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On Civic Groups & Bottom-Up Participatory Initiatives In India

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The transformative potential of civic groups enabling bottom-up participatory initiatives to address the void in the urban planning culture in India

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## Glossary

AMRUT	: Atal Mission for Renewal and Urban Transformation
ASICS	: Annual Survey of India's City Systems
BBMP	: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
BDA	: Bangalore Development Authority
BMPC	: Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee
CAA	: Constitutional Amendment Act
CAG	: Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group
CCC	: Chennai City Connect
CDP	: City Development Plan
CMDA	: Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority
CSO	: Civil Society Organisations
ITDP	: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
JnNURM	: Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
MoHPA	: Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
MoUD	: Ministry of Urban Development
MPC	: Metropolitan Planning Committee
NGO	: Non- Governmental Organisation
NITI	: National Institute for Transforming India
PPP	: Public Private Partnership
PUCL	: People's Union for Civil Liberties
RMP	: Revised Master Plan
SDP	: Spatial Development Plan
SMP	: Second Master Plan
TCPO	: Town and Country Planning Organization
UDC	: Urban Design Collective
ULB	: Urban Local Bodies

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## Abstract

India is currently a nation of rapid urbanization. There exists a divide between the rate of urbanization and the urban planning culture of India, resulting in cities that are not planned adequately. This divide is manifested as a void between planning and execution of urban planning ideas, through a weak connected system between the various tiers of government and especially the local government, which is the primary responsible body for urban planning endeavours and the citizens at the receiving end.

There are numerous citizen run organisations currently working on the rendering of planning and allied services such as urban mapping and documentation, citizen awareness, community mobilization etc.; functioning as a third sector, beyond the public and private sector

The thesis argues that the existing work of these civic groups through the application of bottom-up participatory initiatives in urban areas affects the void within the planning culture and that they attempt to contribute to its overall better functioning across various areas within the wide spectrum of Urban Planning. The research intends to be starting point to the query on whether civic groups can function as effective intermediaries between the various tiers of government and the citizens, and contribute to the making of a democratic participatory process with respect to the urban planning system.

## 1. Introduction

*"The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everybody involved." -Richard Rogers, Architect*

In developing countries, in the recent times, an exceptional movement of human settlements to towns and cities is being witnessed. India is among the nations that stands testimony to such rapid urbanization and there has been a monstrous development of urban population in significant urban communities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai, to give some examples. The rapid urbanization process in India, with an intense increase in the urban population, has exposed the crisis of the absence of an effective urban planning system in place.

The damages caused in Chennai, in December 2015 due to historic devastating floods is huge and the inefficiency and unpreparedness of the government in addressing it is indicative as a cautioning that India is failing in dealing with its transformation from a largely rural country into an urbanising liberal democracy holistically.

With rising rates of rural-urban migration, as more people reach the urban centres, they need space to live and work, and that would invariably result in construction. Much of that construction is now illegal and unplanned, because the city administrations are predominantly run by a deeply corrupt and inefficient network of officers, engineers, contractors and politicians. They overlook, or actively aid, those constructions. These constructions due to corruption and amoral public administration along with inadequate water drainage and sewage planning are attributed to the city's breakdown during the floods<sup>1</sup>.

The above case is suggestive of a shortcoming within the planning system at large prevalent in urban areas, across the nation. The political and administrative class sitting on top of the system remain in oblivion to illegal constructions, unpaved roads and flawed flyovers. The misery of Chennai is mostly about the failure of the state to manage the exponential growth of our urban centres.

According to Dr.V.Suresh, General Secretary of People's Union for Civil Liberties, who is also the Head of the Government appointed Committee to curb Illegal Constructions, in an interview affirms that, "there is an ethical breakdown of ethical

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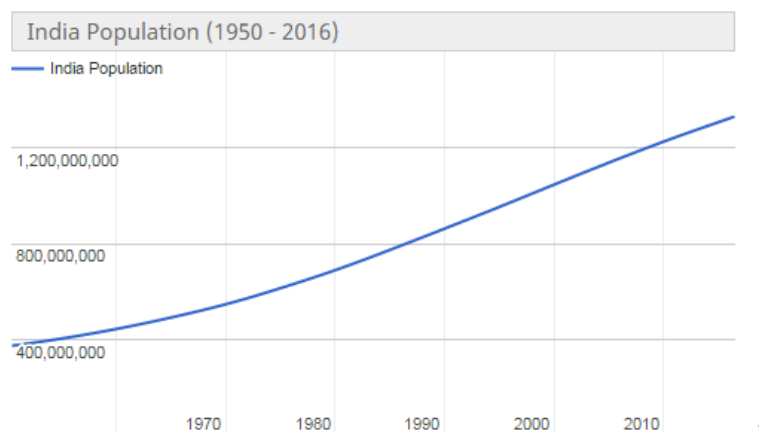
<sup>1</sup> Newspaper article titled, "Chennai and India's urban nightmares". Published: The Hindu, December 8, 2015  
<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/homeland-column-chennai-and-indias-urban-nightmares/article7958641.ece>

framework across various professions that exists in the India, affecting the nature of planning and implementation of projects in urban scenarios. Additionally, the Corporation, which is an independent authority function at the Local urban level, is working in tandem with the whims and ways of the State Government and hence working out services to details at the urban level in the urban system is often negotiated and ignored”. He emphasized the need for capacity and awareness building, in the creation of politically conscious citizens. While exclaiming on the plethora of illegal constructions adds that, “The Second Masterplan of Chennai exists only on Paper”, he also stated that the steps in addressing this void in the system would involve increasing the need for transparency and accountability towards the functioning of both the planning system and the linked governmental bodies such as the water, sanitation, housing departments etc. There is a need also to channelise the work of such external agencies and other civic organisations acting towards common causes on acting together.

The population of our country is increasing at an alarming rate and according to population studies; the current population of India is 1,329,925,248 as of Tuesday, September 13, 2016, based on the latest United Nations estimates.

- India population is equivalent to 17.84% of the total world population.
- India ranks number 2 in the list of countries by population.
- The population density in India is 446 per Km<sup>2</sup> (1,156 people per mi<sup>2</sup>).
- The total land area is 2,972,892 Km<sup>2</sup> (1,147,839 sq. miles)
- 32 % of the population is urban (429,802,441 people in 2016)
- The median age in India is 26.9 years.

**Figure 1: Population of India (1950-2016)**



According to provisional data released by the Census of India, the urban share population grew to 377 million showing a growth rate of 2.76% per annum during 2001-2011.. There are 7935 towns in the country, increased by 2774 since the last census in 2001.

In the last decade; with the growth rate of population for India: 17.64% , the level of urbanisation in the country as a whole increased from 27.8% in 2001 to 31.1% in 2011 – an increase of 3.3 percentage points during 2001-2011 compared to an increase of 2.1 percentage points during 1991-2001.

Therefore, urbanisation has increased faster than expected. For the first time since independence in 1947, the absolute increase in the urban population was higher than that in the rural population, an increase of 91 million, which is larger than the rural population increase of 90.5 million. (Bhagat, 2011, p.10-11)

**Table 1: Trends in Urbanisation in India (1961-2011)**

<sup>2</sup>India Population Statistics- <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/india-population/>

Census Year	Urban Population (in million)	Percentage Urban	Annual Exponential Urban Growth Rate (%)
1961	78.94	17.97	-
1971	109.11	19.91	3.23
1981	159.46	23.34	3.79
1991	217.18	25.72	3.09
2001	286.12	27.86	2.75
2011	377.10	31.16	2.76

The urban percentage of the population is currently around 30%, and is expected to reach 40% by 2030, implying an increase in numbers from 350 million today, to around 600 million. (Ahluwalia, 2011, p.102) Managing this urban transition will pose special challenges in the years ahead.

As the country is in the midst of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) since independence, equipping urban areas to accommodate this transition is considered one of the major challenges, requiring a massive expansion in urban infrastructure and services. With this backdrop, the results of the 2011 Census assume enormous significance in enhancing our understanding of the magnitude, growth and interstate variation in the levels and tempo of urbanisation in the country. This urban transition has major implications for providing urban infrastructure and civic amenities in urban areas, especially since only about half of those currently in urban areas are adequately served even by the current very low standards, without a prior strong urban planning system in place.

By the Census of India 2011, the definition of 'urban area' is as following:

All places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc.

All other places which satisfied the following criteria:

- a) A minimum population of 5,000;
- b) At least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and
- c) A density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km.

Difficulty in dealing with the pressures urban populations put on infrastructure, basic services, land, housing and the environment lie at the heart of the relative lack of liveability of the nation's urban areas. A weakened urban planning system is reflected in the almost 65.5 million Indians who, according to the country's 2011 Census, live in urban slums, as well as the 13.7 percent of the urban population that lived below the national poverty line in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

These statistics are reassuringly indicative that the urban planning system in place in urban areas is not fully effective and that there is a shortcoming within it. While addressing both civic issues at the urban level and urban governance at large in cities across India, the problem despite being in different geographical locations remain the same.

### *The Void*

Poor urban governance is the bane, prevalent across India. And this ineffective urban governance system is the core reason behind the existence of a disconnection between the citizens and governing public institutions, which is referred to as 'the void' through the course of this thesis

The void, specifically to the urban planning system is indicated:

- (i) in the lack of systematic engagement between planning bodies and citizens whilst preparing the masterplans of cities. This is reflected in many ways in various cities like Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai during the preparation of their respective masterplans (e.g. Case of the Mumbai and Bengaluru Masterplans-2031) where the citizen's concerns were not taken into account.

<sup>3</sup> Results of 2011 Census of India

[http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data\\_files/india/Final\\_PPT\\_2011\\_chapter3.pdf](http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/data_files/india/Final_PPT_2011_chapter3.pdf)

(ii) In the disillusionment of the citizens with the system, which partly maybe due to the existing corruption (visible through surge of anti-corruption Anna Hazare movement<sup>4</sup> and the the Lokpal bill)

(iii) in the mismatch between the rate of urbanization and delivery of basic services to urban citizens due to which there is high proliferation of slums

(iv) In the long gaps between planning and implementation of urban projects since project delivery is harder, without the approval and involvement of citizens

(v) As a void of governance responsibility, indicated in the high number of civil society organisations as most of them offer alternate models of service delivery, originally under the responsibility of the government

(vii) Failure of urban local bodies, due to ineffective devolution of power to enable local self-government, thereby distancing the citizen and the state further. (The causes and effects of failure are further detailed in chapter 2.2)

Urban Local bodies (ULBs) can be referred to as the vehicles of municipal governance in urban areas, according to the Nagar Palika Act or the Municipalities Act, 1992 set up through the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act<sup>5</sup>. It provides for a three tier municipal system in urban centres. The size and criteria of these municipal bodies are decided by the respective State legislatures.

The three-tier system of ULBs is composed of:

- Municipal Corporations, in metropolitan areas
- Municipal Councils or Municipalities, in smaller cities and towns
- Nagar Panchayat, in very small cities which are in a transition from rural to urban

The role of urban local bodies is further detailed with respect to the planning system in India in Chapter 2.2.

However, the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 intended for the distribution of power to urban local bodies was simply a restorative activity which did not realize any major changes in the way Indian cities were administered. The Case of Chandigarh could be a valid example.<sup>6</sup> This incoherent functioning of the central and state governments along with the urban local bodies (ULBs), which are intended to be democratic foundations meant to be nearest to the citizens, to be incompetent. (Sharma, 2011, p.90)

The state remains to possess negating forces that invalidates the duties of the Urban Local Bodies and additionally, the structure for accountability in urban zones is weak and powerless.

Without real authoritative power over legal, financial and administrative fronts, urban local bodies just remain an instrument of politics within parties at the grass-roots level, disabling the notion of direct citizen participation through them. This leads to the identification of a void within the system of planning and other public policy areas that disconnects the functioning public institutions of the government from the citizens in urban areas.

With the apparent high rate of urbanization, it is appropriate to seek practical solutions to address the void, beyond the existing laws and recognise the need for solutions that would give real powers to urban local bodies, with the conviction of making the country an effective democracy. At a realistic level however, when such revolutionary changes of the entire system are impractical, the planners and policy makers of the nation have the responsibility to evaluate and conceptualize a feasible system to execute the duties of these urban bodies by alternate means.

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<sup>4</sup> 'What Anna Hazare's Movement and India's New Middle Classes Say about Each', Vinay Stapati Other <http://re.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Anna.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> For complete details of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act: <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend74.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Failure of CAA illustrated through an example study of Chandigarh : By Sharma,D, 2011. 'An Evaluation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act: A Case Study of Chandigarh'. The Journal of Administration & Governance, India. Vol. 6. No. 1

## Civic Groups

Addressing the need to allow citizens to participate in the planning process and have their basic needs met, many citizens coming together forming civic groups, undertake the above task of setting up an alternative means of service delivery through employing various participatory initiatives.

The term 'civic groups' as addressed in this thesis, can be attributed to organisations of citizens( often referred to as civil society organisations- CSO) in urban areas coming together in the planning and execution of community initiatives that are playing an expanding role in experimenting with new models of delivery of social goods and services and meeting local needs. Such community initiatives have arisen in response to a sense of neglect by the agencies of formal government to provide the necessary services such as water, sanitation, housing etc. in urban areas.

There are innumerable civic groups working towards many social challenges in India. The role of such groups is well incorporated in various sectors in India; within the health sector for example, proving that when civil society and government work together, overall service delivery improves; so much that the governmental body has recognised its contribution into the formal system<sup>7</sup>. However, this thesis particularly addresses the work of those groups with community initiatives that are focused towards contributing to better urban planning for people, services and the urban environment at large , in the nation's cities.

Hendrik Wagenaar and Patsy Healey(Healey, Wagenaar, 2015) in their work recognise the opportunities and potentials that lie in such community initiatives driven by civic groups, "to develop alternative ways of promoting development and delivering services on a significant scale" and "to transform not just service delivery but the quality of democratic life" (Wagenaar, Healey, 2015, p.557) Some initiatives deliberately challenge top-down models of service delivery through employing initiatives in bottom-up manner(for e.g. The Ugly Indians initiative) These civic groups' main role in urban planning advocacy(Bandauko, 2015, p.104) where urban planning is valuable in a nation in some areas, where it is even absent or insufficient otherwise. The role of civic groups in public participation is further detailed in Chapter 2.3.

The thesis presents a perspective that potential action towards such a direction of addressing and attempting to bridge the gap in the planning system lies in the existing work of civic groups. These civic groups are part of a larger civil society that functions as a third-sector<sup>8</sup> working towards the welfare of the citizens. It is composed of (NGOs) non-governmental organizations, urban researchers and experts, indigenous people's organizations, community groups etc. With the surge of many such groups observed in the past two decades(detailed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3), a large growth in the size, role, and visibility cannot be ignored, as it has a significant impact on the way our cities and planned and shaped.

Chapter 1 presents the base behind the research as well as the aim that it seeks to achieve. It introduces the concepts of rapid urbanization, the need to address the void within the planning system, the need for public participation and the work of civic groups fulfilling the role through bottom-up participatory initiatives .The methodology of data collection, interviews and case studies undertaken in the research and the hypothesis that the thesis rests on is also elaborated with respect to the themes explored within the topic of research.

For this to be effectively understood, one needs to understand the contextual ground on which these initiatives have emerged and the planning culture<sup>9</sup> prevalent in the country, and this is detailed in the Chapter 2, along with attributes

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<sup>7</sup> Initiative by National Health Mission under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare: Learning from Community Action for Health(CAH)- The critical role of civil society (<http://populationfoundation.in/accountability-for-rmncah-in-india-the-critical-role-of-civil-society/>)

<sup>8</sup> In practice "third sector" is used to refer to widely differing kindsof organization such as charities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), self-help groups, social enterprises, networks, and clubs, to name a few that do not fall into the state or market categories. It was an alternative sector separate from and balancing the state and the market, themselves considered separate sectors. If something is ruled neither primarily by market logic nor via a bureaucratic chain of command, it must be part of the "third" sector. Quoted from, 'Defining and Theorizing the Third Sector' by Corry, Olaf. Pages 1, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Planning culture in this context is understood as 'the cultural environments of legal, administrative and economic traditions'. Quoted from 'Uncovering the Unconscious Dimensions of Planning: Using Culture as a Tool to Analyse Spatial Planning Practices', By Othenrafen, Frank in 2016.

observed in deconstructing the identified the void within the planning culture. Chapter 2 also presents a brief overview of the existing constitutional provisions for the current system of planning and the upcoming opportunities they provide.

In Chapter 3, an elaborate literature review is presented in two parts. In the first part, the various concepts in planning and participation addressed in the thesis are discussed. In the second part, the concepts are related specifically to India, across an overview of literature and experiences in order to learn from and to help analyse the scenario of public participation in the Indian context to, is presented.

Chapter 4 presents a brief synopsis of the current advancements for setting the base to empower bottom-up participation through the over-viewing the work of civic groups across the nation.

In Chapter 5, the context of the metropolitan cities of Bengaluru and Chennai are studied within the realms of public administration and urban planning. The work of civic groups in these two cities is studied across defined parameters and transformative potential is looked at against the normative notion of planning. This chapter thereby contains the investigations whether the theoretical argument presented in the hypothesis is supported by empirical evidence.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion towards the way ahead opening up the potential of the work of civic groups to a form of dual deliberative engagement with the citizens and with the public institutions, contributing to the task of possibly bridging the gap in a small way

The research is laid out within the existing scenario of provisions for citizen participation and summarizes the shortcomings of current practice and opens up to the opportunities presented by analysing the work of civic groups. An expansive review of literature is made to build an understanding of the problem and the concepts involved to arrive at the descriptive and analytical observations examined in the report,

The observations are significantly elaborated to be as useful and pertinent as possible by depending upon practice based confirmation of what works, in engaging citizens within the planning culture to contribute and receive in shaping urban local environments, more proactively.

## 1.1 Aim & Research Questions

India, being a developing nation despite of a rapid process of urbanization, that was inadequately planned for, has led to the creation of urban areas where in spite of its achievements, basic services and infrastructure are even yet to be put in place completely. And hence, seeking public participation could be even deemed as a luxury in some places. With the additional incompetency of the urban local bodies (ULBs) coupled with a political system that functions with a prevalence of corruption, the management of urban areas falls within a void of governance responsibility, with a plethora of issues.

According to Bharath Mishra Nath, in his paper on 'Crisis of Urban Governance in India' recognises this void in service delivery that, "Both first tier metro cities- Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai or Pune, or second-tier cities, they all face similar set of pressing problems- growth of urban population far outpaces the availability of necessary urban infrastructure and amenities that are usually prided by the civic authorities." (Nath, 2015, p.1)

The expansion of slums in these cities, with overwhelming human concentration and sparse urban framework, possess substandard solid waste management and sparse recycling. Drainage systems, roads and other urban amenities mostly remain on paper, and much of that money sanctioned for it is taken out of the system by large sections of the official establishment with the contractor as the conduit. The political heads that create vote banks and shrewd political strategies quite often ignore the fundamental flaws in urban planning.<sup>10</sup> The kind of corrupt nexuses that deprive India of

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<sup>10</sup> Newspaper article titled, "Chennai and India's urban nightmares". Published: *The Hindu*, December 8, 2015  
<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/homeland-column-chennai-and-indias-urban-nightmares/article7958641.ece>

planned urban development exist in every other segment of the Indian economy, and degrade the ability of the nation to effectively manage its urban transition.

The corruption is multiplied by the fact that nobody perceives the larger social benefit in enforcing regulations. More generally, there is a widespread feeling amongst lower and middle-income groups that the government is not doing as much as it should to increase their access to services and employment opportunities. This frustration is seen as a major challenge facing India. It is exemplified by the anticorruption movement led by Anna Hazare, which succeeded in mobilizing an impressive number of middle class citizens. (Dubochet, 2011, p.8)

Urban planning is still in a nascent state of implementation in India. This can be represented by the fact that no single city has a proper waste management system in place.<sup>11</sup> For example, the city Bangalore, which was once infamous for its numerable lakes and pleasant climate where people preferred to settle down after retirement, has become a concrete jungle, with intense traffic and pollution issues. Many of the lakes have even disappeared today. Facilities like road, electricity, water and sewage are short of the demands in most cities. For a rapidly urbanising nation, this divergence is serious problem.

However, while there are multiple issues to be solved through better planning and implementation, India holds aspirations to becoming a great nation in the world. Being a country where population is one of the largest obstacles to tackle on the road to development, the research is born from the idea that, could public participation initiatives undertaken by various civic groups be the tool to activate the citizens to work as a community to make their own environment better, thereby using the greatest problem as a strength.

### *Aims*

Within the above mentioned context, the thesis aims:

- (i) To study the Indian governance and planning system, in the context of public participation to understand the interrelationship between citizens, civic groups and civic bodies with respect to their impact on the development of the city.
- (ii) To study the nature of the contribution of civic groups to effective functioning of the urban planning system. This aim is to be specifically undertaken through the study of the nature of community initiatives, encouraging public participation.
- (iii) To analyse the civic group led initiatives so as to enable future research and policies on how the work of conducting participatory community projects could be integrated within the planning process by strengthening urban local self-government.

The main goal of this research is to highlight the underlying expectations, motivations and approaches, which drive civic groups towards a participatory process driven by bottom-up community initiatives. This is done by seeking to understand their various potentials and shortcomings. This is undertaken to illustrate the transformative potential of the work of such civic organisations to address and to attempt to bridge the void identified within the planning culture of India. "To highlight the potential for transformation in the relationship between state, market and civil society in the design and delivery of locally valued product and services, and the tensions and pitfalls that awaits such initiatives" - (Wagenaar, Healey, 2015, p.559)

A secondary goal is to facilitate further study into areas relating bottom-up participation in planning to address the void of disconnect with citizens and avoidance of governance responsibility in urban local bodies in India. The cases, analysis and recommendations drawn out in this thesis, on positively affecting the nature of urban planning and its implementation, prevalent in the country may serve as a point of departure.

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<sup>11</sup> Newspaper article titled, *The New Indian Express* on 'India must get serious about urban planning' Published: 01st June, 2013  
<http://www.newindianexpress.com/opinion/editorials/India-must-get-serious-about-urban-planning/2013/06/01/article1614594.ece>

## *Research Question*

### **Do civic groups that enable bottom-up participatory initiatives, have the transformative potential to address the void in planning culture of India?**

“Citizens are generally thought as not knowledgeable enough by public institutions to participate in complex decision-making processes” (EIPP, 2009, p.8). The need hence for citizens to be proactive is a necessity to mobilize effective participatory initiatives, as much as it is the outcome. The research is focused on the need to understand the dynamics of the use of a deliberative bottom-up participatory process in planning, executed through the works civic groups, as a mode to mobilize population in the making of more responsible and active citizens.

The possibility of bridging the chasm, with bottom-up initiatives hence is a long-term process, but the steps to it lies in addressing the various need of the public, from the most basic- health, sanitation, housing etc.; to the relatively more sophisticated needs such as the need for public art and cultural expression. The nature of emerging bottom-up participation in planning in India in the past two decades is different from the bottom-up participatory initiatives observed in the Western context (Kumar, Pandit, 2013, p.77).

The primary difference is apparent in the nature of issues they address. In the Western context, bottom-up participation is more apparent in dealing with projects like community expression in public spaces, identification of temporary empty blocks and collaboratively designing its future together, to re-thinking existing public services and spaces for more efficiency etc. Whereas, in India, much basic services like providing education, sanitation, citizen representation in public housing etc., have the need to be addressed in a bottom-up manner.

The research hence focuses on the transformative potential of the work of these civic groups that play this vital deliberative role between the citizens and the formal planning system, initially delegated to the urban local bodies (ULB) by the constitution of India by the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment to empower and decentralise local self-government in urban areas. The work of these third-sector organizations, which include urban planning expert groups, non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations and researchers, can be broadly classified into two stages in terms of level of action in bridging the void.

The first stage of action involves sensitizing the citizens first, creating awareness by education to become proactive with their civic rights and responsibilities, capacity building and community mobilization in order to address the basic needs within the community. The second stage of action involves working with the citizens in the execution of projects and enabling their participation to interact with other community groups, opening up to the possibility of working with other private actors to increase opportunities and most importantly in working with the government actors, to channelize the existing funds and schemes facilitated by existing policies in a just manner and on also further working with research in the process of policy making, in relating citizen-driven participatory initiatives with the formal planning system .

The research intends to be a starting point to the query on whether civic groups can function as effective intermediaries between the government and the citizens, and aid in the making of participatory democratic process and thereby positively affect the functioning of the planning system.

## *Hypothesis*

The hypothesis that this research rests on by relying on connecting the thread between the concepts above explained is that:

***“Civic groups enabling bottom-up participatory initiatives have the transformative potential to positively affect the void that exists in the planning culture of India”***

In the upcoming sections, the validity of the hypothesis will be undertaken by exploring the thematic concepts of participation, civil society, deliberation, and a bottom-up approach to urbanism which build the foundation for the

hypothesis. Later they will be understood in relevance to their contribution to understanding the Indian planning and governance situation, to create appropriate opportunities and solutions. The concepts of public participation, bottom-up approach with the recognition of the need for deliberation and alternate service delivery are linked with the role and work of civic actors.

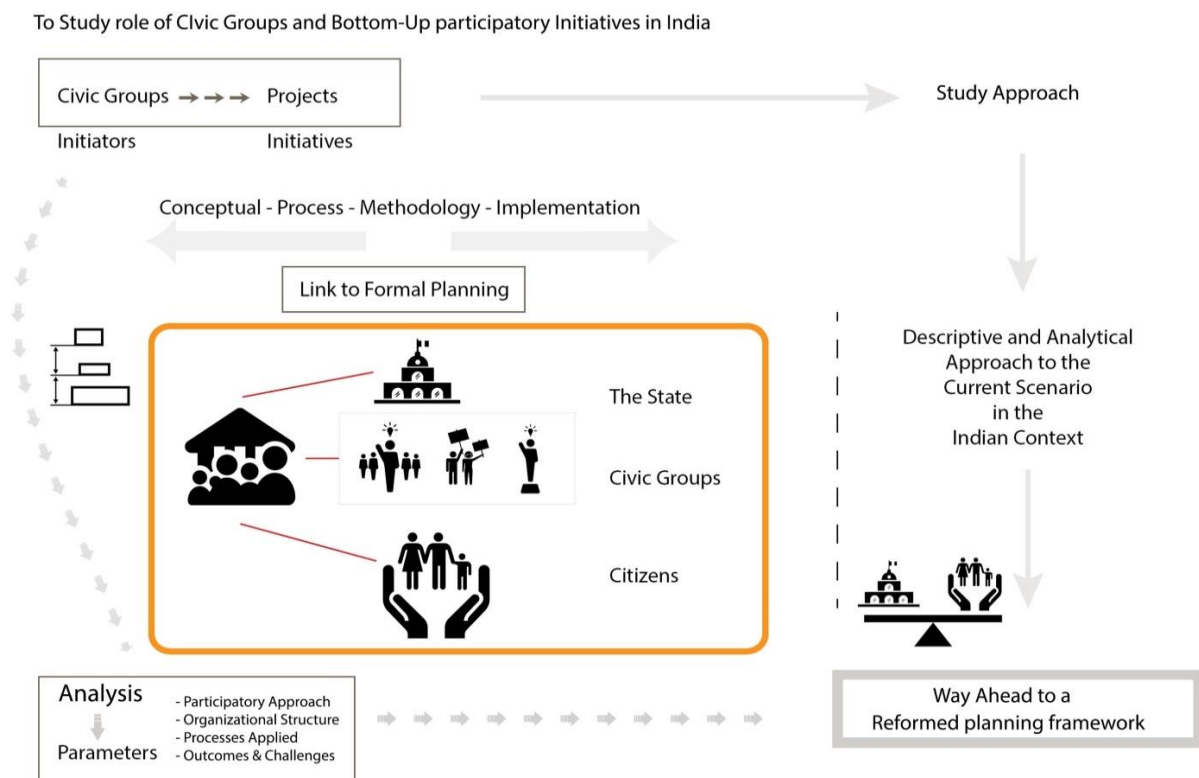
## 1.2 Research Approach

For decades, India has been repeatedly confronting the same quality of life challenges in our cities. On the one hand, hundreds of thousands of crores are being spent on urban projects beginning with the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) over a decade ago and followed up through AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission and the Swachh Bharat Mission. During the same decade, the floods in Mumbai, the garbage crisis in Bangalore, and more recently the air pollution levels in Delhi and the Chennai floods are alarm bells that more of the same solutions i.e. a series of patchwork projects, will not suffice. The research rests on the belief that there are a common set of root causes that underlie most quality of life challenges in our cities that are manifested across different fronts.

