objections and suggestions. Meanwhile, the term of the current elected body has come to an end and an Administrator has been appointed to manage the affairs of BBMP during the transition.

This paper brings together strong reasons why the issues of urban governance in and around Bangalore need to be addressed based on certain underlying principles and attempts to present a set of institutional and systems options that can better meet the twin challenges of governance and growth now and into the future. It recognises and hopes that in the process of considering these options, certain new possibilities might emerge thereby enriching the process. An early version of the paper was discussed at a meeting in the Public Affairs Centre (PAC) on 6th October with a cross-section of professionals who broadly endorsed the approach. A revised version was presented at a workshop in Bangalore on 6th November. The comments and suggestions at the workshop have been taken into account while finalizing this paper.

Issues and Concerns

Clearly, the city’s governance framework, as a means of providing essential civic services to all citizens, is the most fundamental concern. It would be necessary, in the new set up, to specify the entitlements of citizens to these services and set up criteria and mechanisms for monitoring and
enforcing performance. It is universally accepted that civic services are best provided by units closest to the citizens, both in terms of physical proximity and size. BMP is already unwieldy. Trebling its area of operation with responsibility for another 2 million people in 50 additional wards at varying levels of service coverage is hardly likely to improve governance, either for the present city or the new areas. It is imperative to deliver basic services with easier access, more flexible design to suit diverse needs and greater accountability.

Second, any attempt to form GB must recognise that Bangalore has long ceased to be merely the capital of Karnataka or a premier city of India. Today, it is an integral part of a global production-consumption complex in a fiercely competitive world. Its economy is valued at $ 52 billion annually. It accounts for 38% of India’s software exports of $ 22 billion. It is also an important centre in biotechnology, BPO, aviation, space and science research. Despite infrastructure constraints, it continues to attract fresh investments from all over the world. Thus Bangalore is an economic and knowledge powerhouse in its own right not only for Karnataka but the entire country and is likely to so remain for a long time to come.

This reality imposes certain obligations. First, any solution to the problems of governance and growth in Bangalore must safeguard, and if feasible, enhance its role as an engine of growth for the state and national economies. Second, since Bangalore has to compete globally with other investment destinations, organisations designed for its future governance should draw upon and be comparable with the best institutions in leading cities all over the world.

It is obvious, however, that a city is not just an economic enclave but also a live socio-cultural entity. Here, the flip side of the success of Bangalore catches up. While over a third of its 1.7 million households have annual incomes of over Rs. 3 lakhs, urban poor constitute a third of the city population. Life styles and consumption patterns that have emerged are creating social tensions. Hence the third key issue is equity. The transition
to a new Bangalore has to be managed in an inclusive format, with sensitivity towards the needs of old Bangaloreans and new comers in search of low-paying jobs as well as the urban poor. Their needs too have to be catered to, including public provisioning of basic facilities. Rather than seeing these as contradictory pulls, they must be visualized as part of the rich cosmopolitan history and heritage of Bangalore.

Over the years, Bangalore has lost its sheen as the Garden City. It looks and feels dirty and crowded. Traffic is ever a snarl, even late into the night. Road safety is a major concern. Accidents and crime are inevitably but regrettaingly on the rise. The city lacks infrastructure. Standards of civic services have fallen abysmally and institutions in charge of the city are seen as moribund and clueless about how to cope with the fast tempo of growth. Bangaloreans have lost their sense of ownership of and pride in their city. Hence the fourth key issue is management. Antiquated urban management cannot sustain contemporary world-class software industry or research. Nor can it smoothly blend and balance the diverse interests of locals and the newcomers into the city.

Finally, the concern is of sustainability in the use of natural, financial and human resources. Natural resources available now and that can be harnessed in the future may not be able to support the current patterns of growth and consumption. Of these, land is the most valuable. As the city expands, spatial planning must ensure that fertile lands and tank beds are protected and only marginal lands are urbanised. The controversies over the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor project and SEZs in many states is only a reminder that we do not as yet have an objective, fair and transparent policy for assembling land for public purposes.

