

Daksh

People. Perceptions. Politics.

Master Report on
Review of Democracy and Performance
of the Government
of Karnataka

Period: Jun. 2008 – Nov. 2009

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DAKSH is a registered civil society organization committed to enhancing citizens' engagement with issues of democracy, governance, and equity.

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Introduction

DAKSH undertook this review of democracy and governance in Karnataka as a way for a citizen's group to engage with the democratic structures and processes at a state level. Only an aware and active citizenry, who can question and hold its elected government to account, can sustain a genuine democracy. This REPORT focuses on assessing the overall functioning of the government which came to power in June 2008 and encompasses issues pertaining to the period between June 2008 and November 2009.

The details in this report are collected from an analysis of data from the Govt. via RTI, annual reports of various departments, newspaper reports and topical reports and reviews by various national agencies and NGOs. Various sector experts have shared their knowledge and helped us in the compilation of this report.

This report contains a broad purview of some, trends and processes by which the Government functions and what impact it has on various programmes and projects and therefore on the larger public.

We reviewed several policies, initiatives, promulgation of Acts, initiation and establishment of Commissions etc that the Government had initiated since June 2008 and assessed them in terms of three key questions. These questions were:

- 1) How democratic were the processes or initiatives announced by the government?
- 2) How inclusive are the range of commissions and task forces set up by the government? Do they function regularly? What are their objectives and orientations? What have been their contributions over the year?
- 3) Do the new programmes, policies, allocations of funds etc., cater to the genuine needs of people or are they merely populist gestures which strengthen the political base of the party in power?

We believe that we are, sadly, witness to a sharp deterioration of governance in the State and a concomitant deterioration of development goals and standards of living, and a rise in all forms of corruption and violence. DAKSH's endeavour and this Report in several ways is a step towards initiating and developing a broad-based audit of the structures, processes, decisions, and impact of the state government as a way to monitor their impact on the nature of democracy, governance and the well-being of people.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATION, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

LAW AND ORDER

The law and order situation in the state has caused enormous concern ever since the BJP government came to power in May, 2008.

Within a month of coming to power the BJP Government was in the dock because of the incident of police firing in Haveri on a farmers' demonstration regarding shortage of fertilizer. One farmer died in the police firing. The Cabinet (minute decision (17/2008)) implicitly acknowledged that this instance was indeed a case of police excess. The Cabinet decision reads; ' In future with respect to any demonstration by farmers regarding their demands: IN the course of such demonstration taking a violent form and it becomes impossible to control then lathi charge and water jet should be used to break up the group. Tear gas and rubber bullets can be used to control the situation.'

While the Haveri firing incident can be seen as an instance of state excess and the use of fatal force by the state, another glaring law and order failure by the state is the failure to ensure constitutional governance in the state. This failure seems to have communal undertones as it is the right of minority communities to live with dignity as well as minority property and places of worship which have come under attack with the state being a passive bystander. The three key areas of failure have been the continuing communal tensions in Dakshina Kannada district, the attack on churches in twelve districts in Karnataka in August-September 2008 and September 2009, and a series of other incidents which have lessened the sense of security of minority communities such as the withdrawal of cases against those with a proven track record of inciting hatred against minorities.

a) Attack on churches in Karnataka

The Education Department issued show-cause notices to Christian educational institutions across the State threatening to shut them down when these institutions declared 29th August 2008 as a holiday in silent protest against the large-scale violence organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) against the Christian community in Kandhamal district of Orissa since August 2008. Interestingly, immediately after this the ABVP, the student wing of the B.J.P. party and closely affiliated with the RSS, Bajrang Dal and VHP, forced a State-wide bandh of educational institutions on the issue of the illegal entry of Bangladeshi nationals into the country. When questioned about this bandh by reporters, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Vishveshwara Hegde Kageri defended the bandh by saying that the bandh by the ABVP and the closure of colleges by minority managements over the attack on churches could not be equated. This seemed to serve as one kind of excuse for the perpetration of attacks on churches in Karnataka.

In Davangere district, over the months of August, September and October 2008, a number of churches and prayer halls were attacked by members of Hindu Jagrana Vedike, Shiv Sene and Sri Ram Sene who alleged that forced conversions were taking place in these churches and prayer halls. On a number of occasions, pastors and other members of the Christian faith were attacked, threatened and abused, both verbally as well as physically. The Municipal Corporation even sealed the churches based on such allegations and the false complaints of these right wing organisations. Due to inaction of the police who openly supported the perpetrators and often harassed the victims, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) (W.P. 14845/08) was filed in the High Court in December 2008. Consequently, the sealed churches were opened upon the direction of the High Court and criminal cases were

registered against members of the Sri Ram Sene and Hindu Jagrana Vedike.

During the same period, Hindutva groups, including the Bajrang Dal and Srirama Sene, attacked at least twenty-eight churches in Karnataka. The Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa's response to these attacks was that the attacks were provoked by conversions of Hindus to Christianity by some Christian groups. He blamed a Protestant group for triggering the disturbances in the state by distributing literature which insulted Hindu gods. (The Hindu, 26.09.08)

Despite these numerous attacks, no arrests were made of any members of the Bajrang Dal which had openly admitted to having attacked the churches. This resulted in an outpouring of protests and demands from progressive organizations, human rights groups, members of the Opposition and the Central Government that action be taken against the Bajrang Dal and other such groups. Because of widespread condemnation of the event, the Bajrang Dal's Karnataka convener Mahendra Kumar was arrested on September 19, 2008. (Deccan Herald, 20.08.08)

The Central Government has called for a dossier on the activities of Bajrang Dal from all the states in order to decide whether it is an extremist organization and whether to ban it or not. This is in the face of continuing calls to ban the Bajrang Dal from various organizations. Despite this, except for the arrest of the Convener and his subsequent release, no appropriate action has been taken against the Bajrang Dal. (The Hindu, 12.08.08)

Following the spate of church attacks, the Central Government issued an advisory under Article 355, a rarely used provision of the Constitution, which enshrines on the Central government a "duty to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution". The Central Government in its advisory identified the failure of the Karnataka BJP government to ensure 'governance in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution'. However the Chief Minister in a speech before the National Integration Council said, "While Christians and Hindus have co-existed peacefully in the state, there have been unconstitutional and illegal efforts by some Christian organisations such as 'New Life' to forcibly convert or to induce conversion to Christianity," he said, addressing National Integration Council meeting in New Delhi. "Efforts of such organisation include publishing booklets like 'Satya Darshini' in which Hindu gods and goddesses were denigrated. Our constitution provides for freedom of religion but does not permit forcible or induced conversion" (<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Ktaka-CM-blames-Christian-orgs-for-communal-unrest/372818/>). The Karnataka Government has now set up a Commission of Inquiry, the Somshekar Commission, to inquire into the reasons for the church attacks and the report of the Commission is awaited.

b) Continuing breakdown of Constitutional Governance in Dakshina Kannada

It was only after the continuous telecast of the images of the women who were subjected to an horrific assault by cadres of the Sri Ram Sene in a pub in Mangalore on January 24, 2009, that public attention gravitated towards what was happening in Mangalore. A PUCL-Karnataka Fact Finding team documented 45 instances of cultural policing documented in the English Press and 23 incidents of cultural policing documented in the Kannada Press in a seven month period spanning August 08 to February 09. The cultural policing has as its primary target, young people. From Shefantunde (16 years) who was attacked for talking to a Hindu girl, to college students Shruti and Shabeeb for talking on a bus, to Anishwita (23), Akeel Mohammad (24) and Pramilla(22) for drinking a juice together, its the young who have come under vicious attack. Self styled vigilante groups such as the Bajrang Dal, Sri Ram Sene and Hindu Jagran Vedike have begun to police social interactions between members of different religious communities such as boys and girls drinking juice together or sitting together on a bus merely because they come from different religious

communities. Cultural policing also targets women in particular and lays down norms with respect to public spaces they can occupy and the clothes which they can wear.

With respect to cultural policing in particular, which often involves the commission of offences such as criminal intimidation, causing hurt, and outraging the modesty of a woman, the response of senior police officers has been grossly inadequate. Statements by senior police officers, which have been reported in the media, willfully ignore the fact that it is the complainants who are violating not only the criminal law but also the basic safeguards of the Constitution of India by policing behaviour and action which come within the ambit of Constitutional protections. The offences committed by these self styled vigilantes needs to be taken seriously. Inevitably, before they hand over to the police those they see as immoral, there is usually loud and aggressive and demeaning speech, physical aggression and every attempt to expose the persons to a demeaning public gaze and censure. If those who are victimized by these actions attempt to speak back, then events take on a more violent turn. Such speech is inevitably answered by intimidatory gestures, beating, assaults and even sexual abuse. None of these gestures are deemed actionable by the police who seem to treat those who file the complaint as beyond reproach. Police in Dakshina Kannada routinely ignore both the criminal law dimension of moral policing as well as the far more significant Constitutional law dimension of the right to privacy, the right to intimate association and the right to freedom of expression.

The gravity and seriousness of the breakdown of law and order in Dakshina Kannada has also been recognized by the State Human Rights Commission which notes that, 'Alas! It seems, nothing prevents the self-appointed 'moral police' of Dakshina Kannada district to indulge in highhanded, unconstitutional illegal acts with impunity and without any social fear. The commission does not find any improvement in the law and order situation that obtained in the District on the aftermath of the attacks on the places of worship. The Commission is tired of telling the Government repeatedly to take effective and prompt action to contain these highhanded and illegal acts of the self-appointed moral police in the District.'

c) Other incidents affecting sense of security of minority communities

- The newspaper Karavali Ale had been targeted by right-wing elements including the Bajrang Dal for its reporting on the attacks on churches in August/September 2008, in which it reported the role of the Bajrang Dal in these attacks. Members of the Bajrang Dal not only openly burnt copies of the newspaper, but also threatened newspaper vendors and prevented them from selling the newspaper. In a letter written to the Press Council of India (PCI), B.V. Seetaram, editor of the newspaper, requested them to look into matters such as alleged burning of the newspaper's copies and threatening of the vendors. Following this, Seetaram was arrested (in connection with an old case) when he was travelling from Kateel in Dakshina Kannada to Kundapur in Udupi district via Karkala. It appears that Seetaram has been targeted for his anti-communal stance. On February 11, 2009, the High Court of Karnataka directed the State Government to pay Seetaram damages of Rs. 10000 in four weeks. The Court also deprecated the mechanical manner in which magistrates issued warrants against Seetaram. (The Hindu, 3.01.09) (The Hindu, 4.01.09)
- Cases filed against members of the Bajrang dal, VHP, BJP and Sri Rama Sene in regard to their illegal activities around the Baba Budangiri shrine in Chikmagalur have been withdrawn in the last week of December 2008. Cases have been withdrawn against these repeated offenders who continue to commit crimes. Cases have been withdrawn against some prominent present and past members of the Karnataka Assembly, including C.T. Ravi (sitting BJP MLA of Chikmagalur) and V. Sunil Kumar (ex-BJP MLA, Karkala) and members of the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Sri Rama Sene, including Pravin Togadia and Pramod Muthalik. Some of the charges against the above mentioned accused include promoting enmity among groups of different religions (Section 153 A of the IPC), and

malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings (Section 295-A of the IPC). The complaint is in regard to the incidents that took place on 18.12.2002 during the Shobha Yatra procession held during the Datta Jayanthi celebrations organized by the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and B.J.P. According to the complaint, in violation of the orders of the Assistant District Commissioner, these Hindutva leaders shouted slogans and gave inflammatory speeches against the Muslim community during the public meeting at Azad Park, and incited communal riots.