This paper is highly descriptive in nature. It provides an outline of the various roles that civil society organizations play in advocating urban planning and allied services in India. In putting together the paper, documentary search and textual analysis were used. Newspapers, journal articles, research reports and other relevant secondary materials were used to produce this article. In addition interviews and questionnaires were also employed to gather direct information and critical opinions with members of various civic groups undertaking participatory initiatives.

The research is primarily exploratory, in assessing whether these participatory initiatives by can have the potential to address and transform the void, and therefore is limited in its scope. However, the assembled work may be useful for future researchers to delve deeper into several aspects of bottom-up participatory initiatives in planning, by understanding deeper the Indian situation. The research attempts to gather insight, by exploring the possibility of working with intermediary civic groups.

**Figure 2: Illustration of the Research Approach undertaken**



Limitations:

- 1) Selection of case studies involved choosing cases in which participatory initiatives had been an integral part of the process from an early stage.
- 2) The thesis is limited to urban projects. Rural projects have not been taken into account.
- 3) The literature study of cases chosen is due to the prevalence of relatively developed instances of bottom-up participation observed in India.
- 4) Cases in India are selected on a significance basis and not a location-based assimilation, due to widespread activity of the groups not restricting to one urban centre. Such an approach is also because instances of activated participation are sparsely populated across the country.
- 6) All recommendations mentioned in the sections about challenges, opportunities and way ahead, need to be applied and adapted after a thorough context specific analysis.
- 7) The projects presented are not picked from an exhaustive comprehensive list of all the civic groups working on participatory issues, as such a repository was not readily available. Hence the most significant contributors within the stated framework for selection are studied.

## 2. Context for Planning and Participation in India

This chapter elaborates the contextual ground on which participatory initiatives have emerged and the planning culture within the planning system prevalent in the country on which these rest. The role of urban local bodies is studied in relation to its failure in the planning system. This is detailed in the Chapter 2, along with attributes observed in deconstructing the identified void within the planning culture. Chapter 2 also presents a brief overview of the existing constitutional provisions for the current system of planning and the upcoming opportunities they provide

### 2.1 Current system of Planning

The impact of the British in the evolution of the governance system in place today in India is much. Until the British invasion, India was an entity of many small kingdoms that were ruled independently. Whereas, when they ruled, they introduced the concept of urban municipalities, so that could unify these into a single unit and to establish control and discharge duties in an easier manner, for administrative and economic reasons. Though democracy was declared after independence, the remnants of “The way town planners conceive cities in India today, is largely derived from British town planning experience in the belief that they are universal and modern. Even town planning laws are basically British constructions and have not evolved significantly since independence. (Menon, 1997, p.293)

When it comes specifically to the state of the “Indian urban planning (it) needs major overhaul—it is overly top down and controlling where it should not be, and does not provide much needed guidance, coordination and integration where it should.” (Ahluwalia, 2013, p.17) A reason for this overly top-down nature can also be due to a prevalence of corruption<sup>12</sup> coupled with a lack of proactivity within the political and institutional framework, which thereby affects city planning. An ideal example would be in the case of Pune, which is one of the ten largest metropolitan cities in India, where there is no functioning metropolitan urban development authority and professional urban planners in place due to corrupt governmental institutions<sup>13</sup>.

Christian Bason states on the nature of political organizations that, “they can be prone to keep and maintain power, rather than to share it. Politicians sometimes prefer short-term positive media exposure over what could be the most effective long-term solution” (Bason, 2010, p.15). This reluctance to share the power to make core decisions is what that sets an unfavourable platform for citizen engagement and participation is apparent in India. This weakened notion to incorporate participation in the political framework right at the beginning of the power chain extends into the functioning of the public service institutions and further into the level of the urban local bodies

<sup>12</sup> India ranks 76 the out of 168 countries on Transparency International's Index of corruption. Perceptions of corruption are particularly high for public services most relevant to the poor citizens <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015>

<sup>13</sup> Newspaper article titled, ‘Corruption, inefficiency hit city planning: Expert’. Published: The Times of India, Feb 17, 2011, Pune. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/Corruption-inefficiency-hit-city-planning-Expert/articleshow/7518068.cms>

The realm of urban spatial planning, in terms of exercising administrative sphere of influence depending upon geographical and governmental setups exist under the following levels:

- National
- State
- Metropolitan area
- District and
- Local

The responsibilities at the National Level, by the Central Government limited to

- evolving policies, guidelines and model laws for adoption by the states;
- disbursing Central assistance / grants and monitor centrally aided projects;
- providing adequate funds for research and training, and
- formulating development plans and policies for union territories

#### National Level

- Central Government agencies
- National Planning Commission (which is now dissolved and replaced by the National Institute for Transforming India- NITI Aayog)<sup>14</sup>;
- Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) and
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHPA).
- The Town and Country Planning Organization (TCPO)

#### State Level

- The Ministry in charge of urban development,
- Department / Directorate of Town and Country Planning,
- Urban and Regional Development Authorities,
- Specialised or single function agencies such as
  - o State Housing Board
  - o State Electricity Board
  - o Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Board etc.
  - o Master Plans / Development Plans

#### Metropolitan Area Level

- Article 243-ZE of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act 1992 (CAA), provides for constitution of MPC and preparation of Draft development Plan having regard to:
- Plans of panchayats and the municipalities;
- coordinated spatial planning;
- sharing of water and other physical and natural resources;
- Integrated development of infrastructure; and environmental considerations.

#### District Level

- Article 243-ZD of the Constitution (74th Amendment) Act 1992 (CAA), provides for constitution of DPC and preparation of Draft development
- Plan having regard to:
- Plans of panchayats and the municipalities;
- coordinated spatial planning;

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<sup>14</sup>(i) Government establishes NITI Aayog- Press Release by the Planning Commission

<http://planningcommission.gov.in/press-release.pdf>

(ii) Newspaper article titled, 'NITI Aayog replaces Planning Commission, Prime Minister Modi bids farewell to 'one size fits all' approach'. Published: The Indian Express, January 2, 2015, New Delhi.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/niti-aayog-to-replace-plan-panel/>

- sharing of water and other physical and natural resources;
- integrated development of infrastructure; and environmental considerations.
- 26 out of 31 states have DPCs

#### Local Level

- Department / Directorate of Town and Country Planning or City Development Authorities are preparing and implementing Master Plans of urban centres.
- According to 74th CAA, town planning or urban planning is a function of urban local bodies (ULBs)/ municipalities.
- Only a few states have devolved this power to ULBs
- 1,890 (24%) cities 7,935 urban centres have master plans (Kulshrestha, 2013, p.26)

India today follows a land-use based master planning approach. These land use planning mechanism have lengthy time lines starting from the preparation of the plans to the final sanction of the plan. For example, in Ahmedabad between year 1978 to 1999, only 18 town planning schemes were sanctioned and implemented while the population of the city increased two-fold. (Mahadevia, Joshi, 2009, p.8) Secondly, the city government would not be able to implement the plans or construct a single urban road without the final sanction from the state government. The current urban planning mechanism promotes top-down approaches where the state government has all the powers to revert any decision taken by the planning officer. Thirdly, there is no effective mechanism of the participation of the stakeholders in the entire process. Fourthly, there is no link between the administrative boundaries and the planning boundaries and similarly there is no link between city's budget and its land use plans. As a result the planning department and agencies function parallel to the urban local bodies where the planning decisions and the day to day functional decision often do not match.

The purpose of a Master Plan is "to promote growth and guide and regulate present and future development of towns and cities. It is an instrument to work out land and infrastructure requirements for various urban and rural uses, and allocate land for various uses to result in harmonious and sustainable distribution of activities so that towns / cities are provided with a form and structure within which they can perform all their economic and social functions efficiently and effectively" (Meshram, 2006, p.7) In India, a Master Plan commonly covers a period skyline of around 20 years, presenting a guide from the current situation with the city to its optimal end-state with spatial points of interest in the terminal year. For example, in Delhi and Mumbai, it took over 10 years to finish the preparation arrangement of the Master Plans

The procedure typically starts with the projection of population of a urban region and an appraisal of a normal family unit size, which together with salary levels of various family unit classifications, decide the demand-based interest for residential space. "The requirements of industry, office, and retail spaces are based on projections of the economic prospects for the cities; the transport patterns follow from the land use pattern and the space requirement for transportation is typically a residual. The space needs for conservation of natural resources and protection of built heritage are also determined residually, unmindful of considerations of sustainability or contextual nuances" (Ahluwalia, 2013, p.3)

The Masterplans arrived at from such an approach have additionally met a lot of criticism (Ahluwalia, 2013,p.4) in light of the fact that that they might have not been effectively thought out in the first place during conception and have not expressly and deliberately consolidated incorporation of financially weaker areas of society in planning for space, or they were finished in a top down manner with little participation with stakeholders, or once concluded, they have been connected too unbendingly while changing circumstances called for adaptability.

An important challenge for urban planning is of capacity, "both at the local government level to envision and prepare a city development plan, a master plan and a financial plan, and at the level of the state government to provide legislative and administrative support and an enabling environment for facilitating the process of planning at the local and regional level" (Ahluwalia, p.6). Such thought necessitates strengthening the municipal city units enabling urban local self-government in the states (ULBs) which give the premise to preparing and building human resource ability of citizens as

an asset. Advances in information technology today, are leading towards assuming an imperative part in urban planning using GIS, remote sensing, GPS, geo-informatics, and so on. The degree for advancement must be extended by crafting the vital framework of infrastructure services coupled with human asset abilities at the local government level.

In India, “urban development planning process generally Master Plans are prepared by town planning departments but implementation is done by Development Authorities, Municipal Corporation etc. and because of lack of coordination in these agencies the provision of Master Plans are generally not accepted”. (Kumar, Pandit, 201, p.77) With such a decentralised system in place, the lack of appropriate, participation and deliberation amongst the various governing bodies and stakeholders ends up in the creation of unintegrated masterplans with each department/organization claiming a unique vision according to their interests for the city, resulting in a chaotic scenario where no plan gets fully implemented eventually. To progress beyond existent developmental challenges in the nation, it is crucial to ensure that governance is open, accountable, participatory, inclusive, sensitive and responsive to the needs of all citizens; across the continuum of policymaking to the practical delivery of planning and other services.

In India, “Urban Planning for development is based on Master Plans, Zonal Plans, Zoning Regulation, Bye Laws and related guidelines approved by the State Government. Master Plans of various town and urban areas in different States are inspiration of Delhi Master Plan which was the first Master Plan prepared under Delhi development Act 1957. This act was more or less on the lines of Town & Country Planning Act 1947 of Britain. Delhi Development Act 1957 is a major land mark in the present town planning system in India”. (Kumar, Pandit, 201, p.77) This act was the first attempt in which there is a provision of creating a separate agency/ authority and entrusting on it, the responsibilities of spatial development of a city in India

### *Stages in Masterplan Preparation*

The significant stages for preparing a masterplan for an urban area are delineated as follows:

STAGE – 1: First of all, government notification is done to prepare the Master Plan of a city. Local planning authority is responsible to make the master plan, but if local planning authority cannot make the plan, the government can get it prepared by the state town planning department; the cost incurred is to be recovered from the budgets of the local planning authority. For example in the case of Bengaluru

STAGE – II: After it is decided that a master plan is to be made, the next task is to decide objectives of the master plan. These objectives are directly taken from the town planning act of the state, under which the master plan is to be prepared.

STAGE – III: Then, surveys of existing conditions of that city is done and data base is prepared for this both primary as well as secondary sources are tapped.

STAGE – IV: Once a data base is prepared, the next stage is to analyse the data and based on the same, future projection are made for the plan period.

STAGE – V: This stage consists of preparation of the draft master plan which consists the existing and proposed – land use maps, transportation network, facilities and amenities, density pattern, phases of development etc. Apart from these the draft master plan also contains report containing formation of regulation and zonal regulations are also included in it.

STAGE – VI: After preparing the draft master plan, the concerned agency publishes it widely and objections and suggestions are invited from the public and other authorities, up to a certain date.

STAGE – VIII: Then this finalized draft master plan is submitted to the government for approval. The government can approve the master plan as it is or it can propose further modifications, which the concerned agency has to incorporate and re-submit to the government for approval. The government has power to the reject the master plan and to ask the concerned agency to prepare the draft master plan afresh.

STAGE –IX: In case of the draft master plan being approved by the government, it is considered to be the final master plan and then concerned agency publishes it for the open reference and sale. On the very date of publication of the final master plan it becomes operational.

There can be minor variations in the above mentioned skeleton, for individual cases in their respective states, but overall process remains the same. (Kumar, Pandit, 2013, p.76)

## 2.2 Culture of Planning in Local Bodies

### 2.2.1 Constitutional provisions

The achievement of public participation depends to a large degree on the clarity of the constitutional framework that establishes it in the political setting, defining the relationship between participatory arrangements and representative democracy. A successful constitutional framework directs by determining how the outcomes of participatory processes are linked with policy action. It provides rules that apply to different uses of the participatory processes: informing and educating citizens, counselling and consulting them on a given issue, directly involving them in policy-making. A framework regulates the interface between citizens and decision makers. It formally epitomises expectations of the process, dispersing citizens' discernments that they are being co-opted or not taken seriously. The Indian framework, irrespective of the fact that it is mostly not discernible in its execution provides for the incorporation of participation into the system mainly by the provisions of the following two schemes.

#### *The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act*

The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA), of 1992 was created as an afterthought to provide urban local bodies with constitutional legitimacy parallel to what rural local bodies experience. The amendment proposed political decentralisation and the establishment of a local self-government at the city level with relative political and planning autonomy. The enactment of the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA<sup>15</sup> made it compulsory for the State Government to constitute municipalities. For the first time, ULBs were granted the position of the third-tier of governance. The Act accepted that in many States, local bodies had become weak and ineffective on account of a variety of reasons, including the failure, prolonged suppressions and inadequate devolution of powers and functions. As a result, urban local bodies are unable to perform effectively as vibrant democratic units of self-government.

Each state with its own content and format took advantage of the openness. And hence the provisions by the CAA remain subordinate to the State and determined by the financial condition of the state and the willingness of the state to empower ULBs. "It provided a framework for third-tier, city-level governance, but however, it has not resulted in autonomous governance structures. Though local elections are held and political representatives continue to occupy local body posts, state governments continue to enjoy political and administrative control over urban governance." (Nath, 2015, p.6)

Before 74<sup>th</sup> CAA (Constitutional Amendment Act), there was no established arrangement of urban management as compared to sound village administration, which was witnessed and recorded throughout the ancient, medieval and modern India (Nath, 2015, p.10). Before the British Rule, India possessed a system of urban administration from time to time, but it disappeared altogether or lost most of its core vitality with the strong centralising propensities of the British Rulers, inducing a sense of sameness by the nullifying the diversifying elements. Nevertheless, urban governance<sup>16</sup> as it is

<sup>15</sup> For full text of the of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act: <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend74.htm>

<sup>16</sup> The concept of urban governance can be defined as the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens. (Bandauko, 2015, p.105)

understood today is an offshoot of the British rule. They introduced the basic systems for decentralisation of administration through urban systems, but when they left the country, the municipal bodies they assembled were left in chaos and disarray (Nath, 2015, p.13)

In 1992, the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA was passed to bridge the gap in the Constitution for enabling local self-government empowered as a State Municipal Act. It was envisioned to take care of the existing shortcomings in the structure and organization of municipal bodies and regenerate and fortify them to meet the challenges posed by urbanisation. It also envisaged grassroots democratic polity by making municipal bodies instruments of local government and community development. And post the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA, decentralisation through devolution of power became the buzzword. However, it was not a real devolution as it didn't lead to transfer of responsibilities of local bodies that elected their own representatives, had their own funding resources and had independent mandate to take decisions. (Nath, 2015, p.26)

### *JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission)*

For addressing the issue of inclusiveness within the system, the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) was introduced in 2005 as a massive city-modernisation scheme launched by the Government of India under Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). One of the key reforms envisaged by the Mission facilitating for the poor in city planning and development in the reform agenda prescribes the earmarking of 20-25 percent developed land in all housing projects (public and private) for economically weaker sections and low income households, with a system of cross-subsidies. The success of this reform will depend on the creation of suitable legal frameworks and structuring of appropriate incentive zoning mechanisms for developers. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) made it mandatory for cities to prepare a City Development Plan (CDP) and make their demands for specific projects against the backdrop of the CDP. But the hastily prepared CDPs for JNNURM were typically reduced to a list of projects for the city instead of a strategy document. For urban planning to work, "District and Metropolitan Development Plans as well as CDPs will have to become legal as well as spatial documents, and CDPs will have to be integrated with master plans and/or development plans as well as financial plans". (Ahluwalia, 2013, p.6) Focus of JNNURM was on provisions for urban poor, including housing, water supply and sanitation, urban transport, road network, and the development of inner/old city areas, etc. It also aimed to make private players part of urban development through PPP (Public Private Partnership)

The twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) proposed to consolidate JNNURM and envisaged its wider role in urban reforms. During twelfth plan, the components of JNNURM are focused on urban infrastructure governance (UIG), capacity building and slum rehabilitation.

The plan also highlighted the reasons which are acting as hurdles to successful reach and implementation of the program due to:

- Failure to mainstream the urban planning
- Incomplete reform and slow progress in project implementation
- Delay in securing land for projects
- Delay in getting approval from various regulators

Although these provisions are made a part of constitutionally, they do not drive the way of functioning of the local bodies as the rules that determine local governance are put forth in an ambiguous and unnecessarily complex manner. In other words, corruption is incited by enabling people across various stakeholder groups to work around these complexities through discrepancies (Sadhguru, 2015, p.34).

### **2.2.2 Urban Local Bodies**

Some of the duties delineated to Urban Local Bodies as per the Twelfth Schedule (Article 243)<sup>17</sup> of the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA are:

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<sup>17</sup> Section 243W of the 74th CAA

[http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/Const.Pock%202Pg.Rom8Fsss\(40\).pdf](http://lawmin.nic.in/olwing/coi/coi-english/Const.Pock%202Pg.Rom8Fsss(40).pdf)

- Urban planning including town planning.
- Regulation of land-use and construction of buildings.
- Planning for economic and social development.
- Planning, Construction and Maintenance of Roads and bridges.
- Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes.
- Public health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management.
- Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects
- Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.
- Slum improvement and upgradation.
- Urban poverty alleviation.
- Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens, playgrounds.
- Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.

### *Structure Of Municipal Governance Of A Metropolis:*

i) Municipal Corporation - It is the topmost of urban local government and is for an urban area/centre with population above 3 lacs. As an institution it is more respectable and enjoys a greater measure of autonomy than other forms of local government. It is set up under a special statute passed by the respective state's legislature.

ii) Councillors - Members of the Municipal Corporation are elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage for a period of five years and they are called Councillors.

These Councillors, collectively called the Municipal Council, exercise deliberative functions and the executive functions are performed by the Municipal Commissioner.

iii) Municipal Commissioner and Mayor - He is an Indian Administrative Services official appointed by the state government and has the executive powers of the government of Municipal Corporations. The other executives known as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are political executives elected for a period of one year by the members of the Corporation. The Mayor is the titular head of the corporation and presides over the meetings of the corporation.

These Municipal Corporations are in charge of Wards (subdivision or district of a town/city) according to its population and representatives are elected from each Ward. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai which is the civic body that governs Mumbai city is divided in to 6 zones each consisting of 3-5 wards each. Individual wards or collections of wards within a corporation sometimes have their own administrative body known as ward committees.

### *Functions of Municipal Corporations:*

Obligatory - Supply of wholesome water and construction and maintenance of water works, supply of electricity, road transport services, construction, maintenance, naming and numbering of public streets, lighting, watering and cleaning public streets, etc.

Discretionary - Construction of public parks, gardens, libraries, museums, theatres and stadiums, public housing, planting of trees on road sides and elsewhere, provision of relief to destitute and disabled persons, civil reception of VIPs, registration of marriages, organisation and management of fairs and exhibitions.

Most of the revenue generated from economic activity in the country occurs in urban areas, but the revenue generated from this activity accrues to the central or state governments, and there is much less devolution to city governments than there should be. Cities and urban local bodies in India also have limited capacity to raise their own resources

The arrangement of city government at present is with the end goal that city governments are not viably enabled to plan for development in infrastructure. Basic choices on the infrastructure needs of the metropolitan urban areas are normally made by the state governments, which essentially react to the electorate in the state all in all. This needs to change so that city government is in the hands of elected representatives responsible for their local electorate.

(Ahluwalia, 2011, p.102)

Reasoning why (urban) local bodies have become weak and dysfunctional, and are not able to perform effectively as vibrant democratic units of self-government, the Statement of Objects and Reasons made at the time of introduction of 74th amendment bill, mentions three facts, among a variety of reasons that hold good in case of many states:

- (i) Failure to hold regular elections,
- (ii) Prolonged supersessions, and
- (iii) Inadequate devolution of powers and functions (Chaubey, 2003, p.5)

## 2.3 Deconstructing the void in the system

While addressing both civic issues at the urban level and urban governance at large in cities across India, the problem despite being in different geographical locations remain the same. Poor urban governance is the bane everywhere. And this dysfunctional urban governance system is the core reason behind the existence of a disconnection between the citizens and governing public institutions, which is referred to as 'the void' through the course of this thesis

According to Bharat Mishra Nath (2015) in his policy report on the Crisis of Urban Governance in India, the reasons behind the dysfunctional urban governance system could be attributed to the following reasons:

- India being transcendently a rural society never had a hang on administration and planning through urban local bodies amidst and beyond British Rule. Post-Independence, the practice continued until some semblance of order was brought into civil organization by municipal administration through the 74th Amendment Constitutional Act. However it failed to establish the third-tier of enabling self-government at the local level as was visualized in the Act.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) dispatched to address the urban issues had restricted scope because of unchecked government intervention and also in light of the fact that it was limited to just urban communities of population with one million or more. The mission only wound up confounding the circumstance more rather than generating an effective solution to the existing civic problems (Nath, 2015, p.9)

The details of these pseudo effective constitutional provisions for setting up the base urban local self-government and thereby an avenue for participation to occur are detailed in the upcoming section.

It can be said that urban administration through ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) is weak in India, prompting an emergency of urban governance. (Nath, 2015, p.21) The substance of the emergency is that the current urban administration has neglected to manage the huge difficulties of creating/providing urban infrastructure/services for quickly developing urban populations. This imbalance has prompted fast weakening of urban living conditions, which has assumed crisis extents.

The broad variables behind the functioning of urban local bodies undermining quality urban governance are:

- ULBs are weak because Union and State governments leading political parties don't want them strong. They are reluctant to devolve powers – political, administrative and financial – to the ULBs.
- Severe financial constraints come in the way of effective functioning of the ULBs
- Inherent corruption and absence of public pressure, reflecting the void, on ULBs to perform- Voting statistics show that participation is not effective (Refer figure in Annexure 3)

The failure of ULBs can be demonstrated by taking the case of Pune

According to Christopher Benninger<sup>18</sup>, renowned architect and urban planner from Pune, "Pune has no integrated urban plan of action". The city is instead making a development plan in bits and pieces, year by year, local authority by local authority, and even ward by ward. The local authorities are abandoned to struggle with under-paid and under-qualified staff to tackle problems that can only be solved at the metropolitan-region level in a city like Pune, which ranks among

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<sup>18</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Corruption, inefficiency hit city planning: Expert'. Published: The Times of India, Feb 17, 2011, Pune.  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/Corruption-inefficiency-hit-city-planning-Expert/articleshow/7518068.cms>

the 10 largest metropolitan areas in India, lacks even a hint of an urban development authority. He also affirmed the prevalence of a culture of corruption and an inept institutional structure to deal with urban planning, development and management. The plan to exit from such situation lies in steps like setting up of an urban development authority and an economic development commission to look at policy measures, like regulations, incentives and urban infrastructure, and layout an effective masterplan for urban development.

## 2.4 Role of Civic Groups in Planning and Public Participation

In the course of the thesis civic groups are also referred to as civic organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs). While addressing the role of such civic groups, their contribution is widespread across many disciplines when relating to governance and local urban issues, depending upon their motivations and specific field of action. However, the research will later only focus on participatory initiatives of civic groups that work with a central notion towards urban planning, in detail.

The significance of these initiatives undertaken is that they reshape planning approaches that depend on traditional service delivery processes and present a new approach to the active involvement of citizens in these processes (Healey, Wagenaar, 2015, p.559). The work of these civic organisations is hence critical in bringing good urban governance and social justice<sup>19</sup> in cities.

Some civic organisations focus solely on advocacy for housing land and, within their ambit, work towards ensuring that the housing poor and homeless have a roof over their head. This emphasis can be referred to as on 'hard infrastructure' provision. Whereas, the other civic groups concerned almost purely on the 'soft infrastructure' initiatives like public awareness campaigns on making city authorities account for their service provision, capacity building to empower citizens and officials, urban mapping and vision exercises etc. (Bandauko, 2015, p.104)

Civil society organisations (CSOs) like 'Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group', which specialise solely on advocacy for uplifting slums and informal settlements, solid waste management, sustainable transportation, water, sanitation and drainage etc. work towards ensuring that the housing poor and homeless have a roof over their head and their basic need for services are met.

Some civic organisations are mainly concerned with issues such as public awareness campaigns on issues of service delivery and governance. CSOs like 'Arappor Iyakkam' (i.e. Conducting a participatory campaign for citizens affected of the Chennai Floods titled 'Kelu Chennai Kelu'<sup>20</sup>) often use threat to organise protests and campaigns against bureaucratic injustices and making the resident empowered in informational terms.

