DISCOVERY AREA REPORT

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Key questions that help address the issue of
Civic Engagement in Chennai

Analysis of Diagnostic Questions

List of Abbreviations :
GCC : Greater Chennai Corporation
CBSE : Central Board of Secondary Education
B.CLIP : Civic Leadership Incubator Program
RWA : Resident Welfare Association
TAKSRA : Thiruveedhi Amman Koil Street Residents Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Source : Citizen Matters

Chennai joined the 100 Resilient Cities Network in 2014. This opportunity made it possible for Chennai to analyze the city's vulnerabilities and challenges, evaluate responsiveness and understand how to build resilience to these vulnerabilities.
Six Discovery Areas or Priority Areas were highlighted at the end of Phase 1 in order to get a deeper, more targeted understanding of Chennai's strengths and weaknesses. One priority area was found to be **Civic Engagement.**

This report presents a succinct account of the key challenges that Chennai citizens face while engaging with civic issues, and an account of how citizens, communities, businesses and systems we can survive and thrive in spite of these challenges.

Citizens must be aware of how their behavior impacts their everyday life in the city - unconscious use of water, improper disposal of waste, failure to follow traffic rules and regulations etc. directly impacts the day to day functioning of the city. It is also widely known that the most socially vulnerable populations are the ones who suffer most severely. Resilience efforts, therefore, must acknowledge areas and citizens from all walks of life.
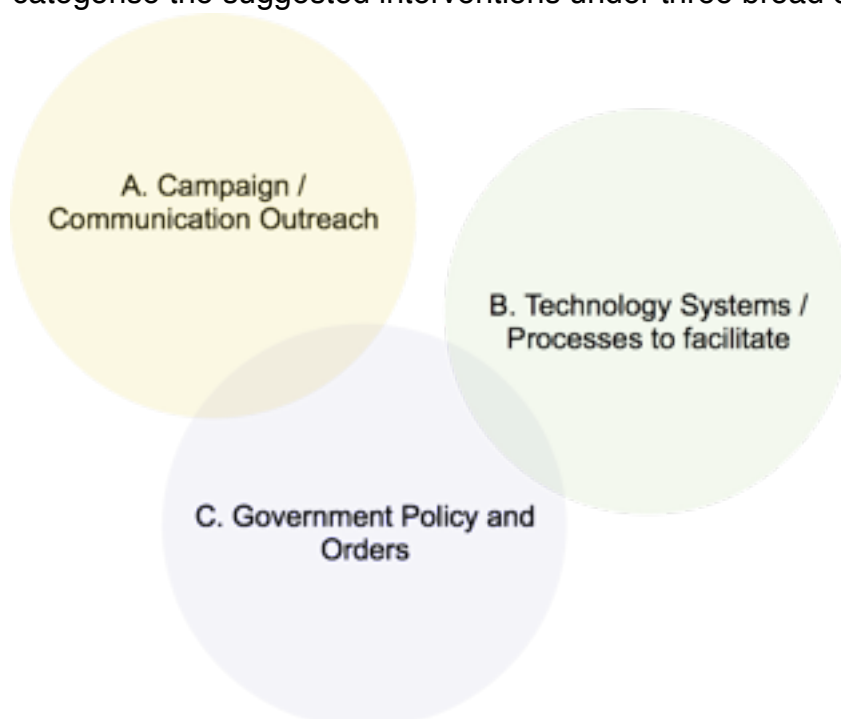
CHALLENGES

Diagnostic questions were formulated for each Discovery Area. Below is a list of the Diagnostic Questions followed by a listing of the proposed interventions.

DQ 01	How can cultural pride be leveraged to transform behavior around common assets?	People tend to identify themselves based on their roots and / or social affiliations, rather than on the basis of their neighbourhood or area they live in. This leads to a certain level of unwillingness to support or participate in groups they do not identify with.
		Lack of accessibility to cultural events and festivals.
		Lack of awareness about cleanliness and sanitation.

