OORVANI FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

OORVANI Foundation
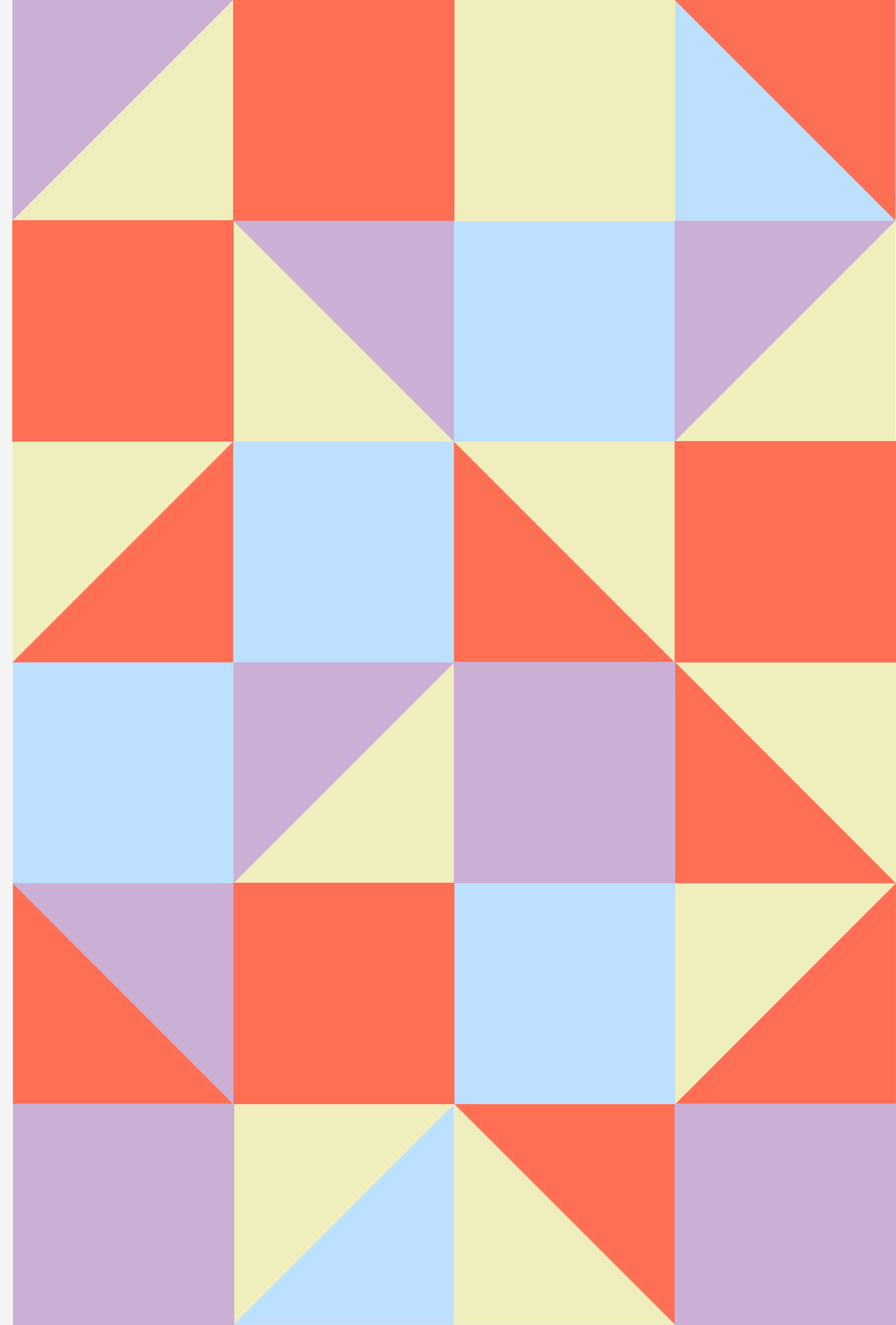
Oorvani Foundation is a non-profit committed to civic engagement, citizenship and communities. We enable open knowledge platforms that help catalyse better cities through civic media, open data, citizen engagement and community events.

MISSION

Oorvani Foundation connects people who want better cities with civic information, tools, resources and networks they need to make it happen.

VISION

Empowered citizens making cities and neighbourhoods sustainable, liveable and equitable.

PROGRAMMMES

CITIZEN MATTERS — Civic media with insightful reports on critical urban issues, ideas and solutions for cities.

Open City Urban Data Portal — India's leading civic-tech & urban data commons and community, enabling data based solutioning.

Civic Learning HUB — Courses, workshops and other programmes to help citizens learn, engage and act.

FROM THE TRUSTEES

Looking back, we believe 2023-24 was an inflection point. We started noticing some distinct trends. While media attention was focused on big political dramas and selective social outrage, people's concerns about everyday issues increased. Worries over jobs, health and careers, the constant barrage of often negative news from mainstream media, and the hectic pace of city life made people switch off from news and civic engagement. At the same time, AI technology became mainstream and started influencing how information is gathered, processed and consumed.

On the ground, active citizens and civic changemakers struggled to get local systems to respond. Fighting the same battles again and again was wearing people out. Our work also evolved to address such challenges.

At Oorvani, we adopted a more intense form of engagement with the civic ecosystem that we now call the "Change Network". This supports our main programmes – Citizen Matters as a knowledge platform, Open City as a data platform, and the workshops and courses that form the "Learning Hub".

We looked at providing people easier forms of learning and contributing. There was more hand holding and mentoring through all of this. We adopted new forms of outreach like citizen clinics and Active Citizen Newsletters. Our training sessions were shorter and incorporated more of "doing". We engaged with more young people. The Civic Journalism Training Programme, a partnership with Youth ki Awaaz, provided a platform for young people to understand the issues of their constituencies / cities and the need to engage with local MPs. The Environmental Reporting Fellowship in partnership with Wipro Foundation saw young writers and professionals from Delhi-NCR learn and write about critical issues in the capital.

Over the years, we have had regular citizen meetups and community events. In 2024, we built on our 15 years of experience and learnings and organised the first-ever India Civic Summit. The convening brought together 150+ active citizens, changemakers and community leaders for a day-long event aimed at fostering dialogue, sharing inspirational stories, and strategising solutions for urban challenges.

We look forward to strengthening the civic ecosystem and increasing the impact of our work, empowering the many cogs of the civic wheel.

"Oorvani and Citizen Matters are pillars of community, highlighting civic issues for every local citizen. They have covered every civic issue that we deal with in our day to day life. There is truth and facts in every piece. I look forward to reading and learning new news issues eagerly. I sure am their loyal fan.

I have (engaged with Citizen Matters/Oorvani) in various capacities – as a reader, contributor, learner and in sharing experience since 2019. I am no writer but they helped me write on a few civic issues that I am connected to......it felt good to be on that side of the bench too.

Their citizen clinic event with various citizen activists was a great learning experience. It encouraged us to be part of the solution rather than (being) silent spectators. Their events have been enlightening, great sharing, learning experiences."