- On 1st January 2009, the Resurrection God's Ministries Church, in village Malebennur was set on fire and completely gutted. (<http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/2692/45/>) accessed on 18.03.09
- On February 9, 2009, two Sri Ram Sene members were arrested and a pistol and six bullets were recovered from them. The accused are associates of Jambaji, who was arrested for fifteen murders and a plot to kill two MLA's. One of the accused organized many protests against anti-Indian culture and planned many events to condemn Valentine's Day celebrations. (Times of India, 12.02.09)

d) Other incidents of police inaction/excesses in dealing with democratic protest

- On 20th October, 2009 Bengaluru police brutally attacked five sexual minority activists and arrested them on false charges when they tried enquiring about the illegal detention of five hijras (working class male-to-female transgender). Police illegally detained and assaulted a large number of human rights defenders when they held a peaceful protest against the illegal police actions. Police also arrested 31 human rights defenders on false charges.
- On 28 February 2009 at 10.30 pm, Sanjana got hit by two men on a bike who slowed down, socked her on her jaw and fled away. On 24 February 2009, Vandana was attacked at around 9 pm by four men who punched her, hit her, and abused her for wearing jeans. On 17 February 2009, two men chased Archana's car at 1.30 pm. One chased her with a large stone as she ran to a friend's house for refuge. That same week, Jasmine (name changed) was attacked by four middle-aged men at 11.30 am when her auto broke down. They physically assaulted and tried to disrobe her while yelling obscenities. These attacks are neither isolated events nor trivial incidents of 'eve-teasing'. They are part of a series of attacks inflicted on women in the name of 'morality' and religious intolerance, attacks that are escalating as women resist and fight back. In all the incidents women have been targeted for what they have been wearing, the fact that they were on the road late at night or that they should not have been in a particular location.
- The Bangalore City Police have come out with a notification on the 'Licensing and Controlling of assemblies and processions (Bangalore) Order', 2008. This notification betrays the mindset of the current administration which views democratic protest as a law and order problem. The notification proposes a system of regulation processions and assemblies through a method of licenses. Hence, the right to exercise one's fundamental rights has been made into a licensed activity subject to the whims and fancies of a licensing authority. Under the pretext of helping the smooth flow of traffic, the notification restricts the fundamental rights of assembling peaceably without arms, the right to freedom of speech an expression, and the right to protest.

e) Problems of Data collection and analyses relating to Law and Order issues:

1 Documented data is either absent or inaccessible: There is a serious issue of access to data. We may not be able to say whether the data is absent, because there may be some general reporting requirements that could capture information widely, but certainly, the information thus reported is neither easily retrievable nor published in a timely/periodic manner. This seriously precludes any form of an objective assessment of the system.

2. Involvement of multiple State agencies: The crime graph of a State is monitored by multiple agencies and arms of various Departments. It involves the Police, Courts, and Special institutions like the State Human Rights Commission. A few state-wide issue-based NGOs also contribute efforts towards this objective. However, there is a crying need for one entity within the Government to be the data repository of all these efforts. We certainly do not feel that the State Home Department is the solution. What we need is information management and not information administration (which also presently is – “too little, too late”!)

3. Lack of accountability mechanisms: Perhaps owing to the above systemic concerns, there does not exist a formidable accountability mechanism for the State to respond to concerns of law and order. For instance, areas of social or infrastructural investments and regulation have now been equipped, sometimes legally, with sound accountability procedures. Of course, we do realize that the State’s performance in “law and order” cannot be held accountable to any one process or form of institution, but there is presently a glaring lack of any legal procedures or formal requirements that mandate the declaration of facts and measures, which in itself could be an effective mechanism.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Karnataka’s implementation of the Right to Information Act and the establishment of the State Information Commission are considered to be exemplary. However, the functioning of the Commission and the implementation of RTI in terms of actual availability of data and information in all the departments is very limited and problematic. Most of the departments do not have an RTI officer in place and several people who have sought to access information have been stonewalled. As an example, our own applications seeking information from various departments have been treated with bureaucratic inefficiency, neglect and callousness. Different departments have different rules which are inconsistent for filing the application. There is an unreasonable restriction on the length of the application. The first tactic appears to be stonewalling, by either alleging that the format of the application is incorrect or the fee is not paid or there is a procedural irregularity. If none of these work, one is normally told that the information is too large and we will require a few trucks to transport the copies (we were personally told this!) and when we insisted, we got a concise 5 page report! From one department, we received all three excuses (almost on the same day) signed by the same officer!

The RTI Assessment and Analysis Group (“RAAG”) and the National Campaign for People’s Right to Information (“NCPRI”) published a report in July 2009 (available at http://rti-assessment.org/exe_summ_report.pdf) assessing the performance under the RTI in various states. Karnataka was one of the 10 states. Karnataka fared poorly in the assessment. In the success rate analysis, based on the actual information received on applications made, Karnataka got a mere 29%! The report contains other significant information regarding the budget for the Commission, delays, appeals, etc.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Karnataka is often praised and upheld as an ‘IT State’ and some flagship e-governance projects have received attention as ways to enhance the accountability, transparency and efficiency, including out-reach, of the government. However, the information available to the public either through print materials and through the electronic and information technology (websites) is woefully inadequate. A review of the websites of the key departments indicates that most of the departments do not update their websites, Annual Work Plans (AWPs), Annual Reports, reviews of programmes etc are rarely available (see review of websites ANNEXURE 1).

FUNCTIONING OF THE LOKAYUKTA

One of the key institutions for curbing corruption and ensuring accountability of the Government is the Lokayukta, the Ombudsman set up by the GoK . While the Lokayukta has been active and has achieved public legitimacy and credibility, it has not been able to ensure proper accountability by the Government, mainly because of lack of institutional powers to effectively pursue action against erring officials.

We interviewed the current Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde about the new Government's efforts to strengthen the Lokayukta. Justice Hegde feels that the BJP government has not taken any steps to strengthen the Lokayukta machinery. Things remain at status quo, in his view. He pointed out that the Kumaraswamy Government had recommended the issuing of an ordinance giving suo moto powers to the Lokayukta to prosecute officials. The ordinance was not issued and the new government has not taken any steps to give such powers to the Lokayukta. No other new steps have been taken which in his view can reduce corruption.

Regarding the functioning of the Lokayukta, Justice Hegde feels that apart from the lack of powers to prosecute, there is a lack of manpower as well. He feels that he needs at least 40-50% more staff to perform more effectively. Because of the lack of efficient manpower, there is a backlog in terms of complaints and this is affecting the efficiency of the Lokayukta.

Justice Hegde mentioned that it is difficult to say if there is an increase in corruption after the BJP government has come to power. If you look at the developments over the last decade or so, there has generally been an increase in corruption. We cannot attribute it to one or the other governments. It appears that there is an increase in corruption only because the Lokayukta has become a more active body over the last few years.

AGRICULTURE

- Agriculture performance of the state for the year 2008-09 has declined as against impressive national improvement since 2006.
- Distribution of Rs 220 Crore financial aid to 22 Lakh dry land farmers with Rs.1000/- each was a novel scheme for the much needed dry land farmers. A discussion with beneficiaries at the Panchayat level brought out details of large scale misappropriation and bureaucratic red -tapism.
- Allotment of 100 crore for a newly formed organic farming mission (OFM) was much lauded effort to take the agriculture in a more sustainable self supported pathway. Karnataka is considered as a leader in terms of bringing out guidelines and support policies since the period of H.K .Patil. Out of allotted 100 crore 48.5 crore is claimed to have been spent. The majority of the money has been simply allotted to Taluka level trust / committees formed to build model organic farm to showcase for others to follow. Committee was asked to spend a maximum amount of money in minimum period. About 5000 rupees is paid to each sanchalakas of the committee per month. As of today not a single farm exist worth being showcased. Money has been utilized for salaries, perks and dole outs. In the name of organic farming the farmers were encouraged to spend and avail money in the form of subsidies from the OFM for digging pits and doing vermiculture. Many of the pits which were a part of Sujalajalayana Yojane were facilitated again under the scheme. The intension to bring focus on organic farming is timely and inline with the organic movement and awareness created by organic stalwarts and consumer awareness of health foods. Most of the committee members of the organic OFM are chosen from parochial consideration like party and Sang affiliations. The emphasis must be on the seed variety conservation low or nil off farm input with value addition of food to connect to market. Institutional strengthening of universities and agriculture extension centers is the need of the hour.

RURAL AND PANCHAYAT RAJ

The 2009 Election Manifesto of the National BJP cursorily mentions rural development only at three places but devotes a small paragraph at the end of the manifesto to the Panchayati Raj and promises to amend the constitution to further devolve powers on Panchayat Raj institutions and to strengthen the Grama Sabha.

The 2008 Election Manifesto of the Karnataka BJP promises to develop rural infrastructure and to strengthen the Panchayat Raj institutions by improving their finances. There is no mention of strengthening of the Grama Sabhas.

Data available is hopelessly outdated. Annual and Monthly reports are available upto Feb 2008, but was last updated on 11.9.2007 and releases made in 2003 have been hoisted on the website. The last update on even the Schemes of the dept was on 21.9.2007.