**Figure 3: Participatory social audit meeting on Chennai Floods- Kelu Chennai Kelu Event**

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<sup>19</sup> Social Justice can be defined as "concerned both with individual empowerment and also with structural injustice; that is with questions of power and resources available to particular communities or sectors of those communities. Participation of local communities in resource management and urban development empowers that community and helps in redistribution of natural resources which contribute to improve social justice outcomes. By meeting the needs of the citizens, community participation is also seen as a vehicle to help achieve a socially just city and region" (Bandauko, 2015, p.106)

<sup>20</sup> (i) Newspaper article titled, 'With monsoon not far away, is Chennai ready?' Published: The Hindu, September 4, 2016. Chennai <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/with-monsoon-not-far-away-is-chennai-ready/article9070780.ece>

(ii) Article titled, 'Kelu Chennai Kelu: Hundreds participate in meet urging government to prepare for floods' <http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/dont-know-what-do-old-jeans-chennai-girl-will-make-you-notebook-out-it-49861>



Source: The New Indian Express

The paper suggests mutuality and close linkage between civic groups in development and civic groups in the advanced agendas for social justice towards urban sustainability and meaningful governance. Both approaches should necessarily be pursued by civic groups to address urban issues in a diverse and complex context in India.

When Janata Colony (a slum in Mumbai) was demolished on 17 May 1976, almost seventy thousand people lost their homes. After a long struggle with the state and national government, the families were relocated to a place named, Cheetah Camp where they had to rebuild their houses. Over thirty thousand residents had marched to government offices to save Janata Colony, but to no avail. The experience of fighting against the institutional to save the settlement from eviction provided many lessons for the community's informal leadership. It strengthened their view that they needed to find an alternative strategy whereby affected communities (not just NGOs or politicians) could be at the centre of the process. This was when the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), one of the very first civic groups affecting the urban planning system of India was created. (Bandauko, 2015, p.105)

This is primarily due to the fact that organisation believed that communities had to go to government with alternative proposals, not just with a list of grievances. They realized that short-term strategies to stop evictions are incomplete, without devising practical long-term solutions to build. The Civil Society<sup>21</sup> organization in India adopted slum enumerations as tools to mobilize and strengthen the capacity of local organizations in advancing the concerns of local citizens.

Many urban NGOs were established to address the needs of disadvantaged urban citizens( some of which are listed are in Chapter 4.3) – some worked on seeking representation while making masterplans for cities, housing rights, raised water and sanitation issues etc. and used the campaign approach as a way to get their message across to state and international agencies. The strategy was to confront governments through demonstrations, agitations and legal proceedings on behalf of the urban poor. Over the past decade in India, new forms of urban movements have emerged as a way of expressing concerns with regards to the delivery of urban services where civil society actors in India have become far more proactive in urban policy and planning processes than ever before. (Singh, 2014, p.2)

'New organizational and democratic forms originate in the civic sphere, with interactive and associational forms that are characteristic of it' (Healey, Wagenaar, 2015, p.557). By playing this interactive role of intermediaries in creating alternate ways of charging the development and service delivery process to a compelling degree, civic organizations act like a ladder in recognising, validating and bringing the issues of the citizens to the deliberative table and onto an agenda of action. Conversely, civic groups may also elevate the citizen's level of aware of the decisions, actions and institution of

<sup>21</sup> Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group. (According to the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics 2009)

the government institutions. Additionally civic groups can also provide a platform for other marginalized groups to level up for strengthening their sphere of influence in representative bodies.

Civil society organizations are often believed “to be more inclusive than states and international institutions, providing avenues for participation of otherwise marginalized groups” (Tallberg, Uhlin, 2011, p.4). This sense of inclusivity allows for a more democratic nature of operations, which can increase the level of trust of the citizens in contributing to the system, as no one feels alienated, and thereby building a sense of ownership.

Community initiatives driven by civic groups in a bottom-up manner are taking up the vital expanding role in experimenting by opening ways of citizen engagement with new models of the delivering of social goods and services for providing the citizen’s local needs in their environment. Patsy Healey and Henry Wagenaar thereby supportively argue for acknowledging the work of civic groups as crucial ‘gap-filling activity’ and that its potential needs to be considered “to not just transform service delivery but the quality of democratic life, in response to sense of neglect by the agencies of formal government” (Healey, Wagenaar, 2015, p.557)

While the existing form of governance is dwindling with respect to the quality of local urban environments and projecting into an upcoming crisis situation, with rising urbanization rates, decrease of general trust in state of political affairs and a prevalent lack of concern and control both by citizens and the government to attempt the implementation of solutions to problems, civic groups act as a site for innovation and experimentation with new forms of organization, financing and governance.

They are driven by the urgent need to find alternative pathways to creating and delivering essential and valued social products and services, focused on the wellbeing of people and the environment The ‘NextBengaluru’ urban envisioning exercise<sup>22</sup> in the Shanthinagar neighbourhood of Bengaluru city, conducted by the MOD Institute is a valid example of how civic groups act as sites for innovation and experimentation through which citizens can innovate and contribute to their urban environments.

The research recognises that role of bottom-up participation initiatives needs to take up on the journey towards such a governance ecosystem. With respect to the context of India, the analysis of the state and progress of such initiatives as they exist today needs to be employed with a piecemeal-approach because of the lack of one cohesive body driving towards change with participation and inclusiveness across all sectors.

Civil society has responded by setting up participation planning and implementing processes independently by co-creating with citizens on small scale projects such as ‘NextBengaluru’ in an innovative manner. Civil society actors tend to be structured as intimate units internally. They recognise their role as convincing public administration to use public participation more regularly, and offer them to tools and expertise to do it. They provide information and education for partners in the participation process about the usability and adequacy of participation and about relevant methods. (EIPP, 2009, p.36)

There are various opportunities for civic groups to engage citizens by informing, consulting, involving, and collaborating with them through a number of techniques; for example, the use of online surveys and peer-to-peer communication tools such as blogs etc. Many of these are now being piloted and used by states, localities, and civic organizations. There is also an increased interest by federal agencies. Although, ‘the challenge of reaching those who don’t already participate as activists or interest group members remains’. (Lukensmeyer, Torres, 2006)

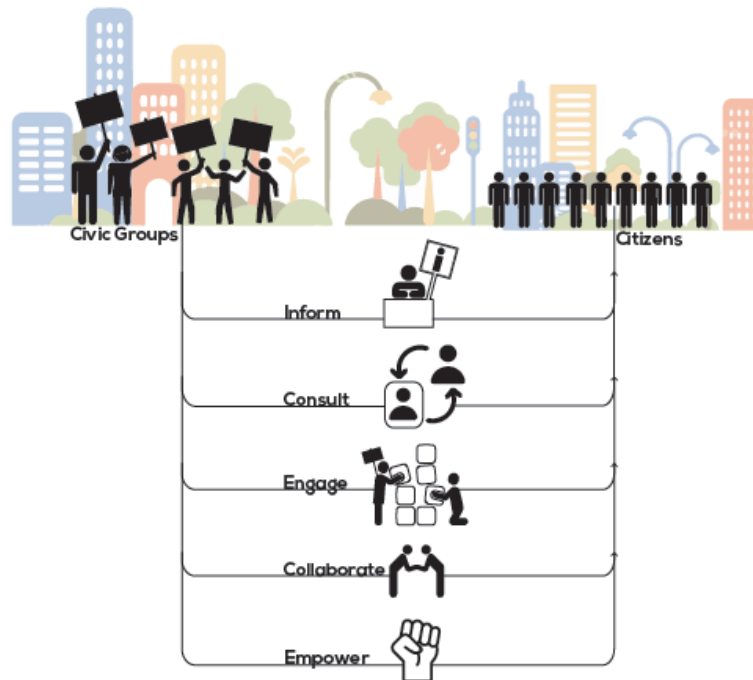
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<sup>22</sup> (i) Newspaper article titled, ‘German touch for future of Bangalore’. Published: The Hindu, September 30, 2013, Bengaluru.  
[www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/german-touch-for-future-of-bangalore/article5182874.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/german-touch-for-future-of-bangalore/article5182874.ece)

(ii) For further details on the Next Bengaluru project:  
<http://www.mod.org.in/mod/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MOD-Nextbengaluru--PEOPLES-VISION-ON-FUTURE-SHANTHINAGAR-Booklet--web.pdf>

Inform	:	Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions
Consult	:	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions
Engage	:	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered
Collaborate	:	Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution
Empower	:	Place final decision-making authority in the hands of citizens

**Figure 4: Citizen Involvement Spectrum Enabled by Civic Groups**



Source: Adapted from International Association for Public Participation

These efforts of inducing social change to address the gap in the planning culture, by activating the relationship between the citizens and the government paves way for a collaborative decision-making and problem-solving process can be referred to as an attempt of social innovation<sup>24</sup>.

Executing these shifts within government is the core of leading public sector innovation. Christian Bason (Bason, 2010) argues that such a process entails the following shifts in planning and implementation:

- a shift from random innovation to a conscious and systematic approach to public sector renewal
- a shift from managing human resources to building innovation capacity at all levels of government
- a shift from running tasks and projects to orchestrating processes of co-creation, creating new solutions with people, not for them
- and finally a shift from administrating public organizations to courageously leading innovation across and beyond the public sector” (Bason, 2010, p.6).

<sup>23</sup> As adapted from the Public Participation Spectrum by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) [http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum\\_vertical.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Social innovation, can be defined, “as innovation for the social and public good, or as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations” (Bason, 2010, p.96)

These shifts are the core of the supportive thought that needs to be incepted within the thinking of the government to practically execute these shifts in a holistic approach, consequently calling for a balancing approach in a bottom-up manner. As the civic sector organizations are working on the ground towards realising these shifts, there is a sense of social entrepreneurship that they possess, which the public sector institutions do not, that helps evolve a capacity for innovation.

Innovative capacity in organizations serving the public is a function not just of organizational characteristics, but also the internal culture, external environment and institutional framework, which can be visible in the work of civic groups. Capacity is thus involved with the structure of the ecosystem, and how it can evolve or even be (re)designed, towards the making of a reformed planning framework. And entertaining this innovative capacity is a vital trait within the approach of civic group by taking the first step through bottom-up participatory initiatives to bridge the void out of its existing social problems. (Bason, 2010, p.24)

### 3. Literature Review

In this section, a review of literature on the thematic concepts of participation, civil society, deliberation, and a bottom-up approach to urbanism which build the foundation for the hypothesis on which the research is built are presented. Later they will be understood in relevance to their contribution to understanding the Indian planning and governance situation, to create appropriate opportunities and solutions. The methods of public participation and a bottom-up approach with the recognition of the need for deliberation towards social change are to be linked with the role and work of civic actors. This is undertaken by understanding conceptually the need, potentials and shortcomings of a bottom-up approach in comparison with a top-down process, through various works.

#### 3.1 Connecting the concepts in Planning and Public Participation

##### *Participation*

Public Participation can be defined as “the deliberative process by which interested or affected citizens, civil society organizations, and government actors are involved before a decision is taken. By deliberation we mean a process of thoughtful discussion based on the giving and taking of reasons for choices”(EIPP Report, 2009, p.6) This definition is indicative of the qualitative potential of public participation beyond just being a mechanism of information exchange between citizens and the public government institutions

The term participation etymologically and conceptually refers to ‘being part of’ and ‘taking part in’ and carries an active component within it. (Steffek, Kissling, Nanz, 2008, p.7). This definition stresses on the importance that participation is not to be a ritual or a static mandatory process. Its potential lies in the ability to generate a platform where the citizen can be active, to affect changes in planning and governance processes.

The concept of participation, of course, is not a new one in development. Over the last thirty years it has acquired a spectrum of meanings and given rise to a diversity of practices. For much of this time, ‘community participation’, usually in projects, has remained distinct from political participation, conventionally through voting, political parties and lobbying. “In recent years, there has been a convergence of concern with citizen engagement in policy formation and implementation and with ‘good governance’, broadening participation to include a search for new, more direct, ways through which citizens may influence governments and hold them accountable” (Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001, p.3).

The need for social change, through participation can be attributed to “a growing realization that mismanagement of the physical environment is a major contributing factor to the social and economic ills of the world and that there are better ways of going about design and planning” (Sanoff, 2000, p. ix) .

Participation when affecting the ways of governance has high impact as a form of public engagement. Deshler and Sock (1985) identified two levels of participation in achieving such impact. Pseudo participation was characterized as a ritual of domestication which is nothing but he informing, manipulation, placation and consultation respectively. Whereas, genuine participation was categorized as cooperatives for partnership & delegation of power and citizens control, and this means empowerment.

The building unit of such a system employing genuine participation practically begins by addressing the population at the community level. "Communities are groups with shared values and a sense of interdependence; they are in a sense the underpinning of social capital. (Social capital refers to the stock of goodwill, or trust that develops from mutual engagement.)" (Stewart, 2009, p.18) This social capital is what that needs to be built for participatory processes to thrive.

In cases, where participation of citizens in planning for their environments is not driven by the government itself directly, there is a need for third-sector that authentically believes for citizens to transforming from being as 'as users and choosers to a more active engagement of citizens as agents in the making and shaping of the social policies that affect their lives '(Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001, p.1)

### *Urban Governance*

The concept of urban governance referred to in this thesis can be defined as, "the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens" (Bandauko, 2015, p.105).

This definition of urban governance, while including the role of 'informal arrangements' highlights the potential direction towards participatory processes of citizens/groups of citizens shaping urban life for themselves at the local level. It breaks with the notion that local government should always be the vehicle through which local needs are met. It indicates the notion of governance by devolving power to local communities.

According to the Commission on Global Governance<sup>25</sup>, "local governance is the sum of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest." With urban planning being one of the vital areas of governance action, this definition allows for the accommodation of diverse interests through co-operative action, reinforcing the connection to the value of participation.

### *Urban Planning*

Urban planning is the process in which all the physical developmental activities of a town are controlled, regulated and monitored from time to time. An urban planning program may be divided into four basic stages: formation of goals and objectives, basic research/available data / study of existing scenario, plan preparation and plan implementation.(Kumar, Pandit, 2013, p.1)

"Urban planning requires an accurate political organization, involving the participation of actors at different levels, with a real distribution of responsibilities for the elaboration and the management of urban policies" (Enyedi, 2004, p.5). And when the process of participation is systematically incorporated into the urban planning agenda, it can be termed as participatory planning. Participatory planning is a technique that accentuates including the whole community in the strategic and administration procedures of urban planning.

Urban planning may be described as a technical and political process concerning the welfare of people, control of the use of land, design of the urban environment including transportation and communication networks, and protection and

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<sup>25</sup> *The Commission on Global Governance (1995), Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Page 2.*

enhancement of the natural environment in urban areas. Drawing an analogy, if urban planning is to be a game, then the need for participation is like the need of a having a variety of stakeholders to play the game, rather than just allowing the general public to be bystanders watching the game unfold. Intrigued by the idea that the local urban environment relating to the physical framework of the city remains common to all players, all stakeholders must have appropriate significance in the proceedings, contributing in their own ways for the common good, as it is indeed unfair to let one player lay all the rules.

However, there are a lot of misunderstandings and conflicts that are observed concerning the real aim and usefulness of public participation while observing its potential practically in India. The main aim of public participation is to help decision-making. If the authorities neglect public participation, it may lead to protest movements and actions. The additional paradox is to agree that pursuing public participation cannot be the penultimate route to the solution of all problems. Its value within the planning equation can be estimated only with regard to the level of awareness and quality of decision making and deliberation. As supported by the answer of Raj Cherubal, from Chennai City-Connect to the questionnaire used during the course of this research (attached in the annexures in chapter 8.1):

“It is always a good idea to keep the impacted citizens part of the process from start to finish. But sometimes due to lack of understanding of the principles involved, or greater issues to be considered, some local citizens can even recommend bad ideas. So, not all participation results in good decisions. Sometimes local interests can trump greater and more valuable objectives. But in general it is good to have citizens on board.”

Meanwhile, it is also to be noted that in top-down planning, there lays the possibility that planners (experts) have a limited knowledge of the contextual nuances of local problems. Statistical data cannot express exactly how local people feel about these conflicts or how the suggested solutions fit into their cultural traditions. Experts, on the other hand, have at their disposal factual knowledge (data) and instrumental knowledge (methods, procedures) and draw from it, to which the public has no access. Sometimes, planners do not take seriously complaints of local people, when they are not properly formulated or do not fit general rules. Planners’ behaviour substantiated through a disconnected planning and governance system may generate suspicion and a lack of confidence amidst the public. As observed by Gyorgy Enyedi in his paper titled ‘Public Participation in Socially Sustainable Urban Development’ (2004), in many countries, “where political climate is unfavourable for the functioning of grass-roots democracy or it has no traditions, planners seem to be considered as a part of an alien political power. Consequently, regardless of their intention or the quality of their plan, they have to face resistance by the representatives of local communities” (Enyedi, 2004, p.14-15). Hence there is a need to induce a participatory process at least on some degree into the planning approach, to lubricate the tensions between planners and communities, by aiming to arrive at mutually beneficial solutions.

### 3.1.1 Need for a Bottom-up Approach

For the last few decades, participation has been used in many (Western) cities as a way to design more relevant strategic spatial plans and urban projects. On the other hand, bottom-up urbanism also rests on participation, but the origin might be different: it comes from the civil society, not from the national or local government. The motivations for such participatory initiatives are diverse (democratic representation, reaction against a project, searching for an economic advantage, civic welfare etc.).

In India, with a large and multicultural population, it is difficult to execute a wholly top-down participatory process. Bottom-up urbanism allows the mobilization of the population and utilizes the potential of the people to organize for themselves. The process of relying to reach every citizen on top-down participation alone<sup>26</sup>, driven by the central laws for such a huge and diverse population, is hard. Hence, there is the need to potentially activate bottom-up processes to ensure change at the neighbourhood level, using participation driven by civic groups to capacitate the citizens and kindle their proactive nature.

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<sup>26</sup> Newspaper article titled, ‘UPA’s ‘top-down’ approach in urban planning resulted in ‘design flaws’: Venkaiah Naidu’. Published: The Indian Express, 15th February, 2015  
<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/upa-top-down-approach-in-urban-planning-not-desirable-says-naidu/>

### *Bottom-up*

There are two great benefits of co-creation brought about through the use of bottom-up participatory initiatives for citizen engagement in the making of a better society and urban local environment that can be: divergence and execution. Divergence means a greater variation of different ideas and suggestions are brought to the table, providing inspiration and giving public servants a wider palette of options to choose from before decision making and implementation. It opens up the process to new forms of knowledge, amongst the various actors, that triggers dialogues and enables new common interpretations of problems, challenges and opportunities (Bason, 2010, p.8-9). Effective execution is the other benefit: co-creation anchors the creative process with the people it concerns and entertains the possibility of seeking more help and co-operation during implementation and also by inducing a sense of ownership to project space.

As in some situations, when people in the locale refuse to just merely play out well-established organizational routines, they may seek to change them, shifting policies, or altering processes. In such situations, local planning activity becomes an effort in shaping or framing the webs of relations through which people give value and take actions with respect to the spaces with which they have some relation. (Healey, 2006, p.49) Such framing work is an effort to invent structure, from a bottom-up perspective.

If this is so, then it is possible to imagine that, through the attempt to recognise and respect our cultural differences-that is other in the array of claims for attention in thinking about local environments- we have the potential to 'make sense' together. (Forester,1989), to arrive at a conception which works for us as a system of meaning, and which links, often in ways we cannot be clear about, to the other cultural referents we have. Thus bottom-up approach to managing our co-existence in shared spaces, in a way which draws in an explicit and reflexive way on the multi-cultural perceptions in the web of relations which have some locus in a place, becomes an exercise not merely consensus building but in local culture building, and in creating a public realm. It is an interactive and discursive effort, through which new understandings and institutional capacities maybe built.

### *Top-down*

In a top down approach, planning decisions are centrally made by organizations that are remote from the project area, and are visions removed from contextual references.

Participation of all the stakeholders who are going to be affected by the project, is only limited to provision of data or by seeking approval and adherence to what has already been planned. Or in the case of a representative democracy, it is limited and an opportunity to direct participation absolutely forsaken, by only allowing for an opportunity to select the people who will be making all the decisions themselves, excluding the opinions, ideas and interests of people at large, during decision-making.

Planners and bureaucrats tend to proceed through the decision-making process, as if they were writing on a clean slate and possessing all the knowledge for improving people's lives. In reality, they are making interventions in a well-established community social system, which has survived over generations of struggles and interactions with the local environment, possessing many unique characteristics of which some may even be transient thereby presenting the need to observe acutely and adapt..

"Top down planning is usually based on poor assumptions of social and environmental behaviour often proven to be incorrect as locality and social formations differ." (Cooksey, Kirkula, 2005, p.4) Plans are generally based on quantitative data or numerical estimations collected through rapid diagnostic feasibility studies or project formulation missions. These data are rarely complemented by a qualitative analysis of the context, situation and of the citizens themselves.

Planning (as well as implementation) processes follow a pre-conceived project design (a master plan type), fixed time schedule leading to rigid interventions having no respect and consideration of environmental changes, local initiatives and development choices, thereby closing the opportunity for any external element to modify the resultant proposal. The approach follows a predetermined project design usually based on assumptions of uniformity and cost-effectiveness regardless of area specific conditions where the project is implemented, and an effective and appropriately holistic solution cannot be achieved without orienting the citizen within the planning and decision-making process.

### 3.1.2 Bottom-up vs Top-down: Potentials and Shortcomings

The developmental issues will most certainly vary from one place to another even within the same local area like a ward and even in the same municipality for that matter. Thus the administrative level where the identification of the developmental issues and prioritisation is done becomes critical. Where and how this is done distinguishes between the top-down from the bottom-up approaches. There is confusion, particularly among municipal staff within the urban local bodies on these approaches.

In the traditional top-down planning approach this identification and prioritisation of development issues is done at the local municipality level by the different heads of departments and compiled into a municipality/metropolitan plan by the spatial planning department (SPD) within the local municipality/metropolitan authority. Often times such plans have no relevance to the felt needs of the grass root communities. They instead, indicate what the district officers in governmental public institutions think the grass root communities need, but the alignment of the communities' actual practical needs with what was envisioned is highly questionable.

As such there is poor ownership of not only the process but the outcome as well. This is what makes bottom-up participatory planning approaches much more palatable to urban development practitioners today. This is because, "the mechanism which allows for the process of identification and prioritisation of development issues is done by the people themselves but the resources and implementation is facilitated by local governmental officials and other staff" (Cooksey, Kikula, 2005, p.ix).

As a reactionary process, the communities organize themselves mostly with the help of some civic groups (sometimes they self-organize) providing the necessary expertise and support take up the implementation process to addressing their needs in their own way, through tactical initiatives. This poses as an informal approach by the community, as against being channelled through a formal approach linked to the legal planning framework to address the shortcomings in the infrastructure and services rendered to it, affecting the quality of its own urban local environment.

Therefore, public participation may be instrumented through formal or informal methods. A legal basis exists for formal participation, when participation of the members of the public or individual groups (e.g. property owners, investors, environmental protection groups) is required by law. Formal public participation may be initiated by decision makers (spontaneously or following legal prescriptions) or by independent public initiatives (Enyedi, 2004, p.14-15).

There is increasing dissatisfaction with these formal means of participation because they reveal a number of inadequacies, namely:

- representation is formulated in a special language that the average citizen cannot understand, which means that: only a very few people are in a position to comprehend and express their views; there is a possibility for pre-conceived defensive reaction to interests of government-led public institutions and proposals; making of non-proactive citizens through dejected inhabitants who receive no feedback on the response to their proposals;
- meetings are dominated by the presentation of the authorities and provide little opportunity for discussion; meetings are chaired by the authorities who thus face a conflict of interests when it comes to complaints and attacks.

In short, formal participation models are no longer adequate for formulating local government planning and policy. Consequently, informal participation models aimed at bringing about genuine public participation or co-operation have been used to an increasing extent recently. Informal public participation may have various forms. No restrictions are placed on the extent or nature of such participation provided it does not contravene legal regulations. Participation of this kind is voluntary and supplementary in character and helps the authorities (the city council) in decision-making. It replaces nothing and nobody, and as such does not constitute competition for the established authorities.

On the one hand, apart from tactical initiatives, working on furthering the citizen approach and awareness, these informal procedures lack force because they have no decision-making power (Enyedi, 2004, p.19), they can only draft

recommendations. On the other hand, they are powerful, because they hold out the hope that good, sound arguments and the weight of consensus achieved between interest groups will exert considerable persuasive force. It would not be wise for local politicians or authorities to ignore, without an explanation, recommendations formulated by the public. The public must feel that involvement is worthwhile, that they will be listened to and that arguments and ideas they put forth will enable them to exert an influence.

It is more complicated to organise public participation on a metropolitan level. In the rapidly growing metropolises of developing countries like India, metropolitan governance has to face new tasks, from land use planning to urban public transport and social housing, which tasks frequently remain outside the traditional regulatory framework. Whereas in the case of developed countries, the problems are more suitably dealt with on a neighbourhood level where local inhabitants have a personal experience of the effects of issues and are aware and mobilized enough to articulate the same. In developing countries it is sometimes easier to organise public participation on a neighbourhood level, because of the by leveraging existent strong cohesion - e.g. community ties - between local inhabitants, whereas city and metropolitan identity is fairly non-existent. Metropolitan identity is more prevalent and much stronger in the developed world; nevertheless it is hard to make a fair decision concerning the representation of the different social groups in dialogues on metropolitan issues.

Due to the scale and magnitude of these problems, a new phase of social change through innovation across sectors is needed to build an inclusive and sustainable economic framework. Social innovation, can be defined, “as innovation for the social and public good, or as new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations” (Bason, 2010, p.96)

The possibility of a public-third sector (non-governmental and voluntary civic groups) collaboration, directs towards a merging of a top-down and bottom-up approach resulting in a composite and collaborative approach towards planning. The quality of deliberation is the key factor in determining the potential impact of this collaboration, where it is tightly linked with the notion of social innovation.

Governments collaborating adequately with social innovators from the civic groups in the third sector have from multiple points of view the same motivating forces for working together with business-additionally distinctive ones in a few perspectives. Since third-sector associations are value-based and normative, rather benefit maxing, they comparatively hold extra potential and different sorts of barriers to transcend than private sector firms. (Bason, 2010, p.97-98)

Highly vibrant civic groups as social entrepreneurs may synthesize more radical thoughts than those that might originate from government officials as they have a more extensive extent of activity, originate from more diverse foundations and are motivated by value, as well as by their competitive surroundings. Considering the potentials that bottom-up participation holds for the future, the following section encompasses a brief overview of the nature of instances facilitating bottom-up participation as it exists in India today.