Bangalore's critical dependence on Cauvery for most of its drinking water needs is not very comforting. Besides vastly improving O&M performance, BWSSB needs also to augment supplies. Rain water harvesting has to be tackled on a war footing to exploit Bangalore's bimodal rainfall pattern. GB has to have a more effective network of storm water drains,
sewage lines, treatment plants and water bodies to prevent flooding. With the advent of the metro, road and rail transport has to be combined more effectively to provide affordable mass transit for the entire region. BMTC, besides providing additional services to the newly merged areas, has to increasingly work towards inter-modal transport solutions in partnership with the Bangalore Metro and the Railways.

Equally, financial resources have to be found to meet current and future public investment needs. This is not merely a matter of generating a huge wish list and passing the bill to Government of Karnataka (GoK) or Government of India (GoI). The property tax base has to be systematically widened using GIS and other methods. Bangalore can never be managed if only a third of its properties are assessed to tax, as is reported. Better tax compliance and collection have to be enforced. Tax administration has to improve. If all properties are covered and assessed at a reasonable tax rate, the property tax receivables alone can help Bangalore raise thousands of crores from financial institutions to meet most of its infrastructure needs. Besides, innovative means of augmenting resources have to be thought of.

The human resources side is the weakest link. Nowhere in the world has urban management in such a demanding high-growth scenario been attempted with such poor quality and quantity of professional staff. A way has to be found to get qualified and committed officials with integrity to cope with the challenges in the areas of public health, engineering, urban planning, finance, etc. All these considerations impose further constraints on the likely solutions.

**Inadequacies of the proposed solution**

The basic argument against BBMP is that it tries to solve a multi-dimensional problem in geographical terms, ignoring many fundamental issues brought out above. Impact on governance is the key concern in any territorial reorganization. From this perspective, centralised governance for 8 million citizens spread over 800 sq. kms. with a 150-member council and its numerous committees with quasi-judicial powers is clearly not the way
forward and may even be a retrograde step. BMP's lack of systems and an organisational performance culture is likely to shape BBMP right from the start. In this environment, local officials [and corporators responsible for large populations] are unlikely to be easily accessible to the citizens and exercise powers delegated to them in a fair and transparent manner. This will increase the frustration and resentment of citizens, particularly of the incoming areas.

Secondly, the proposed single-tier centralised structure does not address the core issue of design and delivery of services, medium-term issues underlying the higher order functions such as spatial planning for growth and raising resources for infrastructure investments or the long-term issues of equity, sustainability, etc. These need to be considered on a regional basis and not necessarily by the same level of organisation that is responsible for day-to-day services. Thus an one-dimensional approach to solving the multi-dimensional issues facing Bangalore is unlikely to work. Bangalore cannot aspire to be a Singapore without comparable urban management structures. This is not a matter of imitation but of institutional design based on intelligent learning and adaptation of the experience of other global cities.

Unfortunately, urban governance in our country leaves a great deal to be desired. Though the 74th Constitutional amendment promised greater autonomy and public participation for urban local governments, much of this still remains a dream. ULBs continue to remain resource poor and are unable even to tap the full potential of property tax in their jurisdiction. Senior staff is deputed from departments of the state government and transferred at short notice. Professional staff with planning and accounting skills is few and far between. Leadership is sorely lacking, with mayors elected annually, in sharp contrast to the election of leaders at the Central and State levels.

International Experience

Governance structures of cities across the world reflect both their history and capacity to respond to the challenges. The evolution of governance
structures has been pronounced in cities that have successfully responded to rapid growth. As existing structures faced difficulties in coping with new challenges and tasks, the governments involved seem to have taken the lead to adopt new governance structures and practices more in tune with the needs of the times. Though the response patterns of cities have varied across countries, some interesting trends have emerged as cities grew into large metropolitan centers.

First of all, the centralized system of functioning that was characteristic of earlier times was found to be inappropriate and ineffective for very large cities. As a result, many cities have moved away from the notion that a single mayor and council can perform all functions of governance directly for very large jurisdictions. Instead, urban governance has increasingly differentiated tiers of governance and a rationalization of functions has taken place across the tiers.

Second, given the need for the mayor to play a more proactive role as leader and integrator of diverse functions, there is a clear shift towards the direct election of mayors on a citywide basis and for a term that is long enough to make an impact. Four to five years seems to have become the norm. In India, Kolkata, Chennai and Indore have variations of elected mayors assisted by councils. Such reforms are yet to spread to other states and cities.

