



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

CITY LEADERS OF KARNATAKA

A systematic leadership programme to empower elected leaders, particularly women, for a sustainable urban future

Brief structure

This brief provides the findings of the 'City Leaders' study specific to Karnataka. It presents an overview of the 'City Leaders' study followed by Karnataka's urban landscape, methodology and findings.

What is 'City Leaders'?

The study, 'City Leaders' enquires into the needs and opportunities in a systematic leadership programme for councillors in India's cities, with a focus on women.

Methodology



10 sample cities for both primary and policy research:

Bengaluru | Cuttack | Faridabad | Guwahati | Indore | Jaipur | Kochi | Mumbai | Panaji | Patna

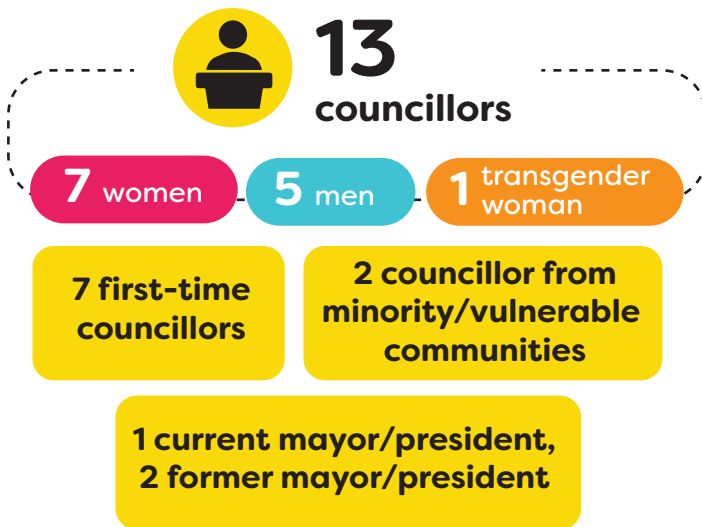
Selection criteria:

- ☒ Size of the cities (in terms of population)
- ☒ Type of city government
- ☒ Geographic distribution
- ☒ Urbanisation level of the states that the cities belong to

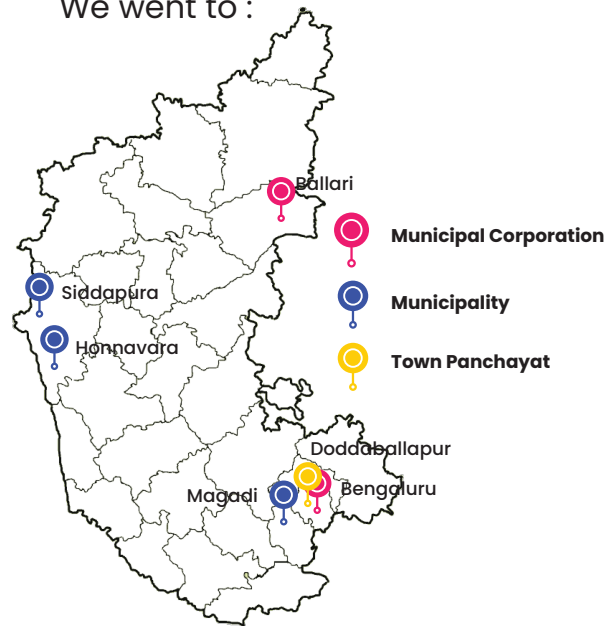
- » As part of primary research, additional 15 interviews were conducted to capture diverse voices, including councillors from – transgender community, recently upgraded city governments, small city governments, Jammu and Kashmir and north-eastern states.

Karnataka

We spoke to :

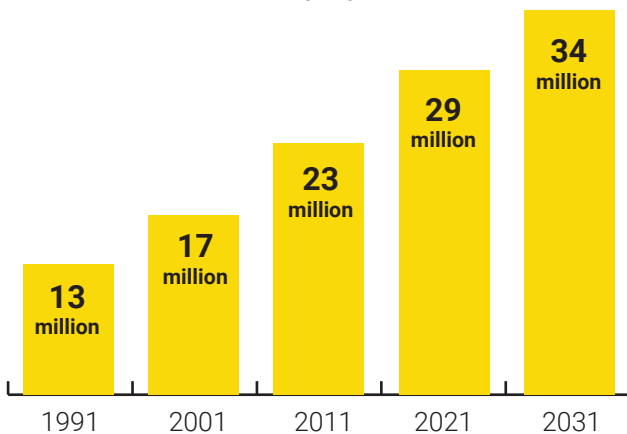


We went to :



