

ANNEXURE

ISSUE – DISTRIBUTION OF ₹2,000 cr FUNDS AT ZONAL LEVEL

VERDICT – NEGATIVE

SUMMARY – *Distribution of funds has to be at the ward level and not at the zonal level. BBMP Act has made things further complicated by having multiple committees like Consultative Committee, Zonal Committee & Ward Committee.*

EXPLANATION - Financial & Administrative decentralization has to be at the ward level and not at the zonal level. Ward Committees & Area Sabhas of each ward should be completely empowered to take decisions relating to ward-level projects. While the Zonal Committee is required for coordination, the devolution of funds & powers have to be directly at the ward level. So, devolution of funds at the zonal level is not a good move. Instead, it should be at the ward level. The creation of the Consultative Committee to be chaired by the MLA of the Assembly Constituency, in the BBMP Act, further complicates matters in terms of who is truly responsible for taking decisions. Lack of accountability has been the biggest problem faced by the city and this is expected to continue with the current budget too!

ISSUE – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – *BBMP should be outsourcing collection of property tax to a professional agency while Ward Committees & Area Sabhas need to be empowered to oversee the working of these agencies, with citizens playing a coordination role.*

EXPLANATION – BBMP should be outsourcing collection of property tax to a professional agency with clear targets to professionalize the whole process of property tax collection. Citizens need to be involved purely from a transparency & coordination perspective. Instead, Ward Committees & Area Sabhas need to be empowered to coordinate with the private agency to track collections. This will ensure professionalization of the process, while making it transparent to citizens and also in involving them in overseeing proper collections. It is also not clear how the 1% of collected property tax, which is being allocated for this activity, is being proposed to be used.

ISSUE – 1 LAKH LED STREET LIGHTS BY JULY 2021 & 2 LAKH STREET LIGHTS BY END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – *Moving towards more energy-efficient & environment-friendly systems is most welcome.*

EXPLANATION – The city has lakhs of street lights and the maintenance of the same comes directly under BBMP. While the individual homes have been moving towards LED lights, the city street lights have not yet been converted to LED. It is already overdue and hence converting the existing street lights to LED is a welcome move!

ISSUE – E-TENDERS FOR NON-MOTORISED TRANSPORT

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – No details given on this very important aspect for the city and hence no views from BNP on this topic!

ISSUE – ALLOCATION OF ₹1,000 cr TO 110 VILLAGES FOR DEVELOPMENT

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – The 110 villages integrated into Bengaluru in 2008 need to have access to basic civic amenities like water, roads, sanitation etc. and a separate allocation for these areas is a hugely welcome move.

EXPLANATION - 110 villages from the outskirts of Bengaluru were integrated into BBMP in 2008 and which have now become an integral part of the city. However, basic amenities in these areas, like roads, sanitation, water supply, lights etc. have been completely missing, despite they being part of Bengaluru for about 13 years now. The announcement of ₹1,000 cr exclusively for these areas is extremely important as these areas need to have these fundamentals in place, unlike the other wards which already have a reasonable access to these basic amenities. This is a welcome move however it is important that the money is fairly distributed across these years and it is spent in a transparent manner with full citizen participation!

ISSUE – 10 LAKHS FREE SAPLING DISTRIBUTION

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – Good in theory but has failed in the past due to lack of citizen participation and in the absence of a clear plan, will remain on paper!

EXPLANATION - Conceptually, it is good but in the absence of citizen involvement through Ward Committees & Area Sabhas, cannot be executed. Has been tried in the past and not worked due to the absence of empowered Committees & Sabhas at the local level who can take decisions on where they can be done in their respective areas. Hence, while in theory, the idea is good, it has failed in the past and in the absence of a clear-cut plan for execution, this will remain only on paper!

ISSUE – ₹20 LAKHS TO EACH WARD COMMITTEE FOR FOOTPATH REPAIRS COVERING 1,000 KMS

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – BNP's view is that Ward Committees need to be empowered and hence this is a welcome step. This needs to be extended to all the projects in the Ward and not just footpaths.

EXPLANATION – Ward Committee is the best forum for citizens to be represented and participating. It is the citizens who need to be taking the decisions on what works need to be undertaken in their respective areas. From this point of view, the allocation of funds to Ward Committees for them to decide on repairing footpaths is a welcome move. However, this concept needs to be extended soon to all projects of the ward!

ISSUE – SOFTWARE FOR E-PROPERTY & EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – While technology & software definitely needs to be used to improve the functioning of BBMP, the current systems are outdated and there is no proper planning / preparation in putting the system together.