Personnel Shortage: There is a general complaint that there is a shortage of Grama Panchayat Secretaries. In many Grama Panchayats bill collectors and watermen are working as secretaries. The Karnataka Government website mentions 1261 Grade-I Secretaries of Grama Panchayats as on 31.12.2005. Earlier Government had proposed to appoint Panchayat Development Officers and Second Division Accounts Assistants to the Grama Panchayats but the appointments had not yet been made. Although exams for the posts have been conducted, there is currently a debate (being reviewed by the Sub-Group on Decentralisation (chaired by Prof. Govinda Rao) as to whether there will be a conflict of interest. Will the appointed person be accountable and responsible to the State (as its employee) or to the Panchayat as its representative.

1 Panchayat Parishat, a committee headed by the Chief Minister and consisting of representatives of the ZP Presidents, etc., has not met during the last one year at least.

The RDPR Department of the Government of Karnataka finds a place in the annual plan of the State for the year 2009-2010. However the following figures show that in fact there is no plan at all.

- RDPR is obviously not a priority to the Government since in the para on priorities of annual plan 2009-2010 there is no mention of RDPR.
- While the outlay on RDPR in the annual plan for 2008-2009 is Rs. 130279.63 lakhs which forms 5.02 % of the total plan, the outlay for the year 2009-2010 has been reduced to Rs. 107027.03 lakhs which is 4.00 % of the total plan.
- For comparison the outlay on Urban Development is 16 % of the total plan outlay. According to the 2001 Census, while 66 % of the population lives in rural areas in the State, only 34% lives in urban areas.
- Special Programme: National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. During 2008-2009, total funds available under the above Programme were Rs. 642.45 Crores whereas only 357.87 Crores were spent which is 55.7 % of the available fund. These figures are available on the website of the Government of India and not of Karnataka. Karnataka Government website on Government schemes has only just been updated and is linked to the Central NREGS information service. Several of the links (such as complaints, details of Social Audits completed etc) are missing (as of Nov 27th 2009). The budget for 2009-2010 announces that it proposes to utilize at least Rs. 1200 Crores under the Programme and earmarks Rs. 144 Crores as State's share. But the budget for 2008-2009 had already planned a total outlay of Rs. 1100 Crores under the Programme.

KARNATAKA'S PERFORMANCE IN NREGS

The recent report by NCAER and PIF (New Delhi, 2009)¹ is based on a compilation of reviews including the CAG report for 2008. As such the data closes at October 2008 and hence it is difficult to use this to assess Karnataka's performance for either until March 2009 or until May 2009 (one year of BJP rule in the state).

Some key issues that can be gleaned or culled from the report for Karnataka are the following:

1. The report highlights the unreliability of data.
2. Despite this, even where figures are inflated, for Karnataka since 2006 (when the programme was initiated to until now mid 2009), the PROPORTION of households that have accessed the NREG programme has DECREASED. For eg, in 2006-07, it was 58 %, 2007-08, it was 48 % and it was 40 % for 2008-09 (until October 2008).

Details from the NREGS website provide the following details:

Fund position for 2008-09

Budgetary Allocation 1100 crores

OB 209.77 crores

Central Releases 390.23 crores

Central release of 07-08 =4.05 crores

State Share 36.80 crores

Total Available 638.94

Expenditure (31/03/2008) 344.74 (54.11%)

Unspent Balance 292.4

3. The study indicates that demand for the jobs has also decreased in Karnataka; eg, 2006-07 it was 40 %, 2007-08 it was 17 %, and between 2008-09 it was 5.9 percent.
4. Percentage of households provided employment (again the data is unreliable; as the report also notes this); 2006-07 it was 40 %; 2007-08, it was 17 and 2008-09, it was 5.8 %.
5. Of the 21 states, Karnataka ranks 13th in coverage and distribution of NREG, 17th in generation of employment, and 1st in utilization of funds (to be reviewed as in 2008-09 it is very low) and 20th in Transparency, Vigilance, and Social Audit.

Bapu Setti and A.R. Vasavi met the Secretary, Mr. Vijay Kumar (on May 14th 2009), and discussed the functioning of the dept with him. He called another official as he did not know much about the dept. He stated that he had come in just six months ago and did not have details. The once very busy and crowded dept was largely empty and even the secretaries looked bored. Although the minister for PRRD is Ms. Karandlaje, a high profile minister (since resigned), the secretariat looks bereft and lacks any dynamism. Mr. Vijay Kumar was very defensive about the performance of the NREG and said that Karnataka did not record good delivery of the scheme as the allocation itself was low. He said, 'let them allocate Rs one thousand crore and then I can show something'. He only consented to the fact that there was very little information dissemination in the rural areas about the scheme and that largely accounted for the poor demand. He also kept repeating that in Karnataka there was little or no demand and most people earned more than what the NREG offered. On being told that there were large areas in which people needed employment, he said that he would look into it.

¹ Evaluating Performance of National rural employment Guarantee Act. NCAER and Public Interest Foundation, New Delhi. 2009.

STATE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, BOARD, VISION FOR THE STATE, ETC:

Karnataka State Planning Department has played a key role in planning and monitoring development programmes. Monthly monitoring reports are developed by the dept for many of the projects and programmes. The KSPD had in the past also initiated key reports such as the State Development Report and State Human Development Report etc. However, there has been a sharp dilution of functions of the KSPD and its focus over the past ten years. The Planning dept is also not given centrality and importance any more.

Conduct of Monthly Reviews: In February 2009, the CM had indicated plans to conduct the meetings once a month. A new format called 'Monthly Programme Implementation Calendar' (MPIC) has been developed and is to be deployed for all departments to report status of all programmes. However, the State Development Board Meetings have not been held regularly during March to November 2009.

State Planning Board: Like the State Planning Dept, the SPB has lost its edge and lacks professional inputs and support. Currently the Board is under the Chairmanship of the CM and the current Deputy Chairman is a Minister, Mr. Shankaranand. Previously, the Deputy Chair was an expert and an experienced person who would be able to engage in planning and development activities of the Board. Since its reconstitution with the new government, the Board has met only twice over the year.

Evaluation studies have not been conducted for key programmes, the last evaluation for a major programme is dated 2005. Currently, (November 2009), only two studies (one on NREGS and the other on accessibility to secondary schools) have been sanctioned.

The Website has outdated materials and does not provide up to date information on all activities of the Board.

Karnataka Vision2020 document: Developed during the previous (JD(s)-BJP) government, a private consultancy firm (Price Waterhouse Coopers) given the responsibility of writing the Vision Document (in September 2007 for a sum of Rs 56 lakhs). The draft version was available to the public for a short period and no authors were identified.

Although inputs were solicited in January 2009, the response by the public, including specialists and experts, has not been subject to a review nor has the feedback been integrated in the final report.

The development of the document lacked democratic processes and was not inclusive of the needs of all sections of people. The Vision document focuses on infrastructure and industrial development and overlooks the regional imbalances of the state. The document has been approved by this government on May 23rd 2009 and the focus has been declared to be on 'infrastructure'.

CONSTITUTION OF A VISION GROUP FOR KARNATAKA

The Chief Minister constituted a Vision Group (vide order no. PD 59 SPB 2008 dated 10th October 2008) with himself as the Chairman and twenty other members. Of the twenty members, 5 are ex-officio members from the state departments, one is an ex-MP, 3 are doctors, 4 are corporate leaders, 3 are ex-officio directors of educational institutions in Bangalore, 2 are former bureaucrats, one is an educational entrepreneur and one an economist from a national institute. There are no representatives from the agricultural community and other rural groups, Dalit and religious minority groups, women or members from specialized civil society institutions and experts from fields of agriculture, irrigation, informal economy, labour. The Group has met only once over the year.

At a meeting held on June 24th 2009, the CM announced the formation of SIX FOCUS GROUPS Or MISSIONS that would address the needs of the state. The CM also reiterated that the focus

of the Vision Group and the document would be on infrastructure development in the state. The Six Missions have met only recently but no reports or perspective plans are available.

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

A "High Power Committee to Oversee Implementation of Recommendations Made by Dr. Nanjundappa (Committee to Address Regional Imbalances)" was constituted on October 14, 2008 and is Chaired by Shri. S. Namoshi, with 16 members to oversee the implementation of the Special Development Plan. The SDP has a total allocation of Rs 31,000 crores to be spent in 114 talukas over the years 2007 to 2014-15. Between the periods of June 2008 to June 2009, the Committee met four times in Bangalore and has toured 6 districts and held meetings. Between July to November 2009, the Committee three more times and undertook a tour of Northern districts in July and of Dharwad and Haveri on Sept 23rd 2009. The Committee (only some members) met again on Nov 24th, 2009 in Chikballapur. A total of Rs.2547 crores has been allocated for year 2008-09 and has been spread over 19 depts. Most of the funds are allocated to agriculture and to transportation departments. A Special Cell for this was set up in December 2008 and the Cell has begun to function but reports are still forthcoming.

The Chief Minister reviewed the Committee's work on May 27th 2009 at the Vikasa Soudha. The handouts indicate an emphasis on infrastructure for education, irrigation, and rural development. The Chief planning officer of each Zilla Parishad has been appointed as the nodal officer and is expected to report details of the implementation of this Special Development Plan to the State Planning Dept.

A.R. Vasavi met Shri Namoshi and discussed the work of the Committee. He was apologetic and noted that the committee had not done much work over the year but had chalked out specific plans. A new secretariat had been established at the State Development Board, but as of November 20th 2009, there were no comprehensive reports or data available on amounts spent or programmes that were supported etc.

Telephone discussions with two senior members of the Committee indicated that the Committee had not been convened regularly to discuss matters in detail. Even the focus on the talukas that required special assistance and attention was not being made.

It is important that the committee be activated and details of allocation of funds, use, and impact be reported. Addressing regional imbalances, especially of poor developmental conditions in the north eastern districts, is central to improving basic civic conditions and livelihood opportunities in these regions. Inbuilt monitoring and evaluation measures need to be initiated. The Cell for monitoring the Special Development Plan has to be activated. Region/taluka based civil society groups, and TPIs must be involved in designing, monitoring and evaluation of funds allocated from the Special Development Plan.