Third, service delivery, especially in terms of mandatory functions, is being performed by geographical divisions/districts within the city by an elected body for the area, but as per standards and norms set on a citywide basis.

Fourth, even in the very large cities, the city council (top tier) is a compact body with representation from all regions or districts of the city. At the lowest tier, namely, wards, mechanisms are provided for increased participation and consultation with citizens on service delivery, local planning and conflict resolution.
In most countries, urban local bodies enjoy constitutional independence. They are not treated as extensions of state or federal governments. Apart from their powers to tax, they are also free to borrow from the market (e.g., municipal bonds). Moreover, they also receive grants from federal and state governments in addition to their revenues. They are also able to float bonds based on their credit rating.

Finally, city governments have emerged as distinct and viable entities on their own and are now competing with each other not merely for staging prestigious events like the Olympic games but for business and trade opportunities. This has been coupled with an openness to employ professional city managers on competitive salaries and bringing in a distinct managerial culture to the affairs of the city. With the new international airport getting ready in less than two years and related facilities coming up, Greater Bangalore will be in a unique position to become the only round-the-year convention destination in India. The time to put lessons from international experience into practice is now.

**Proposed Model**

The key to developing a suitable model is to place the issues and concerns articulated above in a spatial hierarchy and then examine institutional options and mix of functions appropriate to each level in the hierarchy. The basic principles that emerge from world-wide experience are:

(i) allocation of appropriate governance functions to each level of the city organization;
(ii) integration of the functions through a single authority at the top;
(iii) location of the function of design and delivery of services as close as possible to resident citizens in several small, manageable areas; and
(iv) ensuring efficient and effective use of resources through more accountable systems and practices.
A solution based on these principles is outlined below:

The administrative areas of BMP, the 8 outlying municipalities and 111 villages can be taken together and divided into 8 zones of GB with a newly created City Corporation (CC) for each of them. Given the tempo of urbanization led by the international airport, it would be appropriate to include Devanahalli into the scheme of things at this stage itself. Each zone will have, on the average, a population of 1 million.

This logic can be extended further to create even smaller zones, say 16 zones/CCs each for a population of 500,000, which would still be large enough to support an organization with professional capacity.

Five CCs can be carved out of BMP to manage Central, North, East, West and South Bangalore with headquarters at Basavangudi, Malleswaram, Ulsoor, Rajajinagar and Jayanagar respectively. The in-coming municipalities with populations from 50 to 300,000 can be re-aggregated into 3 zones with one CC each to cover the North, East and South/West. Reaggregation of the in-coming areas is being suggested to bring them under a common governance format and legislation. 111 urbanised villages can be tagged on to the nearest zones. This can be done in a manner that does not leave out any rural pocket in between two CCs. Thus GB can be a geographically contiguous entity.

Within each CC, the basic unit of organisation can be a ward with a population of 10,000 households or about 40,000 people. Delivery of basic services can be anchored at these wards. Being compact, they can serve as a focal point for service delivery and information sharing. For example, public hearings can be held at the ward level to assess local needs, to discuss the budget and to review ward level performance. A small office would suffice at the ward level. RWAs and Community Based Organisations (CBO) can be effective in this level to ensure better accountability and participation. The CCs can ensure that responsibility for services is clearly allocated to designated officials of the line departments/ agencies.

Every ward will have an elected Ward Committee (WC). Given the size
of the wards proposed in this paper, a WC of 5 members may be considered at the rate of one member for every 2,000 households or for a population of 8,000. The councillor elected from the ward can be the chairperson of the WC. To make the WCs more effective, an official of the CC can even be designated as the Chief Ward Officer for each WC to coordinate, convene meetings, follow up, etc. No elaborate secretarial set up will be necessary.

We have proposed wards of somewhat smaller size than is the case currently. In large wards, councilors are far removed from the people. Even a population of 40,000 is too large. In order to facilitate increased public participation and interest in monitoring performance at the ward level, it is proposed that WC members be elected from different parts of the ward, say, one for every 8000 persons. The WC can identify and discuss local needs and required funds, consistent with agreed upon standards for works, allocate budgeted amounts and monitor the implementation of the approved projects/works. The WC can hold public hearings in the its constituent areas to listen to people's concerns, announce approved programmes of works and use their feedback to improve implementation of local works and other activities.

