

Amenities-starved locals see ray of hope

DH NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE: "If Greater Bangalore is going to get us drinking water, good roads and waste disposal systems, then it should happen." This is what residents of Bommanahalli City Municipal Council say about the Government's move to form Bruhat Bengalooru, by merging the seven CMCs, one TMC and 111 village areas with the existing Bangalore Mahanagara Palike.

Having suffered from lack of basic civic amenities for years now and witnessed the CMC's inability to deliver these services, residents now see a ray of hope in Greater Bangalore. So much so they are even ready to pay higher taxes for these services.

"I've no problem paying more tax. But we want decent civic amenities," says Shailaja, a teacher in a government primary school and a resident of Hulimavu.

Almost 80 per cent of the CMC area do not have motorable roads, and the entire populace in the CMC's jurisdiction depends on

borewell water. And there is no underground drainage system at all. Worse still, people even today use unhygienic soak pits (an alternative to underground drainage) and get it cleaned every three months manually by scavengers.

Worrisome

The residents sure are excited about the prospect of soon having these amenities once Greater Bangalore becomes a reality, but they

are bit worried too. "I hope Greater Bangalore will be planned well. It should not go the way of the CMC 'experiment', which failed to live up to people's expectations," Gopal Reddy, a local leader, points out.

Why do most areas have no basic amenities despite being thickly populated? "Nearly 70 per cent of the localities are revenue layouts (in other words, private layouts). The private land developers hardly provide any amenities. What they have done is to carve sites out of the land without forming layouts and allot them," explains Muralidhar, a councillor in Bommanahalli CMC.

water drains or road asphaltting, all projects just stop within BMP limits.

"Involve locals"

"Greater Bangalore is a great idea. But the Government should involve citizens, especially resident welfare associations, in planning and implementation. Only people living in the locality understand and, thus, can pinpoint problems."

JAWAHAR KAPILA

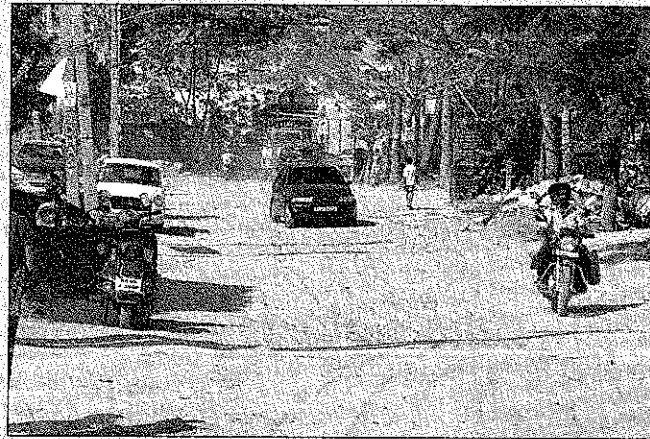
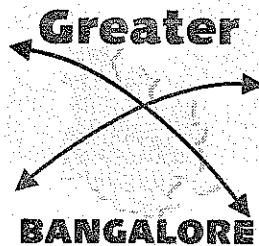
President of the Federation of Resident Welfare Associations of Mico Layout

"Haphazard growth"

"Due to negligence of CMCs by the Government, there has been unplanned and haphazard growth in the last few years. Had the Government ensured adequate flow of funds for development of CMCs and monitored their growth, they wouldn't have been in the sorry state they are in. "The then Government's (2003) decision to strip CMCs of their powers to collect betterment charge, had dealt a major blow to the planned growth of CMCs. Greater Bangalore will hopefully set right these flaws."

PURUSHOTAM

Former vice-chairman of Bommanahalli CMC



DH Photo

The bad roads of Bommanahalli

"Let not history repeat"

"The Government should learn a lesson from the CMC experiment, which has failed. Greater Bangalore should be carefully

"GB will solve funds crunch"

"It's good to merge CMCs with BMP. Though CMCs are growing rapidly, there are no civic amenities at all. Hundreds of residential houses and high-rise apartments are coming up without proper drinking water and sanitary facilities. There are also no roads worth the name and the funds

"End to disparity"

"Right from Day One of the formation of CMCs, the