EDUCATION- ELEMENTARY

The Department for Primary and Secondary Education has improved in several domains. The state has allocated a sum of Rs (16613 lakhs) to the SSA as its contribution to the programme and has therefore met the requirements of the 35 percent of the state's share. In addition, a key positive development has been the conduct of the the meetings of the Governing Council which have been held on schedule and reports of the previous year's work and programmes have been distributed. Several programmes that facilitate access to schools have been initiated. Some of these are the extension of the provision of bicycles to all students (earlier only students from BPL families were entitled to this) upto high schools, the delivery of uniforms and textbooks to all students on time for the new school year, and the initiation of a free bus pass to all government school children upto Std VII, and a health check up programme have also been sustained. The Dept has also initiated the expansion of Nali-Kali or 'joyful learning' programme for classes I and II in all the districts.

The Dept has also attempted to address the very vexatious, and source of high corruption, issue of teacher transfers. It has developed guidelines and a new process in which the continued and near constant process of teacher transfer has been revised and transfers are to be done only in the beginning of the new academic year.

Some of the key limitations of the Department have been that despite the Minister, Mr.Kageri, being very active and initiating several programmes and energizing the dept, there has been inadequate attention paid to the formation of the Textbooks Committee, and the Committee appointed to revise the Karnataka Education Act. Both these committees have not been formed with widespread consultations or debates and are instead dominated by former education officers and those who are in the department's various institutions.

The linkage of the Dept with Hindu organizations and Sangh Parivar affiliated groups is also becoming explicit. The first Vision plan for elementary education was organized with the association of CESS (Centre for Education and Social Sciences, a hitherto not well known organization). The two day meet was inaugurated and dominated by persons close to the RSS-BJP and included a swami. CESS has also been assigned the responsibility of conducting the review of the SSLC examination process.

Surreptitious presence and impact of Hindu religious groups on the dept of education continues. Between the months of October-November 2009, the Dept of education (vide its circular dated October 3, 2009 sent from the office of DPI, Secondary Education) permitted its teachers and students to attend *Bhagavadgita Abhiyan* classes to be conducted by the Sri Sonda Swarnavalli Mahasamsthananam in all districts of Karnataka.

Privatisation of midday meal:

As the recent protests and questioning in the Assembly have indicated, there is a increasing tendency to privatize the midday meal schemes. Assigning the responsibilities of making and delivering meals to schools in urban areas and in some remote areas had been done under the Congress government itself. However, the recent trends of dispensing with full time employees and allocating the subsidies and rations to private agencies have been gaining momentum. A detailed review of this and the impact on the meal scheme needs to be undertaken.

EDUCATION -HIGHER

Karnataka Knowledge Commission with focus on improving quality of education.

- a. This Commission, chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, is one of the few functioning Commissions set up under the current government. The Commission has met several times and has an active secretariat and a web site with all details. However the membership of the Commission consists primarily of ex-officio members and several retired and current Vice Chancellors and ex-officio directors of central institutes such as IIMB and IISc. Two members are from Hindu religious groups, and there are no representatives from either Christian and Islamic educational institutions. The Commission has set up six focus themes and groups are expected to develop and present solutions for each of these themes. One report for Social sciences has already been discussed and shared with the press.
- b. The State has also initiated recruitment for teachers in both government and aided colleges. This is significant as all recruitment for full-time faculty had been stopped since several years.
- c. Pay parity for teachers in colleges is also under the anvil and will go a long way in facilitating college development.
- d. A negative trend has been the Dept of Higher education's official memo to all colleges to compulsorily send all teachers and students to attend the state level function on 'anti-terrorism' which was held on Vivekananda's birthday on Dec 12th at Bangalore. Stipulations to train and bring about 'anti-terrorism' awareness camps and sessions are also undemocratic and the orientation had a strong anti-Muslim stance.

e. Appointment of Vice Chancellors: The Government has interfered with the functioning of Universities in the state and appointment procedures have been bypassed with preference being given to caste and political affiliations. Both, Maharani College and Bangalore University have experienced dramas related to conflicting appointments of Principals and Registrars, respectively.

DEPT OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

A key department that does not receive much financial or social support but is central in that key programmes related to women and children (and hence the welfare of the poor) are deployed through this department.

Organisation/Functioning:

- DWCD does not have an annual plan of action.
- The State Plan of Action for the Child has been prepared following the National Plan of Action for the Child. These plans are part of the requirements under international initiatives since the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. These plans are neither used to guide nor used to monitoring tools in the work of DWCD.
- There are several vacancies at all levels in the Department. 80% of the vacant posts for Grade D (peons, gardeners, etc.) are abolished and the work is getting outsourced.
- Several Committees set up by the DWCD such as the City Advisory Board for Childline, Adoption Advisory Committee etc. have been meeting regularly.
- The new Selection Committee under the Juvenile Justice Act has not been constituted although the term of the earlier one has expired. As a result of this, the new members of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) have not been selected. There should be one JJB for every district but these have not been put into place since the Selection Committee has not been selected. There are only 8 JJBs today with one JJB having jurisdiction of more than one district. Children in conflict with law have to be taken to another district and produced before the JJB. There are only 8 Observation Homes in the State and this again is because only 8 JJBs that have been appointed. The Annual Report 2008-09 states that the Orders have been issued to start 21 Observation Homes. However, this has been held up due to the JJBs not being formed.
- Two Units of Special Homes are set up for the rehabilitation of juveniles in conflict with law one for boys attached to Observation Home, Dharwad and another for girls attached to Children's Home for girls, Bangalore. The total number of children admitted in the Special Home for boys and girls is nil as on March 2009.
- There are 29 Child Welfare Committees now. But these bodies do not receive any funds from the State Government although they play important quasi-judicial functions. Apart from the honorarium for the members, the CWCs and the JJBs do not even have clerical support, leave alone staff to conduct inquiries, home visits, etc. They have no allocation even for basic office facilities.
- There are only 45 Children's Homes, 16 Fit Institutions, 11 Reception Centres, 5 After Care Homes for Men, 8 State Homes for Women and 2 After Care Homes for Mentally Retarded Women. No new homes were sanctioned or started during the past one year.
- The Inspection Committees and Visitors Committees for most of these Homes are not in place.
- Mandatory disclosure under RTI is not available on website of DWCD.
- The DWCD has been playing an important role in providing grant in aid to NGOs through Central and State Schemes. With regards to the Central Schemes, the department plays very little role in monitoring the functioning of NGOs receiving funds.
- There is no special component of Child Budgeting in the DWCD budgets.

- There are huge delays in receiving Central funds, especially in Shishu Grih Scheme where money is received after over an year. There are only 4 units – 2 in Bangalore, 1 in Hubli and 1 in Gulbarga
- There is no budget from the state government for Adoption or Foster Care.

Schemes and Programmes:

Bhagyalaxmi Scheme - a new and mammoth programme called Bhagyalakshmi had been introduced in the year 2006-07. The benefit is limited to two girls in each BPL family. Benefits are given to over 2 lakh girl children every year. In the first phase of this scheme, assistance of Rs. 10,000/- was deposited in the name of the girl child born in the BPL family and will be given at the age of 18 years along with accrued interest. This scheme has been modified on 14.8.2008 (applicable for the children born from 1.8.2008). The features of modified scheme are (i) An amount of Rs.19300/- in the name of the first beneficiary of family and an amount of Rs.18350/- in the name of the second beneficiary of the same family will be deposited and an amount of Rs.100097/- together with interest accrued will be made available to the beneficiary

on attaining 18 years of age. (ii) The beneficiaries who attain 15 years of age and who have passed SSLC and willing to continue further studies, the bonds issued by the selected partner financial institution will be mortgaged in recognised banks to provide loan upto Rs.50000/-. During 2008-09 (up to December 2008) Rs. 163.87 crore has been released for this programme and 1.63 lakh beneficiaries have benefited. In the earlier scheme, girls received insurance interim payments such as scholarship and insurance benefits were available to the beneficiary on continued fulfillment of the eligibility criteria out lined in the scheme. If the girl child fell sick, medical insurance could be claimed upto a maximum of Rs.25,000/-. In case of natural death of the insured person (parent), insurance of Rs.42,500/- was given. In case of death in an accident, insurance of Rs.1,00,000 was given to the family. However, under the new scheme, these interim benefits and insurance is no longer available. An amount of about 1 lakh is given to the girl upon reaching maturity. As per the DWCD Annual Report 2008-09, an expenditure of Rs. 31659.90 lakhs has been incurred as against an allocation of Rs. 31665.00 lakhs covering 2,97,811 girl children. According to the report provided by officials in the DWCD, the allocation was initially only Rs. 266.65 crores but additional money of Rs. 50 crores was made available due to the large number of applicants. The scheme is available for all girls from BPL families and the criteria for assessing the BPL status is annual income of Rs. 17,000 in urban areas and Rs. 12,000 in rural areas. The income certificate has to be provided by the revenue officer and the DWCD has no role in assessing eligible beneficiaries. According to the official looking after the programme, the number of girl beneficiaries seems larger every year if we calculate the total BPL population in the state and the sex ratio. But they have no role to play in any assessment and have to disburse to all applicants if they fulfill the criteria. They have now got a child tracking system for Bhagyalaxmi girls. There has been no evaluation to date of the Bhagyalaxmi scheme although it is one of the largest programmes of the DWCD. No evaluation was conducted even before revising the scheme.

FUNCTIONING OF ICDS IN KARNATAKA:

At present 54260 AWCs and 405 mini anganwadis in 185 ICDS projects are functioning in the State, covering all 175 taluks & 10 urban areas. During 2008-09, 42.46 lakh beneficiaries have availed the benefits under the scheme. The entire 100% administrative cost i.e., payment of salary of staff of ICDS and honorarium to anganwadi workers/ helpers is borne by the Government of India. An amount of Rs. 22101.70 lakhs was incurred upto the end of March 2009 as against an allocation of Rs 22405.15 lakhs under plan.

Additional honorarium of Rs 750/- to the worker and Rs 375/- to the helper is being provided out of state funds in recognition of the services rendered by them to the community. An amount of Rs. 7059.93 lakhs has been incurred upto the end of March 2009.

