

Citizens to pay for BMP's 'generosity'

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THE Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) would spend Rs 85.5 crore per year for the new garbage contracts and this lavishness would be financed by property owners - by paying cess in addition to property tax. The solid waste management (SWM) cess that the civic body proposes to collect from property owners would be Rs 168 crore per year. And that is a conservative estimate. With increase in number of properties under Bruhat BMP, it could be much more.

The government amended Karnataka Municipal Corporation Rules in March 2004, to

GARBAGE CONTRACTS

facilitate collection of SWM cess on buildings and infrastructure cess on vehicles. Though the owners are required to file cess returns with BMP periodically, there seems to be little wisdom in spending from these accounts.

The civic body seems to have capitalised on Rule 19B(1) which says that BMP could entrust garbage management to contractors who would also collect the monthly cess. Though the contractors are more than happy about inflated service charges they are being paid, they resisted collection of cess from households. Apparently, they fear to face the public they serve

every month.

But the citizen groups and private agencies could defeat BMP's extravagance with public money. Rule 19B(2) says that if any other private agency or resident welfare associations take up management of garbage, such agency would also collect the cess.

Rates of MSW cess (in Rs) per month

Residential buildings

Plinth (Sq Ft)	Cess
Upto 1000	10
1001-3000	30
More than 3000	50

Other buildings

Plinth (Sq Ft)	Shops	Industries	Hotels, Chowtries & Hospitals
Upto 1000	50	100	300
1001-5000	100	200	500
More than 5000	200	300	600

- With about 7 lakh properties in city and at an average rate of Rs 200 monthly cess, BMP would collect Rs 168 crore. This money would be spent to pay the garbage contractors and for construction of landfill sites.
- Even if a building is exempt from property tax, it would not be exempt from cess. Such exempted buildings would have to pay service charges at 25 per cent of property tax otherwise payable.