Jayanti Valmiki, Citizen Journalist

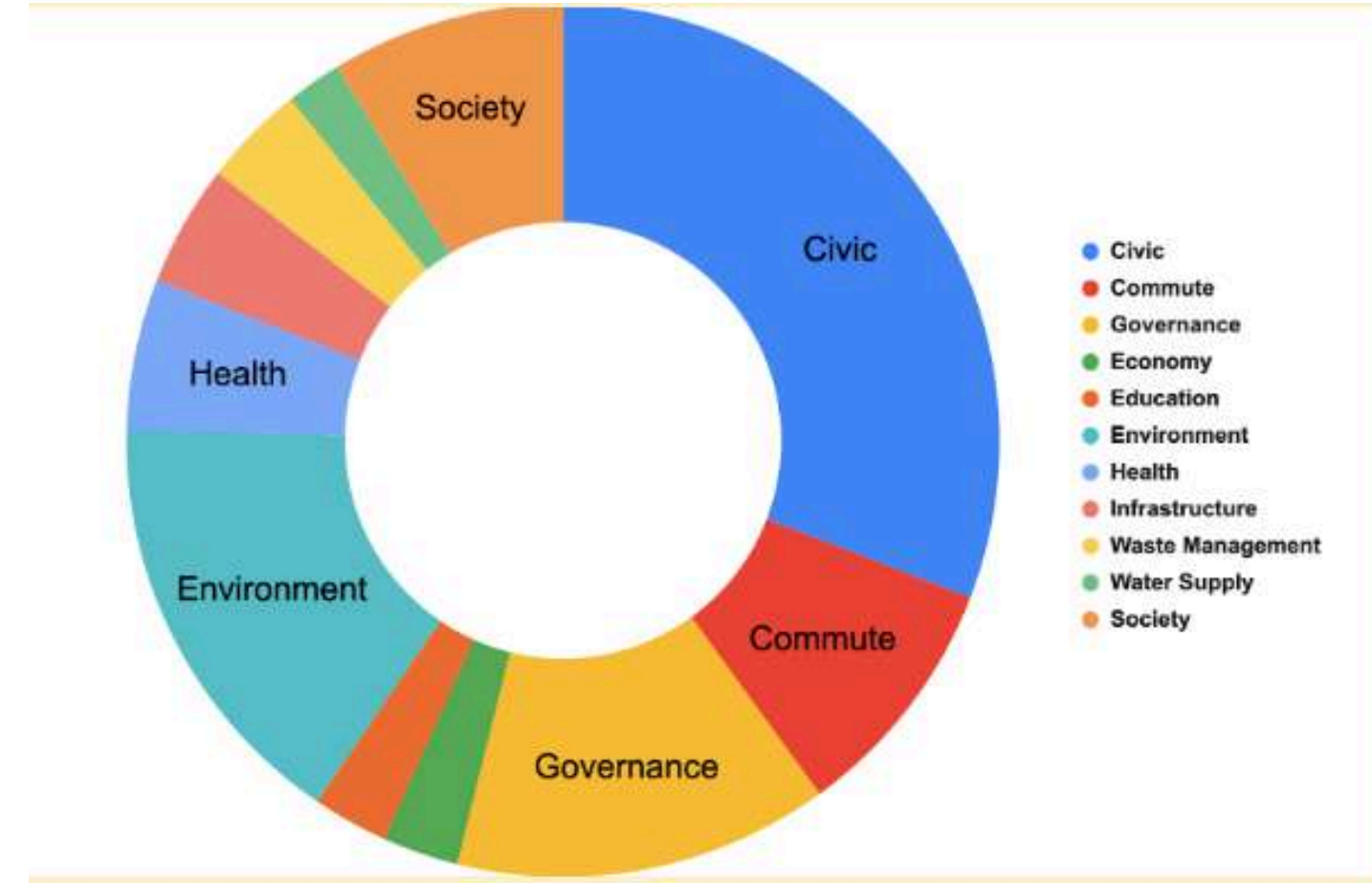"Citizen Matters has been consistent in covering a vast breath of civic and related issues that concern citizens. Whether it is regarding a civic issue, pedestrian rights, heritage, role of a parastatal, or anything else, I have found that Citizen Matters always has very reliable, well researched information from experts and citizen journalists... I also ensure that I contribute (whenever) there was information to be shared.

Citizen Matters has a very important and well appreciated role in informing, creating awareness, setting context. creating a sense of gravitas and a deeper understanding, and sometimes even influencing. A tool that helps many citizens wanting to make a difference. And the more we contribute, the more we read, the better we are and the better the city."

Priya Chetty Rajagopal, Active Citizen

IN NUMBERS

820 articles

155 citizen contributions

30 data stories

99 explainers

233 data sets

1631 data resources

04 data projects

05 data jams

01 summit

12 training sessions

09 webinars

ARTICLES - TOPIC-WISE BREAKUP

Legend:
- Civic
- Commute
- Governance
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Health
- Infrastructure
- Waste Management
- Water Supply
- Society

"Citizen Matters is a no nonsense not-for-TRP media platform. There is immense data to analyse, articulate and derive meaningful directions for society. It's an archive of quality information."

Raghu Rajagopal, Active Citizen and Citizen Journalist

🏆 RECOGNITION

Shobana Radhakrishnan's photo story in Citizen Matters, Life in single-room homes in Chennai received a special mention in the Ashish Yechury Memorial Award for Photojournalism at the ACJ Journalism Awards 2022.

Citizen Matters was one of the 12 global media organisations selected for the International Press Institute (IPI) 's 'Local News Accelerator' initiative, a three-month programme which will equip the cohort with skills and strategies to grow their audiences and empower their teams. IPI had earlier published a study on how journalism around the world is innovating to find sustainable ways to serve local communities around the world, and Citizen Matters was one of the publications profiled as a case study, as part of their Local Journalism Project.

GOVERNANCE/
INFRASTRUCTURE

Resilience during adversity: How RWAs in Tambaram helped combat floods
When the cyclone hit Chennai, residents' groups from this suburb swung into action for relief work and to prevent flooding of homes. This story, written in collaboration with a citizen writer during the December floods, was shared widely among RWAs and republished by other media.

Chennai's new bus terminus in Kilambakkam: Part 1: **EXPLAINER** & Part 2: **CHALLENGES**
A useful guide to the city's new transport hub that proved a popular article. The explainer was even shared on the local government agency CMDA's website and the articles were republished by The News Minute.

Kannappar Thidal: Where residents continue their 20-year wait for a proper home
We continued our coverage of this housing issue where 115 families have been fighting for safe and liveable homes. The issue was raised in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in April 2023. We also collaborated with a local NGO working on housing resettlement of the urban poor for a follow up article in October 2023.

HOUSING

Our coverage of housing in Chennai focused on the flawed state policy around eviction and resettlement of informal and marginalised communities, and the effect it has on their lives as well as on the city as a whole.

Chennai's decades-long policy failure to address housing issues of the urban poor
Looks at the plight of citizens evicted from various sites in the city. It highlights the often abysmal conditions of the new 'homes' where they are resettled and calls for a complete revamp of housing policy for the urban poor.

School, interrupted: The toll of mid-academic year evictions on children in Chennai
A useful guide to the city's new transport hub that proved a popular article. The explainer was even shared on the local government agency CMDA's website and the articles republished by The News Minute.

Can Residents' Welfare Associations solve key issues in TNUHDB homes in Chennai?
The Tamil nadu government introduced a scheme called 'Nam Kudiyiruppu Nam Poruppu' (Our Tenements, Our Responsibility) for community maintenance in tenements provided by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board. This guide explained how such RWAs can be formed, potential challenges and how to work around those to ensure effective operation.

MUMBAI SERIES ON SLUM REHABILITATION

Is it possible to improve maintenance of SRA buildings? Why so many SRA buildings in Mumbai are in such poor shape
The Slum Rehabilitation Authority in Mumbai has not only failed to provide the required number of houses but is unable to monitor or maintain the existing buildings. This series looks at the problems of maintenance, shifting accountability between the builders, SRA and residents.