## **4. Existing work in Planning and participation affecting the void**

### **4.1 Present Provisions for Public Participation**

The advancements towards incorporating public participation in the planning system are attempted through a study of few top-down initiatives for the future by the government is presented in this chapter. However, today barely any of society's complex issues can be comprehended through the disconnected endeavours of a solitary authority. It is turning out to be progressively hard to achieve open goals through public objectives in the current situation of high urban transition. So despite the fact that techniques are actualized by organizations, the actual administration outlining policy or service design should definitely be the aftereffect of numerous offices, agencies and other actors working firmly together in novel ways, accomplishing their outcomes with others, not just by themselves.

Consequently as a result, the recent decades have seen a surge in enthusiasm from the government for introducing initiatives designed for “joined-up, collaborative or networked government as a way of responding to the need for

increased co-ordination, and unity of policy development and service delivery” (Bason, 2010, p.88). Despite its ineffective culture, this chapter elaborates on the few opportunities presented by the government for collaborative participation.

Such public engagement through participation, with respect to determining the quality of urban local environment is provided for through the following recent initiatives<sup>27</sup>:

- Digital India
- Smart Cities
- AMRUT
- Swacch Bharat

Though these initiatives have widespread implications in many policy areas, their influence on the functioning of the planning system is significant both in ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure areas (Bandauko, 2015, p.1). Planning for ‘hard’ infrastructure includes issues like transport planning, housing, sanitation etc. whereas ‘soft’ focuses on initiatives like public awareness campaigns on making city authorities account for their service provision, mapping and envisioning exercises, collaborative platforms for democratic representation in masterplan making and other related urban governance issues

### *Digital India*

‘Digital India’ is the flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy, by allowing for the citizens to be more aware recipients to the services offered and as participants involved in the decision-making. It aims to propagate:

- i. Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen
- ii. Governance and Services on Demand
- iii. Digital Empowerment of Citizens<sup>28</sup>

Such a platform introduced in 2006 is relatively at a nascent stage as a tool to facilitate participation, whereas globally E-government as such is no longer new. As quoted by Hood and Margetts: “From introduction of computers and basic communication networks in internal government administration of the 1980s, to putting citizen services online in the late 1990s and 2000s, e-government has become a pervasive part of the business of government, essentially expanding the toolbox available to policy makers” (Bason, 2010, p.105)

The impact of the initiative is enhancing the urban governance to a certain level as experienced in few cities. (E.g. An impact study of digitalizing the urban municipality of Chennai through an E-government ERP (Enterprise resource planning) is attached in the annexure) However the service delivery promise to citizens at large is yet questionable as of now, as a study showed that “only in 16% of cases did e-government projects lead to improved or faster services for citizens. What we are witnessing today is increasingly a systems level transformation of how government works”. (Bason, 2010, p.105, 106)

As governments experiment with new channels of communication towards public participation, including those offered by new information and communication technologies, they need to find an appropriate balance between official requirements for secrecy, citizens' rights to information, and the protection of individuals' privacy. Consequently it also needs to be supported with participatory initiatives with fair accountability to the citizens, exclusive of which participation enabled by such a portal would be just an empty ritual.

### *Smart Cities*

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<sup>27</sup> Newspaper article titled, ‘Urban Development: Bottom-up approach is the key: PM Narendra Modi’. Published: Indian Express, June 26, 2015, New Delhi. <http://indianexpress.com/article/business/business-others/urban-development-bottom-up-approach-is-the-key-pm-narendra-modi/>

<sup>28</sup> As on the Government India Portal for the Digital India Movement  
<http://www.digitalindia.gov.in/>

The Smart Cities Mission is an urban renewal mission put forth by the Government of India, the objective to promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of smart solutions using technology. The focus is on sustainable and inclusive development and the idea is to look at compact areas, create a replicable model of working which can be replicable in other cities. Directed towards urban liveability, the initiative encompasses better quality of institutional infrastructure (governance), physical infrastructure, as also social infrastructure through a range of quality services across digital and information technologies, urban planning public-private partnerships, and policy change

These developments are to be attempted to modify the city through a composite process of the four following approaches:

- i. Retrofitting within the existing framework of the city
- ii. Redevelopment of parts within the city with citizen participation
- iii. Green field developments of vacant spaces within the city
- iv. Pan-field smart development solutions

The first stage of idea generation for the first few cities to be implemented on the mission is now over and the process was realised by conducting a competing challenge across city municipalities in the countries aides by appropriate urban consultancy firms. The following is a table of examples of some cities that sought citizen engagement<sup>29</sup> along this process:

**Table 2: Modes of Engagements with Citizens in Smart Cities**

City	Modes of Engagement with Citizens
Trichy	Questionnaire to citizens : <a href="http://www.mygov.in/group-issue/smart-city-tiruchirappalli">www.mygov.in/group-issue/smart-city-tiruchirappalli</a>
Nagpur	Door to Door Citizen Engagement from a neighbourhood level
Rajkot	Interactive wall painting campaign and competition for social messages
Agra	Agra Municipal Corporation invited intellectuals, social workers, doctors, businessmen and other dignitaries of the city to discuss the smart city project
Indore	Social media campaign to invite suggestions from residents on smart city project, <a href="http://www.smartcityindore.org">www.smartcityindore.org</a>
Udaipur	Setting up of 100 booths asking citizens' priorities for smart city
Bhubaneshwar	Children Voice Opinions on Smart City

The table, through taking the case of a few earmarked cities for the mission is depictive of how each city is attempting in its own way to seek citizen engagement to gain feedback about their vision for the city. The mission brings attention the quality of life in cities and can be appreciated as an attempt to open up envisioning for the city to its residents. These singular initiatives can are however weak in the connection to institutionalising urban local bodies. Hence, the legitimacy of these attempts and the incorporation into a final agenda and effective implementation is a questionable issue.

The big challenge lies in creating self-sustaining cities, which could create jobs, use urban space and resources wisely and also train people considering the state of affairs across planning and governance systems today. This also means more autonomy for these cities but whether that can effected is dependent on the maturity of the Indian political system.

## AMRUT

The AMRUT- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation scheme was launched in June 2011, to be in coherence with the Smart Cities mission with the focus on urban renewal projects through raising the quality of life from infrastructural and services perspective.

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from data on Smart Cities from <http://blog.fieldsofview.in/2015/10/1038/>

The Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi during the launch of the mission is quoted to have saying: “there is a lack of holistic vision about urban planning, and expansion is driven not by the administrators of a city, but by property developers. Through AMRUT, the aim of the Government is to give cities themselves the chance to plan their future growth. For the first time ever in India, any scheme has called for public participation. Government shall look at the ideas given by the masses for improvement and implementation of the scheme and take them into consideration as per feasibility analysis.”<sup>30</sup>

The thrust areas of the AMRUT scheme intend to:

- i. Ascertain that every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection
- ii. Increase the public amenities value of cities by developing greenery and well maintained open spaces (e.g. parks) and upgrading by building storm water drains to reduce flooding and pedestrian facilities
- iii. To decrease pollution by shifting to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transport (e.g. walking and cycling)

The scheme is dependent with public private partnership model (PPP) model for implementation and prescribes for the process of participation and results of a study<sup>31</sup> also concord by saying that when direct participation of beneficiaries is implemented in their toilet construction ensures better usage.

### *Swachh Bharat*

‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ which can be translated as the “Clean India Mission” is a national campaign undertaken by the Government of India, to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country, bringing great attention the living environmental quality across the Nation (encompassing 4,041 statutory cities and towns)

The campaign was officially launched on 2 October 2014. It is India's biggest ever drive towards cleanliness, reaching out to the citizens and seek engagement through heavy media outreach. It is India's universal sanitation initiative aiming to eradicate open-defecation and attain a fully open defecation free India by 2019, by the construction of adequate number of toilets in each town and city, hoping for cleaner urban infrastructure.

## **4.2 Nature of bottom-up participation in India**

Civic groups functioning as ‘third-sector’ organizations play a key role in society. By some estimates, non-governmental organizations account for 10% of national economies in developed countries. Third sector organizations are relied on, sometimes increasingly, to deliver what value government is not by choice or tradition, active (Bason, 2010, p.97). The voluntary and third sector takes on a number of societal challenges, ranging from running programs for the marginalised to fostering health through various programs.

We are looking at new ways to engage ordinary citizens who, while they do not have deep policy expertise on all matters, do have experience and knowledge from the neighbourhood and community level that is vital to the policy-making process. More importantly, these citizens have a claim to the process because the quality of their lives is shaped by administrative decisions and policy outcomes (Lukensmeyer, Torres, 2006, p.8)

Emerging citizen engagement through bottom-up techniques facilitate in shifting the needle of democratic reform discourse of participation from merely representative position of the citizen towards active forms of ‘information’ and ‘consultation’ to “engagement”, ‘collaboration’ and “empowerment” in planning and governance decision-making—a

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<sup>30</sup> Article in *The Hindu* titled, “Cities should get chance to plan their growth, says Modi”. June 25, 2015. New Delhi <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/prime-minister-narendra-modi-launches-smart-cities-mission/article7353823.ece>

<sup>31</sup> Implementation of a Citizen Report Card (CRC-1) as a part of Improving Consumer Voices and Accountability in the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (now Swachh Bharat Mission) Report of Findings Submitted to Public Affairs Centre. <http://pacindia.org/uploads/default/files/publications/pdf/aaf68c1db435342f0cd6bd77fb9d31c7.PDF>

shift from merely being an observer to information exchange models of involving citizens and furthermore to information processing models that help citizens make meaning of planning and policy alternatives and share with them a real position in affecting the decision-making process.

Decentralized spatial planning allows local empowerment and favours the successful implementation of urban projects. Including the lowest levels of urban governance leverages additional resources and information about the ground reality. Inclusive planning allows a common strategy to be adopted and enforced at the city level, therefore curbing the risk of implementation failures. (E.g. the Kollam Decentralized Planning process in Kerala)

Currently, there is a limited interpretation of Spatial Development Plans (SDPs), which fails to pay attention to rural-urban integration and neighbourhood-level development. Haphazard timelines and boundaries of various ULBs and parastatals further complicate the implementation of vision statements. The level of coordination between various levels of urban governance (neighbourhood, city, and region) is indicative of how authentically citizens' aspirations and needs are represented in the plans.

A critical factor for the success of implementation of metropolitan SDPs is the ability of ULBs to coordinate and work together when needed. This translates to harmony of space and time in the planning ideals and objectives. The lack of a harmonious timeline makes SDPs more vulnerable to political change and to challenging visions/conflicts in project implementation which, in turn, has a severe impact on the delivery of municipal services. This component assesses the measures and frameworks adopted by the cities to enable the implementation of spatial plans.

Participatory planning brings citizens to the fore in shaping the character of their city. It also helps raise a consensus around the vision for the city, which in turn, consolidates the legitimacy of SDPs. Citizens must have a voice in deciding the vision for the city, choosing the process followed for framing the vision, and in evaluating its progress. To integrate local development plans for the city and its peri-urban and rural surrounding regions, efforts should be co-ordinated between the Metropolitan, municipal and ward-level authorities. Elected representatives, Area Subhas and Agencies must be actively engaged for scrutiny, raising objections and responses to ensure the SDPs are prepared keeping in mind equitable development of civic infrastructure and service delivery. This component evaluates the policies in place to encourage citizen participation in plan preparation.

While seeking to understand the nature of bottom-up participation in India towards the process of planning, it is necessary to acknowledge the fact that a whole range of approaches exist, right from grassroots anonymous activism in changing urban environments (e.g. The Ugly India project) and service delivery (e.g. Stormwater drain cleaning) to citizen engagement initiatives integrated within holistic long-term envisioning of masterplans (e.g. through consultation workshops in the making of the Mumbai Metropolitan Plan 2014-34 and People's Campaign in Kerala).

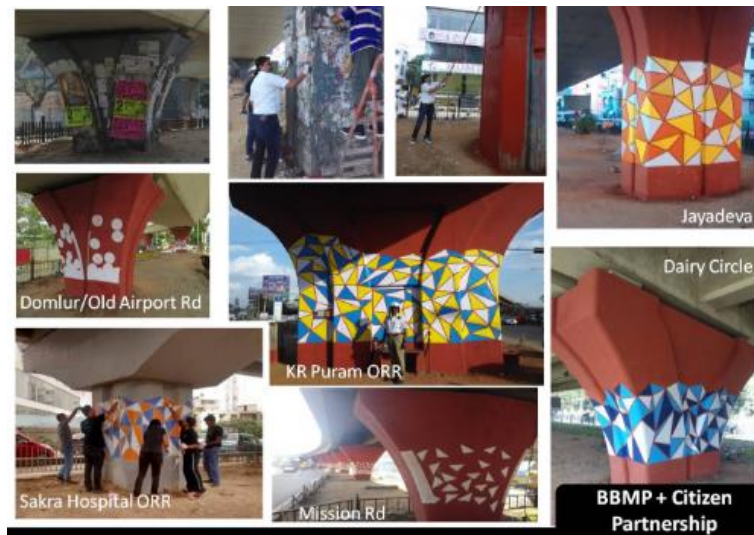
The Ugly Indian Project<sup>32</sup> is an anonymous grassroots citizen initiative working with the approval of the Bangalore local government authority (BBMP) to give a makeover to unappealing and unhygienic urban environments in various neighbourhoods across the city (for e.g. dead spaces under flyovers) and transform the place to be used positively in the future. The Initiative has gathered more than 1500 citizen participants across age groups as volunteers in Bengaluru, and spread to other cities across the nation as well.

#### **Figure 5: Rethinking flyover Spaces by The Ugly Indian Initiative**

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<sup>32</sup> (i) Newspaper article titled, "The Ugly Indians' make Bangalore shine". Published: The Times of India, April 21, 2014  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/The-Ugly-Indians-make-Bangalore-shine/articleshow/34016331.cms>

(ii) Newspaper article titled, 'It is the right angle' Published: The Hindu, June 27, 2016.  
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metrolus/the-ugly-indians-ufo-project/article8779868.ece>



Source: The Ugly Indians Group

At JP Nagar in Bengaluru, an initiative was held for clearing storm water drains with civic participation<sup>33</sup> where a diverse group of citizens from the neighbourhood comprising of shop keepers, BBMP engineers, and construction workers etc. came together and progressively undertook the task of clearing the storm water drain in their layout. Storm water drain clearing however falls under the responsibility of the municipal administration. This initiative represents the role of civic participatory initiatives in being an alternative means to service delivery.

In the case of long-term envisioning of masterplans, when the newly proposed Mumbai Metropolitan Development Plan (2014-34) was published in February 2015 for public appeal, it was heavily scrutinized by citizens for its lack of meaningful public participation. Though the BMC had sought inputs through stakeholder consultation workshops for over a month, the final draft of the Development Plan was criticized for not having incorporated citizens' observations and comments. For the first time in its history, those consultation workshops were organised with various civic groups to discuss the surveys it undertook for the plan's preparation.<sup>34</sup> The Plan was eventually criticised to have ignored crucial aspects in slum mapping, integrating special planned areas and economic zones etc. Under public pressure, the plan was withdrawn by the Chief Minister and demanded that a revised plan be prepared with increased public participation. (ASICS, 2015, p.14)

Participatory Planning and Budgeting in Kerala: The People's Plan Campaign. Kerala's government felt that participatory local planning would economically mobilize citizens. Since 1997-98, the Government of Kerala has devolved 30 percent of all state plan finances to urban local bodies. More importantly, it has also given them a high degree of autonomy in planning for and spending these funds – both of which are done through a unique and elaborate public consultative process, referred to as the 'People's Plan Campaign'. It is widely considered to be one of the pioneering and most successful experiments in participatory budgeting in India, with all stakeholders — including slum representatives, middle class volunteers, women's groups, elected representatives, and government officials — being especially trained to exert their voice in public service planning and delivery.

For participatory planning initiatives such as these two in Mumbai and Kerala, to be a meaningful process, the planning authorities must take into account public suggestions and objections to create a vision that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of its citizens and to build public trust. Adequate justification must be provided if suggestions are not included in the plan preparation. This is necessary for raising public ownership of the plan and therefore its better implementation

<sup>33</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Catch the rain chronicles: theory to practice at Natraj Layout, JP Nagar'. Published: Citizen Matters, 02 Sep 2016, Bengaluru.

[http://bangalore.citizenmatters.in/articles/catch-the-rain-chronicles-theory-to-practice-at-natraj-layout-jp-nagar?utm\\_source=ref\\_article#sthash.PrzYtvTR.dpuf](http://bangalore.citizenmatters.in/articles/catch-the-rain-chronicles-theory-to-practice-at-natraj-layout-jp-nagar?utm_source=ref_article#sthash.PrzYtvTR.dpuf)

<sup>34</sup> <http://scroll.in/article/718347/the-biggest-flaw-in-mumbais-development-plan-it-misunderstands-both-development-and-planning>

### 4.3 Current civic groups in practice

This section catalogues some of the main contributors to the field of public participation in practice in India today, contributing in various fields of expertise and action and taking up different modes of offering services to the entire spectrum of bridging the void ranging from making sanitation accessible to policy-making.

Possibilities of public participation in the formulation and implementation of social policy, welfare policy, or, generally speaking, policies and institutions for social inclusion, show great variety, from housing associations to social care NGOs, from social allowances to self-help initiatives. It is useful to compile a list of institutions and social techniques.

Though composite forms of participation directly affecting the planning framework within the city are few, there are various forms of public participation that are undertaken in contributing through a fragmented approach to bridging the void. Hence, it could be perceived that when it comes to delineating and identifying the initiating source and method of participation, within the Indian situation, “forms of public participation are relatively developed but conflicting” (Enyedi, 2004, p.20)

On the contrary, the approach undertaken in this research connotes the interconnected nature of the root causes to urban issues given the systemic nature of our cities, their challenges and solutions. The bottom participatory initiatives that are active within the civil society nexus, aimed at bridging the gap, where the solutions from one holds the possibility of mutually benefiting another, gaining momentum through the interconnectivity, work across the following spectrums:

**Civic mobilization:** These groups begin with creating awareness about the role, their responsibilities and possibilities within the system of planning and governance. They focus mobilizing citizens and building their capacity, thereby preparing citizens for public engagement processes.

**Research and Policy:** These urban think tanks are a blend of research organizations, regularly at the national level, concentrated on expansive matters of strategy through public policy, particular areas or vested parties; and those that work by linking directly with public officials and policy makers, offering support through knowledge and implementation

**Local governance:** These groups associate on the demand side with citizens to improve investment and activate interest for better governance and delivery of services at the neighbourhood level; and consequently on the supply side, they create through capacity building of local government and advocate for policy change.

**Urban Research, Urban Design, Urban Planning:** These groups working on shaping the physical fabric through employing various process of mapping, study, analysis, design and planning of the urban local environment

**Transparency and accountability:** These organizations advocate for approaches and enactment that improve transparency and accountability; push for discretionary electoral reforms; supply data on the performance of elected representatives and the legislature; and drive responsibility towards accountability at the Union, state, local or sector level.

**Place-making and Temporal Use:** These organizations directing attention towards the making of great public spaces by crafting out place-making strategies and project initiatives. They organize events that activate a space in public domain temporally to gain interest and seek citizen engagement.

**Cultural & Environment:** These organizations are focused on restoring and spreading awareness of diminishing citizen action and attention towards the quality of culture and environment existent in the public domain at large.

The driving goals of these civic groups at large, involve the following tasks:

1. Creating awareness and mobilizing citizens
2. Preparing citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge database and evidence
4. Advocacy for design of policy and implementation
5. Platform for technology and problem-solving

6. Encouraging comprehensive independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government authorities
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement
10. Strengthening local cultural and environmental aspects.

*List of Civic Groups employing bottom-up participatory action with a pan-India approach:*

Many civic groups across India have succeeded in pressurising the local authorities and bring in to their attention the issues of service delivery, lack of citizen awareness, housing shortage, infrastructure development etc. In this context, Civic Organisations and other socially driven NGOs play a central role in bridging the disadvantaged citizens and city authorities to give the excluded and marginalized a voice. Thus through the work of such civic groups urban planning and management can be made not only more inclusive but also effective by assigning authority to the citizens directly through undertaking various bottom-up participatory community initiatives.

Listed below are a range of examples of civic groups, highlighting the potential of inclusive urban planning, through their work by providing across a wide spectrum of services related to urban development and planning such as civic mobilization, local governance, urban design, urban research and urban planning assistance, policy research etc.;

Since a ready repository of such civic groups with a pan-India approach is not readily available<sup>35</sup>, the list has been built by identifying the most significant contributors amidst research across newspapers, journal articles, research reports, documentary and web search. This list is thus not an exhaustive one, to accommodate every civic group working in this direction.

Civic mobilization

1.

- **Name: PUCL- People's Union for Civil Liberties**
- **Organizational Structure:** National level Operations with three-tier structure. The base is the general body known as the National Convention. Then there are the National Council, and the Executive.
- **Field of Action:** Human and Democratic Rights Organization- defend human rights by mobilising public opinion, conducting investigations, publishing findings, and filing petitions.
- **Initiatives:** Citizen's Platform<sup>36</sup>- Post Chennai Floods, Say no to Aadhar Protest

2.

- **Name: Hunnarshala Foundation , Kutch, Gujarat**
- **Organizational Structure:** Citizen- led grassroots movement. 80 Shareholders- People from various backgrounds such as industrialists, businessmen, activists, educationists, scientists, etc.
- **Field of Action:** Community Empowerment & Artisan Empowerment
  - i) People empowerment to shape their habitats;
  - ii) Habitat solutions for more disaster safe, environment friendly and sustainable

<sup>35</sup> There is no certain data about the number of NGOs existing in India, but in 2010, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation estimated the number of non-for-profit organisations at an impressive 3.2 million. However, only 41 percent of those organisations engage in social services and philanthropic activities, others are sports clubs, religious organisations, research institutes, etc (Govt. of India, 2009, p.26)

<sup>36</sup> When disaster hit Chennai, people did not wait for the government to act. There was a collective effort from across the city and we want this feeling to stay and for us to take concrete action. Citizen's Platform, an initiative aimed at creating a citizens' charter and an alternative plan for development. The charter will focus on key issues that came to the fore during the floods: water, land, livelihood and natural resources, industrial growth and urbanisation. To channelise the energy of all volunteers from various walks of life who contributed during relief efforts and to create a citizens' charter and an alternative plan for development.

(Newspaper article titled, 'Doing more for their City', Published: The Hindu, December 21, 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/doinq-more-for-their-city/article8012414.ece>)

iii) Local artisanal knowledge and skills in delivering high quality products.

Offers services for building designs, settlement planning, social housing, disaster reconstruction, waste water treatment systems, infrastructure development, etc.

- **Initiatives:** Urban community initiatives:
  - Urban Slum Redevelopment
  - Recycling Sewage

3.

- **Name:** **CCS- Centre for Civil Society**, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan
- **Organizational Structure:** Large structure and highly networked civil society, establish connects with citizens, private actors, other civic actors and the government.
- **Field of Action:** Education, livelihood and policy training, promotes accountability across private and public sectors. CCS engages with policy and opinion leaders through research, pilot projects and advocacy.
- **Initiatives:**
  - Education:- Patang- Right to Education
  - Livelihood:- Vikalp-Skill Voucher

4.

- **Name:** **UMC- Urban Management Centre**
- **Organizational Structure:** Core team consists of social workers, academicians and management professionals with about 15 funders and partners supporting their cause.
- **Field of Action:** Restoring the civil, political and cultural rights for the poor and tribal population
- **Initiatives:** South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, Anubhav Shiksha Kendra (ASK) Program

5.

- **Name:** **YUVA- Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action**
- **Organizational Structure:** Voluntary Organisation of 50 members, collaborating with 50 civic organisations and 3 institutes with 14 founders
- **Field of Action:** Protecting children especially girls from abuse and exploitation by providing easy access to the right education
- **Initiatives:** Child Resource Centre , Citizen Awareness

#### Local governance

1.

- **Name:** **Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group**, Chennai
- **Organizational Structure:** Non-profit, non-political and professional organization.
- **Field of Action:** Works towards protecting citizens' rights in consumer and environmental issues and promoting good governance processes including transparency, accountability and participatory decision-making.
  - City Governance
  - Consumer Protection
  - Environment Protection
  - Uplifting Slums and Informal Settlements
  - Solid Waste Management
  - Sustainable Transportation
  - Water, sanitation and Drainage

2.

- **Name:** **PRIA- Participatory Research in Asia**
- **Organizational Structure:** Highly networked ore team of professionals and closely tied up with many other organizations worldwide
- **Field of Action:** Participatory research and training in local governance in local and urban areas, ensuring safety of girls and women, enabling effective delivery of basic services in rural and urban areas, strengthening local human and institutional capacities
- **Initiatives:** Kadam Badhate Chalo, PRIA International Academy

## Urban Research, Urban Design, Urban Planning

1.

- **Name: PUKAR- Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research**
- **Organizational Structure:** Independent Research Centre with 5 trustees, 29 professional and 2 visiting scholars
- **Field of Action:** Democratise research, broadening urban data accessibility
- **Initiatives:** Research- Youth and Urban Knowledge Production, Urbanism: Spatial Utopia and Contested Realities, Healthy Cities Wealthy Cities, Studio PUKAR

2.

- **Name: U-Respect Foundation**
- **Organizational Structure:** A team of trained and experienced social researchers conducting research
- **Field of Action:** Research on mapping, studies, socio-economic surveys
- **Initiatives:** Project Vikalp, Swacchalaya, Saksham Sakhi

3.

- **Name: SPARC- Society for Promotion of Area Research Centres**
- **Organizational Structure:** Non-profit, Non-government
- **Field of Action:** Slum development, community driven housing projects
- **Initiatives:** National Slum Dweller's Federation, Mahila Milan

4.

- **Name: ITDP- Institute for Transportation and Development Policy**
- **Organizational Structure:** Centres in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, and the United States with over 80 members, mostly comprising of leading architects, urban planners, transport experts, developers, and financiers.
- **Field of Action:** Environmentally sustainable transportation projects and policies, cycling and walking, outreach and awareness, public transport, sustainable urban development and traffic reduction
- **Initiatives:** Car-free Sundays, Access Africa, promoting Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) System in different countries, OCO (Our Cities Ourselves)

## Transparency and accountability

1.

- **Name: Transparent Cities Network**
- **Organizational Structure:** A team of 16 researchers and administrators striving to achieve the larger goal of transparency and accountability in Cities
- **Field of Action:** Aggregating data, research on empowering the poor and equipping them with tools to fight negligence.
- **Initiatives:** Mapping of various parts of Chennai, Solid Waste Management, Water, Slums and informal Settlements, Pedestrian Infrastructure, Public Toilets and Sanitation, JnNURM, Heritage, Electoral Accountability and City Governance

## Research and Public Policy

1.

- **Name: CFAR- Centre for Advocacy and Research**
- **Organizational Structure:** Media organization with 12 centres across India and 5 trustees for support
- **Field of Action:** Facilitating media to work with marginalised communities
- **Initiatives:** Media Advocacy Initiative, WASH program

2.

- Name: **PRS- Public Legislative Research**
- Organizational Structure: Independent Research Initiative incubated in the Centre for Policy Research. Ford Foundation is one of their supporters.
- Field of Action: Aims at making the legislative process more transparent and participatory
- Initiatives: PRS Legislative Assistants to Members of Parliament

3.