Under ICDS Training- An amount of Rs. 220.24 lakhs was released and Rs.197.50 lakhs was spent to train 32 CDPOs/ACDPOs, 480 Supervisors, 11054 AWWs, 6049 Anganwadi Helpers and 24 AWTC Instructors in (Job Training Course/Refresher training/Orientation training)

Out of 54665 Anganwadi centres and Mini AWCs functioning in the State, 30880 anganwadi centres have their own buildings as on March 2009. The remaining centres are functioning in rented buildings, temples, community halls, etc. Zilla Panchayats have been requested to take up construction of anganwadi buildings on a priority basis. The Department contributes an amount of Rs.50,000/- per building and the remaining amount is met out of Zilla Panchayath funds or public contribution. Rs. 468.06 lakhs has been provided during 2008-09. No information is available in the Annual Report about how much of this has been utilized and how many buildings have been constructed with this amount.

Kishori Shakti Yojana- The scheme seeks to empower adolescent girls using the ICDS infrastructure. The broad objectives are to improve the nutritional and health status of girls in the age group of 11-18 years, promote self development and awareness of health, hygiene and nutrition and family care so as to enable them to gain a better understanding of their social environment and take initiatives to become productive members of society.

The scheme is being implemented in all the 185 ICDS projects in the state. 180 adolescent girls in each project are given 5-days residential training every year by the taluk level TOT members. Supplementary nutrition is being provided to 2 adolescent girls in each anganwadi centre. A sum of Rs. 17.43 lakhs has been spent out of the opening balance of Rs. 27.57 lakhs leaving an unspent balance of Rs. 10.14 lakhs of 2007-08.. GOI has released Rs. 101.75 lakhs during the current year.

Under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme - An expenditure of Rs. 25551.45 lakhs was incurred upto the end of March 2009 as against a provision of Rs. 25646.81 lakhs. From 2005-06 Government of India is sharing 50% of the cost on supplementary nutrition, hitherto borne entirely by the State Government. An amount of Rs. 10916.33 lakhs has been received as central assistance for supplementary nutrition programme during this year. According to Economic Survey 08-09, Appendix (9.6) pg A103, in 2007-08, the total number of beneficiaries was 43,20,000 with an expenditure of 9994.28 lakhs. In 2008-09 (until Nov. 08) the number of beneficiaries increased to 44,12,000 yet the expenditure was only 5301.64 lakhs. There does not seem to be any explanation for this.

Bal Vikas Samithi- Government has constituted Balvikas Samithis with the objective of drawing up of annual action plans for the improvement of the anganwadi centers, monitoring the delivery of all the services under ICDS etc. But these Samithis have not been constituted in most of the ICDS centres and even if they are constituted, these are not functional.

Balvikas Academy: Action has been initiated to establish a Balvikas Academy for the development of socially and economically backward children. The Academy aims at establishing a Balagraha Vikas Kendra in every village to promote science and literary, cultural and art activities for rural children.

The objectives of the Academy are -

- for the overall development of children and to formulate special programmes with a focus on socially and economically backward children.
- To develop and implement creative programmes for the intellectual development of children and to build self confidence in rural children.
- To establish "Balavikasa Kendra" in every village wherein science, literature, culture and art activities are focussed upon to tap the talents among children.
- To improve the status and condition of children from birth to adolescence in the physical, emotional and social spheres and personality development in the areas of education, health, nutrition and intellectual development through information technology.
- To design innovative programmes/methodologies and feasibility studies to improve teaching and learning.

The Balavikasa Academy is functioning as an autonomous body under the DWCD. The Committee for managing the functions of Balavikasa Academy consists of a Chairperson and other non-official members. The administrative aspect is looked after by the Government set up. In addition to this, the Academy is envisaged to have consultants and members in the field of education, nutrition, psychology and legal experts having IT knowledge whose inputs will be utilised for the development of the academy and to improve the status of the children. Balavikasa Academy has its jurisdiction throughout the state. An acre of land has been allotted at Lakammanahally village at Dharwad district for the activities of the Academy. At present only the government officials have been appointed in administrative capacities. Last year, 60 lakhs was allocated but no data is available about the expenditure. This year, an allocation of 100 lakhs has been made

Creches for Children of Working Mothers- Assistance is provided through Zilla Panchayats to Mahila Mandals and voluntary organisations to start creches for children of working women who are engaged in agriculture and other occupations in rural areas. The scheme provides day care services for children in the age group 0-3 years. Services include health care, supplementary nutrition, facilities for children to sleep, immunization, play and recreation. An amount of Rs.39.71 lakhs was spent as against an allocation of Rs.70.31 lakhs to assist 245 creches.

Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Children-

The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has been set up during 2006-07. with an aim for providing speedy trial of offences against children and safeguarding their rights. The broad functions of the Commission are to

- (i) study and monitor all matters relating to constitutional and legal rights of children and
- (ii) look into complaints of the cases involving violation of these rights and recommend measures for the effective implementation of the safeguards provided by any law for the protection of child rights.

An Assistant Director and four staff members have been posted to the office of the Commission. The draft rules of the Commission have been submitted to the Finance department/Law department for approval. As per section 17(2) of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005 the State Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and six members who are persons of eminence and have done outstanding work for promoting the welfare of children. Accordingly, the selection process has been completed.

It is proposed to constitute a sub-committee with an objective of providing a forum/platform for children to directly voice their opinions and concerns. Representatives of children in especially difficult circumstances (working children, marginalized children, handicapped children etc.,) and members of NGOs working for the rights of children will serve on the sub-committee to take forward the child protection movement to reach each and every child..

An amount of Rs. 16.41 lakhs was spent in 2008-09 as against a budgetary allocation of Rs. 40.00 lakhs.

It is only in July 2009 that, despite being constituted officially more than two years ago, the members of the Commission including the Chairperson have been appointed and the Commission is just becoming functional. However, to date no pro-active and substantial measures or actions have been taken by the Commission that is yet to receive full financial and infrastructure support.

A major concern in the state has been about the functioning of the Child Welfare Committees (CWC) which are established in all the districts and whose jurisdiction it is to oversee the welfare of children and to address those whose well-being is violated. However, many CWCs are constituted with members close to the BJP and the democratic functioning of some have been eroded. For example, the developments related to the CWC in Dakshina Kannada district highlight this. Three members including the Chairperson of the CWC were 'sacked' on the same day that

they filed cases against members of the dept for illegally removing files pertaining to cases of violations of childrens' rights by members of the Sangh Parivar.

Santhawana Scheme

The scheme was launched during 2000-01 to assist women who are the victims of various atrocities like dowry, rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and aims at providing legal and financial relief and temporary shelter protection to the victims of atrocities. Santhwana centres are run through NGO's and each centre is provided with a toll free number 1091. The help line receives call from women in distress round the clock. Facilities and rehabilitative services are provided to such women as per the recommendations of the District Level Committee depending on the merits of the case. If the woman is in immediate need of financial help an amount ranging from Rs. 2000/- to a maximum of Rs. 10,000/- is sanctioned as financial relief.

According to the Economic Survey 2008-09, the scheme is implemented in all the 29 districts and 47 taluk headquarters through helpline run by 45 identified NGOs. During 2008-09 (up to November 2008), a sum of Rs.66.91 lakh as against a provision of Rs. 155.00 lakh has been spent to cover 93 Santwana centres.

According to the DWCD Annual Report 2008-09, at present 109 Santhwana Centres are functioning in the state. The scheme has been implemented in 29 districts and also in 80 taluks. An expenditure of Rs. 126.28 lakhs has been incurred up to the end of March 2009 as against the release of Rs. 126.78 lakhs. The number of beneficiaries covered as on February 2009 is 11,443. Even if the Economic Survey data is upto November 2008, there appear to be discrepancies in the data provided.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT/JNNURM

Transparency and democratic processes of functioning:

1. Trend towards outsourcing policymaking to consultants continued. Eg of State vision document and infrastructure projects. See No. 6.
2. Increasing trend towards governance by task force and committee. These do not reflect inclusive or democratic processes of functioning- eg of ABIDE Task Force constituted by GoK in June 2008 under the chairpersonship of the Chief Minister with the aim of improving infrastructure development of Bangalore. Comprising a few nominated members, ABIDE developed certain proposals a few of which have already been taken up by BBMP in this year's budget despite no proper public discussion on these proposals. BBMP has identified 12 important corridors (C12) which can bring commuters from the outskirts of the city into core Bangalore; ABIDE has directed BBMP to develop these roads as signal free corridors over the next 24 months (BBMP budget 2008-09). In the current year the following four roads would be made signal free: 1) Hosur Laskar road, 2) Old airport road, 3) Dr Rajkumar road and 4) Mekhri circle to Benninganahalli. Another decision taken by ABIDE is to make outer ring road signal free and to this end work on the part of Outer Ring Road from Central Silk board to Mysore road which is in the control of BBMP has been started. An amount of Rs.83 crore has been allocated for these works. ABIDE's Transport recommendations also include a focus on developing airport connectivity and signal free connectivity from the airport to the city core has also been taken up by BBMP.
 - a. Also worrying is the increase in the number of one-man committees- eg of State Urban Development Policy: A one-man committee under Dr Ravindra has been constituted to prepare a Draft State Urban Development Policy about Sept 2008. The draft has not yet been made public. It is not clear how such an important policy impacting urban areas of the entire state could be drafted by a one-man committee. There are at least 2 other examples of 1-man committees (Save the Western Ghats Task Force and Biofuel Committee).

3. Continued operation of parallel bodies that don't lend themselves to public scrutiny and bypass elected bodies eg KUIDFC
4. Continuing past trends this administration has made little effort to disseminate information on status of JNNURM infrastructure projects or nature and likely impacts of urban reforms being undertaken as part of JNNURM – all the more important in the absence of an elected council. Little information on KUIDFC's role as State Level Nodal Agency in JNNURM, or as nodal agency for channeling infrastructure projects funded by IFIs. 4 public consultations for JNNURM were held at the time of CDP formulation (in 2006). Most civil society groups who attended were invited and there seems to have been no effort to include urban poor groups. It also isn't clear whether or how the feedback given by the public was incorporated. Since 2006 citizens have not been involved in any consultation on DPR formulation or evaluation of progress although there's been considerable public demand for it. Mysore has been set afire with protests against the proposed privatisation of water services (Jusco deal) from both residents (40000 people signed a petition saying No to the deal) and the Water Board employees union protesting their non-involvement in the decision making.

This administration, making policy changes in accordance with state level reforms imposed by JNNURM, has committed to implement in 2008-09 four reforms: forming area sabhas (Community Participation Law), reducing stamp duty by 0.5 per cent, enacting the provisions of the Public Disclosure law and forming district planning committees. The Prin Secy UDD told me that drafts of CPL and PDL have been prepared and GoK was waiting for elections to be completed before enacting them (i.e they will come through before end of calendar year).

