

BBMP, the urban local body of the Silicon Valley of India, recently released the budget for the financial year 2020-21 with a budget proposal after the year has already started! That too by revising the previous year budget to align with the actual spend! Such scams can happen only in the wonderland called BBMP! Here is BNP's preliminary take and key questions on this so-called budget:

1. The budget is presented after the year starts when it should have been done at least 1- 2 months prior to the beginning of the year. The same thing gets repeated year after year after year. How can a budget be presented after the year has already started?
2. The previous year's (2019-20) budget estimate is revised after the year has ended. A budget estimate can be revised in the middle of the year but how can a budget estimate be revised after the year has ended?
3. The budget estimate for 2019-20 gets revised downwards from Rs. 11,649 crores to Rs. 7,066 crores, a whopping 40% lower! Why does it take more than 12 months for BBMP to know that the budget has to be 40% lower? Do they not spend anything during the course of the year?
4. Budget estimate for 2020-21 has absolutely no basis except for a small decrease over the previous year's budget estimate which anyway has been subsequently revised downwards by 40%. And this is a recurring phenomenon every year. What is even the point of preparing such a budget?
5. Budget has been presented top-down rather than the way it should be done - bottom up! The Wards, Ward Committees & Corporators should be presenting the ward budgets which need to be aggregated to the overall budget, at least to the extent of 70% of the overall budget. This never gets

done! Why is there a need for Corporators, Ward Committees & Wards, when they are not involved in the preparation of their own spending?

6. Audit for the year 2018-19 is still not completed despite the next financial year also having gotten over! And it never correlates with the budget? Why does the audit not get done within 6 months of the year getting over?

With the above, the budget process is completely shambolic and is not even worth getting into any level of detail. Not only is the budget fraught with process irregularities, it is also woefully lacking in the allocation to healthcare that the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic warrants. The primary health centres are not well equipped and many government institutions do not have diagnostic facilities at all. In ignoring these important matters in the current climate, the budget that was passed through videoconferencing is nothing more than a hastily concluded exercise. The BNP team will still review the budget in detail and come out with its detailed analysis on the same soon.

In the meantime, please see this conversation between Subbu Hegde, Treasurer of Bengaluru Navanirmana Party (BNP) & Sapna Karim from Janaagraha to understand how the BBMP budget should be prepared & managed!

<https://youtu.be/stRj4RzChkI>