DQ 02	How can institutional space be created for citizen groups to participate in governance?	Lack of mechanisms to enforce regulations.
		Lack of communication between different bodies - city, area, locality.
		No ownership of the city.
		Citizen participation in civoc bodies does not exist.
		Isolation of the vulnerable sections.
		Lack of communication between citizen groups.

DQ 03	How can the private sector be engaged in protecting common assets?	Lack of awareness - many citizens don't know where to enquire or what to do next.
		Need for a common accessible inventory of which organisations that can be approached for specific types of activity. Lack of information prevents citizens from engaging.
		CSR laws restrict funds spent outside of neighborhoods where companies have a presence.
		Lack of incentives around volunteering.

DQ 04	How can we cultivate champions of change in schools and colleges to instill a greater sense of civic consciousness?	Though college curriculums mandate EVS, a lack of opportunities for practical application exists.
		Not enough resource capacity to teach the students EVS / sustainable living.
		Civic education is not part of ALL curriculums.
		Engaging students in their language, in suitable formats, rather than through the current one size fits all approach.
		Tie up clubs with NGO's whose presence will continue till college or later. For example, EXNORA has a large presence in schools but there is no similar organization or continuation at the college level.

DQ 05	While citizens desire a 'clean city', how can we inspire action that ensures cleaner public spaces?	Lack of involvement from 'public figures'
		Lack of enforcement of rules : traffic, road safety, littering, bans etc.
		Strong hesitation to call out inappropriate behaviour from fellow citizens.
		Lack of individual responsibility.

Based on our research and analysis of the challenges identified, we were able to categorise the suggested interventions under three broad categories, as seen below.

A. Campaign / Communication Outreach

B. Technology Systems / Processes to facilitate

C. Government Policy and Orders

Listed below are the Interventions :

A. CAMPAIGN AND COMMUNICATION OUTREACH

Cultural Events - Events such as Madras Day, December Kutchery Season and Chennai Sangamam instill a sense of pride among citizens.
A comprehensive calendar of such events at the neighborhood and city level demonstrates support for events. The support should include permissions for using public space / traffic management and parking where relevant.

Film and street theater as education - Using film and theater as a means to educating and increasing awareness among citizens. Short films and street dramas can depict the civic issues we face and the importance of civic consciousness to remedying issues.

Complaint numbers - Well designed, sustained campaigns to increase awareness about helpline numbers. Strengthen the existing Corporation toll free number (1913) through targeted interventions to facilitate closing the loop on reported grievances.
Network service providers to create a decentralized connection system such that the respective departments (Fire, Police, Women, Traffic) can receive multiple calls at the same time.

Community activities - Community activities such as wall art brings the community together and instills a sense of ownership among the citizens. It is a simple way of protecting a space from litter and vandalism, while involving citizens to beautify their surroundings.

Competitions / rewards - Rewarding citizens and communities for their efforts towards clean, green neighborhoods is a great incentive to encourage citizens to participate. 'Clean Streets', ' Greenest Apartment Complex' can be carried out on a larger scale across the city.

Mapping tool - Map and graphically represent the civic issues faced by the city - water, waste and traffic. The map will convey all the best practices that are currently in place to remedy these issues. This will help raise awareness and also educate the citizens.

B. TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS / PROCESSES TO FACILITATE

Strengthening the digital platform - Provide citizens with a platform to raise issues pertaining to civic issues in their neighborhood via mobile apps and social media groups etc. and also to access information from the corporation. These platforms (Namma Chennai app, Swachh Bharath app) to be strengthened by better designing the user interface in order to ensure end to end service on reported issues and efficient two - way communication.

Facilitating CSR initiatives - Setting up a single window system to facilitate communication between the government and the private sector by providing a interface between various agencies.

Social media and students - Giving citizens and students the opportunity to engage in civic activities like beach cleanups, tank cleaning, history walks etc. Creating social media specific content that celebrates successes in super short films format and/ or television series in easy-to-share formats. Inspiring students / youth to engage in civic activities like beach cleanups, tank cleaning, history walks etc.