- Name: **IIHS- Indian Institute for Human Settlements**
- Organizational Structure: National university for research in sustainable transformation of India Settlements, with three centres in Bangalore. It is proposed networked institution across India
- Field of Action: Research into challenges and opportunities in India's Urban Transformation, formulating suitable academic programs for the same
- Initiatives: Research in Climate Change, Economic Development, Environment and Sustainability, Governance and Public Policy, Human Development, Urban Systems and Infrastructure in addition to conducting educational programs in Urban Settlement Studies

#### Place-making and Temporal Use:

1.

- Name: **The Ugly Indian**
- Organizational Structure: Citizen led amorphous initiative, through anonymous groups of citizens
- Field of Action: Urban Cleanliness initiatives and Making Better Urban Place
- Initiatives: Spot Fixing and Public Place-making.

#### Cultural & Environment

1.

- Name: **The Vettiver Collective, Chennai**
- Organizational Structure: Citizen led non-hierarchical, with 16 Core members- Environmentalists and Activists.
- Field of Action: Awareness of Environmental and Social issues from Corporate-critical and Democratic justice perspectives
- Initiatives: Community Environmental Monitoring programme, Beach Encroachment , Urur-Olcott Kuppam Vizha, Justice Rocks and Hosts a physical platform for other such initiatives

The voices of such organisations presented are at the forefront of making sure that citizens are well represented across a wide spectrum of initiatives in urban planning and development. The work of such civic groups provides an alternative mode of municipal service delivery contributing to the enhancement of communities in urban local governance issues.

## **5. Analysis of the work of civic groups and their approach to the void**

In this section, an analysis of civic groups is undertaken through the parameters earlier defined in Chapter 3.2. Then the initiatives are studied with a piece-meal approach in mind with respect to their contribution in bridging the void in the planning and governance system. The inferences of bottom-up participation in action through the organizations' work are presented in afterview, through both the study of methodologies applied for collaborative functioning of the civic organization internally within its structure and externally with other stakeholders, through their initiatives.

"The most influential in public policy and management reform in the future may not be experts or people in ostensible leadership roles, but rather those who create new spaces and places for more complex, interactive and inclusive policy conversations" -Martin Stewart-Weeks, Senior Director Public Sector, Asia-Pacific, Cisco (Quoted by Bason, 2010, p.87)

And, civic groups work to create this platform, both physically and metaphorically through its initiatives for The analysis is undertaken by validating the need for systematic understanding of these initiatives that are occurring in an arbitrary manner but are slowly working against the normative notions of citizen engagement in the nation thereby positively affecting the paradigm of how public participation initiatives are conceived and implemented. The value for the work of such civic groups is high in the Indian context at large where aspirations and arguments for public participation are still somewhat lodged in an experimental era and have yet to translate into consistent practice. Detailed knowledge about what already exists in the field is patchy. There needs to be a clearer mapping of the field of public participation as its boundaries are even uncertain.

The chances for public participation in social integration are based on community actions and local government measures in big cities. Spontaneous and officially initiated activities alike may lead to either success or failure. The enumeration of participant institutions and the social techniques employed may help explain the results and the risks involved in spontaneous and officially supported activities. (Enyedi, 2004, p.20)

Equally important is the involvement of different social groups in integration, especially when participation extends to an excluded group (e.g. slum dwellers). Sometimes others are also motivated, by human or economic interests, to take part in the work for a more integrated urban society.

Also to keep in mind during analysis of the civic groups is that it is far from clear to whom civil society actors should be accountable and this aspect should not be left unchecked. Referring to external accountability, “the all-affected principle demands that civil society actors, like other politically influential actors, should be accountable to all significantly affected stakeholders”. (Tallberg, Uhlin, 2011, p.15) Legal regulations instrumented by public institutions are applied to both spontaneous and officially driven projects alike, unlike undemocratic protest-based initiatives and temporary events which are excepted in some cases. .

The upcoming chapters detail about the parameters based on which the five selected civic groups working within the urban local environment. Each civic group has undertaken a diverse range of initiatives affecting the wide spectrum of urban planning and allied services across both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ infrastructure, such as neighbourhood planning, urban mapping, citizen awareness etc.; And hence studying five groups is ideal to draw a comparative analysis of qualitative nature. This is followed by an overview presenting the rationale on the chosen context of influence of these groups, Bangalore and Chennai, as understanding the context under which the initiatives are undertaken is vital. It is generally the major determinant in the characteristics and method of initiatives that rise up in the urban space.

## 5.1 Parameters for selection and study of groups

The framework for study of civic groups within the scope of this research is limited to those groups that have an impact in dealing with urban physical space, as given the nascent nature of participation in India, it is vital to have realised spatial initiatives as examples to study its effect on the people, and not just focus on civic mobilization participation aimed at strengthening the citizen base, a majority of which can be found. The initiatives can either be permanent or temporal, opening up to look at initiatives that approach the envisioning and making of urban space.

“Citizen-centred innovation is when organizations systematically involve citizens, businesses and other end-users in the creation of new solutions. This approach combines harvesting in-depth qualitative insights about people’s lives, for instance through ethnographic research, combined with various methods for involvement through workshops, town hall meetings, social media, crowdsourcing tools, and so on ”(Bason, 2010, p.39) The four selected groups for study are those which employ both methodologies in their practice through their projects, in their quest to enable public participation.

The work of civic groups personally observed, can be broadly laid out based on their field of contribution and their nature of networking:

Based on Field of Action:

- i. Civic mobilization
- ii. Local governance

- iii. Urban Research, Urban Design, Urban Planning
- iv. Transparency and accountability
- v. Research and Policy
- vi. Place-making and Temporal Use:
- vii. Cultural & Environment

Based on Networking:

- i. Working with Citizens directly
- ii. Composite working: Citizens and the State
- iii. Working with the State directly

Civil society at large takes many forms: small grassroots groups, large international charities, informal people's movements, faith groups, unions, social enterprises, and more. And these different groups can provide an avenue for participation that can occur across many levels, depending upon the power to influence decisions that lies with the citizens, as demonstrated in the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969).

The research is focussing on urban initiatives primarily in the rapidly urbanizing metropolitan areas of **Bengaluru and Chennai**, from the southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu respectively. (A map showing relative location with respect to other major cities and their population is attached in the annex) Being adjacent states the geographical contexts do not vary to a great degree but still the municipal setup and approach taken towards urban local environments and their governance by each state is unique and level of citizen awareness and proactivity is different. Yet the reason for selection across different states is also partly, due to a fairly comparable stage of civic interest within the field of urban planning within these two states and not too extremist as social activism, against inequalities or a contrastingly total disconnect.

The research is to be focussed on groups working that are oriented to make an impact in the urban space and urban issues, as groups and NGOs dealing with social issues alone take a deeper sectoral approach towards development whose scope of empirical justification is beyond this research.

The research aims to study groups aiming at mobilizing participatory potential in the making of urban projects and not just those working to capitalize social capital. Although the latter ensures the fundamental work of laying the foundation for better participation to occur, the research is more focussed on the holistic approach to relating to urban space. Groups with a resource ability to create a collaborative platform for all stakeholders required in the planning process are focused on, rather than working with the citizens or the state alone directly are focused on as such groups demonstrate a strong deliberative character, which the research is seeking to explore.

Small groups in terms of their organizational structure, realising singular temporary events, lack the resources and the knowledge to mobilize large scale impact, and the power to influence the workings of the state through its state. Whereas large scale civic groups bring in too many variant parameters by seeking to achieve multiple ambitions across multiple platforms Small and temporary initiatives, driven by a couple of key individuals may gather immediate public attention and achieve their goal of awareness-making to a certain extent, but a legal disconnect fractures it from being a socially sustainable system by restricting it to a one-time event. Because, as stated by Lukensmeyer and Torres(2006), "much of the practice-based expertise in deliberative democracy resides outside of government, organizers and proponents of each deliberative event must, on a case-by-case basis, forge their own relations with government/sponsoring agency, to achieve any impact on policy and outcomes" (Lukensmeyer, Torres, 2006, p.26) there is much emphasis on the level of networking that each group undertakes on its initiatives. And hence, the groups chosen are chosen of a comparable medium-scale, seeking to chart out initiatives at both levels at large, thereby increasing the range of the nature of initiatives.

For the purpose of the research they were observed based on the following parameters:

- Stage of Participatory Intervention (Pre-planning (Capacity mobilization), Planning, Implementation, Evaluation)
- Motivation

- Scale of Action: Work of small groups vs. Large groups
- Degree of Participation (As per Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Participation- Refer Annexure 4)
- Level of Networking
- Connection to the legal planning framework of the state

The four following domains among the rest are selected for study and comparative qualitative analysis of the work of civic groups for the practical reason that while good examples of practice are prevalent in the selected contexts, for their tangibility and the adjacency with which these domains can be experienced by citizens:

1. Organizational Structure
2. Participatory Process
3. Study of Initiatives
4. Level of Networking

1. Organizational Structure
  - Size of Body
  - Scale of Vision and Action
2. Participatory Process
  - Study of the Context of Influence
  - Nature of community intervention
  - Type of Participatory Processes applied
3. Study of Initiatives
  - Range of Initiatives
  - Analysis of Initiatives
4. Level of Networking
  - Relationship with Market Economy
  - Relationship with State
  - Relationship with other Civic Networks

The first set of parameters, involving the organizational structure describes how the functioning occurs across the people who are on the group. Who the team comprises and what is the sort of expertise that each member in the team brings to the table is a major determinant in gauging what the different approaches of looking at the problem will be. Generally, when a melange of talents from different fields of expertise works together within urban projects, it adds diverse perspectives and creates a more holistic approach. Diversity is an expression of the variance in social and cultural identities between people and within an organization research confirms that those with a more diverse staff, including a diversity that reflects the surrounding society or marketplace, achieve better results than homogenous organization (Bason, 2010, p.125).

The size of the organizing is depictive of the scale of the project they can handle. In the case of tactical initiatives and deliberative practices a smaller set of people can see projects through implementation, whereas for projects involving awareness and capacity building where the task involves reaching out to citizens at large, where the scale of vision and action is a more elaborate process, the organising body's requisite for human resources grows respectively.

The second and third of set of parameters involve the specific context over which the group's sphere of influence within the field of their work is exercised. The key factors that are determined by the context are the level of interest of the citizens and local authorities to support participatory initiatives. These bring in a major impact on the nature of work and kind of methodologies applied during the engagement and deliberative processes. A study of the trajectories of making these project initiatives and their impact is vital to understand the repository of techniques that the group applies to achieve participation.

The fourth set of parameters, help in understanding the level of networking expanse that the organising group is trying to achieve. Groups that work with the citizens alone directly either are small scale tactical initiatives or those that work primarily in the field of mobilizing civic potential (e.g. The Urban Design Collective) Whereas, groups that work with the market economy (e.g., Janagraaha and Jana USP) usually have support on the funding front and yet along with it also the responsibility of reporting to and sometime the liability of working with the interests of the supporting entity. Another core challenge for the civic groups applying bottom-up participatory initiatives is the way the outcomes are fed into the decision-making process. In order to increase the chance of public participation to be effective, arrangements ought to be made to link public participation formally to the heart of decision-making. This relation to the formal planning network is vital in understanding. These skills of networking and deliberation are the strongholds of such civic groups for achieving participation in an effective manner.

## 5.2 Context of planning in Chennai, Bengaluru and related civic groups

The research, explores this potential of civic groups working with the urban governance issues in metropolitan cities of Bengaluru and Chennai. It examines the important variables that determine urban governance, drawing present experiences of such initiatives in these two cities.

City Planning is a fairly complex process since it must be conceptualised in several different 'contexts' including its planning area, climate, geography, and so on. City planning also seeks to marry quantitative elements with the qualitative elements of city life.

Bengaluru has been ranked the 12th position, and Chennai the 7th amongst 21 other cities in the ASICS(Annual Survey of India's City-Systems) Survey Conducted in 2015, when compared on various parameters. (Details attached in the annexure)

### *Bengaluru*

Bengaluru is the capital city of the southern state of Karnataka is globally recognised as a centre of innovation and referred to as the Indian Silicon Valley. However, less obvious and less known is the massive process of transformation set in motion by high migration levels into the city. Within the last years the transformation of the urban fabric is humungous (As can be seen in the comparative maps presented in the Annexure) and presented a brand new image of Bengaluru.

As per 1981, the Bangalore City Corporation-

Area :151 sq.km ; Population: 24,76,355 (According to 1981 Census )

However with the creation of the BBMP(Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palika) in 2007-2008, an additional 32 lakh people were added in the BBMP Jurisdiction.

As per 2011, Under BBMP-

Area: 712.54 sq.km

Population: 84, 43, 675 ( According to 2011 Census)

The gigantic rise in population as articulated by the above figures, has put enormous pressure on government to develop and provide important infrastructure like housing, roads, power, water, etc; A study conducted by Dr. TV. Ramachandra and team from the Centre of Ecological Studies in the Indian Institute of Science, has revealed that the city has increased by 925% in its builtup area, and consequently also affected by a sharp decline of water bodies by 79% and trees by 78%, affecting deeply the availability of spaces, services and water.

Added to do this the city's revenue has not progressed in the last five years, and housing demand hasn't been met for the rapidly growing population. The evident inability of the authorities at the helm responsible for providing these basic physical and institutional infrastructures to the ever-growing urban population (a major portion of which is migrated

urban youth for work) has made the task much more daunting. Resident welfare associations are still to evolve completely, but are relatively better than other cities. There are no compulsory consultations between the government and the resident welfare associations (Nath, 2015, p.4, 5).

Vidhya Mohankumar, an urban designer from The Urban Design Collective, in the interview invokes a case of public in Bengaluru openly seeking participation against the governmental planning system- the Bangalore Development Authority, through an anecdote at the event of presenting the Revised Bengaluru Masterplan in 2015, to the citizens of the city. The event was scheduled primarily as a mandatory meeting is required by law for the urban planning officials to seek the approval of the citizen before arriving at the final masterplan.

This vital mandatory meeting that is intended to include the citizens within the planning process by informing and making them aware of the decisions taken, was not widely announced to the public and their requests not incorporated. The published dates in the gazette were also postponed and rescheduled three times across a period of six months. This is indicative of the disinterest of the governmental bodies to methodically include the participation of the public within the plan making-process. Eventually, the meeting was held at the Town hall, half empty. Few of the citizens who had attended, boycotted the entire meeting as they refused to approve of the Masterplan as they were not involved in the Process<sup>37</sup>. This reflects the high level of citizen interest and consequently the void in the planning system that is represented by the prevalent lack of interest in systematic execution of public participation in planning.

According to Anjali Mohan, an urban planner who was involved with the preparation of the masterplan for 2015 as well as the BMRDA's structural plan, it was necessary that citizens were consulted in the process of preparing the masterplan. It is also necessary that the BDA consult other parastatal agencies related to water, sanitation etc. to consider and integrate with their plans for the city in 2035. In fact, this is also the problem when it comes to the implementation of masterplan, she added. Several questions were raised regarding implementation of the master plan. Apart from the fact that there were no reports of any kind to show what aspects of masterplan 2015 had been achieved, there was also the problem of 'ownership' of the plan, according to those gathered. She further lays emphasis on how, "Civic agencies should prepare their own plans for the city and this should be appended into masterplan. These agencies usually do have a plan for their own; however, the architects of masterplan for the city and these smaller plans do not talk to each other,"

Despite the state of affairs, in congruence with the nature to innovation the city holds, there are quite a high number of instances of active citizen engagement through effecting participation processes through the work of civic groups which are observed. With the presence of such proactive citizens and citizen-led initiatives, these people are changing the ways of relating to the planning and governance system. The neighbourhood's citizen and civic group led restoration of the 48 acres at the Kaikondrahalli lake<sup>38</sup>, working in collaboration with the BBMP presents a fair example.

These few instances display potential by transforming the quality of life in the city, positively by connecting to the citizen and hence this context has been ideal to test the hypothesis of this research, where a few groups and their initiatives are studied.

## Chennai

The city has grown in size; with a population of 6.5 million spread over 426 sq. km as per 2011 Census. It is a coastal city, and capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Chennai Municipal Corporation is home to the oldest Municipal Corporation in India, having been established on September 29, 1688, by the British East India Company.

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<sup>37</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'BDA'S SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON RMP-2031 It's BDA vs public again, as BDA's power to public consultation questioned Amid hue and cry, BDA Commissioner Sham Bhatt declared that there are soon going to be more public consultations in each zone of the city.' Published: Citizen Matters, 30 Apr 2015, Bengaluru.  
[http://bangalore.citizenmatters.in/articles/bda-second-public-consultation-on-rmp-2031-ends-up-a-disaster?utm\\_source=copy](http://bangalore.citizenmatters.in/articles/bda-second-public-consultation-on-rmp-2031-ends-up-a-disaster?utm_source=copy)

<sup>38</sup> Case study Report on 'Restoration of the Kaikondrahalli lake in Bangalore: Forging a new urban commons' by Harini Nagendra, Azim Premji University, June 2016  
[http://www.vikalpsangam.org/static/media/uploads/Resources/kaikondrahalli\\_lake\\_casestudy\\_harini.pdf](http://www.vikalpsangam.org/static/media/uploads/Resources/kaikondrahalli_lake_casestudy_harini.pdf)

According to the ULB setup in Chennai, the Council of 200 councillors is headed by the Mayor and the Executive is headed by the Commissioner. The city is reported to have chequered local government history in the recent years (Nath, 2015, p.51). Nevertheless, the city is recently taking efforts to provide efficient services to citizens, administrators and elected representatives. An example initiative the Corporation of Chennai opted and implemented is an integrated web-based ERP that would cater to all its departments in 2009. (The performance data is present in the Annexure).

Like most Indian cities, Chennai city adopted a centralised 'top-down' planning process as provided for in the Town and Country Planning statute. Chennai city developed its First Master Plan in 1975 to guide and determine city development. Since City Master Plans are dynamic processes and not 'products', they are reviewed every five years and modified to adapt to the changing contours of a city.

However, no review was ever carried out in Chennai and the city grew in all directions. It is to be noted that in 2000 CMDA declared that 50 per cent of Chennai buildings were unauthorised and initiated the regularisation scheme. The Supreme Court came down severely on CMDA on this and found it as an administrative failure, regulatory inefficiency and callousness.

In 1995, nearly 20 years after the First Master Plan was developed, the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) brought out a Draft Second Master Plan (SMP). The CMDA later argued that they were engaged in collecting background data and studies on urban growth in Chennai from 1988-1995, and this data formed the basis for the Draft SMP. Chennai residents were provided 60 days to scrutinise comment and respond to the proposed master plan. The CMDA had copies of the Draft SMP available at Rs.1, 000/- per copy and Detailed Development Plans (at the ward / neighbourhood level) at a further cost of Rs.500 per Detailed Plan. Interestingly, Detailed Plans were only available for less than 1/5th of the city, and so interested persons were forced to limit their scrutiny and comments to the larger macro plan for the city. The draft SMP was also printed in English only and the CMDA did not organise any public meetings or hearings to discuss the document, leaving no room for public participation.<sup>39</sup>

This void was debated and discussed by various organisations and unanimously felt that the proposed master plan lacked simplicity. The plan did not carry mechanism to encourage or evaluate public reaction and participation. Around the same time, there were a series of articles in Chennai newspapers pointing out inadequacies in process and content of the Draft SMP. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed by Citizen, Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG) asking the Madras High Court to direct the CMDA to:

- (i) Provide more time to study and evaluation of the document and
- (ii) Separately reach out into the citizen and seek inputs on the Draft SMP

According to Bharath Jairaj, Legal co-ordinator at CAG, The Madras High Court consented CAG's arguments and stayed the notification of Draft SMP. This stay order continued till 2001, when the PIL was eventually dismissed. Much of this could be avoided if the top-down planning process was given up and instead avenues for participation were opened.

In late 2005, the CMDA began discussing about a new Master Plan they were working on. However, much to our disappointment the CMDA has developed and submitted the Chennai City CDP in April 2006 without any public knowledge and in a covert and fraudulent manner, leaving no room for public participation in any stage of the plan-making process.

Today, similar to Bangalore, it also hosts many citizen-centric urban initiatives. When compared to the cosmopolitan people at large in Bangalore, people in Chennai are considered to be relatively more culturally oriented and conservative. One example is the attempt to incorporate participatory planning in the Nanganallur neighbourhood of Chennai<sup>40</sup>, by a

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<sup>39</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Participatory city planning is vital', Published: The Hindu, Chennai, 15 Jul 2006  
<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/pp/2006/07/15/stories/2006071500010100.htm>\*

<sup>40</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Transparent Chennai brainstorms with Nanganallur residents on ideal footpaths' Published: The Hindu, Chennai, 8 Jul 2013  
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/transparent-chennai-brainstorms-with-nanganallur-residents-on-ideal-footpaths/article4889530.ece?homepage=true>

civic group named Transparent Chennai. Where in July 2013, a design workshop was held to encourage walkability within the community where citizens worked together, to design footpaths for their neighbourhood. Nearly 50 residents of the community, including the ward councillor, representatives of resident welfare associations and other local organisations, school students and teachers, and also people from the media attended and participated. The results were then presented to the government as a suggestion for implementation.

**Figure 6: Participatory planning for re-thing streets for walkability at Nanganallur**



Source: Transparent Chennai

It is important that the Government in Tamil Nadu further drives the CMDA to adopt an effective alternative approach to city planning. A great presence of these civic groups in urban affairs, is even brought in times of emergency and planning failure, and felt in their contribution while overcoming the disastrous floods in Chennai in 2015<sup>41</sup>. Citizens are today more informed about the benefits of good governance process - improved transparency, participatory decision making and strong accountability processes. What the city needs is to synthesise the 'expert-driven' plan with a city plan that adopts a micro approach, which is drawn up by citizens. And this role of synthesizing initiatives towards public participation in planning is undertaken by a few civic groups, which are further detailed in the upcoming section.

### 5.3 Detailed analysis of selected groups and participatory initiatives

The following are the selected civic groups applying bottom-up participatory initiatives to study through an overview of their functioning, as driven by the rationale directed by the set of parameters in chapter 5.1. All of the groups have a wide range of initiatives across various fields of action related to planning identified in Chapter 4.3

1. Janaagraha and Jana Urban Space, Bangalore
2. MOD Institute, Bangalore
3. The Urban Design Collective, Chennai
4. City Connect, Chennai

#### 5.3.1 Janaagraha and Jana USP, Bangalore

The civic group for study is an embodiment of two sister organizations namely, Janaagraha and Jana USP. The greatest strength of this organization is its collaborative functioning addressing the urban quality of life at large for citizens. While Janaagraha is a centre for working on matters of citizenship, democracy and matters of governance, Jana USP focuses on the planning and design of urban space specifically.

#### *Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy*



<sup>41</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Flood of kindness as the skies open up'. Published: The Hindu, 5 December, 2015.  
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/chennai-residents-lend-a-helping-hand-in-the-rain/article7940986.ece>

The Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy is a non-profit organization based in Bengaluru, India.

### Organization Structure

The organization strives to improve quality of life in urban India, through effecting systemic change. The scale at which the organisation seeks to make impact is . The team is also present as a highly-networked multi-tiered organisation, with the highly-skilled human resources across various fields of expertise to carry out the grand vision by seeking to connect citizenship to higher democratic roles of governance.

The value of group's vision lies in how the organization perceives sees 'quality of life' as comprising two distinct, but inter-connected aspects:

- 'quality of urban infrastructure and services' (the quality of urban of amenities such as roads, drains, traffic, transport, water supply etc.) and
- 'quality of citizenship' (the role that urban citizens play by participating in their local communities).<sup>42</sup>

### Participatory Process

The chosen context of influence is with reference to effecting initiatives that

- promote civic learning and engagement with the governance system at the neighbourhood level
- advocate governments to adopt a strategic and actionable frameworks to urban transformation in whole or part
- create innovative platforms, both on ground and online and provide data and tools to bring citizens and governments together

### Range of Initiatives

- Civic Learning:
  - Bala Janaagraha : an interactive pedagogy based civic education program, to transform children of urban India into informed, engaged and active citizens of tomorrow, with a sense of civic responsibility & good citizenship
  - Imatter : an initiative for citizen awareness building in institutions
- Civic Participation:
  - Community Policing : to create awareness and provide inputs to police and citizens towards working together to solve neighbourhood-level security and crime concerns
  - iChangeMyCity : a technology enabled platform that allows citizens to capture complaints in neighbourhood level and liaise with the authorities in addressing them.
  - Open Works : a realtime platform for opening up data on the operations and finance of a City. Beginning with the creation of municipal data sets to empower communities with actionable data and ending with the creation of a data portal that is customizable to suit the requirements of a city and its civic works
  - I Paid a Bribe : an initiative that focuses on Retail Corruption. It is the largest online crowd-sourced anti-corruption platform in the world today. It uses a crowd-sourcing model to collect bribe reports, and to build a repository of corruption-related data across government departments.
- Advocacy and Reforms:
  - City BluePrint : a robust framework for city leaders to be able to develop a clear strategy for their city
  - City System Reforms : a structural construct, the City-Systems framework defines four significant aspects of urban transformation – Urban Planning & Design; Urban Capacities & Resources; Empowered & Legitimate Political Representation and Transparency, Accountability & Participation
  - ASICS : ASICS(Annual Survey of India's City Syste is India's only independent benchmarking of cities using a systemic framework. It evaluates India's city-systems: the complex, mostly-invisible factors (such as laws, policies, institutions, processes and accountability mechanisms) that strongly influence the quality of life in India's cities.
- Engagement Research and Insight:

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<sup>42</sup> (<http://www.janaagraha.org/about-us/>)

- Voter List Management
- Monitoring & Evaluation

City Blue-print:

The group developed a transformational framework for working with city leaders. This indicates the high interactive methodology applied to relate to the public government bodies. It rings together projects and policy reforms, process changes and people issues in the city, to create a holistic urban transformation. It is developed with a five year timeframe, but with interim milestones that can then be monitored

**Figure 7: Framework for the City Blueprint project**



Source: Janaagraha

The iChangemyCity initiative:

As demonstrated earlier, Urban India suffers from a massive disconnect between citizens and local government, where even a small task, such as finding information to contact your local civic agency, becomes an incredibly challenging feat. This is accentuated by fragmentation between urban bodies and departments, and, fundamentally, a lack of formal avenues for citizens to take part in local governance. IChangeMyCity was launched in 2012 in Bangalore, as one such formal avenue to address the lack of three aspects in urban governance; participation, accountability and transparency.

The multiplicity of various government departments and the paperwork involved acts as a deterrent for many individuals to connect with civic agencies. IChangeMycity.com tries to address this problem by being a seamless bridge between government and citizens. It networks people locally to address issues of common concerns. It connects people on-line to bring them together off-line for civic engagement on the ground, and allow them to plan for their neighbourhoods with respect to resolving issues.