The WCs will work along side the RWAs and CBOs. The CCs can involve these organisations in planning various initiatives. In Karachi, for example, local associations are even allowed to take contractual obligations to operate and maintain certain common facilities in their localities. Even in Bangalore many RWAs have done pioneering work in solid waste management, development of parks, etc. Such partnerships need to be encouraged throughout GB.

Each ward can form a constituency to elect one councillor. Thus the CC for a division of 1 million citizens will have 25 wards and 25 elected councillors. If the zone covers only 500,000 people, then it can still have 25 wards, each of 20,000 people, and there could be one councillor for each ward.
In addition to councillors elected from the ward-level constituencies, it will be useful to give public-minded citizens an opportunity to participate formally and directly in local governance. There can thus be 5 additional councillors in each CC elected from among qualified citizens. Voters of the entire CC can vote for these councillors. Thus, there can be a total of 30 elected councillors in each CC. They can elect a President among themselves for a term of five years, co-terminus with that of the council.

Each CC can have a Commissioner heading the administration, supported by staff and other provisions. It can collect taxes and provide basic services in its administrative area. The functions and responsibilities of the CCs can be spelt out in the enabling legislation.

These 8 CCs can be created under a new Greater Bangalore City Corporations' Act. This Act to legislate a new governance structure for GB can also provide for a Greater Bangalore City Corporation (GBCC) with a directly elected mayor and an elected council. GBCC will have city-wide functions including strategic planning, resource mobilization, infrastructure, regional development, urban poverty, slums, tax policies and distribution of grants and overall monitoring, besides coordination and standard setting.

Citizens in all the 8 zones can directly elect the mayor in a GB-wide election for a fixed term of five years. The council of GBCC can have 8 corporators, each elected from a zone/CC. Presidents of the 8 CCs can be ex-officio members of GBCC, which will thus have 16 members (8+8).

Both in the zonal CCs and the GBCC, there can be provision for reservation for women and weaker sections but not for rotation of constituencies.

GBCC can be responsible for land-use and spatial planning as the designated planning authority under the Karnataka Town & Country Act, 1961. Within the approved master plans prepared by GBCC and approved by GoK, powers to grant building permits will be delegated to the CCs concerned. This can effectively combine planning and development and end the present dichotomy where BDA does the planning and implementation
Greater Bangalore - Governance Options

is left to BMP and the ULBs around Bangalore. The BDA Act can be repealed. GBCC, under an elected council, is more likely to ensure the orderly growth of GB by providing infrastructure in advance and inducing urbanization in low-density areas.

GBCC can also be responsible for natural resources planning, particularly water and waste water. Mechanisms for coordination with BWSSB and other agencies can be spelt out in the GBCC Act and harmonized with other relevant legislation. Officials of these agencies can be part of the monitoring and follow-up set up at the ward level.

Major taxes can be decided and levied by GBCC, by applying uniform or differential rates as appropriate. CCs can levy local cesses and user-charges as required. The mechanism for collecting and sharing tax revenues can be spelt out in the GBCC Act.

On human resources, the staff already in position with BMP and the incoming ULBs can be pooled and made available to the 8 CCs on a rational and transparent basis. Their rules of engagement can be redefined to compel them to perform. Regular staff can replace deputed staff after a short transition period, with options given to present incumbents who are found fit to either get absorbed or revert to their parent cadres.

GBCC can and should employ professional managers who, besides providing subject-matter skills, can also retrain the existing staff of the CCs. Systems and procedures can be completely revamped. Committees of the council can be rationalized and their ground rules redefined in the GBCC Act to take away quasi-judicial powers in matters such as taxation and planning approvals

GBCC as well as the CCs can adopt the Fund Based Accounting System (FBAS). They can prepare annual budgets and accounts with the help of professional accountants and host them on their websites.

Apart from the statutory audit, internal audit can be introduced by the CCs and GBCC. Their annual accounts can also be audited and certified by a top professional accounting firm.
Both the CCs and the GBCC can present their annual reports of achievements and shortfalls to the citizens and publish them thereafter. The public presentation can enable the elected Mayor and the entire team of GBCC to render an annual account of what was committed and what was delivered.