C. GOVERNMENT POLICY AND ORDERS

Education - Develop programs similar to B.CLIP (Civic Leadership Incubator Program) that trains and supports talented individuals who wish to transform their city by contesting municipal corporate elections through specialized training and on-ground work. Citizen Participation Program (CPP) to educate citizens on (example) SWM work at the ward level.

Introduce community service into curriculums - Schemes such as Social Empowerment through Work Education and Action (SEWA), which is currently part of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSEi) curriculum, should be introduced to other schools and curricula. Making it mandatory and grading students on assignments will ensure participation.

Communication between government and private sector - Setting up a quasi-government (intermediary body) which acts as a liaison between the government and the private sector, documenting the common assets, prepares proposals and approaches corporate actors and individuals.

Setting up ward committees - A citizen-centric approach to the selecting of ward committee members to decision making processes is essential to achieving transparency and accountability in local governance.

Public events - Events that connect citizens with people and organizations working to address civic issues such as the Bangalore Santhe and Kuppai Matters can be organized in a structured manner. Government involvement will ensure participation and sustained growth of such events.

Community adoption - Community groups can come together and 'adopt a lake', 'Adopt a park' or 'adopt a road' and collectively maintain it. This unites the community in caring for common assets.

CHAPTER 01 :
DISCOVERY AREA _ BACKGROUND :

Chennai joined the 100 Resilient Cities network in 2014 with the aim of building resilience to short term shocks and long terms stresses. Six Discovery Areas or Priority Areas were highlighted at the end of Phase 1 in order to get a deeper, more targeted understanding of Chennai's strengths and weaknesses and one of these priority areas was found to be Civic Engagement.

Building Resilience begins with strengthening the social fabric.

Citizen Engagement is a powerful tool to increase accountability and transparency. The idea behind citizen engagement is that citizens should have power over the decisions that affect their lives on a daily basis.

Currently, levels of citizen engagement with issues of public concern in Chennai are low. The lack of empathy towards our civic issues has given us, as citizens, the ability to live with shocks and stresses: an innate, passive resilience.

Many of Chennai's stresses relate to a failure of collective action.

If citizens value the city's common assets, issues of encroachment, traffic congestion, over-exploitation of water resources, solid waste management etc. can be minimized.

Over the past couple of months, the Resilient Chennai team has engaged with city leaders from academia, civil society, government and the private sector to understand the resilience strengths that the city can leverage and the weaknesses it needs to address in order to respond to the shocks and stresses the civil society faces.

We need to identify Chennai's diverse strengths and transform **citizen behavior** towards common assets including rivers, infrastructure, beaches, public spaces and architecture.

In order to foster long term, sustainable changes, citizens need to become active agents driving the process of development. Citizens need to identify social and civic problems as partly their own - only then will citizens be willing to take action.
Multiple factors, stakeholders, policy level changes etc. can improve successful coordination efforts within the government and between the government and citizens. However, transforming the citizen behavior to understand the individual and societal benefits of their conscious action is critical.

Through detailed studies and research, we aimed to identify what trigger(s) could potentially facilitate this transformation. Is it culture? Pride? Awareness? Knowledge sharing? Enforcement?

While there is the urge to participate and get involved with the functioning of the city, there remains limited awareness about the avenues that already exist. This coupled with a lack of infrastructural support, limits the ability of citizens and stakeholders to collectively engage in a sustainable manner. Our Citizen Engagement Survey indicates that 98% of the participating population want to be more engaged with the Government. A lack of belief that one can make a difference prevents citizens from actively participating.

To build long term resilience within the area of Civic Engagement, it seems crucial that we recognize the multiple factors, stakeholders and policy level changes that can improve coordination and communication efforts between the government and citizens and transform passive citizens into active citizens.

The Civic Engagement Discovery Area thus aims to identify the triggers that can bring about change by raising awareness, strengthening the existing systems or components of a system through critical interventions.