The portal has helped solve problems ranging from indifferent garbage collection, poor street lighting, potholes and security related issues in the suburbs. It has also provided citizens with useful information on how much funds have been allocated to wards and constituencies and how the same has been utilised.

The complaint statistics according to ward wise data presented on the portal, for the city of Bengaluru in 2015, is referenced in Annexure 6.

#### Level of Networking

The organization works with both citizens and government to ignite civic awareness and participation from the grassroots up, as well as complement the process with working on governance reforms from the top down. As an organisation that works primarily with the State on informing the public institutions on citizen processes by applying appropriate research and solutions.

## *Jana Urban Space Foundation (JanaUSP), Bangalore*



Jana Urban Space Foundation (JanaUSP) established in 2007<sup>43</sup> is a non-partisan, not-for-profit trust working on the core premise that urban space planning and urban design are central to shaping vibrant urban local environments within cities and city regions, thus enhancing the quality of life. Though based in Bangalore, it is the largest civic organisation working in urban planning projects across India.

With the work of such civic groups in shaping urban projects, a positive direction is visible in the functioning of the urban local bodies. As answered in the questionnaire by Vinaya Mani, an Urban Researcher at Jana USP: “The bodies have become more open towards implementation of such infrastructure projects for various parts of the state. “ This also emphasizes on the positive outcome of the collaborative role the organisations take on working with the local bodies in their initiatives.

### Organization Structure

As a wide and multi-disciplinary team focused on the making of better urban space solutions, JanaUSP’s as an initiator of bottom-up urbanism is to catalyse a more thoughtful transition for a rapidly urbanizing India, through three streams of activities involving practice and policy across the fields of Urban Planning; Urban Design; Policies for Planning and Design.

### Participatory Process

The Foundation has done pioneering work in both advocacy and practice towards better urban liveability, effectively moving the needle forward using pilot projects, research work, publications, workshops, conferences and expositions. In addition, integrated design and implementation solutions have been provided for projects to improve urban design of public spaces such as roads, junctions, transport hubs, rural produce distribution markets, etc. and also by preparing spatial plans for regional, municipal, and neighbourhood levels. JanaUSP provides technical expertise on policy reforms for better planning and design.

### Range of Initiatives

#### Policy Initiatives:

- i. TENDER SURE- The group devised a document on the Specifications for Urban Roads Execution, used as a tool in promoting better pedestrian movement and streamlined traffic. Brigade Road, Cunningham Road and Museum Road; three main roads in the city have been effectively redesigned
- ii. Developing guidelines for Nation Urban Spatial Planning and Development
- iii. Focussed on Participatory Planning:
  - Ward Vision Campaign, Changemakers, 2006 :  
The Ward Vision Campaign was a 3-year perspective document for the development of each participating ward, the result of consultative deliberations between various stakeholders. The objectives of the campaign are as follows:
    - a) To produce a plan that is articulated by the residents and other stakeholders of each ward, prioritised over 3 years.
    - b) To make the plan a realistic one, it will also identify the sources of funds and their allocation.
    - c) To make the process as representative of the demographic, economic and social profile of the participating ward.

<sup>43</sup> (Data on the group as on <http://www.janausp.org/aboutus.php>)

- d) To make the process a collaborative one, with leadership from the corporation as the elected representative of the ward, and the administration of the BMP, as well as participation from all other concerned stakeholders.
- Cox Town Market Rejuvenation Project, 2004 :  
With the rapid expansion in Bangalore's population and the city's boundaries, the intermediate role that wet markets assume between food, producers and consumers has become increasingly complicated and important. Consequently, this project aimed to provide an in-depth, micro analysis of this role and studied suggestions for improving the efficiency of Cox Town Market. The culmination of this project's research and analysis was utilized in a public referendum, whereby the residents were encouraged to vote for the new market design of their preference.
- Devising Decentralized Planning Guidelines
- CDP(City Development Plan) Workshop, 2005: for collective feedback and suggestions on the revised comprehensive development plan (2005-2015) for the city of Bengaluru
- Neighbourhood Vision Campaign, 2003

#### Urban Planning Initiatives:

- i. Jaipur Redevelopment Plan, Rajasthan
- ii. Chhindwara 2030 SDP(Spatial Development Plan), Madhya Pradesh
- iii. Valluvanad 2040 SDP, Kerala

#### Urban Design Initiatives:

- i. Design and implementation of 11 main roads within the Bengaluru Metropolitan area such as the Museum Road, Brigade Road, St.Marks Road, Cunningham Road etc. as per Tender S.U.R.E Guidelines
- ii. Mumbai Mile
- iii. Mobility Masterplan for Electronic City

**Figure 8: Design for Cunningham Road, Bengaluru**



Source: Jana USP

#### Level of Networking

JANA USP as an organisation primarily supports, by informing and collaborating with government agencies, over citizens' urban space concerns. The group believes that transformational change should be based on leadership and partnership - from those within government, as well as from those outside the government. In keeping with this view, the Foundation

organises events that act as vibrant deliberative platforms:, bringing together government, market, academia and policy thinkers, practitioners and civil society

Vinaya Mani stresses on the value of including participation in a project that, “Certain parts of the roads(under the TENDER S.U.R.E project) are taken care of by the abutting property owners like maintaining the landscape, desisting encroachment or maintaining cleanliness as they develop the sense of ownership. This s the case with any public project whether it is government driven or community driven where you provide them with some element to connect back to” The level of civic participation has a positive effect with the citizens even though it may not be absolute at every stage of the project. “They develop a sense of ownership towards the outcome than the process as they are the direct users. The process largely remains unaware of. ” Even including them in a few stages before the implementation seems sufficient in provoking the desired result amongst citizens with more co-operation, leading to better realisation of urban projects.

### 5.3.2 MOD Institute, Bangalore



MOD Institute is an interdisciplinary urban action and research institute based in Berlin and Bangalore. It was founded in 2010 to link the scientific gap between the Western and Southern dichotomy of urban planning discourses and to identify application-oriented solutions.<sup>44</sup>

#### Organization Structure

MOD Institute was founded by Anne-Katrin Fenk and Tile von Damm from architecture, urban design and political design backgrounds. MOD is a collective of architects, designers, researchers, curators and practitioners with engaged interests in, the urbanisation processes in India. The group emerged out of cross-national concerns and engagements with the present state of debate about urbanisation in India.

The work focus is the question of urbanity in all its forms and their representation from the intellectual debate, cultural connotation up to the visualisation of contemporary transformation processes into the urban fabric. The goal the civic group is to establish an integrated information platform for various kinds of data – from topographic surveys to emotional maps – on Indian cities, which will be open-source, multi-authored and open to debate/modifications. Learning to observe and describe the urban field – to demystify and to help to design them further.

Visions and interventions in the scale of neighbourhood plays a focal role in the work, as an anchor for addressing the urban design approach. The leading question for the practice of the civic group: how urbanisation can be made observable and therefore enable participation in the field of urban development.

#### Participatory Process

MOD engages with the specific contexts and processes of urban transformation in India by undertaking observations and analyses of the trajectories and the discourses and the forces of urban change; by collecting, archiving and visualising information and communicating with an aim to make the city observable for and by citizens.

In the context of Indian cities, MOD Institute, as a civic group feels an urgent need for engaged urban analytics and information visualisation, driven by the ideologies of open-source and collaboration. MOD would like to inform, support and enrich the processes of making Indian cities more inclusive and liveable by creating tool-boxes for observing, discussing, analysing and designing urban environments, along with initiatives in design-education, information visualisation and public dissemination of information.

The group specialises in three kinds of activities:

- i. Visualisation: visualising and communicating information – issues, debates and experiences

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<sup>44</sup> Data on the group as on <http://www.mod.org.in/>

- ii. Modification: modifying approaches, perspectives, visions objects, buildings and cities
- iii. Design and curation: designing and curating information, discussions, environments and experiences

The following are six identified avenues for structuring the work layout and approach of MOD:

- i. Open-source and multi-authorship: open-source systems and archives, open and multi-authored planning/design, participatory approaches, real-time design, copy-left, web 2.0
- ii. Creative entrepreneurship and informal flows: local markets and local products, multi-functional spaces, bottom-up entrepreneurship, support and networking, cultural economies, informal flows of people, resources and knowledge, informal-formal interactions
- iii. Mapping and visualising: making the city observable, mapping city processes and city experiences, sensible mapping, information visualisation, visualisation as analysis and for analysis
- iv. Re-inventing historical references: exploring, excavating and archiving historical references, re-visiting old debates and decisions, re-invention as re-contextualisation
- v. Visions and future-thinking as tools to create debate: urban visions, future visions as provocations, future projections to re-think the present
- vi. Observing and organising complexity: fractal design, observing fractal realities, complexity as an opportunity, organization/ management of complexity not by simplification but by recognition

#### Range of Initiatives

- i. To involve the neighbourhoods in planning- and implementation processes is quintessential for urban development. This is also very much connected in using and identifying new tools for urban planning, like mapping, action workshops and design studios.
- ii. One of the major tools of the group is the blog they run at ([workshop.mod.org.in](http://workshop.mod.org.in)) informing citizens about worldwide projects, which
  - show alternative ways of urban actions by people
  - provide tools to make urban issues visible
  - support critical voices about the status quos of urban planning.
- iii. MOD started the crowdsourcing initiative 'Nextbengaluru', which enables citizens' participation combined with a mapping reporting systems, recently in collaboration with 'Nexthamburg', which is an independent urban research entity based in Hamburg, working with the crowdsourcing model to community projects.
- iv. Another format MOD identified is the international critical lecture series titled, 'Talk Of The Town'. The format provides information from different perspectives with the focus on the cultural understanding of cities.
- v. One example for a different view on a city is the 'Wallzine', which the group creates in Bangalore and Chennai as an interactive public poster wall on questions of the city. For MOD it is quintessential to combine research and analysis with design thinking to guarantee an outreach, participation and transparency.
- vi. Two studies on the future masterplan of Bangalore have been produced from our urban research unit on including pedestrian walks and Bangalore's future vision.
- vii. The research on decentral solutions, especially decentralized (social) networks, is another topic MOD is working on. The group is part of a research project in Helsinki on decentralized urban planning.
- viii. Questioning existing city planning and identifying future solutions in transportation and waste- and water management is just about to start as an implementation project on one quarter in Bangalore.

The Nextbengaluru<sup>45</sup>, is an landmark experimental project in the city of Bengaluru. Relying on a crowdsourced model for generating ideas for the community's own development, the exercise was to explore unused spaces in the neighbourhood of Shanthi Nagar in Bengaluru.

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<sup>45</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Bottom up is the way forward'. Published: The Hindu, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2014  
<http://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/bottomup-is-the-way-forward/article6668121.ece>

Newspaper article titled, 'Crowdsourcing ideas to build a better Bengaluru'. Published: The Times of India, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2014  
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bengaluru/Crowdsourcing-ideas-to-build-a-better-Bengaluru/articleshow/45365818.cms>

Figure 9 : Crowdsourcing model of Citizen's Vision



Source: Nexthamburg, Germany([www.nexthamburg.de](http://www.nexthamburg.de))

The project undertook on a collective three month process of addressing urban questions. Considering that accessibility and participation are vital elements to work on towards achieving an inclusive city, a temporary collaborative space was built within the neighbourhood in an identified empty space, which accelerated the citizen engagement process through multifunctional usage such as place for workshops, installations, citizen awareness programs, brainstorming sessions etc;

Figure 9: Gatishil community workspace for Nextbengaluru in Shanthi Nagar neighbourhood



Source: Nextbengaluru, Bengaluru([www.gatishil.nextbengaluru.com](http://www.gatishil.nextbengaluru.com))

The exercise involved the citizens mapping, both physically and through an app, the various empty spaces of potential that lay within neighbourhood. The second part of the project involved the different citizens of the neighbourhood brainstorming and presenting their visions for future urban interventions, within the identified void spaces for activating the neighbourhood. The project gave the opportunity to everyone to be involved, and the response involved the participation of about 1200 citizens.

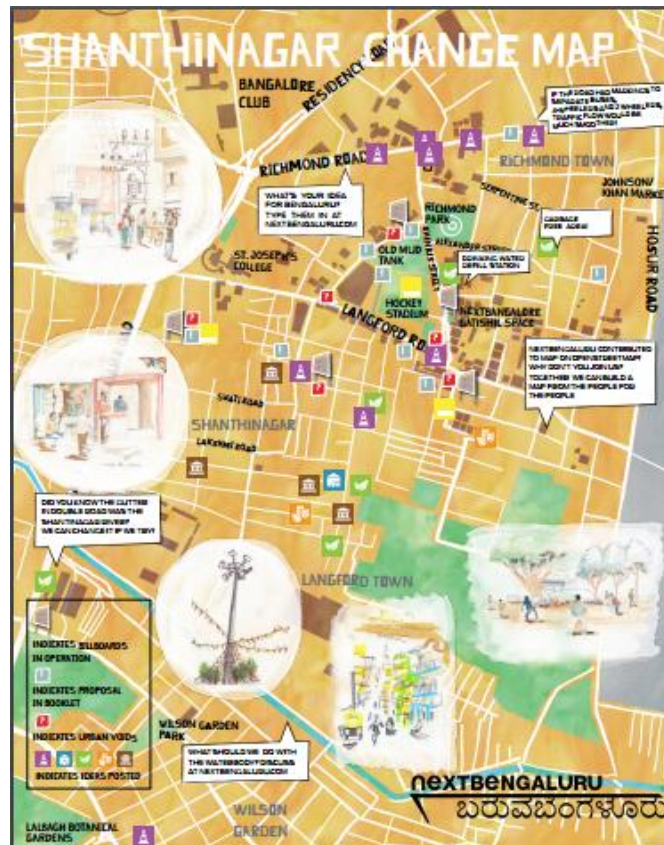
Ideas for planning and rethinking the neighbourhood was achieved across traffic and transport planning, to include more public spaces with nature and waterbodies, to encourage cycling and walking, spaces for children, waste management, affordable buildings, public toilets, old buildings and conservation of heritage and spaces for art and culture<sup>46</sup>. The

Newspaper article titled, 'Wanted Crowdsourced Masterplan'. Published: The Bangalore Mirror, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2014  
<http://www.bangaloremirror.com/bangalore/others/Wanted-Crowdsourced-master-plan/articleshow/45028336.cms>

<sup>46</sup> People's vision Bengaluru, a booklet on the Nextbengaluru Project

following map is the result of a mapping exercise envisioned by the citizens through the project, where the citizens projected their ideas for change for their neighbourhood.

**Figure 10: Shanthinagar Change map with Citizen proposals**



Source: Nextbengaluru, Bengaluru([www.gatishil.nextbengaluru.com](http://www.gatishil.nextbengaluru.com))

### Level of Networking

The group works independently and in collaboration with an extended network of individuals and organizations to analyse and visualise urban processes and challenges so as to inform participation and intervention. MOD offers an integrative view on cities and a toolbox for implementing projects. The approach of the design is to be informed, accessible as open-source, multi-authored and debated. The group is interested in information design and visualisation practices that empower not only the designers but also the users/readers/audience to understand, to learn from, to modify and to contextualise.

### **5.3.3 The Urban Design Collective, Chennai**



Urban Design Collective (UDC) is a collaborative platform for architects, urban designers and planners to create liveable & sustainable cities through community engagement<sup>47</sup>. UDC's approach is best defined as a mix of storytelling, advocacy and demonstration through practice. That apart, the approach is people-centric at the core and aims to bring all the many stakeholders involved in the city building process deliberatively as equal partners to what makes liveable & sustainable cities.

According to Vidhya Mohankumar, Founder and Chief Urban designer at UDC, in a discussion on the role of public participation in developing liveable, sustainable cities, she listed the following as major challenges faced during planning for better cities are:

- Lack of Capacity- of Governmental bodies, service providers and citizens at large
- Slow service delivery and Rapid Urbanization, each being both the cause and effect of the other- The planning bodies and the various service providers are unable to keep up with the pace of urban development, and this further leads to more unplanned growth and unhealthy changes in the urban environment
- Lack of Interest by civic governmental bodies- The Corporation,
- Party politics within matters of governance
- Failure to recognise the work of civic groups

She recognises that, "It is vital to include community participation at all key planning stages of an urban project" and lists the following as the variant types of community participation apparent in their initiatives, as part of the planning process:

- Informing the citizens on plans and decisions
- Obtaining information on needs and views
- While seeking approval after decision-making
- Including people in the plan-making process
- Independent grass-root initiatives

Generally, the values that the planners choose to side with, particularly in the case of situations with conflicting interests between citizens and actors in the decision making body, determine their place in leaning towards either a bottom-up or top-down flowchart of addressing issues, planning and execution.

As Urban Design and Urban Planning practitioners, she declares the role of UDC first as 'community organisers', enabling citizens to be aware and participate in their making of their own urban environment. This statement is indicative of how in the case of civic groups, the position is always leaning towards an informed place for the welfare of the citizens first (even though citizens are unaware of its implications and maybe against their own good sometimes keeping short term interests in mind).

The process of conducting various workshops and exercises with citizens and other stakeholders directly, in urban planning and design is to focus on a particular project and context, resulting in a tangible outcome in the city.

#### Organization Structure

The organization founded by Vidhya Mohankumar, functions as a community of architects, designers, engineers, artists and students, who are passionate about cities, working together. This civic group hosts a relatively smaller team in comparison with the aforementioned two groups; comprising 4 Board members, 8 Core Members and 3-4 Interns or project basis.

Scale of Vision and Action at the Urban Design Collective:

- Improving the quality of the public realm & built environment
- Improving walkability
- Improving liveability of neighbourhoods and precincts
- Improving awareness on sustainable development
- Improving community engagement towards the city building process

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<sup>47</sup> Further details on the organisation: <http://urbandesigncollective.org/>

### Participatory Process

The context of influence for their participatory initiatives is mainly focused in the cities of Chennai and Pondicherry. The methods that are applied towards the realization of the above-mentioned goals include

- Urban Mapping and Research
- Community Engagement and Participatory Workshops
- Education and Capacity building
- Public art & Socially engaged art
- Publications and Social Media Outreach

### Range of Initiatives

- Urban Mapping and Research:

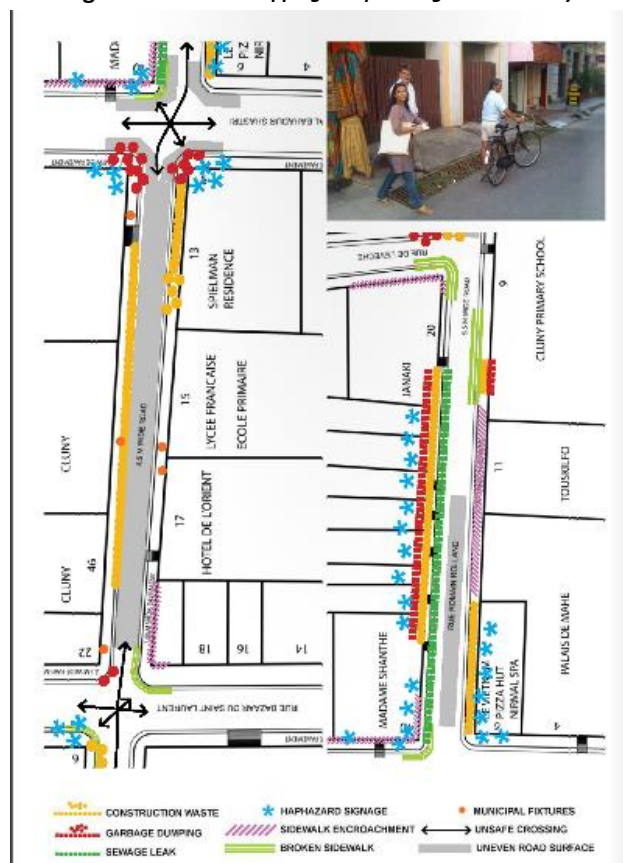
An important aspect of understanding and working with cities is data. Towards this, UDC engages in mapping various aspects of cities as well as allied urban research that can facilitate better solutions for our cities.

Aside from traditional mapping techniques, the group has evolved innovative ways to involve a wide range of citizen groups to understand the city through maps.

- The City Archive Project : Urban Documentation, July 2015 – Present
- Social Cohesion in Neighbourhoods : Urban Mapping & Research, Chennai, July 2015 – Present
- Sidhpur Stories : Urban Documentation & Exhibition, Chennai, December 2014 – March 2015
- Where Is YOUR Chennai? : Community Asset Mapping, Chennai, December 2014
- Small Steps, Big Changes : Neighbourhood-Improvement Project, Pondicherry, August 2013 – Present

Since August 2013, Urban Design Collective, engaged with the local Resident's Association of Pondicherry's fresh Precinct (Raj Bhavan Neighbourhood Association), facilitating their various community planning initiatives. The key initiatives include: Solid waste management, Community initiatives such as 'Meet your neighbour', 'Become a street Champion' and Street Improvement.

**Figure 11 : Street mapping and planning in Pondicherry.**



Source: Small Steps, Big Changes. Urban Design Collective

- Community Engagement and Participatory Workshops

Community engagement is at the heart of all of UDC's activities and the group explores ways to engage a wide range of urban citizens in dialogues and activities on 'what makes cities liveable'. UDC has collaborated with local and international organizations, anchoring workshops and public events to raise awareness on good urban design and participatory planning practices.

- Most Purposeful Use of Mairie Building<sup>48</sup> : Consensus-Building Workshop for Reprogramming the Mairie Building, Pondicherry, December 2015
- Restart [Your City] : Community-Based Restructuring of The Built Environment And Sanitation Systems For A Sustainable Future, Urur Olcott Kuppam<sup>49</sup> (a coastal slum in South Chennai), Chennai, September 2015- Present
- Unmotored : Participatory Workshop For Non-Motorized Planning, Chennai, December 2013  
UDC working along with the Institute for Transportation and Development, facilitated a working group that dealt with non-motorized planning for the Chennai metropolitan Area. The result was a draft non-motorized planning plan, generated along with participation from other contributors such as the Chennai Corporation Engineers, The Tamil Nadu Cycling Club etc.

**Figure 11 : Unmotored' Workshop on Planning for non-motorised transport in the city**



Source: The Urban Design Collective

- People Building Better Cities : Exhibition & Public Program, Chennai, October 2013
- Our Water, Our Waste, Our City : Participatory Planning Workshop, Chennai, September 2012

- Education and Capacity building

The idea of place-making still has a long way to go in Indian cities as is evident from the public realms of most cities. Formal architectural design education too has not been able to address this because it is still largely a habit if not the norm to be limited boundary of the site in planning exercises.

UDC has attempted to bridge this gap with educational workshops and capacity building exercises for various 'change agents' starting from students of architecture to public works department engineers in city Urban local bodies.

<sup>48</sup> Newspaper article titled, 'Suggestions for Mairie as a cultural centre'. Published: The Hindu, Nov. 1, 2015, Puducherry  
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/puducherry/suggestions-for-mairie-as-a-cultural-centre/article7829100.ece>

<sup>49</sup> On the restart Your City Initiative: <https://restartururcolcottkuppam.wordpress.com/>

- i. Urban Mapping Workshop : Educational Workshop For Students, AMS College of Architecture, Chennai, September 2015
- ii. Public Space Design Workshop : Capacity Building Workshop for Corporation of Chennai Engineers Chennai, September 2014- January 2015
- iii. Reading the Urban Environment: Educational Workshop For Students and Professionals Hindustan University, Chennai, August 2013
- iv. Exploring Local Heritage : Heritage Awareness Workshop for School Students Pondicherry, February 2013

- Public art & Socially engaged art

The group also believes that public art enriches urban spaces and can be a powerful tool to provoke, engage, and collaborate and conducted the following initiatives to the cause:

- i. The Cities and People Poster Wall : Public Participatory Art, April 2016- Present
- ii. Neighbourhood Postcard Project: Socially Engaged Art, Chennai, December 2014
- iii. Peoples' Puppet Project : Street Theatre Workshop, Pondicherry, December 2014
- iv. Cookies- Installed : Interactive Art Installation, Chennai, October 2013
- v. The Haves & Wants Wall, Interactive Art Installation, The Goa Project, Goa, March 2013

#### Level of Networking

Interaction is minimal with private sponsors and the State as initiative is predominantly of temporary and tactical in nature. The group is focused more on reaching out to citizens through participatory initiatives. Without playing a highly deliberative role in the implementation of large urban-planning projects and being involved in policy-making, the group focuses more on projects through a tactical approach to participation.

As a collaborative platform however the group is always open to individuals or organizations across the globe who wish to collaborate on projects/ initiatives and research and test ideas

Being heavily connected to other civic groups of similar approach, some of the collaborations (both local and international) of the group are with the following civic groups:

- Prastara, DakshinaChitra, The Startup Centre (Chennai)
- INTACH: Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, Chennai Chapters
- People for Pondicherry Heritage
- MOD Institute, Bangalore, India
- The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, Chennai, India
- The Alternative.in
- The Center for the Living City, Restart [Your City], Rebuild Global, Jane Jacobs, Walk, Utah. (All in the USA)

#### 5.3.4 Chennai City Connect Chennai



Beyond urban service providers through participatory approaches, a number of initiatives aim to foster civil society development and the establishment of more extensive participation in the political system. They do not directly organise such processes, but establish networks and opportunities for exchanging best practice. Some support small-scale, bottom-up or grass roots projects that include citizens in developing their social world.

Collectively, various stakeholders—residents of the city, employers across the entire range of industries, small and medium firms, bodies like Rotary, industry associations, NGOs and community organizations—which are aware of the

challenges of the city along with the technical capacity and commitment work out project initiatives to ensure that various government initiatives are successful. The challenge is to harness these collective energies onto a single platform that can make the whole larger than the sum of the parts. This also aims to help the government respond to citizen interests and civic action in a constructive, collaborative manner to the voices coming from outside the government and create value-added partnerships.

Chennai City Connect (CCC) is an initiative specifically meant to play this role, by bringing various urban stakeholders outside government together onto a single platform. This also helps government respond in a constructive, collaborative manner to the voices coming from outside government, and create value-added partnerships. The aim of CCC is, among other things, to assist governmental agencies by providing the knowledge base and support to help the development on urban infrastructure and services.

According to Raj Cherubal, Director-Project at Chennai City Connect as answered in the questionnaire in the annexe, the primary motivation to seek public participation in a project is 'usually to get input and build support for a project since funding for implementation of ideas etc. is done by Corporation or some other public agency. Also project cannot be implemented properly without the consent of the citizens in the neighbourhood'. As organisers of participation, he recalls the value of involving key citizens in the early stages of a project.

He comments on the lack of methodical application of participation techniques in projects and owes it to the state of Indian cities which lack, "the capacity to engage in a systematic manner, over a long period of time. Officials change, plans change etc. So follow ups etc. are very difficult. So most of the participation is when either the project is announced, or when a project has public resistance during implementation and hence requires participation and resolution."

As a civic group, they usually relies on the public agency (for e.g. the corporation) to do the participatory meetings since they are officially authorised to deal with civic issues, and CCC subsequently plays a more deliberative role in the implementation of the project. As in the case of big projects like the T Nagar Pedestrianisation project, K K Nagar cycle track project, etc. Corporation of Chennai conducted many participatory meetings. These will require big changes on the ground. As an independent organization they focus more on conducting seminars, interaction with media to communicate with public.