State halves lock-in period for SRA housing: Pro-poor move or push for commercialisation?
This article examines the recent development of reducing the lock-in period that allows the owners to sell their tenements more easily.

No more free rehousing, but government offers discounted homes to slum dwellers
More than half of the city lives in informal settlements. This story brings out the doubts and dilemmas over the new SRA policy that asks residents to pay Rs 2.5 lakh for a tenement.

City fails to provide homes for those displaced by infrastructure projects
This article sheds light on how rehabilitation remains a distant dream for thousands of project affected people, who continue to live in dilapidated and even dangerous buildings for decades.

SERIES ON POTHOLE MANAGEMENT IN BENGALURU

Pothole menace: Why Bengaluru's roads resemble the lunar surface
Great plans on paper, but the potholes refuse to go away
Despite the BBMP's initiatives, including the FixMyStreet app and cold mix plants, potholes continue to plague road users in Bengaluru, worsened by monsoons and utility cuts. This series highlights both issues and solutions to the problem.

SERIES ON BENGALURU'S FOOTPATHS AND PEDESTRIAN WOES

28,544 cases for parking on Bengaluru footpaths in 5 months speak of disregard for rules
Great plans on paper, but the potholes refuse to go away
Despite repeated promises and budget allocations by the BBMP, the city's pedestrian infrastructure remains inadequate. The series explored if better design and increased budgets would make Bengaluru pedestrian-friendly.

The promise of Gruha Lakshmi: Challenges of an ambitious scheme
The article analysed the implementation and effectiveness of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme, launched by the Congress government, that transfers Rs. 2,000 monthly to the bank accounts of female heads of eligible households.

Mumbai hawkers in limbo: Government offers loans but continues eviction drives
Though law recognises hawking, delay in marking hawking zones or issuing licences, leaves the vendors vulnerable to evictions. This story highlights the dichotomy in the administration's decision to give them loans but go on with eviction drives in Mumbai.

SPECIAL SERIES ON KANNADA IN BENGALURU

A series on Bengaluru's language discourse: Citizen Matters traced the history of Kannada signage rules in Bengaluru and that of the Kannada movement and took stock of state efforts to promote Kannada

Kannada signage rules in Bengaluru: A history

Kannada movement in Bengaluru: A history

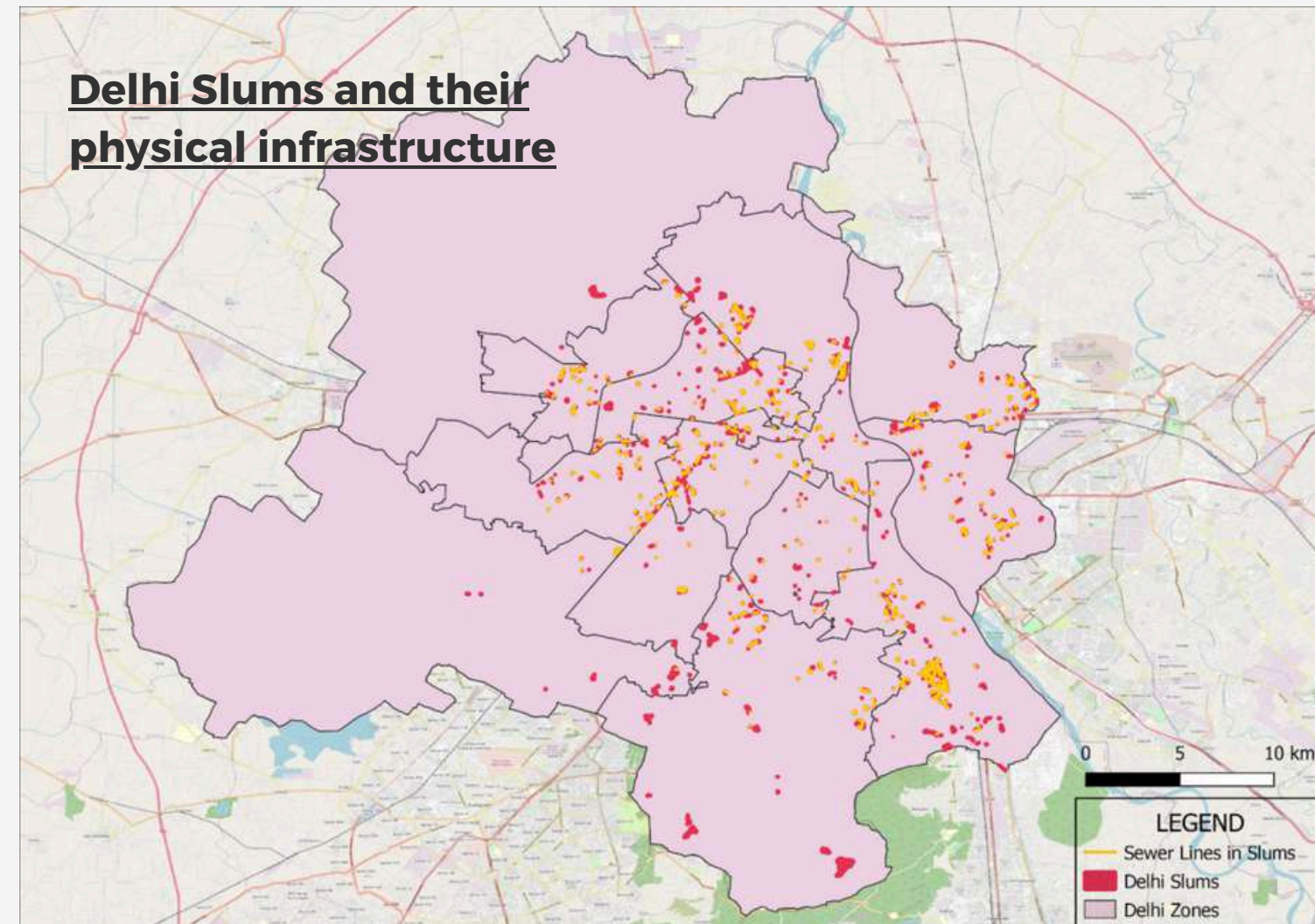**Stronger state support needed for 'Kannada Gottilla' to 'Baruthe' journey**

DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Villages Around Our Cities

Crime in India's Metros

Delhi Slums and their physical infrastructure
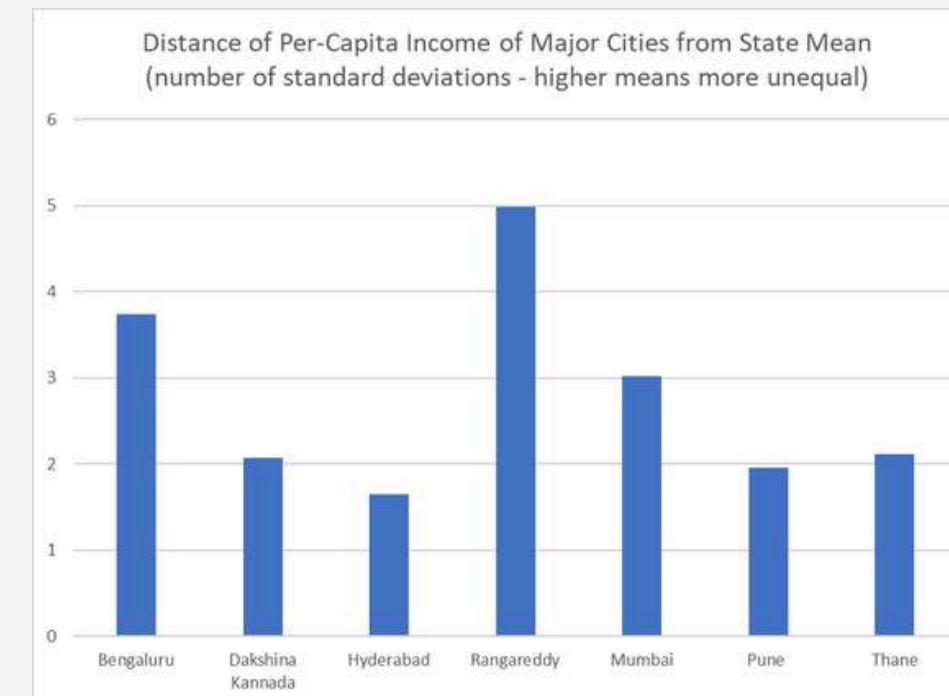