**Constitutional Requirements**

Art. 243P to Art. 243XG in Part IXA of the Constitution of India deal with the municipalities. These provisions have to be kept in view while framing the GBCC Act. Some of the more important requirements are discussed below:

Art. 243Q provides for transitional, smaller urban and larger urban areas to be notified by the Government, based on certain criteria. The zones proposed in this paper can be the smaller urban areas and GB a large urban area for this purpose. Having a two-tier structure does not appear to be inconsistent with the Constitution as long as care is taken to avoid jurisdictional conflicts between the municipalities of the smaller and large urban areas. The potential for conflicts can itself be minimized by laying down that responsibility for citywide infrastructure such as arterial roads vests with GBCC.

Art. 243R (1) provides for the members being elected only from ward-level constituencies. *Prima facie*, this seems to rule out city-wide constituencies. Defining two types of territorial constituencies in the GBCC Act may be an option.

In terms of Art. 243R (2), the GBCC Act may provide for the representation of specialists, MLAs, MPs, etc. Bangalore has a large number of MLAs, MLCs and MPs. It may neither be necessary nor desirable for all of them to be sitting on GBCC under a directly elected Mayor. In order to allow for a proper balance between elected and ex-officio members, a system of allowing the two houses of Parliament and the Legislature to nominate one member each to the GBCC can be considered. Jurisdictional MLAs and MLCs can be members of the CCs.
Art. 243S provides for Ward Committees. These are built into our proposals.

Art. 243ZE envisages a Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) to prepare a draft development plan for the metropolitan area as a whole. The MPC has not been created yet. Any plan is only as good as its implementation. The structure proposed in this paper envisages that planning in all its aspects - spatial, resources and development - and execution/enforcement of those plans will be key functional responsibilities of the directly elected Mayor and his team of experts. In any case, the metropolitan area is larger than that of the proposed GB. Hence, as and when GoK constitutes the MPC, it can ensure that GBCC functions as its arm for the GB area. This will avoid duplication and second-guessing. In fact, the planning unit of GBCC can service the MPC as well.

Other provisions of Part IXA such as reservation, accounts and audit are already built into this paper. In fact on many of these, the framing of the GBCC Act can be used for the first time to give substance to the hopes and aspirations enshrined in the Constitution through the 74th amendment. Others relate to the State Election/Finance Commission, etc. which are already established under existing municipal laws. *Mutatis mutandis*, they will assist the working of the CCs and GBCC as well.

**JNNURM**

Under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), the States are expected to adapt the model Nagara Raj Bill Act that has been proposed. This Bill envisages a tier below even the ward and proposes Area Sabhas at that level. It provides for the rights, duties, activities and functioning of the WCAs. JNNURM is essentially a programme of GoI for leading investment into urban areas by linking it to institutional reforms. Like all standardized programmes, it does not cater to the special needs of a rapidly growing city like Bangalore with its own unique dynamics. Thus the proposals outlined in this paper go far beyond what is contemplated under JNNURM.
Also, from the perspective of the arguments developed in this paper, the degree of micro-management envisaged in the model Nagar Raj bill can result in overkill and may even be counter productive.

**Possible Alternatives**

At the PAC workshop held on 6th November, the participants did not propose any specific alternatives. They were in broad agreement with the proposals in this paper but wanted them to be elaborated or clarified.

One suggestion was to take democratic governance even below the ward level to smaller sabhas and have planning and budgeting from that level upwards. This suggestion emanates from the desire to replicate our gram sabhas in the urban setting. This may neither be necessary nor effective. Sub-wards or even wards are not natural entities unlike our villages that have been around for thousands of years.

The second suggestion was that it is important to overcome the multiplicity of agencies that are involved, have better coordination and work towards a single authority that can take total responsibility. In principle, there can be no objection to this. Our proposals do envisage that GBCC would play a more proactive role in matters like water supply, transport and electricity through the Mayor. In an era of specialization and given their natural monopoly characteristics, it is not necessary for all the utilities to be directly owned or operated by GBCC. GBCC should only be able to enforce accountability. This then becomes really a matter of practical management. Various alternatives are possible. For instance, GBCC can enter into MoU with the BWSSB or BMTC or even a formal contract. More importantly, GBCC will lead the exercise that will plan for the improvement and expansion of these services. The directly elected Mayor will have the authority to monitor commitments made and ensure performance. This can also written into the legislation.