5. In terms of progress of JNNURM UIG projects: a few new projects have been announced (development of 33 lakes in May 2009, public buses). The record on completion of old projects remains very poor. The first project (stormwater drain) which was started mid 2006 hasn't been completed yet.

In BSUP slum housing projects this administration has only continued past projects, no new projects have been initiated in this 1 year. Out of the 5 pilots taken up by the BBMP, 2 slums (Kalyani and Kodihalli slum) were mostly completed during the Kumaraswamy administration but houses still haven't been allotted and registered in the names of slum dwellers during this past year. Work is continuing in 1 other slum (Bakshi Garden) and is nearing completion. In 2 other slums BBMP has done almost no work. Overall construction work has been significantly delayed and there have been many protests by slum dwellers claiming their lack of involvement in the project design. Field visits have revealed irregularities in implementation of BSUP stipulated amenities such as a park, hopcoms, anganwadi, milk booth, community hall. This administration has promoted commercialisation of basic services through BSUP housing in line with the JNNURM reform agenda which has also led to conflicts with local communities.

Under Community Participation Fund (CPF), a sub-program of JNNURM, 2 proposals in Bangalore have been approved in Sept 2008 for building a multipurpose citizen's centre and setting up a decentralised solid waste management system. Both these are to be implemented by an RWA federation in Vijayanagar (Vijayanagara Nagarikara Vedike) with technical assistance from Janaagraha. In Mysore, 26 proposals have been submitted by different citizen committees² to Mysore City Corporation which has forwarded them to MoUD for approval; nearly 70 additional projects are in the pipeline (JNNURM website). Rather than take up formation of Constitutionally mandated ward committees or JNNURM mandated area sabhas, citizen committees has been taken up as they do not require an amendment to the KMC Act (JNNURM website). Each citizen committee was given training from resource persons of Mysore City Corporation and eminent personalities during January 2009. Parallely an

² Under the initiative of the Mysore Commissioner Manivannan in 2007, citizen committees at the level of polling booths were identified (6-14 polling booths per ward and 686 booths for Mysore city). A Steering Committee was set up to prepare guidelines for these Citizen committees in Oct 2007 and citizens were asked to apply to become members of this committee through a series of advertisements in newspapers. The criteria for selection of members were not made public.

awareness meeting and door to door fund raising campaign was conducted for CPF (citizens need to contribute 10% of project costs) on 27th January 2009. To build legitimacy for the booth committees, a federation of Citizen Committees was registered under Karnataka Co-operative Societies Act on 02.03.2009. Thereafter bank accounts have been opened by each booth committee in the joint account of Commissioner and Chief Accounts Officer of Mysore City Corporation. Positive: The CPF promotes decentralised initiatives by local civil society groups according to local needs. Negatives: There is insufficient information on criteria for proposals to get approved and the regional (ie city-wide) implications of implementing individual proposals; there are equity concerns because better organised, more literate and affluent civil society groups will be better placed (organizationally, time and money-wise) to develop proposals and get funding for neighborhood services.

6. Trend towards large donor supported infrastructure projects continued- with minimal discussion of design, evaluation of progress and impacts by State Legislative Assembly or City Councils. In fact, greater domination by bureaucrats is witnessed over the last 1 year than seen in previous administrations because majority of BJP MLAs (and MPs) are new and lack experience in administration and so depending more on bureaucrats.
 - o While infrastructure projects launched in selected urban areas, municipal reforms typically launched for all urban areas with little public scrutiny or debate. Under the World Bank funded Karnataka Municipal Reforms Programme (KMRP) for instance, two crucial TAs were prepared by external consultants. One of these is an Urban Finance Framework and Design prepared by CRISIL which proposes a series of reforms for all urban areas in the state of Karnataka, except for Bangalore (Aug 2008). It promotes privatisation of basic municipal services and aims to create more opportunities for market borrowings that progressively reduce the "dependence" on funding from state and central governments. It even recommends the conversion of state grants into loans if certain suggested performance criteria and rating mechanisms are not met with (Final Report - Executive Summary Aug 2008). Of concern is that this framework outlines a set of criteria for the State Finance Commission's (SFC) allocations to ULSGs that reduces the importance given to 'backwardness' by the 1st and 2nd SFC allocations (for instance, the weightage given to illiteracy has been considerably reduced from 33% in the previous SFC recommendation to just 10%) and there is greater focus on road length as a criteria. This framework is yet to be approved by the 3rd State Finance Commission and the UDD, although it isn't clear if it is going to be approved or discussed by the State Legislative Assembly or any City Council.

The second TA sponsored by KMRP, the State Urban Land Management Framework, proposes reforms and policies for land management across the State. It is prepared by STEM consultants. While a draft report was shared with State Government in mid-2008, it has so far not been made public.

Priorities of Govt and extent to which programs are inclusive and pro-poor:

1. JNNURM: Skew in funding allocations between BSUP and UIG continues (JNNURM website). In Bangalore BSUP spending only accounted for 12% (374.06cr) compared to 88% for UIG projects (Rs 2817.72cr); In Mysore, BSUP projects accounted only for 12% (Rs 136.21cr) compared to 88% of UIG funds (Rs 1022.22cr).
2. Promotion of commercialised (PPP) model for service delivery: The PPP Cell formed in Jun 2007 to mainstream PPPs in infrastructure sectors sits within the Dept of Infrastructure Development. In Jun 2008 at the start of the new administration there were 39 PPP projects valued at Rs 6000cr. In Nov 2008, 166 PPP projects had been proposed at a capital cost of Rs 109,329cr (Presentation by A Jadhav, IDD Nov 26-27 2008)
 - a. Following Karnataka's Infrastructure Policy 2007, a commercialised model of service delivery is being followed particularly for roads building (making roads toll roads) as can be seen under the Suvarna Karnataka programme. The Cabinet recently

announced that the Bangalore-Mysore road would be a toll road in 2012. In Nov 28, 2008, 57 road projects at a value of Rs 20,698 cr had been identified for PPPs out of which 2 are operational. While it might be too early to comment on how this model is working, there needs to be much greater public debate on the costs associated with such a model (Vs public models of delivery), particularly for poorer and rural groups and the process by which roads are identified, contracts are drafted and the costs and benefits for different groups (contractor, govt, public) need to be made transparent.

- b. Besides road building, the administration is also strongly pushing toward privatisation of services in rural areas - contracting out services like water supply, garbage disposal [don't have more detailed info on this]
3. Strongly emphasising road building to catalyse development:
 - a. Comparatively less funds being devoted to other core infrastructure
 - b. Concerns about which roads are being targeted and whether 'backward' areas are receiving the benefits of this development- are they typically main roads that service core areas of cities and CBD or arterial corridors throughout the state? There are concerns that this does not adequately address issues of regional backwardness. The NKUSIP for eg was sanctioned in 2003 (after Nanjundappa Committee Report) in areas designated as 'backward' by the Nanjundappa Committee with the objective of development in backward areas through infrastructure and reforms. The total cost of the project is \$440 mn. 6 years and 4 govts later there has been very little progress in delivering this infrastructure to these backward areas.
 - c. The transport recommendations of ABIDE for the greater Bangalore area that are reflected in the BBMP's current budget include projects to eliminate signals on the Big 10 arterial roads and route to airport and the HoHo bus service started in the city's CBD. These proposals seem to favour the professional/business classes, and tourists as they focus on major roads and the core areas of the city.
 4. Facilitating land acquisition by privileged private companies or trusts: At a cabinet meeting on Feb 18 2009, GoK decided to allow private companies or trusts to buy agricultural land for industrial purposes. Section 109 of Karnataka Land Reforms Act 1961 will be amended to pave way for industrialists to buy agricultural land. With the proposed amendment in the Act, an investor planning to buy huge tracts of land for industrial or housing purpose, need not go before the cabinet. Only the conversion from agriculture to non-agriculture purpose from the competent authority is required. However, only those investors recommended by cabinet sub-committee headed by revenue minister G Karunakara Reddy will be eligible to buy agricultural land. Such a step is of concern because there is no clear oversight or discussion by Cabinet, who will be accountable? A list of privileged investors eligible to buy agricultural land is setting up a system which favours corruption and rent-seeking rather than outlining a transparent process with clear criteria for buying large tracts of land.
 5. Revision of Cadre and Recruitment (C&R) Rules: Common C&R rules for seven city corporations in the State Karnataka are being formulated. Additionally, efforts are on to rationalize postings in ULBs (identify where additional postings are needed or should be eliminated, filling vacant postings) and enhance delegation of powers to municipal employees. The Directorate of Town Planning is also being restructured. These have resulted in no fewer than 4 amendments to rules in the past year and a half. Note: It is difficult to say more about this because these are all in the process of being finalized and while they remain drafts, they are not in the public domain and cannot be debated or critiqued. What can be said (as told me by Principal Secy UDD) is that the magnitude of reforms underway is considerable.

NOTE ON AGENDA FOR BENGALURU INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT (ABIDE) TASK FORCE:

Set up by a GO from the State Government its objective is to “revive and rebuild Bengaluru through a combination of comprehensive planning, improved municipal services and new investments into infrastructure” (ABIDE Agenda).

Positives: Attempts focus on planning and coordination for better infrastructure development. Includes some emphasis on public transport and pedestrian needs. A few of the plans (namely the Transport Plan) reveal careful survey of the literature and use of new technologies in planning/decision making.

Negatives:

- Diluting power of (predominantly) elected institutions: The ABIDE Governance Act seeks to subsume all Acts that currently cover municipal planning and public utilities and come up with a Master Act that governs all planning, implementation, governance and service institutions covering the Metropolitan Bangalore Region (BMR). This Act will cover an area of 8,000 sq. km. of BMR for an estimated population of 160 lakhs (in 2021). The Act expands the powers of BWSSB, BESCO, and BMTC to cover the BMR. It simultaneously abolishes Local Planning Authorities and gives over planning powers “as defined and regulated by BMRDA” to all CMCs, TMCs, and Panchayats. This makes it unclear whether there is any real expansion of planning powers of local governments. Further, making the BMRDA to be responsible for regional planning when it is not accountable to the electorate violates the role envisaged for the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) by the Constitution. The Kasturirangan Committee Report (KCR) has recommended that the MPC be responsible for planning and coordinating with executive powers in the metropolitan region with the BMRDA functioning as the technical and administrative arm of the MPC³. This means that it is the MPC who should have the power to review, and if necessary overrule, local government plans and not the BMRDA. It is not clear why the ABIDE Governance Act has rejected this recommendation of the KCR.