LEGEND
Sewer Lines in Slums
Delhi Slums
Delhi Zones

DATA STORIES

Analyzing the pro-incumbency in Bengaluru
Going into the election in May 2023, an analysis in Citizen Matters by Deep C and Srinivas Alavilli had found that 16 of the 28 MLAs in Bengaluru had been in their seat since 2008. 22 of the 28 MLAs had been in their seats for more than one term. Only six MLAs were first-timers.

How has BBMP's spending on different categories varied across assembly constituencies in the past 5 years?
Most of the assembly constituencies in the interior of Bengaluru had an average spending of Rs.200-400 crore in the last five years, while the constituencies at the periphery of the district got the most money.

Distance of Per-Capita Income of Major Cities from State Mean (number of standard deviations - higher means more unequal)

Economic census analysis: Income gaps

EVENTS

Fight hydra-headed cybercrime: Exercise caution, register complaints quickly, December 2023
To raise awareness on cybercrime, we hosted a citizen clinic titled "How to protect yourself from cyber fraud?" The panel moderated by Prachi Pinglay-Plumber, Consulting Editor included Karan Saini, security researcher and technologist; Gautam Mengle, Senior Assistant Editor Mid-Day; N S Nappinai, Supreme Court advocate and founder of Cyber Saathi; and Sanjay Shintre, (IPS) Superintendent of Police, Maharashtra, Cybercrime.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION/ JAMS

BBMP – Work orders, Budgets and Processes Datajam, July 2023
What can a deep dive into the BBMP budgets and work orders data reveal about how the money is being spent? What can we find out about where the money is coming from? What are the processes that drive how BBMP spends its money, and how can they be improved? These were the questions participants tried to answer in the datajam organised in partnership with Janaagraha and Karnataka Ward Samiti Balaga.

Bengaluru Constituencies Datajam, April 2023
The datajam organised in partnership with WRI and Janaagraha had participants to evaluate how the 28 constituencies performed in terms of school education, health vulnerability, civic participation and access to public transport.

"I attended the Bengaluru constituencies Datajam hosted by Oorvani Foundation at IIM Bangalore. The Datajam is indeed a great platform to find like-minded volunteers working towards a common public good or goal. I found the experience deeply motivating and intellectually challenging. I certainly learned a lot from it."

Dr Kanish Debnath, Participant

COMMUTE

The case for merging Mumbai's suburban public bus systems
Daily commute can be exasperating for people from distant suburbs of Mumbai, where a unified bus transport system can play a huge role.

How Valmiki Nagar residents ensured proper relaying of roads in their locality
A citizen journalist gives tips and solutions on engaging with civic authorities in Chennai to ensure good quality and timely road repairs.

Pedals of change: Chennai's shift to a sustainable mobility future
Prioritising bicycles over cars and promoting the use of public transport can increase Chennai's sustainability quotient.

Traffic jam 24/7: When a Thane service road leads to mall, tech parks and apartments
The traffic on Viviana Mall Service Road in Thane is unmanageable already and it might get worse when the metro line opens.

How Cantonment redevelopment will impact Station Road traffic
Problems posed by development outside Cantonment Railway Station need solutions mutually agreed upon by all stakeholders.

#AppKaraBusKara: Pune campaign calls for bus app to make commute easy
A call to support the demand for a bus app to make Pune commute seamless and hassle-free.

A citizen's group in Kanakapura Road is trying to solve commuters' woes
The story of how a citizens' group on Kanakapura Road addressed a critical commuter pain-point, using surveys, social media, and meetings with traffic authorities.

SERIES: PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR COMMUTERS

This series looks at the available medical emergency facilities at key transit points and commuter hubs in Chennai and Mumbai, to check the level of awareness among the public. The articles look into the challenges and suggest steps for bystanders to intervene when they see a person in need of immediate medical care.

Facing a medical emergency in Chennai railway stations? Here is what you should know

Koyambedu bus stand must take steps to improve preparedness to face medical emergencies

Chennai Metro commuters left in the dark about emergency medical facilities at stations

When seconds matter: All about medical emergency services at Chennai Airport

Emergency medical rooms at every Mumbai railway station will save lives say passengers

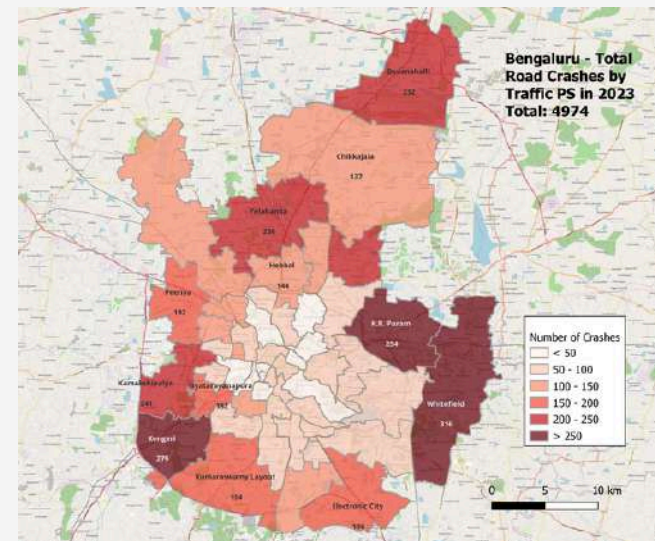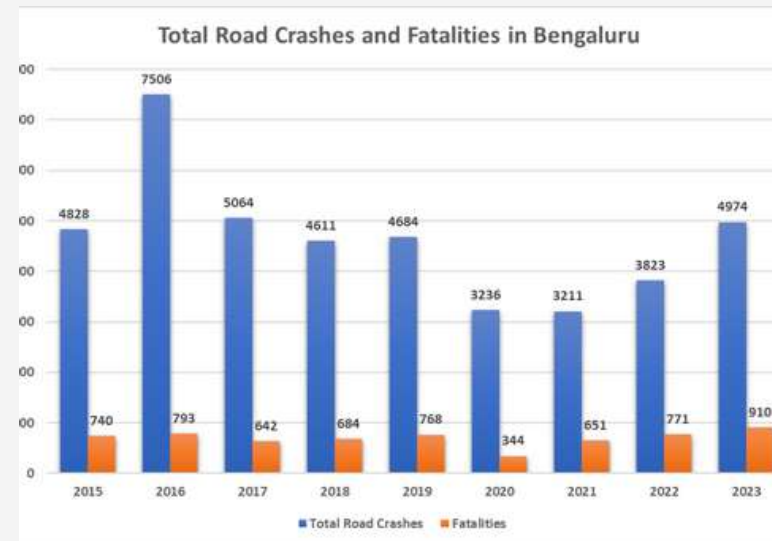**Medical facilities at Mumbai airport adequate for passengers, but not for visitors**

STORIES

DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Bengaluru Traffic Police's Challan Automation

Should Bengaluru legalise Bike Taxis?