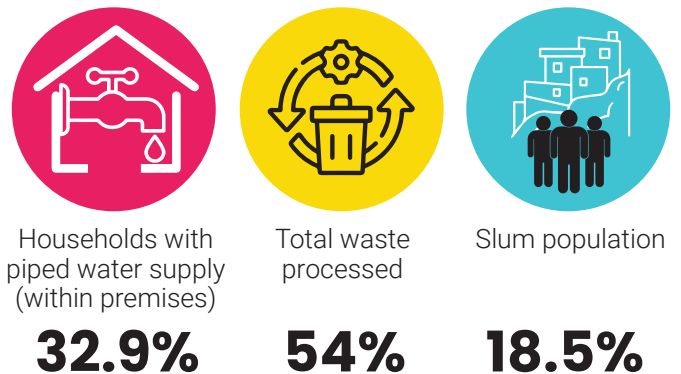
Cities – the theatres for 21st century challenges

Karnataka's urban population



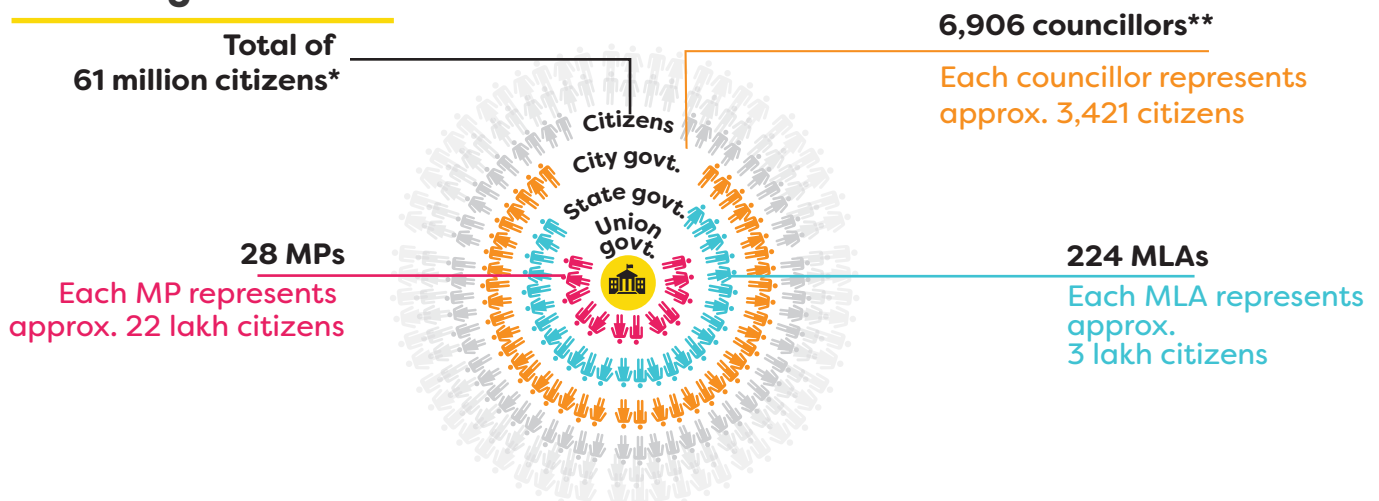
Source: Census 1991, Census 2011, Report of Technical Group on Population Projections, 2019

Karnataka's urban service level benchmarks



Source: Observer Research Foundation's Report on solid waste management in urban India, 2020, Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs' Handbook of urban statistics, 2019, Karnataka Slum Development Board's website

Councillors – the elected leaders of our cities are key to solving 21st century urban challenges. They are the bridge between citizens and the government at the “first mile.”

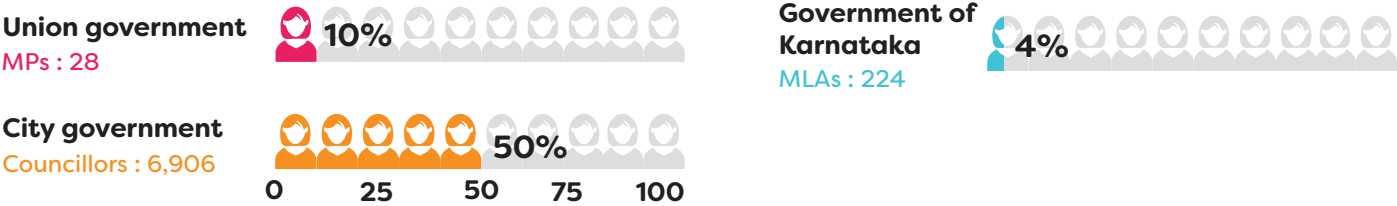


Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the websites of Lok Sabha, State Assembly, and Local Government Directory website

*Population as per Census 2011 | **Councillors represent only urban population

Women councillors are a significant leadership force in cities.