Source : Yourstory

CHAPTER 02 :
DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS

KEY QUESTIONS THAT HELP ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN CHENNAI:

Based on research and widespread consultations with various stakeholders, five pertinent diagnostic questions were identified and studied. In this chapter, we discuss the existing challenges and possible interventions for each question.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS :

DQ 1: How can cultural pride be leveraged to transform behavior around common assets?

DQ 2: How can institutional space be created for citizen groups to participate in governance?

DQ 3: How can the private sector be engaged in protecting common assets?

DQ 4: How can we cultivate champions of change in schools and colleges to instil a greater sense of civic consciousness?

DQ 5: While citizens desire a 'clean city', how can we inspire action that ensures cleaner public spaces?

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION 01 :

## How can cultural pride be leveraged to transform behaviour towards common assets?

After a series of meetings and interviews with citizens and Resident Welfare Associations, we felt the need to understand if CULTURAL PRIDE was/is really a driving factor to influence people's minds. This led us to rethink the idea of Cultural Pride, and understand if Civic Pride which was more prevalent, can be used to transform behavior.

Can Civic Pride truly be converted into tangible actions in the absence of external stimulus?

Pride features itself in various forms in the minds of Chennai's citizens. Representatives from Resident Welfare Associations expressed during a Focus Group meeting that to some, pride lies in the common assets of the city - its rivers and waterways, while to others it lies in Indian movies and the arts. To many, pride is not the one factor that that can ensure behavioral change towards city civic issues. We met with members of Resident Welfare Associations and reached the conclusion that the focus should be on building identity and building community in order to in-crease PASSION among citizens.

People tend to identify themselves based on their roots and / or social affiliations and not neces-sarily on the basis of their neighborhood or area they live in. This leads to a certain level of unwill-ingness to support or participate in groups they do not identify with.

While numerous cultural events and activities exist in the city, there is little knowledge and aware-ness about them. Increased awareness and accessibility to cultural events and programs needs to be ensured.
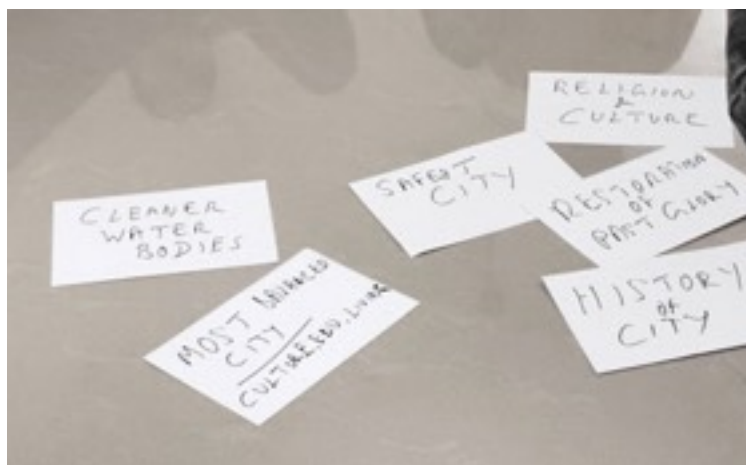
Programs and events including ones run by the Goethe Institute, Nizhal, TM Krishna, Urur-Olcott Kuppam Vizah, Madras Day organisers, The Hindu and other stakeholders already happen in large numbers in the city.

Recent events such as the **'Save the Adyar River'** hosted by Reciprocity Foundation in collaboration with Environmental Foundation of India (EFI) seek to bring together citizens and multiple stakeholders to engage and participate for the sake of protecting, reclaiming and inspiring actions towards our rivers through art and culture.
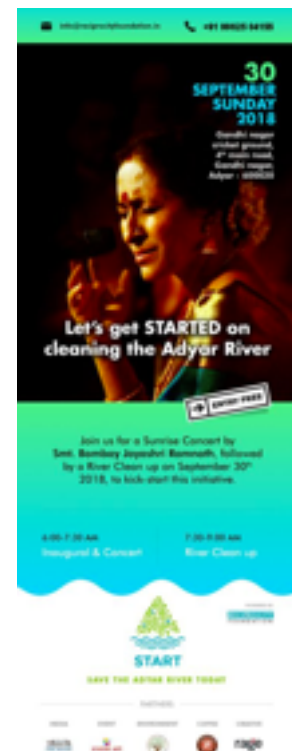
Source : Reciprocity Foundation