EXPLANATION – BNP would like to draw the attention of citizens to the BNP Citizen Portal on the BNP Website www.nammabnp.org, based on which BBMP created the Citizen View. The BNP Citizen Portal covers 63,629 approved projects of BBMP over the last few years, which has been developed indigenously by BNP, which is far more comprehensive, user-friendly and better features compared to BBMP. Without a proper orientation of how to develop technology & software, introduction of new systems / software by BBMP will only be a failure. This needs to be addressed first before planning to introduce new systems. BBMP should look at outsourcing this to good technology companies through a tender process, for better outcomes.

ISSUE – A+ CREDIT RATING BY ICRA & RAISING FUNDS THROUGH MUNICIPAL BONDS

VERDICT – NEGATIVE

SUMMARY – BBMP needs to get its act together first in terms of preparing & auditing its accounts within 6 months of completion of a financial year before embarking on raising additional funds from public. BBMP's accounts have not been prepared and audited for 3 years and there is absolutely no transparency on the same.

EXPLANATION – While BBMP needs to augment its financial resources through multiple channels, the reality is that financial management in BBMP is in absolute shambles. Accounts are never prepared and audited on time, sometimes delayed by many years. The publicly available accounts have very little details for anyone to even start analyzing the financials in a meaningful manner. With this background, any attempt at raising more public money through municipal bonds will be an absolute and unmitigated disaster! BBMP has to first get its house in order in its financial management and prudence!

ISSUE – CENTRAL TECHNICAL VIGILANCE CELL FOR PROJECT REVIEWS

VERDICT – NEGATIVE

SUMMARY – Vigilance Cells are needed but has to be at the Ward level with involvement of citizens, particularly those who are technically competent.

EXPLANATION – The proposal to constitute a Technical Vigilance Cell is welcome however the objective of spot examining all projects through this cell is impractical & not sustainable. Instead, Ward Committees and Area Sabhas should be empowered to oversee projects with a call to citizens with technical competence to be included as part of Ward Committees. Ward level Technical Vigilance Cells with participation of citizens need to be incorporated.

ISSUE – PREPARATORY WORK TO CANCEL ‘B’ FORMAT REGISTRATION OF PROPERTIES

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – The process of ‘B’ Khata issuance has to be completely done away with, however is no clarity in the budget on what is the proposed plan.

EXPLANATION – The concept of ‘B’ Khata / ‘B’ format registration of properties is completely absurd and vitiates the entire process of registration of properties. This should have been done away with long back and an online system introduced to bring in transparency into the process of issuance of Khata and registration of properties. The current system is mired in opacity, misgovernance, corruption & inefficiency. We do not need preparatory work for cancellation of ‘B’ format but a move to an online system which can bring in transparency, accountability and efficiency.

ISSUE – SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

VERDICT – NEGATIVE

SUMMARY – No clear plan in the budget on tackling the burgeoning garbage problem and the creation of a new agency which has been envisaged by the State Government, is a completely retrograde move, with one more agency getting added to the long line of non-performing Government agencies, without any accountability & transparency.

EXPLANATION – There is no clear plan in the budget on tackling the burgeoning garbage problem and the creation of a new agency which has been envisaged by the State Government, is a completely retrograde move, with one more agency getting added to the long line of non-performing Government agencies, without any accountability & transparency. We already have enough Government agencies like BWSSB, BMTC, BESCOM, BDA etc. which are all mired in corruption, inefficiency and lack of accountability without any transparency. The proposed new SWM agency gets added to the long list of such agencies without any clear game plan for the same! A totally retrograde move!

ISSUE – 67 NEW PUBLIC TOILETS & TO BE MAINTAINED AS PER ODF++ SPECIFICATIONS

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – One of the truly positive aspects of the budget with citizen inputs considered and to be implemented.

EXPLANATION – Public Toilets have been significantly lacking in the city and there has been a crying need to improve the numbers and also to maintain the existing ones properly. The campaign run by BBMP prior to the budget to seek citizen inputs and subsequently incorporate the same is a truly welcome move and should be replicated for other types of works too. In addition, a more detailed study needs to be undertaken to assess the public toilet infrastructure and see how many more public toilets are needed across the city.

ISSUE – AWARDING ₹5,000 TO POURA KARMIKAS, PROVIDING BENEFITS TO THEIR CHILDREN, ADDING AN ADDITIONAL ₹200 PER MONTH & OTHER BENEFITS TO THEM

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – Pourakarmikas deserve to be rewarded for their fantastic work over the last 1 year braving the Corona odds, despite quite a few of them being infected!

