



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

From its inception as a movement that focused on people's participation in public governance, Janaagraha has evolved into a robust institution for Citizenship and Democracy.

Janaagraha is a not-for-profit institution started in December 2001 by Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan. Janaagraha works on issues related to public governance in urban India. The organization is guided by the belief that India's democratic challenges need a 'systems' based approach and not stop gap solutions that are the usual norm. These changes are possible only through constructive engagement of all stakeholders within and outside the government. Janaagraha is a responsible partner to such engagements, whenever these opportunities arise.

Core Values

Positivity: To believe that real change is possible, if everyone did his or her bit.

Belief in the power of the Community: To recognize that the central means of all action is a collective one. From an inclusive community comes collective strength, but also the building of long-term bonds that will shape our society."

Constructive Engagement: To engage (with individuals, communities and organizations) in the spirit of partnership and give the benefit of doubt until proven otherwise.

Professionalism: To deliver on individual roles and responsibilities at the highest degree of commitment and capability at all times.



*Ms Swati and Mr Ramesh Ramanathan,
Founders, Janaagraha*

Moral Compass: To consistently be guided in all actions by the principle of moral truth and be concerned with not just the ends but the means as well.

Compassion: To empathize with and support those in real need and carry out one's responsibilities in building a caring and just society.

Core Purpose

To improve the quality of life for all, by improving the quality of public governance.

Vision: To fundamentally transform the trajectory of our country, in 20 years.

Core Programmes

Research

Underlying our research activities is the conviction that there is no activism without information. Our research programme at Janaagraha is focused on three areas - Political and Social Research, Economic Research and Legal Research. Our mission is to combine academic rigour with grassroots research to provide an informed foundation upon which to act. We are developing a research centre on urban Governance at Janaagraha: the Civic Literacy Index, which measures people's awareness of civic affairs, will be the first key project.

Training

Based on the belief that each individual can play a role in our democracy, the CAP was created to give citizens the knowledge, motivation and tools necessary to participate in the political process/governance of their city. The programme is conducted by trained facilitators with small groups of participants.

Through multimedia presentations, participants learn about the structure of the union, state and local governments, the infrastructure of service providers and the strengths and challenges of our democracy. Role-playing and team and individual exercises reinforce key concepts.

The final phase of the CAP introduces tools and methods for community engagement that enable individuals to contribute to the quality of life in their community. Participants become part of a growing network of committed citizens who feel a sense of ownership towards their city.

Advocacy

Janaagraha's model of change also leverages Advocacy as a medium to bring about long-term sustainable change. Janaagraha firmly believes that it is imperative to change policies and legislations

in order to bring about lasting changes in urban governance. The Advocacy programme involves extensive background research, preparing case studies, facilitating policy discussions and seminars, and advocating the REED reform framework at local, state and national levels.

The first part, R stands for REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE. We cannot view the problems of the city in isolation. The city is part of a larger region and there are many inter connections. For example, when you have an international airport outside the city it's going to impact traffic and transport in the entire region. We need a regional view for all our planning and resource requirements. Janaagraha seeks to sensitize the citizens and government to taking a regional perspective.

The second part of our systems approach is E which stands for EMPOWERING GOVERNMENTS AND CITIZENS. Inside any region there are many local governments - municipalities and panchayats. Janaagraha actively advocates decentralization, devolution of functions and the restructuring of local bodies so that our local governments are EMPOWERed to solve the problems in our cities. We also work towards EMPOWERing citizens. We have been advocating a law for citizen participation at the level of the Union Government which gives citizens a formal voice in local decision making. Today this is a mandatory reform in the largest mission for Urban India - JNNURM. We also EMPOWER citizens with knowledge and awareness about their role in the democratic process. Bal Janaagraha, Yuva Janaagraha and the training programs such as CAP are aimed at educating and motivating citizens to participate in their communities.

The third part of our systems approach is another E. This stands for ENABLING OUR CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENTS. In order for the municipalities to perform their functions effectively they need technology tools like GIS, skilled people, and so on.



Janaagraha is developing programmes to ENABLE the local governments with such skills and tools through workshops and training. Janaagraha also ENABLES citizens with platforms, skills and tools to participate effectively. We have piloted the Area Sabhas in 4 wards of Bangalore, created platforms like City Connect, and tools such as the Ward Infrastructure & Services Assessment (WISA) project.

The fourth part of our systems approach is D. This stands for direct accountability. If we only empowered and enabled the local governments we could be only decentralizing corruption. We need to make the governments accountable directly outward to the people so that there is transparency and participation in their functioning. Our PROOF programme works with the government to create processes for public disclosure of financial records and performance evaluations of urban governments.

Citizen Leadership Programmes

Bala Janaagraha

The Bala Janaagraha program is designed to create within our children, a strong moral and social compass that will guide them towards being responsible citizens in society. It seeks to equip children with the knowledge of how local governments operate and to make the students understand their role as future citizens in a democracy. Through a 'citizenship course' and structured activity-based projects, Bala Janaagraha also engages children in exploring civic issues directly related to their neighbourhoods. Its run in various schools across Bangalore.

Yuva Janaagraha

Janaagraha believes that the nation's youth have the immense potential to resolve the issues of the nation and therefore must be oriented to engage proactively. Yuva Janaagraha therefore aims to actively involve the country's youth in democracy. It is a programme aimed at colleges in Bangalore.

Community Leadership Programme

In the year 1992, the Parliament passed the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment, two key acts that effected decentralization of governance to the local level. While the 73rd Amendment institutionalized citizen participation in rural areas through Gram Sabhas, the 74th Amendment did not create a similar space for the urban citizenry. Janaagraha aims at filling this gap through the platform of Area Sabhas. Defined as the group of all registered voters living within the jurisdiction of a polling booth, Area Sabhas create a political space that connects the people to the decision making process, thereby deepening



the platform for citizen participation to the level of a ward.

Partner Programmes

WISA (Ward Infrastructure and Services Assessment)

Ward Infrastructure and Services Assessment (WISA) project is a unique initiative to assess an urban citizen's quality of life through the measure of local public goods delivery in a citizen-centric manner. This will be done through a ward level measurement of a set of infrastructure and service indicators that are objective, quantifiable and unchallengeable. Besides being a powerful tool providing valuable information to urban planners and decision makers, WISA will also facilitate a direct accountability of local administration and elected representatives to the urban citizens.

City Connect

Bangalore City Connect is the first of the City Connect chapters to be established in August 2007 as a registered trust with the Confederation of Indian Industry (Karnataka and Bangalore chapters) and Janaagraha as its founding members. This body includes the membership of prominent industry associations and citizen groups in Bangalore.

The agenda of the foundation is to address urban infrastructure issues. Traffic and transportation has been identified as the inaugural focus areas of Bangalore City Connect. City Connect has a formal arrangement with the Karnataka Government and its agencies (e.g. Bangalore Traffic Police, BDA, BBMP, BMTD) to take up traffic and transport-related projects under the Bangalore Traffic and Transport Initiative (BTTI). A few of the projects that have been initiated include the design of a Mobility Hub close to BIAL, model traffic junctions incorporating international best practices, traffic management on Bellary road, etc.