While we live in a city that is shaped by water, where water plays an integral role in the city development and in the daily lives of citizens, our water resources remain neglected. The Goethe Institut took this as an opportunity to create new dialogues between water and urban spaces / urban lives. During an interview with Helmut Schippert of Goethe Institut, he expressed his love for art and the need for art and public space to come together so it is accessible by all. Through the initiative **"Embrace Our Rivers"**, Goethe Institut aims to initiate awareness about the river as a public space through public art by connecting it to the city's most vital and basic connection to nature - the river. People from all sections of society including students were involved and engaged. The art work was intended not just to raise awareness about public space and art and to bring people out onto these public spaces in the city, but also to emphasize the role and responsibility of the citizen body as a whole towards our waterways.

Some of the grand ideas, didn't take off. The lack of permissions forced them to display the art work in an indoor space, not along the Cooum as originally planned.

Small scale, large impact events such as Wall Art is a great initiative that not only brings the community together, but also instils a sense of ownership in the area. Chennai's walls, at one point used to be filled with advertisements. Over the years, they became adorned with colorful artwork. The Art for Change initiative for example, aims to celebrate community oneness. Residents of

Mylapore were pleasantly surprised to see many people - young and middle-aged alike, painting the wall opposite Nageswara Rao Park, last year. Similarly, students of AMM Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Kotturpuram took over their compound wall which was filled with political posters, and transformed it into a large stretch of painted wall, paintings on themes carrying strong messages such as environment, cleanliness, spirituality, sports etc.

Using similar principles of resilience and tactical urbanism, other such small scale, community projects can be implemented in Chennai. For example, the "pocket parks" in Santiago De Chile, where temporary public spaces included public art, playground equipment, community gardens, markets etc.

Events such as the above certainly do bring communities together and raise awareness, however they don't always reach out to citizens of all social and economic strata.

Marginalised communities need to be given more attention and made part of public events that address civic issues.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION 02

How can Institutional space be created for citizen groups to participate in governance?

We need to create or build on institutional space for citizen groups to participate in governance and ensure that citizens understand both their rights and responsibilities.

Empowering citizens to get their voices heard is critical, but not enough. We need to support governments to build institutional systems that incorporate citizen voices in decision making processes.

During a working group meeting with citizens from various private and nongovernmental organizations, participants expressed the importance of a common and accessible space for citizens of all walks of life to come together and have their voices heard. This was a result of an overall understanding that while citizens are keen to participate, there is a lack of knowledge / awareness about the means and possibilities for participation.

There already exists a few avenues for citizens to engage, participate and stay informed about neighborhood and city level functioning. These are in the form of public hearings, social media platforms and group information for interested citizens, government mobile apps such as the Namma Chennai app and other such private apps including Recykle, Kabadiwala Connect etc. While these platforms are widely used by citizens across the city, through citizen interviews and research make it evident that there exists three main drawbacks define these mediums -

a) Accessibility - These avenues do not reach to citizens from all walks of life.
b) They don't serve as effective means of two-way communication - where citizens and the corporation to share and exchange informations.
c) The systems do not ensure effective 'closing of the loop' on several reported grievances.