Moreover, both Wards Committees (WCs) and Neighborhood Area Committees (NACs) are to comprise of nominated members. Despite the fact that they do not represent the public’s mandate, the NAC wields great influence on the neighborhood with a role in decisions relating to landuse changes, traffic restrictions, parking, operation of commercial establishments, developing and prioritizing projects, identifying beneficiaries for govt schemes, and verifying eligibility of persons receiving welfare in the neighborhood.

- Lack of participation: Close examination of Task Force practices to date do not indicate that there have been sustained or comprehensive efforts to engage different stakeholder groups or get these visions out on to the streets for deeply democratic engagements. ABIDE’s strategy has instead relied mostly on interactions with middle class English-speaking communities who have access to the internet. This strategy has clearly found favour with many middle class groups despite being consulted after the plans and vision were largely complete and without clarity on whether and how their feedback would be incorporated into ABIDE’s plans. While this has attracted some debate, suggestions, and offers of volunteerism from sections of the middle class, the response has been small when we compare it to the overall middle class population and minute if we compare it to the city’s population. It is therefore clear that ABIDE’s strategy has very narrow reach. Second, when citizen input is solicited after plans have been developed, then their feedback is restricted to modification of the plans; it cannot question the assumptions underlying the plan, and why certain thematic sub-groups or projects, which benefit specific groups, for instance, have been chosen over others.

³ The KCR has taken the further enlightened step of suggesting that it is not necessary for the State Government to have to approve the BMR’s MP. It must be noted however that the KCR somewhat negates the powers conferred on the elected institution of the MPC by recommending the Chief Minister as MPC Chairperson.

- Not a vision plan but a sequence of existing and future projects: ABIDES's VISION 2020 does not read as a longer-term vision for a multicultural, multilingual, vibrant, deeply political and bustling metropolis. There is no explanation of overall goals for the city, or the overall development trajectory. Rather, it seems as if several service agencies in the city have been requested to submit their agency plans and this accumulation of individual, physical infrastructure, projects have been stapled together to form the Vision 2020. In addition to the focus on physical infrastructure projects over social infrastructure projects, there is very little project detailing done in the plans. This leaves absent the rationale for different projects, implementation plans, cost estimates and funding sources, implementation timelines and current status of the project. For e.g. the aim of the RWH Theme park project is left unspecified, including how it will be executed and who will benefit from it.
- No coordination with other agencies: Another omission is the lack of attention paid to coordination among service agencies to carry out different projects despite ABIDE's promise of enhancing coordination among government agencies.

STATE INDUSTRIAL POLICY 2009-2014

Main objective is to make policies more attractive to investors and entrepreneurs (to alleviate financial crisis).

Positives:

- Some attention to promoting manufacturing, small and medium industries and balanced regional devt; Proposals of all micro, small and medium enterprises will be cleared by a District Level Single Window Clearance Committee (DLSWCC).
- State will allocate Rs.1000.00 crores for acquiring 1000 to 2000 acres of land in each district through KIADB. While developing new industrial areas by KIADB, at least 20% of the developed land will be reserved for MSME sector and this will facilitate establishment of thousands of small and medium enterprises.

Negatives:

- No attention paid to understand causes of high levels of vacancy in previous efforts of KIADB to develop industrial estates for SMEs. Often these SME industrial estates suffer due to lack of infrastructure, how will these industrial estates be different?
- The KIADB has a poor record for transparency and has been accused of considerable corruption in its dealings. Will this responsibility for creating a land bank for investors in every district make this worse?
- The objective of creating employment is not backed by clear concrete strategies and funds.
- Tremendous focus on commercial road development: Government will implement Suvarna Karnataka Development Corridor Programme (4-8 lane corridors) throughout the State. An extent up to 25 kms. on both sides of the corridor will be developed through orderly establishing industrial clusters, township, satellite towns and sector-specific industrial zones. Is this too much focus on large roads without a timeline for making the State free of power cuts or developing other priority infrastructure like water, sanitation, health and education? Further, there is no plan in place to address the haphazard development (and speculative real estate development) that will ensue from road building.
- In order to encourage self management of industrial areas by the Enterprises, the Government will expedite the establishment of Industrial Township Authorities in major industrial areas / estates. All efforts will be made to develop required infrastructural facilities and facilitate the timely development of these zones based on the recommendations of exclusive task forces set up by the Government to take the proposals forward. A dedicated Infrastructure Development Fund with an initial corpus of Rs.500

crores to be operated through KIADB is to be set up for this purpose. Similarly the Policy mentions an Industry Vision Group constituted by the Govt. that will guide the orderly development of industries and trade. Negative: Such a process would effectively bypass local governments in the jurisdictions of the industrial estates possibly creating islands of good infrastructure? No mention is made of the composition of these "exclusive task forces" which would make important decisions with respect to these industrial estates.

- Land acquisition: While the formation of industrial estates and road development would entail a focus on large-scale land acquisition, there are no concrete steps enumerated for how this could happen other than to say it would take place in consultation with farmers & industry. The Policy also specifies exemption of conversion fee (agricultural land to non-agricultural land) from 75 per cent to 100 per cent which could result in further greenbelt reductions.
- Considerable tax waivers given to companies: Stamp duty exemption, concessional registration, and waiver of conversion fee, entry tax exemption and other exemptions for industries. It is not clear what loss for the State Exchequer this entails. Positive: incentives for rain water harvesting, setting up effluent treatment plants and use of alternative energy means.

Urban Development Policy for State: On Sep 1 2008 it was reported that the Karnataka Government is planning to formulate Comprehensive Urban Development Policy, for systematic growth of towns and cities. A one-man committee, comprising the former Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Board, A. Ravindra, was leading the efforts of preparing the draft. Newspaper reports state:

- The state urban bodies have been instructed to identify land and reserve it for distribution to public for construction of houses. The policy would also encourage coordination between both state-owned authorities and also private land developers in preparing the development plans
- The state government had also advised all the urban development authorities to prepare master plans, revise it for every 10 years and implement it.
- To make it an attractive proposition, henceforth all the district authorities, while acquiring private land would also offer a portion of the developed layout to the land owner from whom it was acquired. "An 18 per cent developed land will be handed over to the owner of the land" Suresh Kumar said

The government had earmarked Rs 350 crore in the current year's budget for seven city corporations except Bangalore, and Rs 175 crore had been released so far.

DEPARTMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES WELFARE

This was until recently a neglected department that is often assigned a weak and incompetent officer. However, since 2008, the Central Government has increased allocations to this department and a large number of schemes have been developed for this dept. The State government also appointed Bharat Lal Meena, an IAS officer with a record for competency, to head the dept. He did initiate several actions and was attempting to strengthen the dept but was transferred in 2009 to head the BBMP.

Allocations from the state have also increased (from rs 200 crores to Rs 600 crores) and education concessions and scholarships, including allocations for hostels and food have been increased. Altogether twelve new programmes have been initiated and the overall budget for the dept has increased. A Hostel Management and Best Hostel Award (to oversee functioning of nearly 5000 hostels) have been set up.

A key gap in the dept is that of the vacancies of a large number of posts especially at the lower level in the offices at the taluka, district and state levels.

FUNCTIONING OF the BACKWARD CLASSES COMMISSION: This is an important Commission and is closely aligned to state politics. The previous government had appointed Dr. Dwarkinath as the Chairperson, but this government attempted to replace him. He, however, has filed a case indicating that he must complete his term.

Based on stipulations from the Central government, the Commission is also preparing to conduct an important survey of castes (the first after 1931) but no details of the survey are available.

A glaring example of the non-democratic nature of the current government has been its attempt to surreptitiously 'declare' all Lingayat sub castes as Backward Castes. This has been done twice and submitting to the uproar and criticisms the government has had to revoke the order.

The functioning of the various Development Corporations (which are allocated large amounts of funds) also needs to be reviewed.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental conservation and compliance with environmental regulations have taken a back seat in the state. The mining issues, and the problems of pollution and environmental degradation, including encroachment of forests, continue to be contentious issues which are not addressed.

1. The continuation of **illegal and open cast mining in the Tumti forest areas in the Bellary region**. Despite the Lokayukta's reports on this issue, no action has been taken. In addition to the violations of environmental safety, issues related to labour regulations (including use of child labour and working conditions and payment), human rights, encroachment on forests, and revenue generation and collection remain unresolved.
2. **Clearance and felling of thousands of trees in Bangalore** for either road widening projects and or the construction of the Metro railway have been unprecedented. Lack of clarity in planning has been compounded by lack of environmental sensitivity and bypassing citizens' interests and safety.
3. The inauguration of the Gundia hydel project in Hassan district (near Yettinahole) in the biodiversity rich region of the Western ghats is a blatant violation of central government norms and procedures. Without receiving full compliance and permission from the Dept of Environment, and despite objections raised by environmentalists, the state government has inaugurated this project, claiming that it will help in the providing hydel power. A total of 700 hectares of land will be submerged, and 168 families will lose their land.

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Based on our review and verification from various departments and programmes, we endorse the following initiatives and programmes undertaken by the government since June 2008.

1. Sanctioning of new District (Yadgir) and 43 new talukas: The formation of Yadgir as a new district, bifurcated from Gulbarga district, was long overdue. Its formation and allocation of funds should see an improvement in life conditions and administration in the otherwise very poor region.

In an attempt to streamline administration, the Government has sanctioned the formation of 43 new talukas. This is an important process that will facilitate decentralization.

2. Establishment and activating a commission to oversee the implementation of Special Development Plan for 'Backward Talukas'. See details under State Development Board.
3. Additional CET Counselling at Hubli and Gulbarga. This has eased the burden on several thousands of people who have had to travel to Bangalore for the CET Counselling.
4. Establishment of Janaspandana programmes to facilitate administration and development works at hobli and village levels.

According to the official rules, every last Saturday of the month is to be devoted to open and public reviews of all programmes. People's grievances are to be addressed immediately. This is being done in some areas but its conduct in the other regions needs to be verified.