The third suggestion was related to finances, the apprehension being that while Bangalore is rich, GBCC may be without adequate resources.
The need for innovative mobilization of resources was emphasized. This aspect has already been touched upon in the paper. In fact, a vastly improved governance structure under a two-tier structure is a *sine qua non* for attempting financial innovations. Otherwise we are likely to see more instances of the officials going through the process of introducing new measures only to have them aborted by the Council at the final stage of approval.

The fourth suggestion was to downsize the city bureaucracy and vastly improve it's functioning. The need to start on a clean slate was emphasized. While this may be desirable, it may not be practical. The proposals in this paper to pool the staff and redeploy them in the eight CCs, ending the endemic practice of deputation from GoK or its agencies, getting professionals for the GBCC from the open market and enforcing performance through the Mayor's office will go a long way in alleviating the problems faced by the citizens. E-governance solutions can also be used to broaden the access of citizens.

One alternative to the proposals in this paper is what GoK has decided to do – constitute BBMP on the lines of BMP, delegate powers of the Commissioner to senior administrative officers and place them in charge of the eight zones. At the workshop, a few points were made in support of this decision. These were: (a) there is virtually no governance at the level of the CMCs; (b) citizens do not have the time or the inclination for ward committees; (c) we need not be afraid of the size of Greater Bangalore; (d) BBMP need not be unwieldy or ineffective if good officers are posted and the agencies involved are better coordinated; and (e) many of the suggestions in the paper can be incorporated in the BBMP through the deliberations of the Expert Committee to be appointed and the new legislation to be enacted. It was suggested that the two-tier structure proposed here would not be politically acceptable. Certain inadequacies of this solution have already been commented upon at paras 14 to 16 and need not be repeated. However, certain other issues need to be discussed and clarified.
An independent observer would find the proposition that the CMCs and GPs around Bangalore do not provide any governance hard to accept. In fact, if Bangalore does not have an even greater population living in slums, it is in no small measure due to the fact that these bodies have been able to take some pressure off from Bangalore by authorizing layouts, permitting construction, providing some amenities, etc. In fact, some work by the Centre for Budget & Policy Studies seems to suggest that had GoK been more supportive, the CMCs might have achieved better outcomes. In any case, GoK cannot solve local governance problems only by having the larger local bodies administratively take over the smaller ones. Thus this model is severely limited in applicability.

The argument that the average citizen is not interested in wasting her time over ward level matters may have some empirical support. But that is only because the wards are not compact and hence participating citizens do not get any feel of immediacy or control. This is what can be corrected through the smaller wards and committees proposed in this paper.

Unwieldiness is not determined by size but effectiveness. Water supply and sanitation, for instance, have to be planned and executed on the basis of river and drainage basins. These are specialized functions that no city government can handle on its own. However, if there is political accountability through a directly elected Mayor, then improved water and sanitation services as well as better planning for future growth can be ensured. Coordination can be improved only by leadership and not by administrative fiat.

Mobilising resources innovatively is indeed the key. That is why overall tax policy and harmonization need to be distinct functions entrusted to the first tier that has the required capabilities for this task. It is not also true that there is under-assessment or evasion of taxes only at the level of the CMCs. Given the rapid expansion of commercial properties in Bangalore, BMP ought to be collecting much more by way of property taxes alone.

Finally, in the absence of elected bodies at the zonal level, the proposed solution may provide decentralisation but not democratic legitimacy. The
thread of electoral accountability will have a break at the zonal level. It will also compromise the ability of the system as a whole to intervene and resolve conflicts at the zonal level. Mumbai is a city where this model has been in vogue with consequences highlighted at one end by the city’s failure to cope with heavy rains in July last year and at the other end by cities like Dubai stealing a march over Mumbai as regional aviation or financial hubs.

Another easy option may be to concede the importance of citywide functions like planning and infrastructure but argue that this can be entrusted to a nominated body of ex-officio members with a few experts and chaired by the Minister-in-charge. This will perpetuate the dichotomy between planning and implementation and make it impossible to extract performance or enforce accountability.