EXPLANATION – Pourakarmikas have been at the forefront of helping keep the city clean despite the Corona pandemic creating a lot of complications. The team has been completely committed to keeping the city clean despite various obstacles and have shown great resolve in tiding through the situation and coming out with flying colours. They need to be rewarded and even more importantly, they should be taken care of a lot better by BBMP in the future, unlike the rough treatment which is generally meted out to them. The BNP Manifesto for Pourakarmikas, available on the BNP website, outlines all the aspects that need to be provided to Pourakarmikas!

ISSUE – FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PERFORMING STUDENTS / STAFF OF BBMP SCHOOLS

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – *While financial assistance to the well-performing students & staff needs to be continued, it is precious little for BBMP Schools which are creaking under poor infrastructure & governance.*

EXPLANATION – BBMP Schools are notorious for their poor infrastructure, poor quality of teaching, lack of technology etc.! There have been no attempts made to improve any of these standards. This automatically means that there will be very few students or staff who will perform well in these circumstances. While financial assistance to the well-performing students & staff is important, an environment conducive for learning has to be created first which can enable more students and staff to perform better. In the absence of this, financial assistance is just a token move, which carries very little meaning!

ISSUE – ₹214 cr FOR MAINTENANCE OF PARKS UNDER SUPERVISION OF WARD COMMITTEES

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – *BNP's view is that Ward Committees need to be empowered and hence this is a welcome step. This needs to be extended to all the projects in the Ward and not just maintenance of parks.*

EXPLANATION – Ward Committee is the best forum for citizens to be represented and participating. It is the citizens who need to be taking the decisions on what works need to be undertaken in their respective areas. From this point of view, the empowerment of Ward Committees to oversee maintenance of parks is a welcome move. However, this concept needs to be extended soon to all projects of the ward! The move to display the names of the concerned contractor and their numbers in the parks, is also a welcome move as it can help improve accountability on the part of the contractors!

ISSUE – UPGRADATION OF 12 HIGH-DENSITY CORRIDORS & WHITE TOPPING OF ROADS

VERDICT – NEGATIVE

SUMMARY – White topping is a huge scam which delivers nothing as the very few main / arterial roads which are already in good condition are the ones which are white-topped while the rest of the roads in the city running into thousands of kms, are in pathetic shape.

EXPLANATION – Both the mainstream parties BJP & Congress have been accusing each other of a mega scam in white-topping when the other is in power, but when they are in power, spend thousands of crores in white-topping projects which carry no meaning whatsoever. The few roads in Bengaluru which are in good condition are the main / arterial roads like Outer Ring Road, Old Madras Road etc. However, these are the ones which are chosen for white-topping by digging them up and putting citizens to untold misery, while at the same time thousands of crores are siphoned off through these projects. Instead of allocating thousands of crores for white-topping roads, the same budget should be spent on improving the quality of the side roads (running into thousands of kms across the city) which currently are in very bad shape!

ISSUE – CITIZEN WATER WAY FROM KR MARKET TO BELLANDURU

VERDICT – NEUTRAL

SUMMARY – While the concept of a citizen water way is welcome, it should be done only when we are absolutely sure that no garbage or waste water can enter this system.

EXPLANATION – The current network of Rajakaluve & Storm Water Drains are in horrible shape with garbaged & waste water rampantly entering the system. While thousands of crores are allocated every year to clean the drains, there is no visible improvement with the significant likelihood that most of the money is just being siphoned off. A project needs to be taken on a war-footing to first ensure that waste water and garbage cannot enter the Rajakaluve before embarking on a water way project, which is definitely interesting. However, without the above, the water way will only end becoming a waste-water-way!

ISSUE – CREATION OF TREE PARKS

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – *We need more open space and breathing space and hence creation of tree parks in Machohalli, Kadugodi & JP Park are welcome.*

EXPLANATION – With the depleting tree cover in the city, there is a desperate need to plant more trees and create more open spaces to improve breathability and our environment. These projects which were already approved in the Karnataka budget are most welcome and we need more such tree parks in the future for the city to become greener, more breathable and enable a better environment.

ISSUE – CREATION OF EXPERIENCE BENGALURU CENTERS

VERDICT – POSITIVE

SUMMARY – *The creation of Experience Bengaluru Centers in the lands belonging to NGEF & Mysuru Lamps is also a welcome move as it is time to start propagating the rich culture, history & heritage of the great city of Bengaluru.*

EXPLANATION – Bengaluru has a rich history, culture and heritage with eminent personalities, places of historic significance and an assimilation of various art & culture forms having enriched the city since its inception. However, not much has been done to propagate the same to the citizens of Bengaluru, particularly given that there is a very high proportion of floating population in the city. These Experience Bengaluru Centers can help develop a greater sense of connect & pride for the citizens with this wonderful city of ours!