The Constitution of India provides for 33% reservation for women in the city council. However, 50% of seats in city councils of Karnataka have been reserved for women.



Source: 17th Lok sabha, Gender-wise representation of members. (2019). Lok Sabha House of the People. <https://bit.ly/3MQtyg3> Analysis based on the data made available by the website of Karnataka state assembly, and state mandate on women's reservation in city councils.

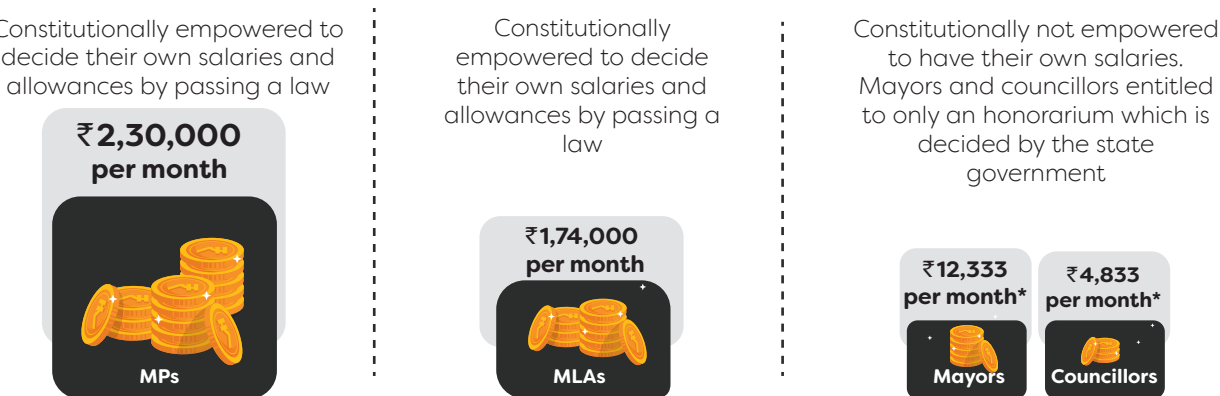
However, councillors in Karnataka's cities, like any other Indian cities, are highly disempowered. This is because city governments are yet to be recognised as a unit of governance in India.

Councillors are disempowered over the proverbial 3 Fs – Funds, Functions, and Functionaries.

1. Disempowered over funds
- » Only Bengaluru is empowered to collect all key taxes such as property, entertainment, advertisement and profession taxes.
- » No city councils are empowered to raise borrowings or invest surplus funds without the prior approval of the state government.
- » No city councils are empowered to have a final say in approving their city budgets.
2. Disempowered over functions
- » Only Bengaluru has been devolved with all eighteen functions under the twelfth schedule of the Constitution, by law. Only nine functions are devolved to other municipal corporations, and six functions to municipalities respectively. *
3. Disempowered over functionaries
- » No city councils have the power to appoint, initiate disciplinary action or terminate the services of municipal officers.

*Karnataka's municipal legislations distinguish between 'obligatory' and 'discretionary' functions. In this analysis, only those functions devolved as 'obligatory' have been treated as devolved functions by law.

Councillors in Karnataka do not receive adequate pay.



Average honorarium across types of city councils in Karnataka (city corporation, city municipal council, town municipal council, town panchayat and notified area councils)

Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the Lok Sabha website, Karnataka state legislation on salaries and allowances for MLAs, and data shared by the respective city elected representatives and officials.

Note: Calculations are based on the monthly base salary/honorarium.

Mayors in Karnataka are indirectly elected and do not have a five-year term co-terminus with that of the council.

What did we hear from councillors in Karnataka?

1. 12 out of 13 councillors interviewed feel that their role is not clearly defined.