Road Crashes in Bengaluru

EVENTS

ORR-Sarjapura gridlock: Govt, IT sector, commuters must collaborate for solutions
About 7 lakh commute to ORR-Bellandur; between 75,000 and 1 lakh live on and around Sarjapura, facing transport and infrastructure challenges.

Bengaluru Walkability Datajam
Open City organised a datajam on the topic of Walkable Streets, in partnership with Sensing Local and WRI. The jam had data from walkability audits across 10 wards in Bengaluru, covering 350 km of footpaths and 185 junctions, collected with the help of over 150 volunteers. Participants dove deep into this data to offer insights into pedestrian infrastructure in different parts of the city, its impact and identify potential entry points for intervention.

BBMP – Work Orders, Budgets and Processes Datajam
BBMP's budgeting, finances and processes affect the daily lives of those who live in Bengaluru in multiple ways. This datajam hoped to get common citizens to look at the spending as well as processes to understand how BBMP works. The goal was to get people to engage with the city government with what they find and demand better services.

COMMUNITY

PROJECTS

Mobility in Sarjapura Road Surroundings
Open City worked with "SoS – Save our Sarjapura Road – Fix the Traffic" a a coalition of neighbourhood groups on a survey to collect information on the commuting patterns of residents in South-East Bengaluru – those living around Bellandur and Sarjapura Road. The data was used by the citizen groups to advocate for better public transport, better footpaths and safer roads.

MASTERCLASS

Masterclass on Urban Mobility: Why is there traffic?
Why is there traffic in our cities? Is it because of narrow roads, clogged junctions, too many vehicles, or poor public transport? What kind of infrastructure can solve our traffic problem – wider roads, flyovers, elevated roads, better footpaths, cycle lanes, metro or buses?

SURVEYS

- The Sarjapur mobility survey tried to gauge commuting patterns in the areas around Sarjapur Road and the interest in the community for sustainable public transport. The survey was taken by more than 1500 participants and helped understand the need for buses better.
- The bus shelter survey was to identify the state of bus shelters in BMTC stops in different parts of the city. With around 80 responses, it found that close to 40% of the bus stops don't have shelters or functioning shelters. And in some cases, where there are shelters, buses don't necessarily stop at the shelter but at a distance.

"It was great to continue participation in the Walkable Cities' Walkability Audit, sharing my experience and insights. My highlight was to interact with people from diverse backgrounds to understand other creative perspectives."

Nithya, Datajam Participant

CLIMATE AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Oil spill in Chennai's Manali area can cause irreparable damage to Ennore Creek wetland
A citizen contribution from environmentalist Deepak V. The author was then contacted by other media for inputs for their stories on the Ennore oil spill and also interviewed for an LMES documentary on the topic, which has reached over a quarter million viewers at last count!

The environmental hazards of Bannerghatta National Park's proposed elevated flyover
This video story covered the issues with the proposed elevated flyover within Bengaluru's only National Park. The story was viewed over 1500 times on Youtube, 4000 times on Instagram and 96,000 times on the Inshort App. It was also republished by The News Minute.
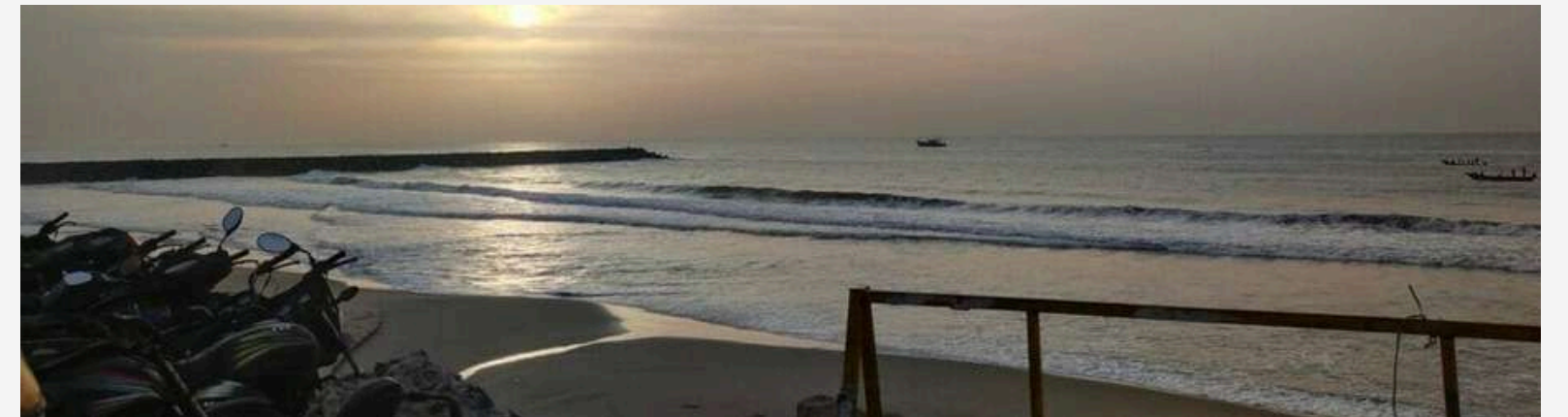
Industrial pollution in Chennai: Through the lens of the toxic tour
Is industrial pollution in north Chennai, a 'north Chennai problem' or a Chennai problem? A scholar from New York University cited the piece in her dissertation.

More heat, less business: Street vendors struggle as temperatures soar in Mumbai

With summers getting hotter by the year, Mumbai witnesses scorching heat for several weeks.This article examines how rising heat has severe health implications for street vendors, and how their business and incomes suffer as weather gets hotter.

Chanakya Wetlands: In the pink or on the brink?

A photo-essay describing the biodiversity of the Chanakya Wetlands near Mumbai and the beauty of the flamingoes that migrate to this area every year. It highlights the current threats to its ecology and the efforts of local people to protect the wetlands amidst rapid urbanisation.

Saving Navi Mumbai's mangroves, one week at a time, for over 150 weeks

Preserving the fragile ecosystem of mangroves from the onslaught of plastic and other waste is not easy. But this was made possible by a community-led initiative to clean up 250 tonnes of garbage from the mangroves of Navi Mumbai and raise awareness about the issue.

SERIES: RAINFALL PATTERNS IN BENGALURU

Over 100 years of Bengaluru rains decoded
Can a little boy affect Bengaluru's rains?

This series on Bengaluru's rainfall analyses over 100 years of data, which show significant fluctuations and unpredictable patterns influenced by El Nino and La Nina. It highlights the challenges in managing urban infrastructure amid varying rainfall trends and underscores the need for better city planning to mitigate flooding and water shortages.

Environment Reporting fellows

In November 2023, Oorvani Foundation launched the Citizen Matters – Urban Environmental Reporting Fellowship with from Wipro Foundation. Six young journalists were selected for the fellowship and they had the opportunity to enhance their skills in environmental reporting drawing attention to the environmental challenges faced by Delhi-NCR, providing a comprehensive overview of systemic issues and their interconnectedness.

Activities

Fellows attended sessions led by experts in air quality, water, solid waste, biodiversity, climate change, urban development, and multimedia storytelling. They were provided mentoring, and provide guidance, and feedback throughout the fellowship.

The fellows attended talks and training sessions conducted by experts and received guidance from mentors. Over a three-month period, they have delved deeply into various concerns, initiatives, and potential solutions related to climate change, urban environment, and sustainability challenges in Delhi-NCR. The fellows produced compelling stories on environmental issues that affect the residents of the Delhi-National Capital Region and explored responses to these problems. Their work introduces innovative approaches and equitable solutions proposed by civic and environmental groups and policymakers.

