



सत्यमेव जयते

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Defence
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps
Co-Chairman, District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee, Bengaluru Urban District

April 28, 2015

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah

I am writing to you with regard to the Bangalore Development Authority's (BDA) move to convene a public meeting on the Master Plan 2031 for Bengaluru on Wednesday, April 29th, 2015. Such a move represents the second time in the last six months that the BDA has tried to defy the constitutional mandate of the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) by usurping its powers and responsibilities for creating a development plan for Bengaluru.

You will recall that the BDA made a similar attempt to hold a public consultation on the Master Plan in November 2014, which was eventually cancelled owing to protests from citizens. Article 243ZE of the Constitution explicitly mandates the MPC as the constitutional body for drafting development plans for the city. It states that "There shall be constituted in every Metropolitan area a Metropolitan Planning Commission to prepare a draft development plan for the Metropolitan area as a whole". This clearly puts into question the BDA's *locus standi* to prepare a master plan for the city. It is evident then that the BDA, by seeking to hold a public consultation on the Master Plan, stands not just in direct contravention to the Constitution, but to a Constitutional body headed by you, as its ex-officio Chairperson.

There is a growing perception that the BDA's attempt at planning in the past is being driven more by vested interests rather than genuine concern for the city and people. Such a move then, only seems to reinforce the perception among citizens that the BDA seeks to continue to pander the vested interests, rather than let a MPC function as per its constitutional mandate. Rather than usurp the powers of the MPC, the BDA must wait for a re-elected MPC post the BBMP elections and allow it to perform its duties as per its mandate under the 74th Amendment.

The Constitution of the BMPC in September 2014 had marked a significant Urban Governance reform. Yet, the sad irony is that your Government had failed to ensure the MPC performed its duties even while in existence. While your Government made initial steps by electing a MPC last year, it turned out to be a defunct body, having not met even a single time since it was elected and the 20 elected members were not even allotted a room to meet in.

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If the Government hopes to uphold the letter and spirit of the 74th Amendment and ensure that citizens have a say in the development of the city, I urge you intervene immediately to ensure that the BDA exercises caution and does not exceed its mandate. I further urge you to ensure that the newly elected MPC, reconstituted post the BBMP elections is allowed the freedom and resources for its independent and effective functioning. True reform can only be ensured by an MPC that achieves all three goals - a formal role for citizens in governance (including budgeting and oversight), a regional planning scope for the MPC, and enhanced executive powers for elected leaders in municipal bodies.

The strong opposition that the BDA's public meeting has sparked is evidence of the fact that Bengalureans are willing to assert their right to have a say in the development of their city. Our people and our city and state deserve better than what we are seeing today. They deserve a Government and institutions that work in partnership with citizens, rather than the current situation of conflicts between residents and Government. I urge you to keep your promise of Good Governance and uphold the constitutionality of the MPC or face opposition to these moves.

I look forward to your intervention on the issue.

Yours Sincerely

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Government of Karnataka
Vidhana Soudha
Bangalore