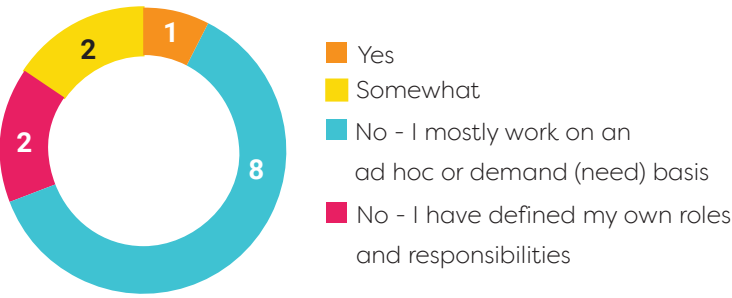


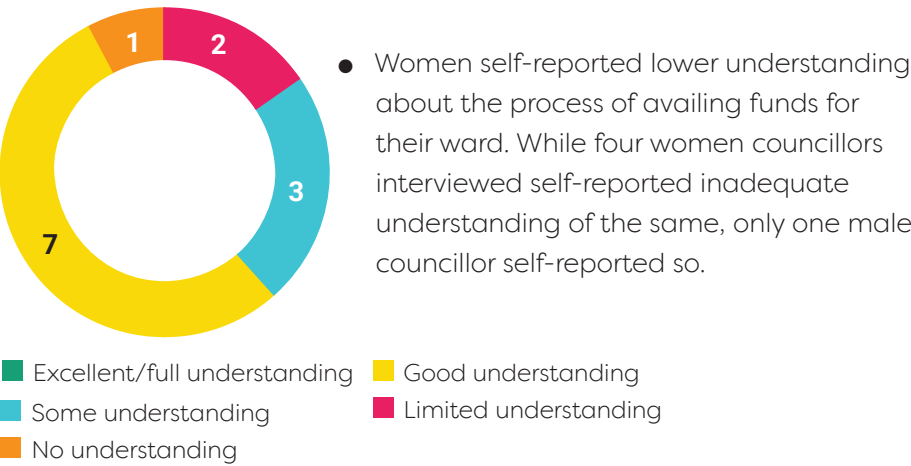
Fig. 1: Do councillors feel that their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined?



“Definitely my knowledge about the functions of councillor has given a better insight into different wings of the ULBs, how to integrate them into getting the work done. It has also helped me get an effective understanding about prioritising and resolving issues effectively.”

Female councillor*
First-time councillor, Bengaluru

2. 5 out of 13 councillors interviewed feel that they don’t have a good (or excellent) understanding about the process of availing funds for their ward.



“I did not have any idea of what were the others sources that I could tap into for funding projects in my ward. Due to my sheer determination to get things done in my ward, I used to reach out to all and any stakeholder to avail funds. I used to get funds collected from MLA, MP, SC and ST Fund and get work done.”

Fig. 2: Do councillors understand the process of availing funds for the development of their ward?



Parveen Bhanu
Former councillor, Ballari

3. 100% councillors (N=13) interviewed feel that a systematic leadership programme is critical.



Fig.3: Councillor’s perception of a systematic leadership programme

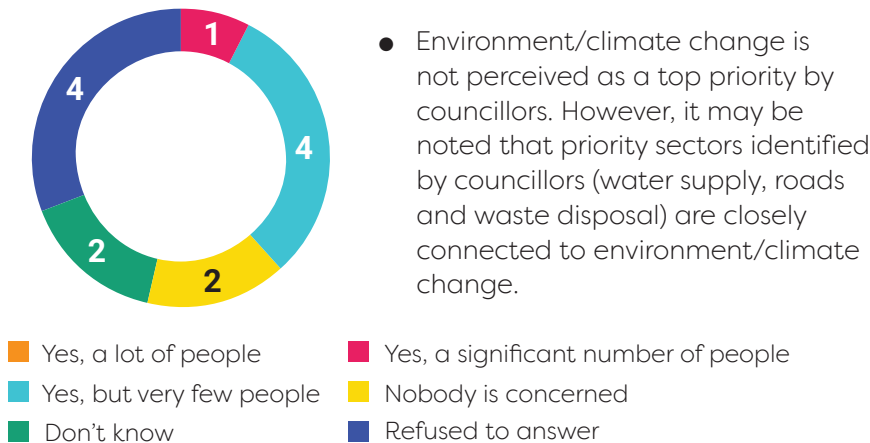


“Not many are equipped with adequate knowledge about the structure, roles, responsibilities; also, many still stay silent and don't voice their opinion, due to myriad reasons. They also need training on how to interact with citizens and resolve their issue. Hence, I feel training for councillor or any elected representative for that matter is pertinent.”

Female councillor*
First-time councillor, Bengaluru

* Requested anonymity

4. Only 1 out of 13 councillors said that a significant number of people are concerned about environment/climate change in their ward.



"It is very important to train councillors about environment. It is also important for development of the city's vision."