5. The hosting and management of the unveiling of the statues of Sarvajna and Tiruvalluvar in Chennai and Bangalore respectively have been a positive contribution of the BJP government. By managing dissent by varied regional linguistic groups, the government facilitated the unveiling of these statues, thereby contributing to regional and inter-group harmony.

6. Enhanced State Allocations for Elementary Education: The state has allocated a sum of Rs (16613 lakhs) in the 2009-2010 budget to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as its contribution to the programme and has therefore met the requirements of the 35 percent of the state's share.

7. Free Bus Passes have been provided to all students upto the high school level, thereby facilitating travel to schools in rural areas.

8. Based on increased fund allocation from the central government, the state has also enhanced funds and programmes for the Dept of Social Welfare which caters primarily to the social (educational) needs of the disadvantaged caste groups. Altogether twelve new programmes have been initiated and the overall budget for the dept has increased. A Hostel Management (to oversee functioning of nearly 5000 hostels) and Best Hostel Award have been set up.

9. The State has also initiated recruitment of teachers for both government and aided colleges. This is significant as all recruitment for full-time faculty had been stopped for several years.

MAJOR CONCERNS

Based on our assessments in terms of the criteria of democracy, effective and equitable governance, support for human and social development, and on our observations and discussions with several experts in a wide range of areas, we highlight the following as key concerns.

I. Political Instability and Administrative Neglect

The state has been subject to severe administrative and political instability. Frequent infighting among the legislators, tensions within the party members, periodic transfers of key officials, and a failure to address the pressing problems posed by unprecedented calamities of drought and floods have been the key problems.

2.. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES AND 'RULE BY COMMITTEES': A key concern with the State government establishing committees, task forces and groups for reviewing issues, or acting as advisory bodies is that this is leading to an orientation of "governance through committees". Even if actual decisions or plans are not made by these groups, or what is made by them is not implemented the presence and impact of such bodies needs to be noted. While the Krishna government (CONG : 1999-2004) started the trend of setting up such 'task forces' and vision groups, the same has been continued with added intensity by the new BJP government. In most cases there is no process of due diligence in terms of formation of these 'advisory committees' (egs, Perspective plans, Vision document, Committee to review Karnataka education act, etc). The government can and does form these committees by suggesting people who they deem appropriate. These are generally honorary committees where expenses for the committees are limited to 'attendance fees and TA-DA'. Most of these reports developed and submitted by these committees are not always put in the public domain for feedback / suggestions. It is only when the reports of these committees are taken up as 'implementation' process, that due diligence (of inviting expressions of interest) comes into the picture. Even this is not done in a manner in which the response of the larger public or inputs of experts is solicited. As a result a large number of committees are problematic in terms of the expertise and orientation of the members, the lack of representation of a wider body of citizens, the inadequacy in the number of meetings and review activities, and in the overall orientation and final suggestions made by these committees and groups.

3. LAW AND ORDER: There has been adverse effect on the law and order situation in the state. The communal riots in Mysore and the communalization of the social fabric in the coastal belt indicate the deterioration in the situation. The promulgation of draconian and anti people rules and laws have eroded the democratic fabric of the state.

4. PROMOTION/SUPPORT FOR HINDU ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS, CASTE-BASED INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS:

We identify a number of schemes and financial allocations which are not keeping with the goals of inclusive social and cultural development and indicate priorities and biases on the part of the government.

a. Under the Vividha Samudhayagala Abhivridhi

(Development of different communities) allocation, an amount of rupees fifty crores has been allocated to 'Backward Classes' community organizations such as Kumbara, Kshatriya, Madivala, Kambara, and Devanga and other BC communities. We see this as a populist measure that will not cater to the needs of the people of these communities but will lead to furthering caste-based demands on the state.

b. The state plans to provide financial support upto Rs. 180 crores for the renovation of the Kukke Subramanya temple and for building a 500 room guest house for pilgrims and a 25 cottages forVIPs from Karnataka at Tirumala in Tirupati.

c. Subsidy for temple tours for BPL families: The dept of Muzrai has plans to provide financial support for BPL families to visit temples such as Kukke Subramanya, Dharmastala, Sringeri, MM Hills, Udupi, Savadatti, and Bangalore.

d. Distribution of Prasad during Mahashivaratri and instructions to the Muzrai temples to conduct puja in the name of the CM.

e. Distribution of Ganges water (gangajal) by the government to the temples.

5. FAILURE TO SET UP/ACTIVATE OR STRENGTHEN KEY CENTRE-INITIATED PROGRAMMES:

The National Rural Health Mission and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programmes are key central missions that seek to alleviate poverty and ill-health in the country. While the NRHM was about to be revived in Karnataka through the initiatives taken by a new secretary, he was transferred to another dept. Currently, the Health Dept on the whole and the NRHM continue to be on a downward spiral.

Similarly, the NREG has not been adequately implemented in the state. Social audits of the scheme have not been conducted and overall the funds allocated from the centre have largely lapsed even though there is unemployment in large parts of the state. (SEE section under Dept of Panchayat Raj and Rural Dev).

6. NEGLECT AND DILUTION OF PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS.

Karnataka was a lead and model state in establishing the Panchayat Raj institutions and processes. However, over the years there has been a dilution of the structures, processes and linkages. The past year has furthered this erosion of the panchayat system. The fact that the dept wears a deserted look and the administration does not see its key programmes, such as NREG etc, as important are pointers to this. DETAILS ARE REQUIRED.

7. VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION/SAFEGUARDS.

Several projects have been initiated without adequate clearance or safeguards related to environmental damage. The initiation of the Gundia project, which many environmentalists have objected to, is a case in point. The Environmental Impact Assessment has many false claims and is not a comprehensive document and the Central government has not cleared the project. Several ecological and societal issues, which could be damaging in the long run, have been overlooked. The project also erodes the potential to increase and sustain forest coverage in the Western ghat region.

Clearance of trees in Bangalore for either road widening projects and or the construction of the Metro railway are also other examples.

The continuation of illegal and open cast mining in the Bellary region continues. Despite the Lokayukta's reports on this issue, no action has been taken.

8. QUESTIONABLE UTILISATION OF MLA FUNDS.

There is no information available on the utilization of the local area development funds that each MLA has at his/her disposal. The Government does not monitor this as effectively as the MPLAD monitoring undertaken by the central government. We believe this is a serious lacuna and needs to be addressed at the earliest.

IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT REQUIRE ATTENTION

- 1 Karnataka has the largest number of Below Poverty Line Persons In South India (See details of new report by Suresh Tendulkar Committee)
- 2 Deceleration of agriculture; State's growth rate much lower than national average growth rate. Karnataka's Economic Survey Report 2008-09 indicates that the state experienced a negative growth rate in agriculture (GDP in agric) (-5.7%), while the national average was 2.6% . A discussion on this issue at the Assembly led the Chief Minister to constitute a Committee to review this. The committee, under Prof. R.S. Deshpande of ISEC, submitted a report indicating that there was a methodological problem in calculating the growth rate and recommended that the actual growth rate was about 2.4 percent. Therefore this deflected attention from the problems and also led to a denial of the continuation of agrarian distress in the state. This is another example of how committees are used to promote agendas or perspectives or to deny realities. Since suicides continue in the state and the recent droughts and floods have compounded the losses, it is important that more attention be paid to the agricultural sector and to the rural areas as a whole.
- 3 Largest number of malnourished children. Karnataka also has the largest number of malnourished children in the nation. 38 percent of children have stunted growth. The continued oversight of this and the poor functioning of the health dept and its various programmes are issues that need to be addressed.
- 4 Violation of norms of democracy in expediting development. The focus on 'development' and that too primarily infrastructural development has been aligned with a bypassing of democratic processes to get work done. The inaugural of the Gundia project, the clearance for tree felling in Bangalore and expediting several SEZs without local consent and process are indications of this. In addition, the inaugural of several schemes have become opportunities to showcase these as results or achievements of the BJP instead of them being government activities. The inaugural of the Gundia project, the Yeshwantpura flyover, and the grade separators in the outer ring road etc had a stronger presence of the party and its symbols and activists than that of the government personnel or the public.

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ANNEXURE 1**Website Report as on November 26th 2009****GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

Department of Forest	2009	C Check if O???	NA	NA
Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs	13/11/2009	C	A (U)	NA
Karnataka State Horticulture Department	19/11/2009	C	A (U)	NA
Department of Industries and Commerce	26/6/2009	C	A (U)	NA
Kannada and cultural Department				
Karnataka Legislature	20/11/2009	C	NA	A – chronological tables of various things
Karnataka Public Service Commission	"Daily getting Updated"	C	NA	NA
Karnataka Road Development Corporation Ltd.	2009	C	NA	NA
Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation	2009	NC	NA	NA
Karnataka State Pollution Control Board	2009	C (O)	A (O)	NA – Outdated Statistical data
Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Ltd.	30/10/2009	NC	NA	NA
Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd.	29/10/2009	C	AWP – A(U) Report – NA	NA Updated Statistics
Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission	16/11/2009	C (O)	A (U)	A – Some outdated Discussion papers
Karnataka Udyog Mitra	10/11/2009	C	NA – But various updated policy statements... ??	NA
Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation	Copyright 2010	C	NA	NA
Water Resource Department	13/3/2009	C	A (O)	NA – Performance Budget upto 2007

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Department of Labour	3/9/2009 Some sub-depts. Date back to 2007	C	NA	NA
Department of Law	19/3/2009	NC	NA	NA
Karnataka Lokayukta	Daily Getting Updated	C	NA	NA – Outdated Stats.
Directorate of Mass Education	13/5/2008 Site Under Construction	NC	NA	NA
Department of Mines and Geology	3/10/2008	C	NA	NA
Department of Parliamentary Affairs and Legislation	11/11/2008	C	NA	NA
Police department	Regularly Updated	C	NA	NA – Updated Budget Available
Karnataka Public Works, Ports and Inland Water Transport department	26/2/2009	C	NA	NA
Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department	26/5/2009	C	A (U)	A – Monthly Magazine
Department of Social Welfare	5/10/2009	C	NA	NA
Department of Stamps and Registration	20/8/2009	C	NA	NA
Department of Watershed Development	2007-2008	C but some info required is missing	NA	NA
Department of Women and Child Development	2007-2008	NC	NA	NA

Index:-

C – Compliant
 NC – Non-Compliant
 A – Available
 NA – Not Available

(U) - Updated
 (O) – Outdated