Even within the model proposed in this paper, other variations can be brought in later. For instance, in Johannesburg, the WCs are bigger in size and they elect a chairperson who then automatically becomes the corporator for that ward. Thus instead of the elected corporator being the ex-officio chairperson, the elected chairperson becomes the ex-officio corporator. This changed ex-officio equation appears to be promising option.

**Summing Up**

To sum up, a three-tier model is proposed. They are 200 wards/committees, 8 zones/CCs and the GBCC functioning under a single, stand-alone legislation that attempts to overcome the acknowledged weaknesses of existing structure/system. The model provides for elected councillors, corporators and professional managers at different levels with differentiated responsibilities but bound by common principles and approaches to the issues of governance and growth of Bangalore.

The proposals envisage a major reform in the way urban governments can be structured with embedded systems to serve the twin objectives of governance and growth. A pictorial representation of the above is given below:
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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>REFORMS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership with Accountability</td>
<td>1. Directly-elected Mayor with 5 year term</td>
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<td>2. Annual Performance Reports</td>
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| Effective & accountable governance thru’ decentra-
  lisation                                    | 1. Delegate service delivery to Tiers I & II                          |
|                                                | 2. Integrate functions like planning, resources and infrastructure at the level of GB |
| Respond to the needs of different parts of GB  | Decentralise/delegate service delivery to the 8 zones/CCs and to the ward committees |
| Enhanced citizen involvement                   | Smaller wards of 40,000 and ward committees of 5 elected members      |
| Professional competence, standards and systems  | 1. Hire professionals and reduce reliance on deputation               |
|                                                | 2. Induct new systems and augment training                            |
| Financial autonomy                             | 1. Better coverage & collection of taxes                              |
|                                                | 2. Raising of long term resources thru’ bonds                         |
| Legal structure                                | Going beyond the letter but consistent with the spirit of the provisions of the Constitution |

**Transparency**

In the proposed structure, it is absolutely essential to have transparency at every level. Today, with the RTI Act in place, citizens can get information
on demand. But CCs and GBCC can be made to provide information on tap by having an "obligation to inform" clause under which they regularly put out complete information about their working starting from taxes assessed and collected to contracts awarded and the progress of works. This information can be on their websites and can also be publicised through other means.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, this paper attempts to formulate a set of proposals aimed at delivering a government for GB that works. It recognises that the key variable here is leadership with accountability. Ultimately, someone must take direct responsibility for GB. This responsibility cannot be diffused or diluted among various layers of Government. Direct election for a term of 5 years can give the Mayor the authority and the time-frame required to address the issues of present governance as well as future growth by delegating responsibility for service delivery to formal structures like WCs and CCs. Hiring of professionals in various disciplines coupled with new systems for budgeting, accounts and annual performance reporting to the citizens can usher a change towards greater professional accountability.

An empowered Mayor can command the performance of his entire team and discipline non-performers. (S)he will have the popular mandate to build a consensus on sensitive matters such as property tax coverage and assessment, building law violations, etc. In a word, the Mayor will provide the leadership to ensure that GB remains at all times governable so that citizens do not have to feel helpless and alienated in their own city.

It is not all a matter of power and authority either. The power itself will be shared with the GBCC Council of 16 corporators at one level. At another level, the Mayor has to work with 8 CC Presidents, 240 councillors, 200 WC chairpersons and 1000 WC members. He will thus have to manage a diverse political constituency on the strength of the mandate given to him as Mayor. This is indeed a challenging responsibility. The directly elected Mayor has also to respond to the demands of the urban poor, who constitute a third of
the city's population. Public facilities need to be provided for them, partly by GBCC directly and substantially in partnership with other statutory organisations. Authority and responsibility combined in a single office is more likely to ensure that GBCC's own resources are properly leveraged.

Though GoK has constituted BBMP, a High Level Committee is considering the objections/suggestions from various stakeholders. The formal process of delimiting the wards has to be completed. Legislation and the actual roll out in terms of elections and constitution of the new BBMP may take at least six months thereafter.

This paper has been prepared as a basis for discussion. It conceptualizes a three-tier design outline without all the detailed working drawings. It considers a number of possible options but presents one preferred option and retains flexibility for the future. Obviously, the supporting constitutional and legal details have to be worked out. It is hoped that the paper would help underscore the need to move away from current thinking and steer the debate towards new and exciting options for Greater Bangalore.

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