Cherubal on the value of incorporating public participation into projects comments that, "usually in small projects the public is consulted in the middle or end. But in bigger projects after the concepts and renderings are ready to show public. It is always a good idea to keep the impacted citizens part of the process from start to finish. But sometimes due to lack of understanding of the principles involved, or greater issues to be considered, some local citizens can even recommend bad ideas. So, not all participation results in good decisions. Sometimes local interests can trump greater and more valuable objectives. But in general it is good to have citizens on board. "

The highly deliberative role of CCC is reflected in his statement on Cherubal saying, "We spend a lot of time persuading officials and then persuading public. That is a lot of effort. Also we help one agency get permissions etc. from other agencies since they sometimes don't talk to each other regularly. We help set up processes and improve them to be able to deliver these projects. Other key permissions etc. are done by public agencies. "

He reflects at times, politicians and public officials too are looking for exciting and useful projects as current systems are only capable of giving them outdated or poor ideas and projects. So they are more than happy to work with CCC, demonstrating how such civic groups are able to act as a site of innovation

#### Organizational Structure:

Chennai City Connect has been formed to create this common platform for all city stakeholders to constructively engage with various government agencies on the city's planning and implementation process. Their approach is hinged on the following beliefs:

- It is essential for various city stakeholders outside the government to work in a coordinated manner and represent themselves in a single voice
- It is essential to have a formal relationship and clear role for engagement with government agencies. It is important however to ensure that this does not distort the existing political / decentralized system
- It is essential to play a role that adds value to the system. Our aim is to assist government agencies by providing the knowledge base and support to help the development on urban infrastructure.

#### Type of Participatory Processes applied

Chennai City Connect brings value at three levels by working with various government agencies responsible for urban infrastructure:

- Strategic Inputs – Many of the strategic choices faced by government (on policies, large scale projects such as right location for a ring road around city, PPP initiatives etc.) are complex in nature. We can enable the right decisions by providing complete technical resources and capacities necessary for making the right choices.
- Project Inputs – Many urban infrastructure projects involve not just 1 or 2 agencies but a multiple of government agencies working with their own priorities. We can enable detailing of a project in the most appropriate manner through taking a holistic view of project planning and enabling better co-ordination amongst various government agencies.
- Implementation Inputs – As a group of diverse stakeholders, it brings together multiple skills to ensure time-bound implementation of critical projects.
- Area for Inputs – Potentially we can help government agencies in providing good quality of service to urban citizens in traffic and transportation, affordable housing, water, sewage, e-governance, city services to poor like food, education, insurance and other inclusive growth related issues, city management, land use and other urban infrastructure and services.

#### Range of Initiatives

The participative projects the group is currently involved in can be classified into three focus areas<sup>50</sup>.

- Traffic & Transportation

The Traffic and Transportation focus area started out as a regular street improvement plan. It has since then moved into all the other fields of traffic management, from Junction improvement to wider sidewalks.

- Urban Planning: The most significant sub areas are:
  - i. Street Improvement : many of the streets in Chennai, were redesigned in collaboration with Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) and the Corporation of Chennai. E.g. T-Nagar Panagal Park Road, Chamiers Road, Second Avenue Besant Nagar etc.

**Figure 12 : Street Improvement Project for T-Nagar Panagal Park Road**



*Source: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy*

- ii. Transit Corridor Densification
- Environment
    - i. Waterbodies as Eco-Spots

<sup>50</sup> For further details on the civic group: <http://chennaiacityconnect.com/>

- ii. Pallikaranai Watch Towers
- Other Initiatives
  - i. Clean Chennai
  - ii. Chennai Street Art- Conquer the Concrete: Goethe Institute along with Chennai City Connect and other partners. organized a Street Art festival called '**Conquer The Concrete**' in early 2015. Totally, around 25 artists from India and abroad participated in this initiative to activate walls in public spaces.

**Figure 13 : Street Art Project under Conquer the Concrete Initiative**



*Source: Chennai City Connect*

- iii. Car Free Day
- iv. Coovum Art Festival

#### Level of Networking

As the organization primarily works on a deliberative platform with the government on initiatives, the level of networking with state led public institutions is high and there is an almost no need to interact with private sponsors as no costs are incurred. With respect to expanding the networking by connecting to other civic networks, Chennai City Connect Foundation has partnerships with the following National and International organizations for the execution of its participatory projects:

- The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)
- SMART Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility Research & Transformation
- EMBARQ

#### *Conclusions*

In numerous occasions, in the nature of the various range of initiatives presented above, proof of the mere certainty that civic group pioneers are not subject to the guidelines and outlooks of administration to create results, and this radically improves the probability that the civic groups arrive at innovative solutions to urban problems. Being visionaries without the shackles of bureaucracy administration, they tend to be more proactive do what needs to be done.

The wide range of initiatives by each civic group and the nature of functioning of the organisations are analysed. The nature and identity of each of the civic groups is specific to various parameters within their functioning as an organization, but irrespective of their particular field of work addressed in the projects, all of these civic groups function as an intermediary between the government and the citizens.

Cumulatively, civic groups such as the ones presented, acting as urban social entrepreneurs face numerous shortcomings, including:

- i. Lack of access to funding in the form of grants, equity or debt, as well as mentoring
- ii. Lack of appropriate evidence or transparent available data to make better decisions
- iii. Shortage of skilled human resources
- iv. High upfront cost of inducing awareness and behaviour change, due to a large and diverse population

- v. Shortage of technical expertise over processes of deliberation and participation. Higher the diversity and variation of interests, arrival at the mean is harder and farther; especially in the case of a heterogenic entity such as India, as occurrence of conflicts in a pluralistic situation is more and the demand is more for such expertise

The following are key potential factors across sectors that could facilitate civic groups to mitigate these challenges on the path to social innovation in affecting the ways of democratic delivery of governance influencing their work, rising from a bottom-up approach to urban initiatives:

- Government support is vital for the growth of social innovation and there is a need for more regulatory frameworks that support such innovation. Sustained government support can help to:
  - i. Deepen and update regional data and resources, presenting towards more transparency and accountability
  - ii. Create institutions that enforce standards and contribute towards an integrated master planning approach.
  - iii. Increase availability of funding and widen stakeholder involvement
  - iv. Develop planning and supportive policy frameworks that support innovation in civic groups
  - v. Encourage training and skills development programs for capacity building of both officials and citizens
- Collaborating with key stakeholders to create a well-defined social environment with delineated roles for various stakeholders could lead to scalable, high-impact innovations. These associations could aid to:
  - i. Create a deeper understanding of problems of planning and governance in the society
  - ii. Create platforms as opportunities for new and better solutions
  - iii. Build more systematic processes and effective organizations
  - iv. Heighten the level of implementation of projects with improved deliberation
- Leveraging the use of technology to scale up their organisation and work as access is spreading across communities, regions and classes in time in urban areas. It can help to:
  - i. Gather, monitor and analyse data
  - ii. Develop an open multi-stakeholder platform for information technology exchanges and development
  - iii. Further expand mass-media relational methods to reach out to more citizens

## 5.4 Comparative Qualitative Analysis

The civic groups in comparison above are each presenting their unique array of bottom-up participatory initiatives as their contribution to bridging the void which exists as a disconnection in the governance system of local urban environments. They are qualitatively compared by the research parameters as set in section 3.2

The comparative table is built by grading each of the four civic group across every one of the parameters earlier set in Chapter 5.1 across a figure from 1-10 by grading through ascending sizes of circles where the smallest circle represent a grading of 1 whereas the largest one represents a grading of 10. (A legend of the grading circles to read the table is placed to the right of the table)

A choice of tabular representation of the qualitative comparison based on the earlier parameters of study is attempted to draw some broad conclusions in trying to relate the composition of the civic groups itself to the context and nature of initiatives undertaken by them.

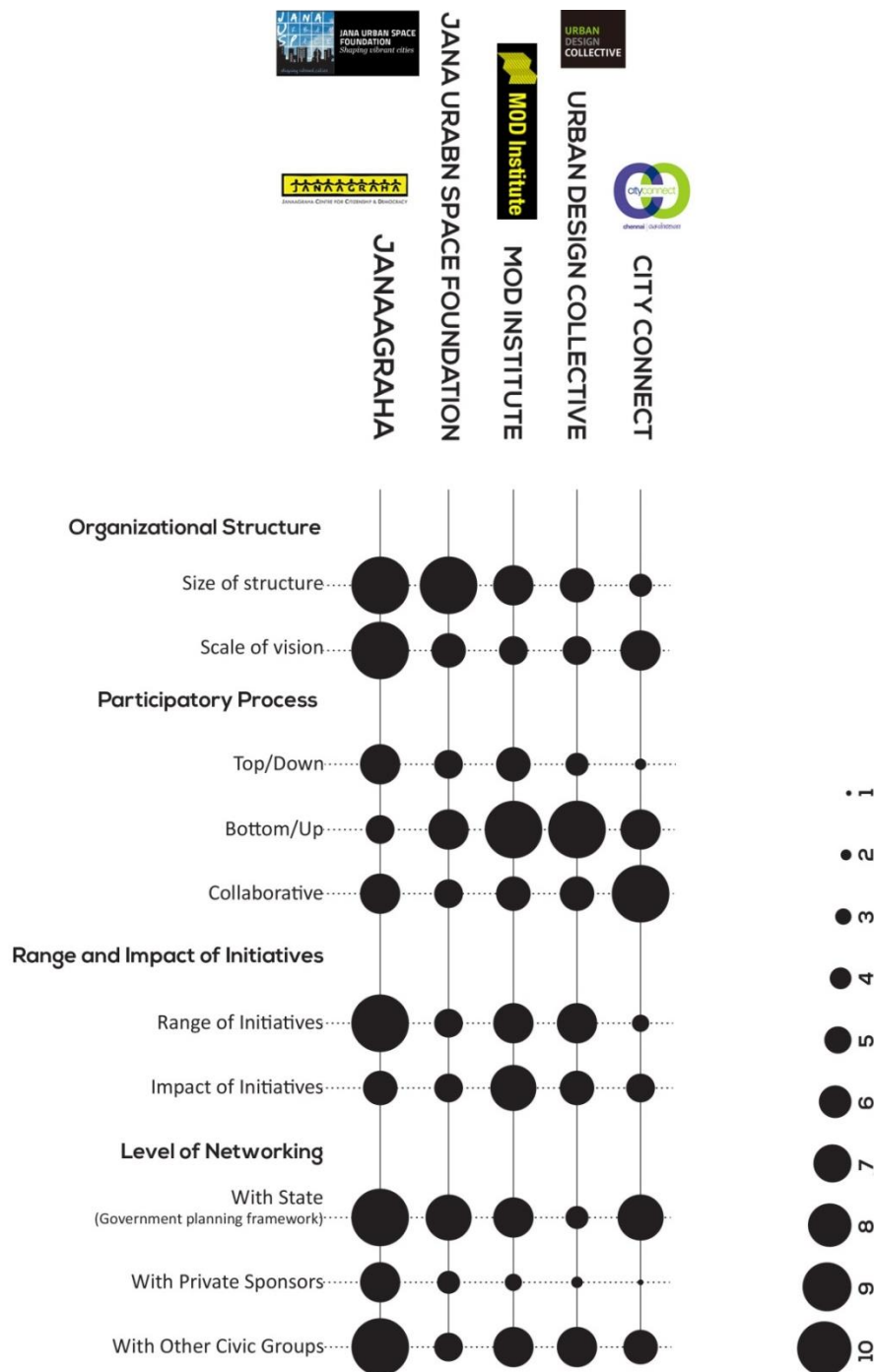
The observations drawn from the table are not to be taken as ultimatum as they are very specific to the study context of these five groups. All the four groups, except City Connect which plays a purely facilitative and deliberative role, undertake participatory initiatives as projects that are both top-down, bottom-up and collaborative in nature. Since these groups address the void in planning through a varied range of initiatives, both 'hard' and 'soft', the processes have a higher variance of originating both from the institutional and civic sphere. Another aspect to be noted is that no group

solely follows only one particular directional process (i.e. top-down or bottom-up) of approach to work, and is subjective to the particular context and initiative.

Observations based on-

- **Organizational Structure:**  
The size of organizational structure is proportion is to the scale of vision, with respect to the motivations behind the initiatives undertaken. The Chennai City Connect is an exception, because it primarily thrives in collaborative working formats, and undertakes initiatives with visions larger than its capacity along with other groups
- **Participatory Process:**  
All the four groups, except City Connect which plays a purely facilitative and deliberative role, undertake participatory initiatives as projects that are both top-down, bottom-up and collaborative in nature. Since these groups address the void in planning through a varied range of initiatives, both 'hard' and 'soft', the processes have a higher variance of originating both from the institutional and civic sphere. Another aspect to be noted is that group solely follows only one particular directional process (i.e top-down or bottom-up) of initiatives. And on an average, the bottom-up process initiatives are predominant, with the highest contributors being the Urban Design Collective and the MOD Institute. Thus, staying true to the intermediary role in the nature of work of such civic groups
- **Study of Initiatives**  
The largest group of Janagraaha manages to seek the highest range of initiatives. MOD Institute and The Urban Design Collective are these civic groups of very similar standards of initiatives.
- **Level of Networking**  
All civic groups network less with private sponsors less on urban planning initiatives. One reason may be due to a cautionary aspect that private sponsors that seek a role to influence planning, might possess vested interests in mind. Among the groups, Urban design Collective is the group to interact least with the State through its initiatives.

**Figure 13: Comparative Qualitative Analysis between Civic Groups**



After comprehending the work of civic groups employing bottom-participation through a varied range of initiatives and the rationale behind their work, the following challenges in maximising the work of civic groups to its full potential are observed:

#### At the Planning and governance level:

- Threats of politics:

There could exist low receptivity to the idea of acceptance of civil society organizations as active stakeholders in the political governance and planning processes. The participation of citizens is perceived as a disturbance to their flow of work

- Capacity and competence:

In the Indian scenario, Public officials have little experience with public participation. They are uncertain and critical of its potential and usefulness. Moreover, there is incompetence in the rendering planning services due to the lack of an

integrated approach to making a coherent masterplan for an area, as each central and local government department, local authority or agency. Additionally, local government has insufficient resources work to beyond the faults of this strategic incongruence and work to support each department's aspirations for citizen participation.

- Overcoming the existent planning system

Since the current functioning planning system is predominantly closed to address and incorporate citizens needs and suggestions, there is a vital need for avenues to invite more participation and presenting the opportunity to create more innovative and sensitive solutions to the citizen's problems, especially to be addressed at the local level.

#### At the Civic Group Level:

- Establishing a more deliberative role in connecting between the citizen and the formal planning network
- Establishing identity and presence, since civic groups have a relatively limited presence in the information arena. The civic groups, in addition to the rendering of services must also bear the responsibility of creating awareness about the need for participation through extensive media outreach.
- Low Level of Networking
- Need to strengthen sources of funding and
- Need to involve citizens across as many stages of the planning process of a project as appropriately as possible.

#### At the Citizen Level

- More awareness
- Lack of affinity towards participation

A lack of proactivity due to tradition exclusion in urban decision-making exists among the citizen which is reflected in the lack of eagerness to participate in the making of their own local urban environment as a majority of them have low interest in the urban social sphere.

## **6. The Way ahead:**

As stated at the outset, the purpose of this paper was not to present firm conclusions, but rather to pose the issues we need to address in strengthening the urban planning system at large, in the hope of provoking a wider debate focussing on the contribution of civic groups. However some broad conclusions can be drawn.

Recognising the void that exists within the Indian Planning Culture, the thesis began by exploring rationale behind the persistent urban issues void in the planning. Thereby to prove the potential of the application of participation through bottom-up initiatives originating in the civic sphere, the thesis theoretically explored the concepts of participation and bottom-up approach in planning, and its application in the Indian Context.

On reflection, the way ahead towards effective planning and governance systems seems to hold that, every person, irrespective of his frame of life, whatever obligation he holds, whatever impact he has, needs to stand up, as a responsible citizen and get change happening in his general vicinity in his neighbourhood. And this has been demonstrated across cases presented in chapters 4 and 5. And civic groups act with their initiatives act best on this appropriately by approaching issues at scale of the neighbourhood, thereby routing out change through the citizens in governance.

Given the expanse of the issue, the legislatures or any particular pioneer civic group might not be able to address and solve the issue of bridging the void alone. The larger vision is to draw as many people as possible to actively participate in this process of shaping their urban environments. Hence, there is urgency for the articulation of a strong system that can enable self-organization, to act as a vehicle for participation. And for this to happen, the system needs to working with raising sensitivity of people to the governance and urban scenario through education, awareness and skill levels of the people, as most people are now disillusioned with the failure of the existing model, which accentuates the problem more.

The important part of building the foundation for participation, by relating to the people directly is primary executed by civic groups thereby establishing the base for effective participation to occur. There is additional value to their work, as along with their technique expertise, they also possess the vital skill to deliberation by relating bottom-up participatory processes to formal planning institutions.

In a few circumstances, when civic groups and individuals in the urban area decline to simply just play out settled hierarchical schedules, they may try to modify them, affecting policies, or modifying forms. In such circumstances, neighbourhood level planning movement turns into an exertion in forming or surrounding the networks of relations through which individuals give value and bring activities regarding the spaces with which they have some connection. Such framing work is a push to rethink the structure.

“For a small group of thoughtful and committed people to change the world, they must believe that change is possible. They must be ready to act the moment a stuck system becomes liquid. They will only be effective if they display collective intelligence. Finally, they must live in a small world.”(Hassan, 2005)

The civic groups’ vision and work through their bottom-up participatory initiatives thereby functions by the above principle by playing the role of effective intermediaries. They from within their small world in an organise and conceptualize initiatives that induce change and then through connect to the citizen and their needs on every level, as different groups address issues affecting different aspects of the void. Through the myriad ways of their approaches and initiatives, their proactive nature while working towards making better urban local environments, is simultaneously connecting the system with the citizen.

As demonstrated in the course of the thesis, in the past, there has been a tendency to respond to the void that exists between citizens and state institutions in one of two ways.

On the one hand, attention has been made to strengthening the processes of participation – that is the ways in which disadvantaged citizens exercise voice through new forms of inclusion, consultation and/or mobilisation designed to inform and to influence larger institutions and policies.

On the other hand, growing attention has been paid to how to strengthen the accountability and responsiveness of these institutions and policies through changes in institutional design and a focus on the enabling structures for good governance.

Each perspective has often perceived the other as inadequate, with one perspective warning that consultation without attention to addressing the institutional system, will lead to generating interest but without the necessary mobilization energy for implementation. Whereas the other perspective arguing that reform of political institutions without attention to inclusion and consultation of citizens, will only reinforce the status quo. Increasingly, however, with the nature of civic groups presented, the importance of working on both sides of the equation is highlighted. As concerns about good urban governance and governmental responsiveness grow, questions about the capacity of citizens to engage and make demands on the state come to the fore.

There is growing consensus that the way forward is directed with focus on both a more active and engaged civil society which can express demands of the citizenry and a more responsive and effective state which can secure the delivery of needed public services. At the heart of the new consensus of strong state and strong civil society are the need to develop both participatory democracy and responsive government as ‘mutually reinforcing and supportive’ (Cornwall, Gaventa, 2001A, p.32)

The key to bridging the void thereby lies in an ideal concoction of top-down and bottom-up processes of participation as sought out by the civic groups acting as intermediaries hold the clue to impacting transformative action to the system. Though this may not be applicable to all situations, such thinking paves way for the understanding that the solution is probably to achieve a deliberative balance between top-down planning and bottom-up participatory planning. The ideal approach to dissolving the void is perhaps in a deliberative form of dynamic merging similar to what is undertaken by the civic groups in India at large, research by addressing the void by a piece-meal approach as narrated in the course of the research . The strategy for the way ahead should entail empowering local governments and communities and promoting

broad-based grassroots in the mobilization of resources, knowledge and experience with a view to stimulating initiatives at all levels of society.

Thus, in accordance with the hypothesis the deliberate efforts made by the civic groups to empower the citizens and catalyse their democratic involvement in planning processes through facilitating as an alternative source for the rendering of services meant for urban local bodies, not by substitution but rather by complementing its duties. The work of such civic groups thereby hold great value and exhibit the first step towards affecting the bridging of the void in the planning system positively, in the making of a socially sustainable urban future, in India.

## 7. Resources

### Annexes(Articles, Questionnaire)

#### Questionnaire:

#### 1. Answered by Ms. Vinaya Mani, Urban Researcher at JANA USP, Bangalore:

##### Questions:

- *As an organization, what is your motivation to seek public participation in a project?*

The organization was formed for the sole reason of citizen welfare by coming up with measures to protect citizen rights, which we are often deprived of due to the unlikely events of negligence, corruption and lack of unified authority. The same being the cause, the organization works for public welfare.

- *On which projects have you sought out for maximum involvement through public participation?*

Tender SURE, the road design project in Bangalore sets standards for urban roads promoting better pedestrian movement and streamlined traffic.

- *What the steps do you usually follow in your organization for a project? At what stage/stages of the project at hand, do you usually involve the public?*

At the study/conceptual stage where you find the best fit for the situation in hand, we involve the public and their needs. We also try and foresee the larger effect the design could have on the city and its people in the years to come.

- *Are the citizens as participants, willing to help with the implementation of the process and not just aid with the initial representation for information?*

The participants from the citizen group would be activists or volunteers who would help in data sourcing at different times of a project.

- *Is every participant given the opportunity to speak and be heard?*

Yes. As an organization we are open to both the positive and the negative inputs from the public.

- *What are the costs and benefits (time and resources devoted in comparison to the perceived impact of the process) for citizens and for organisers?*

Better infrastructure is the benefit for both the citizens and the organizers who are also the citizens. The costs for the organization are the time and resource it takes to put the project through, which we also see as a part of the process.

- *Was what that had been promised to the citizens while participation realised exactly the same, in any project or did it evolve into a new form during execution?*

The road designs did create the desired effect on the urban roads. Whereas a few undesired were learnt from and corrected in the future projects.

- *Did the process have an impact on the political system?*

The bodies have become more open towards implementation of such infrastructure projects for various parts of the state.

- *What do citizens perceive of the process? Do they develop feelings of ownership for the process and the outcome?*

They develop a sense of ownership towards the outcome than the process as they are the direct users. The process largely remains unaware of.

- *Did an executed project, continue to be maintained by the citizens themselves, after your contribution in the conception and execution is over?*

Oh yes! Certain parts of the roads are taken care of by the abutting property owners like maintaining the landscape, desisting encroachment or maintaining cleanliness as they develop the sense of ownership. This is the case with any public project whether it is government driven or community driven where you provide them with some element to connect back to.

- *Do you see a need for community initiatives that seek to promote change need to adopt the strategy of a social movement allying with others transversally?*

Most community initiatives lose their voice among the refrainers. Therefore I feel it's necessary to develop a cogent strategy to get the intent to ground, partnering the other stakeholders.

- *Does participation change people's attitude to democratic processes? What do they learn about planning for our local environments?*

A lot of micro level urban design projects are purely driven by the citizens and has achieved success to the best of their intent. But the costs of the process are high enough to retain the distrust in the system in spite of the success. On the flipside, when it is government driven, it is considered as an entitlement (which it is).

Though the outcome is evident, the process always remains hidden and there is very little understanding about planning local environment. It's necessary for the system to be transparent enough to let know the citizens of their entitlements and responsibilities.

- *Do discussions within the participation inform wider public debate? What are your methods of connecting to a larger audience through media?*

At certain times they do invoke queries from the public side which are carried through newspaper and TV media and are answered through press meets.

- *Are politicians and public officials responsive? Are the outcomes of the participation reflected in their planning justifications and actions?*

Yes. Most projects involve politicians and the members of the urban local bodies. The outcome is also built on the inputs from them and vice versa.

- *As organisers of the participation, what have you learned about the methods you have used, in hindsight of your projects?*

In the hindsight of the projects I have learned to stay true to my intent and also to mend my ways for the good.

- *How do such initiatives relate to the formal legal requirements which underlie so much of government activity?*

Most public project is done through a longer span of time, during which the process goes back and forth through the collaborative bodies for the best.

- *Do you face the need to operate like any other 'private' operator, to seek permits for planning, environmental health, and health and safety requirements, or do they evolve different ways of relating to such regulation?*

Predominantly yes. We do face the need.

**Rate from 1 to 10:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The degree of openness of the citizens to participate on a project               | : | 6 |
| 2. The degree of distrust that the citizens have on the governance system           | : | 9 |
| 3. The degree of openness of the governments to collaborate on a project            | : | 5 |
| 4. The degree of corruption that negatively affects your work process               | : | 6 |
| 5. The level of effectiveness of the urban local bodies in discharging their duties | : | 8 |

**2. As answered by Mr. Raj Cherubal, from Chennai City Connect**

**Questions:**

- *As an organization, what is your motivation to seek public participation in a project?*

Usually to get input and build support for a project since funding for implementation of ideas etc. is done by Corporation or some other public agency. Also project cannot be implemented properly without the consent of the citizens in the neighbourhood.

- *On which projects have you sought out for maximum involvement through public participation?*

Big projects like the T Nagar Pedestrianisation project, K K Nagar cycle track project, etc. Corporation of Chennai conducted many participatory meetings. These will require big changes on the ground.

- *What the steps do you usually follow in your organization for a project? At what stage/stages of the project at hand, do you usually involve the public?*

We usually rely on the public agency to do the participatory meetings since they are officially authorised to deal with civic issues. As an independent organization we have conducted seminars, interaction with media to communicate with public. Usually in small projects the public is consulted in the middle or end. But in bigger projects after the concepts and renderings are ready to show public.

- *Do participants know why participation is taking place, prior to their involvement?*

Public agencies have a mechanism to call for such meetings. Since they conduct these meetings for other projects they advertise in paper, and/or use local network of resident welfare orgs, shopkeepers associations etc. to invite public.

- *Are the citizens as participants, willing to help with the implementation of the process and not just aid with the initial representation for information?*

Sometimes. While everyone is eager to help it is usually not realistic since the project usually happens in fits and starts, has delays, stops and then after much delays starts again, etc. So the people involved in following up and monitoring need a lot of stamina, time, and commitment. All of this is not realistically possible from ordinary citizens. Citizens in some areas where they are more organised or has some local leadership do involve in smaller, immediate projects.

- *What are the processes/participation techniques applied to ignite effective participation?*

Indian cities don't have the capacity to engage in a systematic manner, over a long period of time. Officials change, plans change etc. So follow ups etc. are very difficult. So most of the participation is when either the project is announced, or when a project has public resistance during implementation and hence requires participation and resolution.

- *Is every participant given the opportunity to speak and be heard?*

Usually the meetings are open. Sometimes the public is aware of the issues and contribute. But sometimes the loudest people end up speaking and making statements. It depends. Competence of the public cannot be exaggerated. Some of these projects are complex.

