

B.PAC



Let's Be Better

Agenda for Bengaluru

Bangalore Political Action Committee

The **Agenda for Bengaluru** is a set of initiatives, across the spectrum of government and society, which B.PAC believes will enhance the quality of life for all citizens in Bengaluru. As the objectives are reached, or based on review from time to time, B.PAC may include new initiatives that reflect the changing needs of the city.

(a) **Proper governance structure for the city** – the policy, planning and administrative efforts of government are inter-twined, as a result of which there is inadequate clarity of roles and responsibilities of the BBMP, state government and Parliament for the city. Reforms and policies that would have greatly improved the quality of life in the city are mandated by the 74th Amendment, the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, and the BBMP Act, but are not being fully implemented.

Therefore, the focus of B.PAC is:-

1. **SEPARATION OF PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION** - Create a statutory planning approach for all aspects of economic and social development, through the formation of a regional planning authority for Bengaluru city.
 2. **ACCOUNTABLE CITY GOVERNMENT** - Establish a meaningful term of office for the Mayor of the city, the Corporation Commissioner and key civic officials, such that they have adequate time to develop a vision for the city and implement it. Ensure that the mandates of the 74th Amendment, and the recommendations of the Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee, are implemented.
 3. **SPECIAL STATUTE FOR BENGALURU** - Introduce legislation as proposed in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Governance Bill to strengthen public administration, to facilitate citizen participation in governance, and to enhance the powers of city government.
 4. **CITY GOVERNMENT AS AN IMPORTANT THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT** - All parastatals that provide civic services should be brought under a common authority for the city. Ensure that BBMP has capacity to administrate the areas of the city. Ensure that the key officials in the BBMP (and the parastatals, e.g. BWSSB, BMRTC, BESCO) are appointed in time so that there is adequate leadership to meet the city's needs for development. A municipal cadre should be established for the state, and officials in city government appointed from this cadre only.
 5. **EXPERTISE** - Appoint technical members in the Boards of the civic agencies, and technical advisory groups in each agency that bring in the expertise of private citizens into the regular functioning of service providers.
- (b) **Promoting citizen inclusion in governance** – The city is growing in size every day, and the scale of the problems we face is also increasing. Also, there is a growing disconnect between citizens and governance. To address these deficits, B.PAC will push for formal inclusion of citizens in public decision-making and in solving problems at the neighbourhood levels.

This can be done by:

1. Appointing citizens with necessary expertise in tackling urban problems as nominated corporates in BBMP.
2. Including citizen experts in each of the Standing Committees of BBMP.
3. Forming ward committees in each neighbourhood, thereby involving citizens in routine works at the ward level.

(c) Strengthening the finances of the local body and other city agencies – Bengaluru faces a serious shortage of finances to keep itself strong in infrastructure, economic activity and public services. Given the importance of the city to the economy of the state, it is important that we should keep this ‘engine’ of the state running smoothly. A number of proposals for increasing revenue are needed. For instance:

1. The profession tax collected in the city should be earmarked by the State government for the city.
2. 50% of the stamp duties collected on property transactions in BBMP limits should be given to the city.
3. 50% of the road tax collected in the BBMP limits should be given to the city.

Such funds can be given either to BBMP, or to the BDA, for infrastructure development. The principle of such use of funds can be applied in all cities in the state, and they would all benefit from the infusion of funds.

(d) Ensuring accountability of civic agencies – To most citizens, it is not clear what the civic agencies are doing, or how well they are doing it. It is important to set measures of success for each of the agencies, and to also have public disclosure of their work, whether in small projects or at the level of achieving an overall vision for the city.

B.PAC will work for:

1. Public disclosure of expenditure on all projects.
2. Public information on all tenders for works executed in the city.
3. Regular progress reports on all projects.
4. Performance audits of projects undertaken by the officials of BBMP and other parastatals, with scope for citizen feedback.
5. CAG audit of the municipal body each year.
6. A public accounts committee to be created in BBMP to provide continuous improvement in standards for project execution.

(e) Developing strong infrastructure – We need world class infrastructure, if we are to have a world class city. At the moment there are serious deficits in physical infrastructure, knowledge infrastructure, social infrastructure and financial infrastructure, and we must overcome these swiftly. A comprehensive proposal for infrastructure development across all sectors has been drawn up by the Karnataka Information Technology and Communication (ICT) Group, which was presented to the government on January 8, 2013. B.PAC will advocate that each piece of this proposal be taken up by the government and instituted over the next 10 years.

(f) Strengthening the foundations of urban politics -

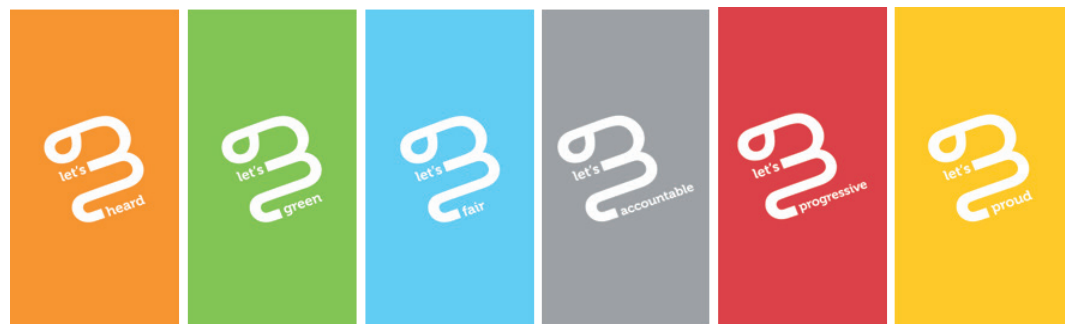
- 1. STRENGTHENING URBAN REPRESENTATION** - Despite the growing urbanisation in the country, the number of seats in State legislatures and Parliament from urban areas has not grown. Explore legal and political processes to make representations that continuously reflect changing demographic trends.
- 2. CAMPAIGN FINANCE** - The permissible amounts of expenditure for election campaigns is currently too low, and needs to be set realistically. Also, regulation of campaign expenditure is weak. Take up necessary interventions in courts as well as with the Election Commission to set realistic limits for expenditure, and ensure that these are regulated well, so that the public gets a good view of all candidates before Election Day.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

B.PAC's advocacy of its objectives will be greatly strengthened if large numbers of people in the city are also supportive of it. To this end, B.PAC will work to develop and maintain a public outreach program that provides a steady stream of material to the public to educate them about its objectives and the progress that remains to be made to achieve them.

- A network of supportive citizens, known as the Friends of B.PAC, will be formed to extend the advocacy of B.PAC into different parts of the city, and in different fora.
- The B.PAC website will register those who are similarly keen on reforms in the city, and send them regular updates of the work B.PAC is doing, along with suggestions on how they can be co-advocates with us in furthering the Agenda for Bengaluru.
- B.PAC will partner with organisations engaged in similar work to promote reforms in the city, and take up specific initiatives.
- B.PAC will maintain a media outreach program by which material for the media is specifically prepared and distributed. B.PAC members, in their personal appearances in the media, will also take up the advocacy of the Agenda for Bengaluru.

B.PAC Values



Contact Details:

No. 4/6, Ground Floor, Millers Road,
Opp. Vikram Hospital, Bengaluru - 560052.
Email : forbengalure@bpac.in
Website : www.bpac.in
Tel: +91-80-41521797