India's Constitution gave shape to the Grama Sabha in 1993. The equivalent structure for Urban Governance - the Ward Committee - which was suggested in the 74th Amendment of the Constitution to strengthen the third-tier of self government, was left to the states to design for themselves. The key problem in the functioning of the ward committee lies in the size of the population that it represents. (Citizen Matters)

Citizen Survey data indicates that :

Just 22% of Chennai's population have interacted with their zonal or ward level staff. It is also evident that there is great scope to increase awareness for ward/locality level waste segregation initiatives. Citizens feel that Resident Welfare Associations can play a key role in improving ward level interaction
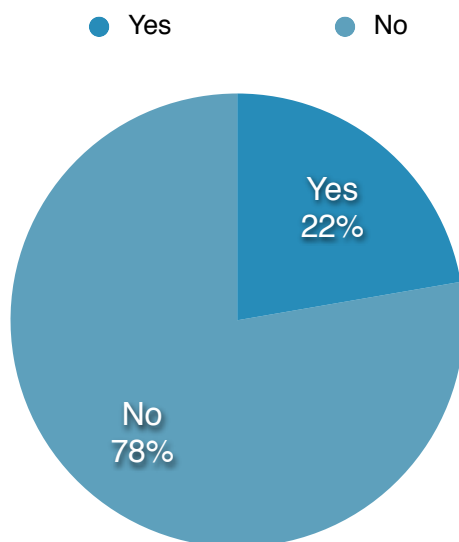
In Bangalore, for example, Ward Committees play a vital role in area administration.
Each committee consists of 12 members - 2 members representing the government and 10 are local citizens of the wards.
Ward Committees institutionalise the citizen engagement process. Some of the functions of the ward committee include - a) prepare and submit Ward Development Scheme to the Corporation for funds allotment. b) approve the list of beneficiaries for beneficiary printed schemes of the Corporation submitted by Area Sabhas falling under that ward and c) supervise all programmes and schemes being implemented by the Corporation in the ward.

An all-women initiative called VoiceOfPeople in Besant Nagar, Chennai came together to demand the following:
a) Clean and good governance
b) Integrity on the part of those holding public office
c) Transparency in governance

VoiceOfPeople are concentrating their efforts on preparing a ward manifesto in a few designated wards to begin with, and plan to eventually reaching out to people across the zone through surveys.

Source : Citizen Matters

There needs to be a open and inclusive system, where citizen opinions are regularly sought, and where an efficient system of timely addressing reported issues is in place. The **Namma Chennai app** which was launched by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) in early 2018 is one such example. The app allows citizens to more easily report civic issues and follow up on the status of complaints, without having to spend time on the GCC website or dialing complaint numbers (1913 for civic issues). Within a few months of its launch, the Corporation reported 10,000 downloads and over 3,000 complaints registered. The app has been made efficient by routing each received complaint to the relevant department. Citizens can also upload images of civic concerns such as improper sidewalks, pot holes or garbage problems etc. While the mobile app has fastened the system and made it easier for citizens to report complaints, there has been feedback about some of the issues being 'closed' or marked as 'resolved' without it ever being addressed.

Survey findings make it clear that a strengthened and better designed app and social media platforms would be more useful as citizen resources.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION 03 :

How can the private sector be engaged in protecting common assets?

Through our research, we realized the need to utilize large IT companies with large employee bases and CSR funds to demonstrate how ideas can be translated into productive action on the ground. Interviews with CSR heads of large IT companies, led us to understand that the current CSR policy framework restricts several activities and participation.
CSR law advices that the funds be spent only in neighborhoods where the company has a presence which leaves out large geographies from access to CSR funds. The current CSR law structure does not incentivize volunteering and does not value people time spent.

One of the main drawbacks we understood from speaking with citizens actively involved with CSR projects is that the nature of multi departments involved in one project or area increases the time to get things moving.

There are however, successful examples where the use of CSR funds along with the skills of residents and government bodies has brought about tremendous change and awareness.
The Chander Swamy initiative for integrated use of CSR funds by working with government bodies/residents and leveraging complementary strengths to amplify the effects of CSR funds is an excellent example. Today, the Thiruvanmiyur Beach is among the cleanest in the city. The beach is cleaned twice a day, and traffic is regulated on Fridays and weekends. Garbage management, bio-toilets, automatic LED lights, rain water harvesting and other such initiatives have been successfully implemented. Citizens and corporation officials agree that the task at hand is complex and large. It is critical that citizens and corporate actors to take responsibility for their neighborhoods and environment.