- *What are the costs and benefits (time and resources devoted in comparison to the perceived impact of the process) for citizens and for organisers?*

It is always a good idea to keep the impacted citizens part of the process from start to finish. But sometimes due to lack of understanding of the principles involved, or greater issues to be considered, some local citizens can even recommend bad ideas. So, not all participation results in good decisions. Sometimes local interests can trump greater and more valuable objectives. But in general it is good to have citizens on board.

- *Was what that had been promised to the citizens while participation realised exactly the same, in any project or did it evolve into a new form during execution?*

It usually evolves. Also since quality of execution etc. is not up to the mark, what is shown cannot be delivered as promised. But sometimes it is possible.

- *Did the process have an impact on the political system?*

Good projects, despite initial resistance, do change mindset. When people see the benefit after or during the implementation, and when the public realise the predicted bad effects did not occur, then support grows. Sometimes it can go in the opposite direction where there is good initial support, but then public or some people change their mind and start resisting.

- *What do citizens perceive of the process? Do they develop feelings of ownership for the process and the outcome?*

Usually yes. There are usually some strong voices in each neighbourhood who take active role in their areas. If they are on board it helps.

- *Are the citizens when coming forth to participate aware of a method to seek the accountability through the implementation of the project?*

Not entirely because these are still murky in India. There are the standard actors like public agency, contractor, some NGO who is developing or supporting the ideas, etc. But there are lot of the process that is not clear to the public especially when projects take a lot of time to implement.

- *Did an executed project, continue to be maintained by the citizens themselves, after your contribution in the conception and execution is over?*

Sometimes. Here too like implementation it takes the capital and operating costs of public agencies to make this a reality. Following up with all this is not easy with constant changes in the system. There are some schemes where public can take over and maintain etc. But I don't think rest have done too well since the formal structures required for smooth functioning does not exist.

- *Do you see a need for community initiatives that seek to promote change need to adopt the strategy of a social movement allying with others transversally?*

Community participation is always good. But how much average citizens can participate, monitor, follow up etc. should not be exaggerated. There are limits to their time, ability, commitment, etc.

- *Does participation change people's attitude to democratic processes? What do they learn about planning for our local environments?*

Surely it helps. But it can also make them cynical when things don't happen the way it was promised. Formal systems need to be in place and a more robust mechanism needs to be in place to make all this reality.

- *Do discussions within the participation inform wider public debate? What are your methods of connecting to a larger audience through media?*

Surely it does. Media is always a good ally in spreading ideas. But it takes constant and long term engagement with ideas, data, case studies, ready quotes on relevant issues, well done reports with data, pics, graphs etc. that media finds exciting to report on, etc. Not to mention seminars, workshops, etc.

- *What is your approach to being financially resilient as an organization?*

Our funds requirements are small so that is not much of an issue.

- *How are tensions between the practical delivery of a service/product and the wider role of awareness building, capacity building and deliberation managed?*

We rely on public agencies to engage the public. We don't have the capacity to do this ourselves and it is not our responsibility as we are not public agencies. But we use media, social media etc. to communicate beyond seminars etc.

- *Are politicians and public officials responsive? Are the outcomes of the participation reflected in their planning justifications and actions?*

Most of the time. They too are looking for exciting and useful projects. Current systems are only capable of giving them outdated or poor ideas and projects. So they are more than happy to work with us.

- *As organisers of the participation, what have you learned about the methods you have used, in hindsight of your projects?*

Earlier you get key citizens involved the better. But you also need media and other venues to push for better principles and sustainable ideas.

- *How do such initiatives relate to the formal legal requirements which underlie so much of government activity?*

Most of our projects are routine things advanced cities do regularly. Just because Indian cities have no capacity these are seen as new ideas and path-breaking. So, all projects are within the legal framework.

- *Do you face the need to operate like any other 'private' operator, to seek permits for planning, environmental health, and health and safety requirements, or do they evolve different ways of relating to such regulation?*

We spend a lot of time persuading officials and then persuading public. That is a lot of effort. Also we help one agency get permissions etc. from other agencies since they sometimes don't talk to each other regularly. We help set up processes and improve them to be able to deliver these projects. Other key permissions etc. are done by public agencies.

#### **Rate from 1 to 10:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The degree of openness of the citizens to participate on a project               | : | 8 |
| 2. The degree of distrust that the citizens have on the governance system           | : | 3 |
| 3. The degree of openness of the governments to collaborate on a project            | : | 5 |
| 4. The degree of corruption that negatively affects your work process               | : | 5 |
| 5. The level of effectiveness of the urban local bodies in discharging their duties | : | 3 |

#### *List of Interviewees:*

- Vidya Mohankumar, Founder at Urban Design Collective(UDC): On participatory initiatives undertaken in UDC
- Daniel, Chennai City Connect(CCC): On participatory initiatives undertaken in CCC
- Dr,V.Suresh, General Secretary at People's Union for Civil Liberties(PUCL): On the state of the urban planning system
- Jayaram Venkatesan, Convenor at Arappor lyakkam: On conducting relief measures and a social audit as base for participation in planning, with the case of Chennai floods
- Bharath Jairaj, Legal Co-ordinator at Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group: On the lack of public participation in the preparation of the Second Masterplan for Chennai

#### *List of Newspapers References:*

- i. The Hindu
- ii. The Indian Express
- iii. The Times of India
- iv. The Bangalore Mirror
- v. Citizen Matters

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#### **Annexure 1- Population Statistics of India, 2016**

##### **Population of India (2016 and historical)**

Year	Population	Yearly % Change	Yearly Change	Migrants (net)	Median Age	Fertility Rate	Density (P/Km <sup>2</sup> )	Urban Pop %	Urban Population	Country's Share of World Pop	World Population	India Global Rank
2016	1,326,801,576	1.2 %	15,751,049	-377,200	26.9	2.45	446	32.4 %	429,802,441	17.85 %	7,432,663,275	2
2015	1,311,050,527	1.27 %	16,013,205	-519,600	27	2.48	441	32 %	419,938,867	18.92 %	7,349,472,099	2
2010	1,230,984,504	1.47 %	17,331,642	-565,900	25	2.8	414	30.3 %	372,901,884	18.88 %	6,929,725,043	2
2005	1,144,326,293	1.67 %	18,169,044	-441,300	24	3.14	385	28.8 %	329,516,783	18.68 %	6,519,635,850	2
2000	1,053,481,072	1.86 %	18,521,218	-143,400	23	3.48	354	27.4 %	288,365,219	18.37 %	6,126,622,121	2
1995	960,874,982	1.99 %	18,054,641	-135,600	22	3.83	323	26.5 %	254,314,016	18.1 %	5,735,123,084	2
1990	870,601,776	2.17 %	17,703,330	9,000	21	4.27	293	25.5 %	221,979,229	17.94 %	5,309,667,699	2
1985	782,085,127	2.32 %	16,971,076	96,600	21	4.68	263	24.3 %	190,338,784	17.62 %	4,852,540,569	2
1980	697,229,745	2.32 %	15,105,221	226,400	20	4.97	235	23.2 %	161,445,950	17.17 %	4,439,632,465	2
1975	621,703,641	2.33 %	13,552,083	423,700	20	5.41	209	21.3 %	132,732,329	16.88 %	4,061,399,228	2
1970	553,943,226	2.16 %	11,204,591	-49,000	19	5.72	186	19.8 %	109,709,315	16.67 %	3,682,487,691	2
1965	497,920,270	2.06 %	9,651,679	-21,100	21	5.9	138	14.4 %	71,906,548	16.5 %	3,322,495,121	2
1960	449,661,874	1.9 %	8,076,336	-800	20	5.9	151	17.9 %	80,586,315	16.3 %	3,018,343,828	2
1955	409,280,196	1.69 %	6,590,998	-21,100	21	5.9	138	17.6 %	71,906,548	16.21 %	2,758,314,525	2

Source: **Worldometers** ([www.Worldometers.info](http://www.Worldometers.info))

Elaboration of data by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*. (Medium-fertility variant).

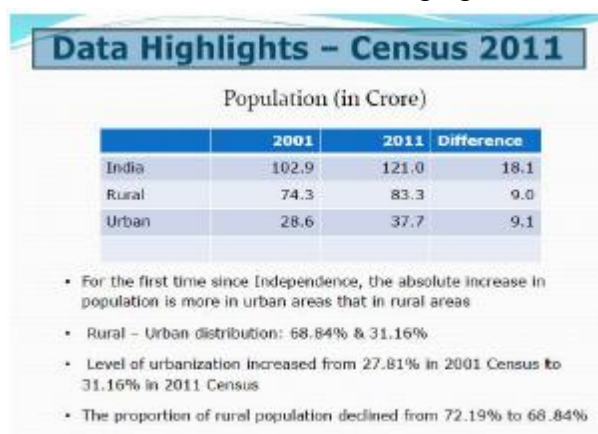
## India Population Forecast

Year	Population	Yearly % Change	Yearly Change	Migrants (net)	Median Age	Fertility Rate	Density (P/Km <sup>2</sup> )	Urban Pop %	Urban Population	Country's Share of World Pop	World Population	India Global Rank
2020	1,388,858,917	1.16 %	15,561,678	-377,200	28	2.34	467	33.9 %	470,726,086	18.9 %	7,758,156,792	2
2025	1,461,625,234	1.03 %	14,553,263	-371,700	30	2.23	492	36 %	525,459,048	18.84 %	8,141,661,007	1
2030	1,527,657,988	0.89 %	13,206,551	-369,500	31	2.14	514	38.2 %	583,038,483	18.76 %	8,500,766,052	1
2035	1,585,349,852	0.74 %	11,538,373	-352,000	33	2.06	533	40.5 %	642,296,787	18.65 %	8,838,907,877	1
2040	1,633,727,672	0.6 %	9,675,564	-352,100	34	1.99	550	42.9 %	701,357,654	18.48 %	9,157,233,976	1
2045	1,673,618,767	0.48 %	7,978,219	-352,300	36	1.94	563	45.3 %	758,961,289	18.28 %	9,453,891,780	1
2050	1,705,332,544	0.38 %	6,342,755	-362,200	37	1.89	574	47.8 %	814,398,506	18.04 %	9,725,147,994	1

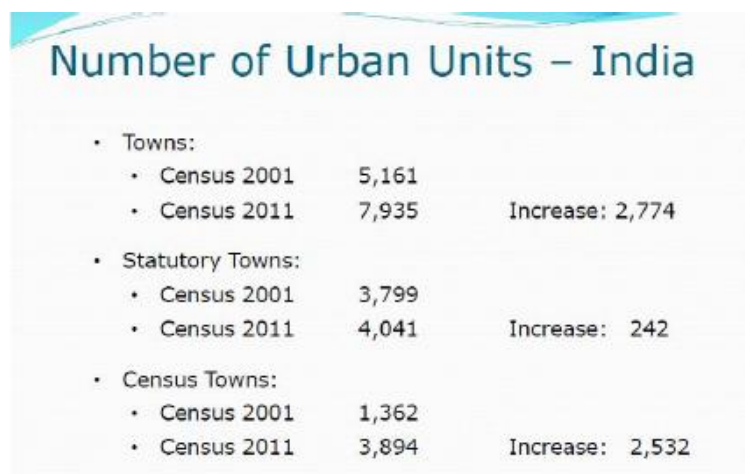
Source: **Worldometers** ([www.Worldometers.info](http://www.Worldometers.info))

Elaboration of data by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*, (Medium-fertility variant).

## Annexure 2- Census 2011 Highlights



Source : Census of India 2011

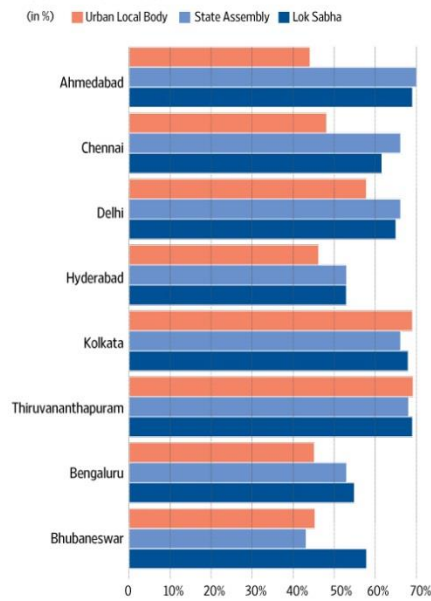


Source : Census of India 2011

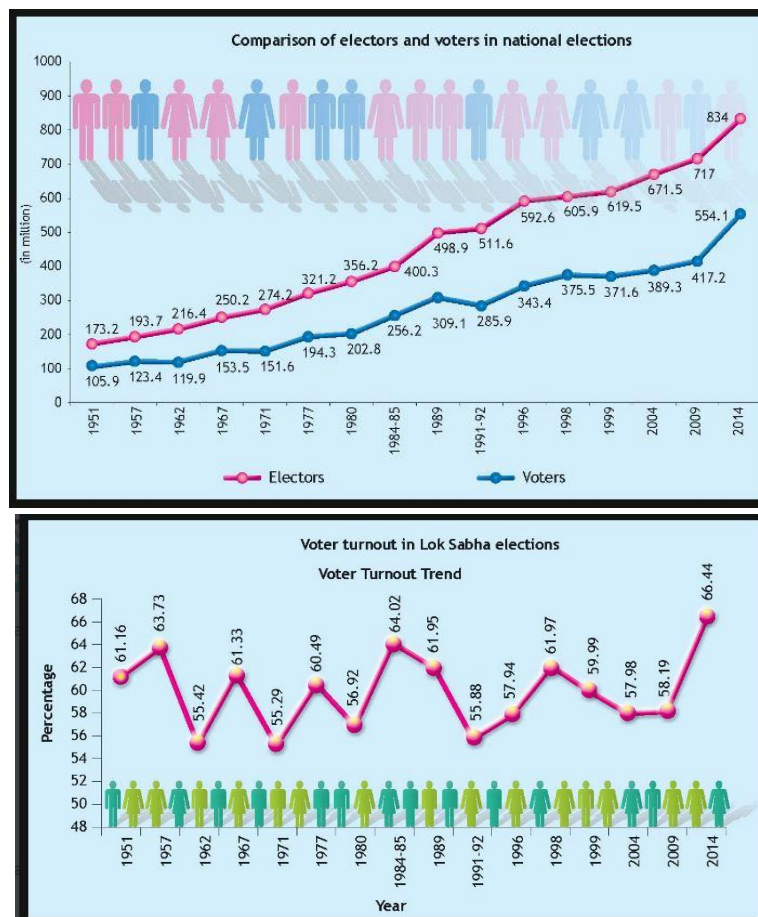
## Annexure 3 – Voter Turnout Statistics

### VOTER TURN-OUT

(in %)

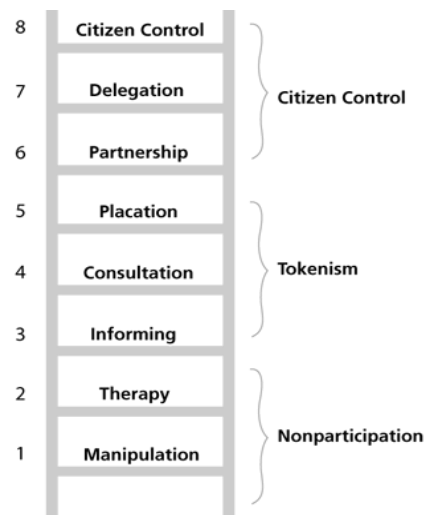


Source: Janaagraha, 2014



Source: <http://ecisveep.nic.in/>

### Annexure 4- Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

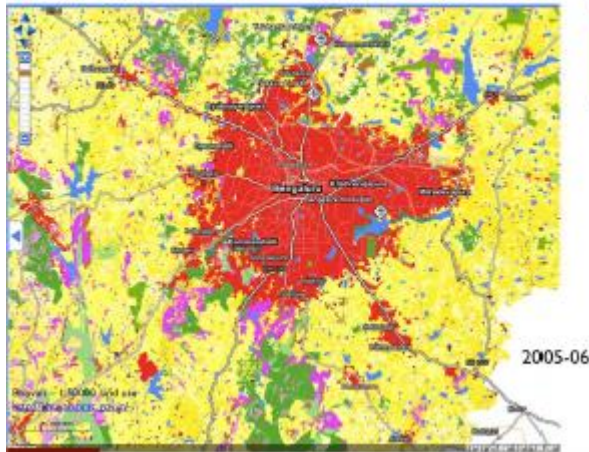


**Annexure 5- Location of Bangalore and Chennai**

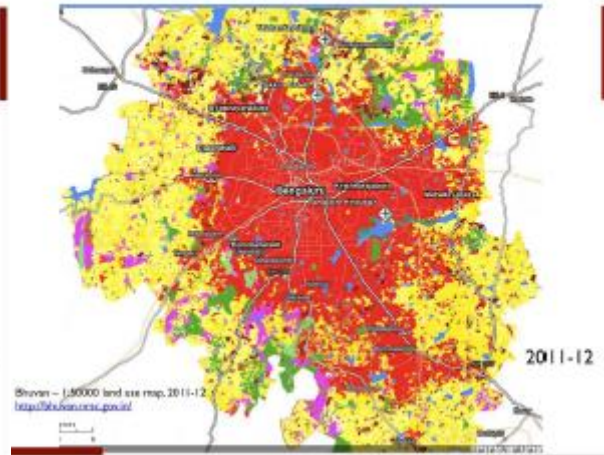


**Annexure 6- Bangalore Urban Growth**

Bengaluru City urban landscape 2005-06

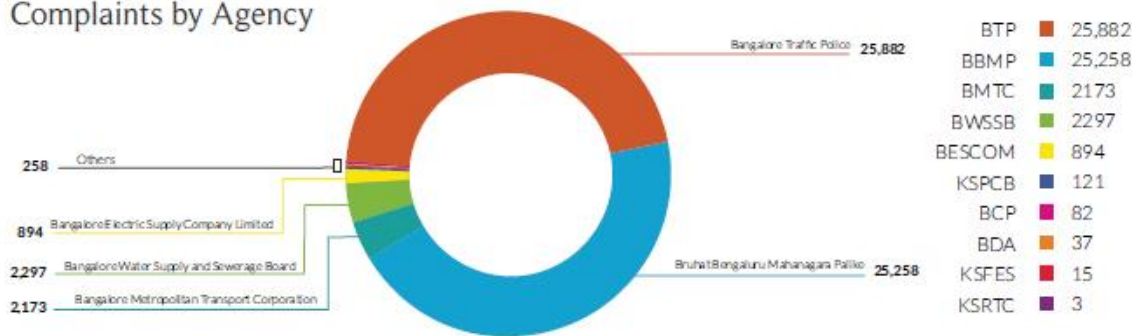


Bengaluru City urban landscape 2011-12

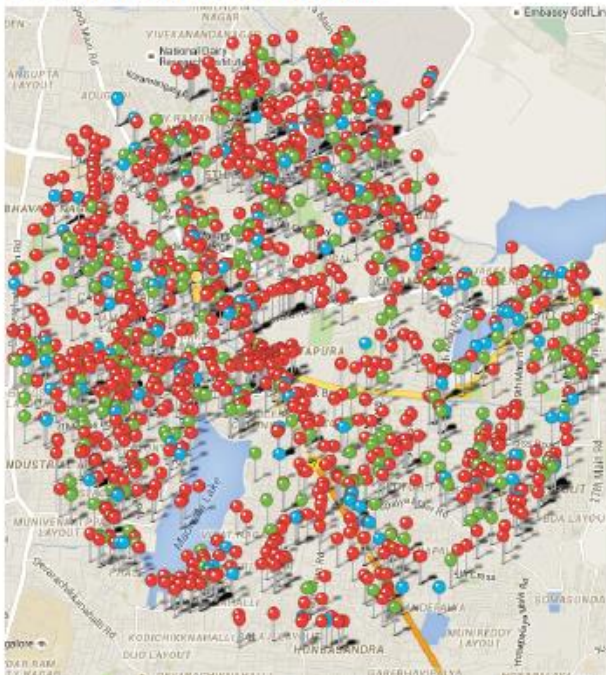


Annexure 6- Statistics of ichangemycity portal

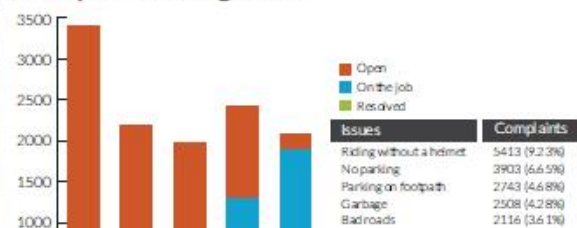
### Complaints by Agency



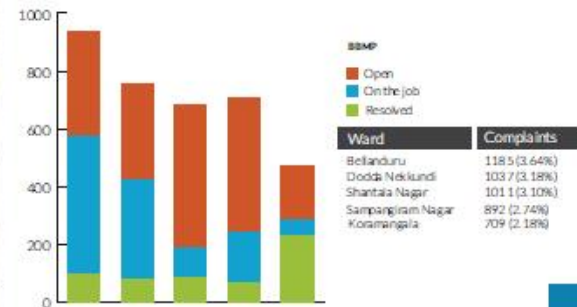
### Location map of complaints



### Complaint categories



### Ward wise data



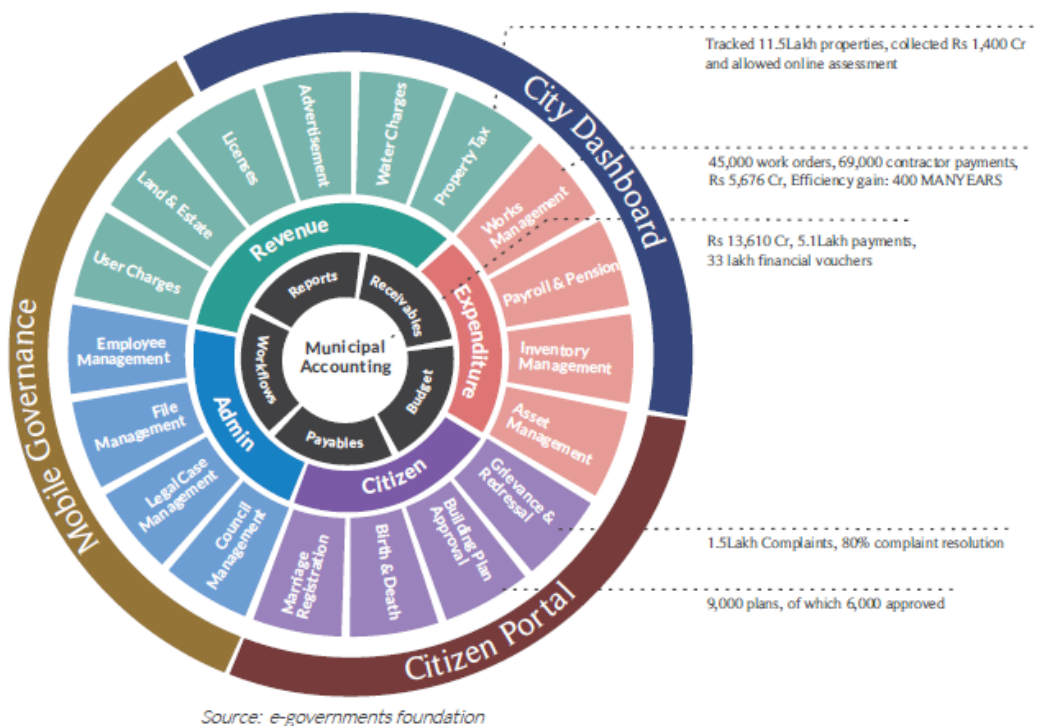
Source: ASICS Report

Annexure 7- Statistics of Chennai e-government portal

To provide efficient services to citizens, administrators and elected representatives, the Corporation of Chennai opted implemented an integrated web-based ERP that would cater to all its departments. The implementation of the eMunicipal ERP was undertaken with the help of eGovernments Foundation in 2009.

The objectives of the implementation included:

- i. Re-engineering processes for better service delivery to the beneficiaries.
- ii. Shift from process accountability to productivity accountability and from transactional to transformative governance.
- iii. Improvement of administrative processes by cutting cost and managing performance.
- iv. Empowering officials and decision makers with accurate information using the data captured.
- v. Provision of integrated and simplified services to citizens with single-window delivery for services and information.



Source: ASICS Report

## Annexure 8- Smart City Solutions



Source: <http://smartcities.gov.in/>

## 7.2 Bibliography

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## 7.3 Online Resources

Repository for European civic organizations working towards participation: <http://www.citizensforeurope.eu/organizations>  
Current Population statistics based on United Nations data: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/india-population/>

For data on voter turnout in by Election Commission of India: <http://ecisveep.nic.in/>

For the entire details of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act: <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend74.htm>

The Portal of the Government of India: <https://www.mygov.in>

For Data on the Digital India, Smart Cities and Swachh Bharat mission launched by the government of India:

<http://www.digitalindia.gov.in/>

<http://smartcities.gov.in/>

<https://swachhbharat.mygov.in/>

For data on the Smart Cities Challenge: <http://blog.fieldsofview.in/2015/10/1038/>

For a repository of non-profit organizations working in India: <https://www.dasra.org>

For data on civic groups currently in practice in India as mentioned:

<http://www.hunnarshala.org/>

<https://www.cag.org.in/>

<http://pucl.net/>

<http://pria.org/>

<https://www.itdp.org/>  
<http://iihs.co.in/about/>  
<http://pukar.org.in/>  
<http://www.yuvaindia.org/>  
<http://www.prsindia.org/aboutus/what-we-do/>  
<http://urespect.org/homepagenew/>

Links to the official websites of the referenced civic groups of study

<http://www.janaagraha.org/>  
<http://www.janausp.org/aboutus.php>  
<http://www.mod.org.in/>  
<http://urbandesigncollective.org/>  
<http://chennaicityconnect.com/>  
<http://nextbengaluru.com/>

## On Civic Groups & Bottom-Up Participatory Initiatives In India

The transformative potential of civic groups enabling bottom-up participatory initiatives to address the void in the urban planning culture in India

### **Abstract**

India is currently a nation of rapid urbanization. There exists a divide between the rate of urbanization and the urban planning culture of India, resulting in cities that are not planned adequately. This divide is manifested as a void between planning and execution of urban planning ideas, through a weak connected system between the various tiers of government and especially the local government, which is the primary responsible body for urban planning endeavours and the citizens at the receiving end.

There are numerous citizen run organisations currently working on the rendering of planning and allied services such as urban mapping and documentation, citizen awareness, community mobilization etc.; functioning as a third sector, beyond the public and private sector

The thesis argues that the existing work of these civic groups through the application of bottom-up participatory initiatives in urban areas affects the void within the planning culture and that they attempt to contribute to its overall better functioning across various areas within the wide spectrum of Urban Planning. The research intends to be starting point to the query on whether civic groups can function as effective intermediaries between the various tiers of government and the citizens, and contribute to the making of a democratic participatory process with respect to the urban planning system.

### **Keywords:**

Bottom-up, Participation, Civic Groups, India, Planning system, Governance.

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