Delhi's homeless stare at cruel summer as temporary shelters set to be dismantled

The Delhi Heat Action plan makes no provisions for the homeless; winter shelters are taken down in the equally harsh summers.

Anuj Behal, Fellow

Unplanned growth, flawed notification endanger Delhi wetlands

Increased public involvement and lessons from successful restoration attempts can help revive the crucial wetlands under threat in the city.

Nuzhat Khan, Fellow

URBAN OCTOBER

How changemakers play a key role in preserving habitats and making their cities more liveable.

Initiated by UN-Habitat, the month starts with World Habitat Day on October 1st and ends with World Cities Day on October 31st.

We may discuss and debate several aspects of rapid urbanisation, but the one fact that is unanimously agreed upon is that civic participation can be the force behind preserving what needs to be saved and changing what needs to go.

Engaging communities in informal settlements in the climate change agenda

Turning climate change into a tangible concept for informal settlement communities, and also gaining monetary and other benefits in the long run.

One man's seven-day effort to preserve Gubbalala lake

BBMP may have planted saplings, but the efforts of one man has ensured that they do not die. All it took was seven days to bring about changes.

Behind the tree that is still standing in Bengaluru, there is a person guarding it

Munishwara Lakshmi's love and dedication towards trees led her to nurture a banyan tree over 34 years. The tree provides shade to commuters.

How a commuter's complaint pushed BMRCL to make lift and escalator available for all

Social media is a powerful tool for metro commuters to post their complaints. A commuter's effort bore fruit within a short period of time.

URBAN OCTOBER

Getting piped water supply to homes in Chitlapakkam

After two decades, many homes in Chitlapakkam will receive piped water supply thanks to the relentless efforts of residents.

Can residents' welfare associations solve key issues in TNUHDB homes in Chennai?

TNUHDB has helped form RWAs in its tenements in Chennai. But the scope of work remains limited and does not address social issues.

This Chennai apartment's self-sustaining sewage treatment plant a model to emulate

The sewage treatment plant in this south Chennai apartment complex is designed so the residents can reuse the black water.

How the residents of Adyar banded together to save a tree

Residents of Gandhi Nagar in Adyar worked with the Greater Chennai Corporation to ensure the transplantation of a fallen ficus tree.

When Navi Mumbai residents came together to protect their wetlands...

A group of Navi Mumbai residents took legal action to protect an important wetland (also a flamingo habitat) from being razed by CIDCO.

Saving Navi Mumbai's mangroves, one week at a time, for over 150 weeks

The relentless efforts of Dharmesh and the volunteers, not only transformed the mangrove landscape of Seawood but has also instilled a sense of pride and responsibility within the citizens.

Bandra citizens combine technology and collective action to clear garbage dump

When citizens in Bandra came together, they were able to remove a garbage dump with the help of civic officials and technology.

Dabul residents strive for a zero-waste locality

Concerned by amount of plastic generated, parish member starts a 'green cell' to take collective action as a community.

WASTE

Rampant garbage burning reveals gaps in waste management in Pune's Pimpri-Chinchwad
A citizen journalist came upon piles of industrial waste burning on Pimpri Chinchwad's Varale-Ambethan Road, and looked deeper into it.

Why Chennai residents don't want an eco-park in Perungudi dump yard
The proposed biodiversity park in the Perungudi dump yard within the Pallikaranai marshland would mean an intrusion into the eco-sensitive area.

Pongal Bird Count: What winged friends teach us amidst the urban chaos
The yearly Pongal bird survey that happens in Chennai and other parts of the State is an important exercise in promoting biodiversity.

Cooking up solutions: Addressing Bengaluru's urban commercial kitchen effluents
BBMP collects solid waste from urban commercial kitchens, but liquid waste is often disposed of into sewer lines or stormwater drains.

Escalating garbage crisis in Bengaluru's Ilyas Nagar, residents seek BBMP action
People seem to feel that waste dumping is quite acceptable in Ilyas Nagar. BBMP is yet to act on residents' complaints.

Chennai floods: How the vulnerable are always short-changed
Disasters don't affect all equally. This article delves into the socio-economic vulnerability of flood-affected areas in Chennai.

Reduction in Kharghar forest fires, thanks to proactive administration and alert citizens
Kharghar hills have been a hotspot for forest fires for many years. However, awareness programmes seem to have contributed to a marked decline in recent times.

Lake Health Index reveals pollution concerns in Bengaluru's water bodies
The citizen-driven Lake Health Index project assessed the condition of three lakes in the city: Ulsoor, Doddabommasandra and Shivapura.

Hundreds of crores of SWM budget lie unutilised, yet no sign of scientific landfills
In Yelachenahalli, the non-profit Saahas Zero Waste is working to improve waste segregation through daily awareness campaigns, which have led to some improvements. The article examines the issues and challenges behind why segregation levels have remained low.

SERIES ON STPS AND MANUAL SCAVENGING

How STPs are causing manual scavenging to continue in Bengaluru

Challenges in Bengaluru's sewage treatment plants: Awareness gaps and inaccurate technologies

This series examines how sewage treatment plants in the city's apartment complexes have perpetuated a new form of manual scavenging, even though the practice has been banned on paper for quite some time. It also looks at initiatives that could effectively eliminate manual scavenging and promote sustainable sanitation measures.

EVENTS

Citizen Clinic: Valuable tips to become a 'zero-waste' household

Citizen Matters Chennai organised a Citizen Clinic on how to become a zero-waste household with a panel of experts. The online clinic provided answers on how to segregate waste at source; how to avoid plastic and what are some eco-friendly alternatives; how to find recycling units near your home and how to get help with composting in Chennai.

CITIZEN CLINIC

CITIZEN MATTERS HOSTS AN ONLINE CITIZEN CLINIC ON

HOW TO BECOME A ZERO-WASTE HOUSEHOLD

ONLINE SESSION: WEDNESDAY 29 NOV 2023, 4 PM – 5 PM

Livestream link: www.youtube.com/@citizenmatterschennai

P NATARAJAN
Environmentalist and founder of Namma Ooru Foundation

JANANI VENKITESH
Solid waste management expert and Secretary, Residents of Kasturba Nagar Association (ROKA)

MADHUVANTI RAJKUMAR
Researcher, Environment & Climate Action, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG)

CITIZEN MATTERS

LAKES

Venkateshpura Lake: An ancient monument and grazing land at stake
Why residents of Chokkanahalli and Sampigehalli in peri-urban Bengaluru who use the lake area as grazing land are worried.

Govt claims 47 lakes developed and 17 underway, but this is not quite true |
Lake development: Politicians seek publicity, but leave the public clueless
This two part series on the Amrutha Nagarothana scheme and lake restoration in Bengaluru during the Karnataka Assembly elections reached a large audience and was republished by The News Minute.

Lessons from the past must guide the restoration of Chennai's lakes
An in-depth analysis in the wake of the CMDA and WRD's decision to restore 10 selected lakes in Chennai at a cost of Rs 100 crores. The analysis looks at previous attempted eco-restorations, the concerns they have created around the present plans and how a balance may be struck.