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One of the main drawbacks for private institutions and organizations to engage and contribute seemed to be a lack of access. A common, accessible inventory of activity/projects and stakeholders involved to help There is distrust in the system, between citizens and the government. We need to rethink the assumption that government and citizens are in opposition with each other.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION 04 :

How can we cultivate champions of change in schools, colleges to instill a greater sense of civic consciousness?

Based on our research and studies, we felt that in order to truly understand the role of education as a whole and civic consciousness, the question should be:

How can we cultivate champions of change in schools and colleges and the citizen body to instil a greater sense of civic consciousness?

We must cultivate champions and agents of change in schools and colleges through a curriculum that instills a greater sense of civic consciousness by teaching students about Solid Waste Management, traffic safety and rules, resilience, animal welfare, disability inclusiveness and the belief that their awareness and small scale changes will create large scale impact.
The goal is to educate young citizens of Chennai about the risks their city faces, and to encourage a culture of environmental awareness and citizenship, prevention and collective action to mitigate the shocks and stresses.

We spoke with students and teachers to understand existing practices and systems to educate students and citizens about the civic issues. We gathered that, while civic education is part of some of the curricula, it is not made mandatory across all boards of education.
Students and parents felt the need for civic and social studies to be more application based subjects and not just theory based subjects as it currently is. Practical knowledge in the form of on-ground activities such as tank cleanups as conducted by PSBB school, history walks, wall art events etc. bring about increased awareness and active participation.

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While there are a few organizations such as EFI and Kabadiwalla that work with schools and colleges to increase exposure, this needs to be made a sustained interaction and made part of the system to reach more educational institutions.

A leading college in Chennai has taken on several small scale campus initiatives on campus to bring about awareness and change. Student Clubs such as The Eco Club, Young Indian and Rotract etc. encourages students to undertake community initiatives to generate and enhance environmental awareness among students as well as staff members of the college. Activities include - cleanliness drives, rainwater harvesting, tank cleanups and plastic ban on campus, to name a few. From discussions with Eco Club students, we gathered that students look up to public figures. They emphasized the knowledge and inspiration gained when experts in the field visit their campus and speak to them about the work currently being undertaken and the possibilities of a clean, green future. This will also encourage students to take on short internships and/or organize site visits to such organizations.

Programs such as Civic Leadership incubator Program (B.CLIP) is a Bangalore initiative that selects, trains and supports talented individuals who wish to transform their city by contesting municipal corporation elections. The program equips candidates with public policy, municipal administration and election campaign skills - to name a few. Replicating a similar educational initiative in Chennai will help identify and develop skills in young individuals.

Source : bpac.in

While citizens desire a 'clean city', how can we inspire action that ensures cleaner public spaces?

"It is our problem, not just the government's problem." - This idea needs to be more widespread in the minds of people for more proactive participation.

A working group workshop was held with experts from private organizations, NGOs, academia and the Corporation. Participants expressed frustration with a lack of involvement from public figures as a factor for less motivation.

From the survey results and workshop meetings, we gathered that a **Lack of Enforcement** of rules leads to citizens knowing there are no consequences to their actions. Every citizen desires a clean city. However, public perception is skewed towards enforcement based strategies.

A citizen engagement survey indicates that - 98.4% of the participating population agrees to supporting government policy that mandates waste segregation. However, in the absence of strict enforcement and monitoring that punishes those who do not segregate, such mandates may not be effective.

Having said that, it has been identified that **rewarding good practices** as in the case of the India's Swachh Bharath Mission which aims to make India clean by 2019 by involving citizens, rewards neighborhoods and apartment complexes for Clean, Green initiatives. These rewards have proved to be great incentives for resident groups to take action.

Aashiana Apartments, a gated community in Venus Colony, Chennai, for example, received the Swachh Bharath Mission award from the GCC for turning its premises into a Green Zone and for its solid waste management practices and grey water recycling mechanisms. The Association created the Aashiana Green Club in 2016 with the objective of going zero waste. Over the years, the residents worked together to experiment various conscious methods to achieve this and save resources.

