

[Home](#) / [Opinion](#) / [Main Article](#) / Saving Bengaluru: Citizens must own it

Saving Bengaluru: Citizens must own it

Future of Bengaluru



Sheela K Ramasesha, JUL 13 2019, 00:25AM IST | UPDATED: JUL 13 2019, 10:57AM IST



How would Bengaluru be if the traffic on the roads was orderly? How would Bengaluru be if we could breathe purer air? How would Bengaluru be if we did not have such hot and prolonged summers? Simply wonderful.

The projected population of Bengaluru in 2031 is 20.3 million according to the Revised Master Plan-2031 published by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) in November 2017. A critical challenge that the city experiences is insufficient infrastructure to accommodate the massive growth of population. Lack of planning, adoption of ad hoc measures exposes the successive governments' inefficiency and lack of political will in effectively dealing with the challenges. On the other hand, how responsible are the citizens for the present situation in the city?

Owing to scarce land resources in Bengaluru, investing in land in terms of housing and otherwise has been a profitable business. To accommodate people from all strata of the society, BDA and many housing societies made sites of different dimensions. As the demand for land grew along with the growing population, the city witnessed illegal constructions, encroachment of public spaces, not respecting the standard government laws on set-backs for house constructions, etc.

With such construction, there is hardly any space for light or ventilation inside the houses. Because Bengaluru climate is changing by all accounts, and the summer is becoming longer and parched, most of the houses end up having lights/fans running all day. Besides, many houses have air-conditioners.

In the sixties and seventies, Bengaluru was called an air-conditioned city, but now, it is ironic that, air-conditioners are used in many homes. Aren't the voracious citizens along with unscrupulous officials responsible for these illegal constructions in residential areas? The government officials who bend the rules for their gains should realise that they are citizens of the city too.

Congestion on roads has also become a major problem. Because of inadequate parking spaces inside residential properties, vehicles are permanently parked on the roads. Lately, many single storied houses are being converted into multistoried-apartments, with full knowledge of government officials, flouting all set-back rules. Thus, a single family living on a plot is being replaced by many families with at least two vehicles per family, all of which are parked on the roads.

As a result, narrow roads have become free parking spaces for vehicles further constricting the roads. We seem to have become an insensitive and selfish society. Disregarding the rules/regulations is no longer an exception but a norm. Notwithstanding the corrupt government officials, why do citizens want to flout all rules and construct such buildings on their properties?

Talk of insufficient infrastructure, and the condition of roads catches the eye. The city is unable to cope with the rapid escalation in number of vehicles (both public and private). According to

reports, there are 76.2 lakh registered vehicles in Bengaluru, a substantial rise from 34.91 lakh in 2010.

As the number of vehicles continues to increase with bad road conditions, the situation induces multiple challenges in terms of road accidents, road accident related deaths, traffic situations and road rage. It is to be noted that in the last four years, there have been 3,250 death cases and 18,694 cases of injuries related to road accidents.

Another challenge the city encounters is air pollution. The main source of pollution in the city is the emission from vehicles. According to Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, during 2017–18, the suspended particulate-matter (PM) pollution in the city was above the national standard limits with PM2.5 exceeding in seven out of 11 locations monitored and PM10 in all the 15 locations monitored.

Chaos factory

As commuters on city roads, we create chaos by not following lane discipline. We are always in a hurry on the road to save every minute by trying to beat or, even worse, jumping the red signal. Are we such a time conscious and hardworking bunch that we need to save every minute on the road by breaking every rule in the book?

We are just an impatient, insensitive and anxious society. Everybody wants to push through and risk their lives, especially the two-wheeler riders who are more prone to injuries in an accident. In the process, traffic congestion is created decreasing the efficiencies of vehicles and increasing vehicular pollution.

Of course, the public transport system in the city is inadequate to meet the transport demands of the population and most people own personal vehicles. It will help immensely, if there is awareness among people about the traffic jams that are created almost at every intersection because of the haste leading to increase in vehicular emissions and pollution.

Parking vehicles close to intersections slows down the traffic movement. People without thinking twice stop cars right in front of the shops to pick up their requirements even if it affects the smooth flow of traffic. We can park slightly away and walk a few steps!

As citizens, given the limited road surface area and the large number of vehicles, if we drive a little patiently and courteously, instead of trying to save a few minutes that are later wasted anyway, the roads will become safer, and more importantly, help reduce vehicular pollution.

7/17/2019

Saving Bengaluru: Citizens must own it | Deccan Herald

As residents, we have a big responsibility to save the city. The city belongs to the citizens — passing the buck to the government will only affect us. The citizens must work towards reducing air pollution and cutting down on illegal constructions to make Bengaluru a little more livable.

(The writer is with the National Institute of Advanced Studies)