Chitlapakkam lake revival a model for collective effort
Chitlapakkam Lake plays a significant role in catering to the needs of farmers and residents in and around the lake. This traces efforts taken by some resident forums in Chitlapakkam, which have not only helped in reviving the lake, but also set a model on how residents can play a crucial role in saving waterbodies.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION/ JAMS

Chennai Rains and Waterlogging Datajam
The city faced widespread flooding and waterlogging, during and after the cyclone, raising questions about systemic issues and disaster preparedness all over again. The datajam, conducted in partnership with Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC) and Consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), tried to bring the focus on these issues by looking at available data in the form of crowd-sourced and government data on previous floods, storm-water drains, elevation, among others to identify any systemic issues and, if possible, suggest remedies.

"OpenCity is a great initiative by Oorvani to make government documents and data more accessible to the public. Very often, OpenCity has been the only place to find important documents on official city plans and reports, since the original government website does not load anymore. Through the Datajams, I've had the opportunity to explore and understand various civic issues using the data on OpenCity, thanks to the varied set of participants, some of whom have a deep understanding on the Datajam topic."

Vivek Mathew, Datajam Participant

COMMUNITY

MASTERCLASS

A deep dive into understanding lake assets
The session was aimed at engaging citizens in a discourse on lake rejuvenation/management. About thirty-five participants attended the 2-hour masterclass class which involved short exercises and two sessions by experts, Ram Prasad and Nagesh Aras from Friends of Lakes.

WEBINARS

Lack of public consultation is a hindrance to holistic lake development in Bengaluru
Environmentalists and citizen groups have worked to protect lakes, but questions remain on why there are still issues of encroachment and pollution.

SURVEYS

The lake assets survey was a part of the masterclass for civic-minded citizens to identify the attributes of healthy lakes and their assets, and state of these assets. The survey was done in 20+ lakes to look at the state of the assets in lakes in Bengaluru.

"My experience working with Citizen Matters and Oorvani foundation was great. The communication was professional, cordial & prompt. The work ethic had a very likeable human touch to it which is seldom seen in the fast paced world of journalism."

Vedant Mhahtre, Datajam Participant

WATER

STORIES

Chennai residents question quality of water from Nemmeli desalination plant
This story got a lot of hits on social media. Three mainstream publications contacted the reporter after the story appeared.

Ground Water Usage in Major Indian Cities |
The National Compilation of Dynamic Ground Water Resources
An explainer on Central Ground Water Board report that calculates the total groundwater availability and total groundwater extracted each year. We also looked at the groundwater situation in Bengaluru, Chennai and Delhi over the years.

Water shortage in Bengaluru: Families, schools, hospitals share their struggle
We covered the impact of the water shortage this summer. The story produced in-house was republished with Question of Cities as well. The story received widespread attention on social media and reached over a 1000 accounts.

Waiting for water: Thoraipakkam residents demand speedy implementation of CMWSSB scheme
Residents of Thoraipakkam have waited a decade for piped water supply. Watch our video as a citizen journalist elaborates on the situation.

Looking back for answers: Can Chennai reclaim its relationship with the water commons?
The water bodies of Chennai were often managed by agrarian communities that saw seasonal floods as opportunities for storage.

Dombivli's water shortage: A fight that gets harder by the year
Water shortage in Dombivli has only worsened with time, exacerbated by rapid urbanisation, poor water management and erratic monsoons.

How water meters saved time and money for this Bengaluru apartment
A step-by-step guide on how an apartment complex installed individual water meters, overcoming challenges to achieve benefits.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION/ JAMS

Bengaluru Water Datajam
After a year of failed rainfall due to El Nino, Bengaluru is feeling the heat in more ways than one this summer. Stories of water shortage are common, tanker rates have been hiked across the city. Discussions and news reports on water resilience are back after many years of plentiful rainfall when flooding was the main issue the City faced.

Surveys
The water tankers survey was done in collaboration with Bangalore Apartments Federation, and 160 apartment associations participated in the survey. The survey identified the patterns around demand and supply of water tankers, and the pricing in different areas. The media reports based on the survey drove the government to clamp down on private tankers and cap the prices to ensure better supply to all parts and sections of the city.

HEALTH

Heavy metals in veggies: Urgent source investigation needed
This story was well-received by our readers.

What was the "true" toll of Covid-19 in Bengaluru?
The official count of deaths due to Covid-19 for Bengaluru Urban as of Feb 19th 2024 stands at 17,015 deaths. If we consider just the five months of 2020 (July to November) and the four months of 2021 (April to July), which were the peak months of the first and second waves respectively, the total official count in Bengaluru Urban is 15,321, or 90% of the total "official" deaths due to Covid happened in these nine months.

WEBINARS

Creating inclusive spaces in Chennai colleges will help address mental health issues of students
We organised a panel discussion to look into the root cause of mental health issues faced by students in Chennai colleges.

Career conundrum in 12th grade: How to keep stress at bay
The webinar looked at how to deal with the pressure, is there a way of identifying what suits your personality and pocket, is it okay to change track, how money – fees and future income prospects – become a deciding factor in choosing courses for higher studies.

CHANGE
NETWORK

INDIA CIVIC SUMMIT

The India Civic Summit 2024 brought together 150+ active citizens, changemakers, and community leaders for a day-long event aimed at fostering dialogue, sharing inspiring stories, and strategising solutions for urban challenges. Held at the Institution of Agricultural Technologists, the summit featured diverse sessions and discussions on topics ranging from grassroots initiatives to institutional change and youth engagement.

One of the highlights of the summit was the session featuring grassroots leaders who shared inspiring stories of community-driven initiatives. From Vyasai Thozhargal's efforts to educate marginalized children in Chennai to Chalo Chanakya's movement to protect Navi Mumbai's wetlands, the session showcased the power of citizen activism in addressing local issues. Other initiatives like Citizens of Sankey, Koota@Cubbon, and Whitefield Rising demonstrated innovative approaches to community engagement and problem-solving.

A panel of young leaders showcased innovative approaches to community engagement and activism. From addressing water scarcity to promoting public reading initiatives like Cubbon Reads, the panelists highlighted the importance of inclusivity, grassroots collaboration, and youth empowerment in driving social change.

In parallel. Ajay Raghavan and Jai Warrier led a masterclass on addressing civic issues and climate change, emphasizing the importance of community-driven solutions, localized approaches, and coordinated civic engagement.

The event culminated with CM Spotlight, a presentation on some of the most impactful initiatives from across India's cities and Vani Murthy, sustainability evangelist and V Sudhakar, co-founder of Big Basket reflecting on their experiences in the civic space.

COMMUNITY

Participants engaged in a lively discussion on burnout in civic activism, motivations for engagement, barriers to participation, and strategies for scaling operations. The discussion underscored the need for inclusivity, collaboration, and sustained civic action in driving meaningful change.

Across India, citizens gather together to fight for sustainable, equitable cities. We shone the spotlight at some of these groups at the first India Civic Summit. These are their stories ➤

CIVIC LEARNING HUB

Civic Journalism Training Program

The Civic Journalism Training Programme (CJTP) was organised by Oorvani Foundation in collaboration with Youth Ki Awaaz. The programme's objective was to train and support 20 passionate young citizen journalists who would focus on the pressing issues in their constituencies.

The theme for this cohort was "My MP and I". In the context of upcoming elections, the sessions provided an introduction to public policy and governance, helping them make sense of ground issues, and evaluate elected representatives. The programme also helped them articulate community needs, communicate to political leaders and push for solutions!

Topic -> Story Idea
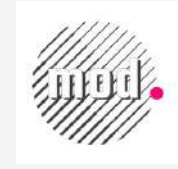
Topic: Broad with the potential to lead to many stories.

Eg: Flooding in Mumbai, air pollution in Delhi, education in Chennai

Story idea: Specific. Draw the audience's attention to one aspect or angle

Eg: How does flooding affect children's schooling? Health costs of air pollution. What sort of sports facilities do government schools in Chennai have?