M Shivaraju
Former councillor, Bengaluru

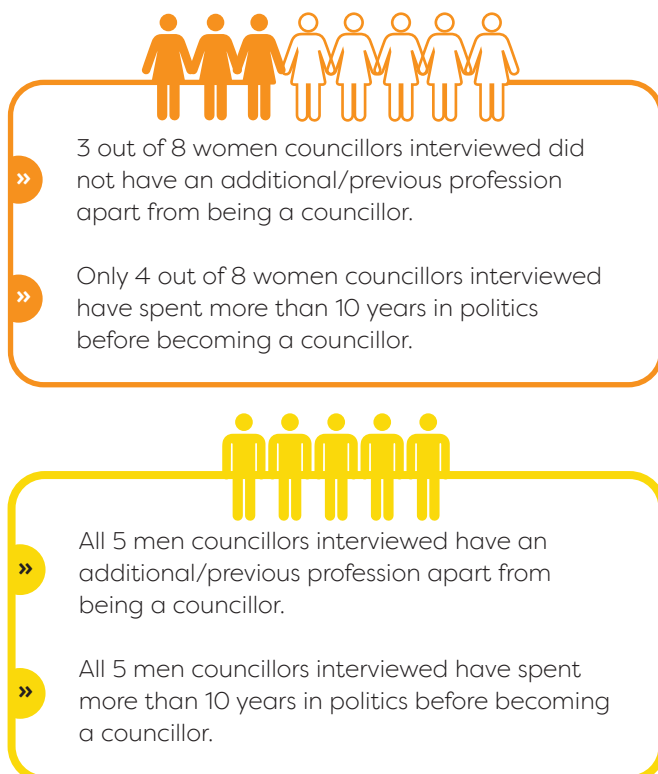
Fig. 4: Do councillors think that the people of their ward are concerned about environment/climate change?

5. Councillors identified five training areas for self-development.



Fig. 5: Top training areas identified by councillors of Karnataka for self-development

6. Men and women councillors have different starting points in terms of work place and political experience as well as expectations of the society.



Top five challenges faced by women councillors

- Society does not think women should be elected representatives.
- Women councillors are not considered to be assertive, knowledgeable and able to lead well.
- It is challenging to cope with councillor and household responsibilities.
- Women councillors are seen as figure-heads of male family members, not real leaders.
- Society does not perceive politics/local government to be a choice of career where women are safe or can flourish.



"I used to carry my three-year-old kid when I went to meetings along with my mother. My mother would wait in the car while I attended meetings."



Kalpana Shivanna
Ex-president, Magadi

Fig. 6: Different starting points for men and women councillors in Karnataka in their city politics journey

7. 11 out of 13 councillors feel that they are not paid adequately.

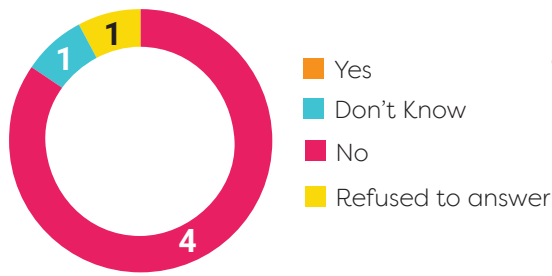


Fig. 7: Do councillors feel that they are paid adequately?

8. 100% councillors (N=13) feel that there should be greater decentralisation to be truly empowered.

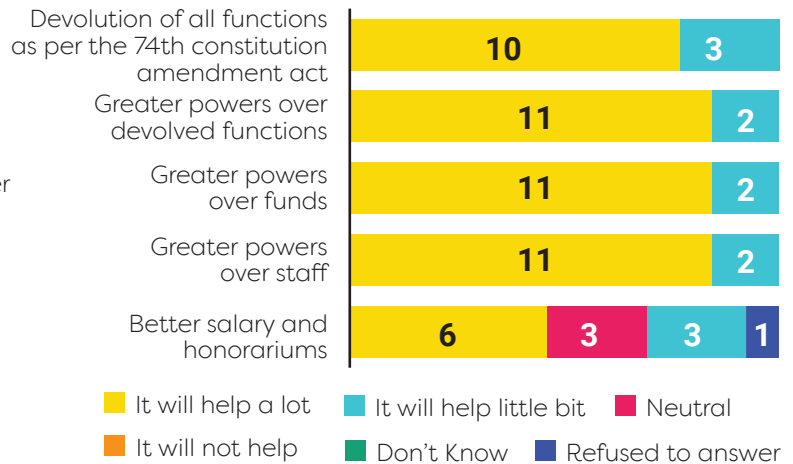


Fig. 8: Do councillors feel that greater decentralisation is important?

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