OUR PARTNERS

OBITUARY

TR Gopalakrishnan, our Editorial Advisor, passed away on 15th November 2023. He was the former Editor-In-Charge of The Week. He had previously worked at the Motherland, India Today and Hindustan Times.

TRG, as we knew him, dropped in at our office, one day in early 2019. He had moved to Bengaluru after retirement. He started helping us with commissioning, editing and more, as we started looking at cities beyond Bengaluru and Chennai. He chipped in whenever any editor was on leave or had bandwidth issues. We became familiar with his "Need help with editing? Send it to me!" He was ready to help or advise anytime, and not just with editorial.

TRG was an integral part of the team and we are grateful we had the privilege of having him as a part of our team for the last few years. We resolve to always stick to his advice on telling good stories to make a deep impact on our audience.
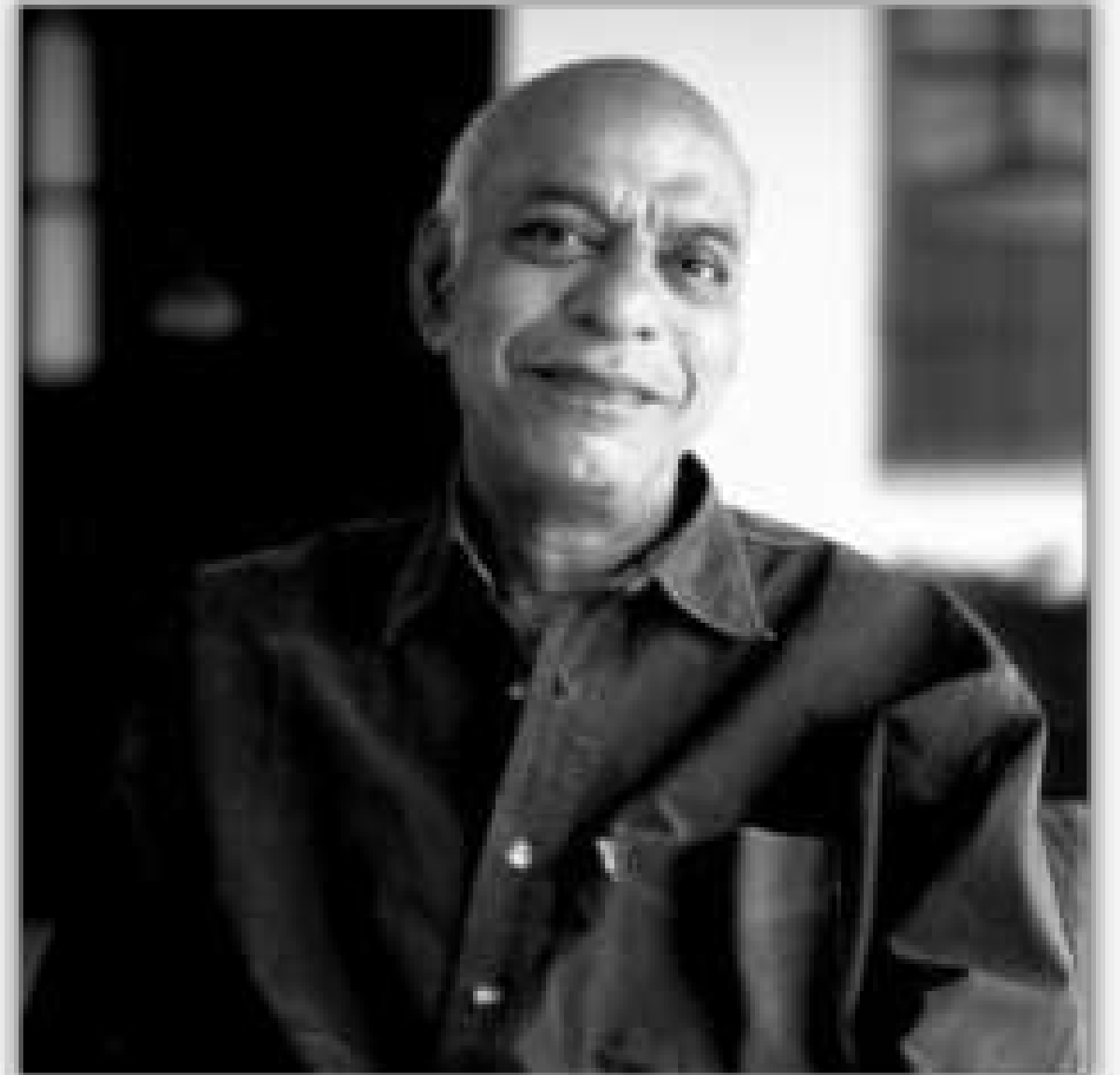
FINANCIALS

Oorvani Foundation

No.63, Abshot Layout, Vasanthnagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru - 560051

Balance Sheet as at March 31, 2024

Liabilities	Amount Rs.		Assets	Amount Rs.	
Corpus Fund			**Property, Plant & Equipment**		
Contribution from Trustees		3,000	Camera and Tripod		
			WDV as on 1.4.2023	57,247	
Surplus/Deficit in Income and Expenditure A/c			Less : Depreciation	8,587	48,660
Balance as on 31.03.2023	21,81,905				
Less : Excess of Income over Expenditure			**Current Assets, Loans and Advances**		
for the year transferred from Income and			Bank Balance in Savings Bank Account with		
Expenditure Account	(14,60,555)	7,21,350	- ICICI Bank A/c No. 100805000796		13,12,586
			Prepaid Expenses		14,700
Current Liabilities and provisions			Balance with GST Authorities		
Consultancy Fee payable	8,87,220		Input Credit IGST		3,41,314
Audit Fees payable	30,000				
TDS payable					
- TDS - Consultancy/Professional charges	75,690	9,92,910			
Total		**17,17,260**	**Total**		**17,17,260**

Date : 28.09.2024   for Oorvani Foundation   To be read with our report

Place : Bangalore   and notes of even date

for P N R & Co.,

Chartered Accountants

Firm Regn No.0024955

Trustee

(P N RAJASHEKAR)

Partner

Membership No. 022647

Date: 29.09.2024

P.N.R. & CO.
Chartered Accountants
117/3, Fortune Square,
T 301 & 302, S.C. Road, Seshadripuram,
BANGALORE-560 020.

Oorvani Foundation

No.63, Abshot Layout, Vasanthnagar, Bangalore North, Bengaluru - 560051

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended March 31, 2024

Expenditure	Amount Rs.	Income	Amount Rs.
Consultancy charges - Professional	1,04,58,762	Gross receipts	
Consultancy charges - Freelance	7,41,807	- Contribution	1,07,30,535
IT Expenses	8,15,612	- Others	1,30,000
Accounting Charges	25,500	Other Income	2,701
Audit Fees	23,000		
Bank Charges	4,500	Excess of Expenditure over Income	14,60,555
Printing and Stationery	2,500		
Travel Expenses	6,412		
Other Expenses	1,80,617		
GST no longer recoverable writtenoff	56,494		
Depreciation on Property, Plant & Equipment	8,587		
Total	**1,23,23,791**	**Total**	**1,23,23,791**

Date : 28.09.2024   for Oorvani Foundation   To be read with our report

Place : Bangalore   and notes of even date

for P.N.R. & Co.,

Chartered Accountants

Firm Registration No.0024955

Trustee

(P N RAJASHEKAR)

Partner

Membership No. 022647

Date: 29.09.2024

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THE TEAM AT OORVANI FOUNDATION

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