Our research leads us to believe that publicizing the success stories about neighborhood projects, street clean ups etc. inspires other citizens and neighborhoods to replicate these models.

A staggering 98% (506 out of 517) of the participants felt the need to participate in local RWAs.

● Yes   ● No

No
2%

Yes
98%
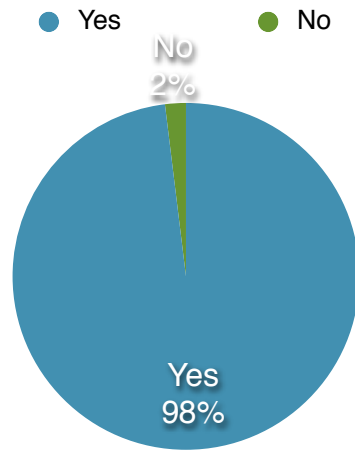
Another great example of a residents association working to make the neighborhood clean and green is Thiruveedhi Amman Koil Street Residents Association (TAKSRA) in Mandaveli.
A few years ago, some of the residents got together and decided to bring about change. They started with inviting residents and getting to know each other, in a step they believed would bring about structured change. Through the prioritization of challenges and
systematic working of all residents, step by step, the street today is a model street for the entire city. Parking, sidewalks, segregation, composting, street lights are all just some of the challenges addressed. "Seeing is believing", said one TAKSRA member. Residents see that it is possible to make change and leave inspired to replicate that change elsewhere. Corporation officials have also helped a lot after seeing the changes with not only implementation but also design suggestions." Association meetings are held weekly and on the streets rather than in an indoor space. Security guards from each of the residences are also taught and asked to be involved in street maintenance, and wind up also feeling a sense of belonging to the street and area.

Source: TAKSRA RWA

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CHAPTER 03
METHODOLOGY

Our aim was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the current situation and challenges faced by citizens of all demographics, geographic locations and socio-economic strata, while also trying to engage with city civic issues. Additional inputs were taken from experts in academia and the private and public sectors, school teachers and students, and government officials.

Data sources included research reports, journals, policy documents, one-on-one interviews and group discussions with RWAs and citizens working hard to address our civic issues through active participation.

This was complemented by a citizen survey which reached out to more than 500 citizens across socio-economic backgrounds. The aim of the survey was to validate existing perceptions about citizens and citizen groups engagement with their civic issues, including especially solid waste management

Workshops and Focus Group Discussions

Interviews

Surveys

Research

APPENDIX 01 : WORKING GROUP MEETING SUMMARY

Background

Over the past six months, the Resilient Chennai team has worked with multiple stakeholders from government, industry, academia, and civil society to understand the city's context and identify key resilience challenges. Based on this Phase I stakeholder-driven process, six broad areas were prioritized for deeper engagement in the next phase of strategy development. These six discovery areas are: *WATER, METROGOVERNANCE, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, HEALTHY & PLANNED URBANIZATION and URBAN FINANCE.*

Resilient Chennai's Phase I work and pre-existing knowledge offers a strong basis for understanding the current state of affairs and key problems around each of these discovery areas. In Phase II the focus is more on the relevant interventions and strategies that can help address the current challenges these discovery areas face.

Therefore, on the 28th of September an OPPORTUNITY ASSESSMENT SESSION was organized to call upon the CIVIC ENGAGEMENT working group to come together and brainstorm around actions and interventions that present the opportunity to make Chennai more resilient with respect to getting citizens to meaningfully engage with civic issues (Please refer Appendix 1 for list of participants).

The experts on civic engagement from civil society, academia and private institutions were invited to

- Identify and validate Chennai's challenges related to citizen participation and engagement with civic issues.

- Ideate to find ways to address these challenges through regulatory, community building and/ or technological interventions

- Develop a priority list based on their understanding of what is relevant, feasible and necessary to improve participation in civic issues among citizens.

Session 1: Problem Mapping

The discovery area was broken down in to five pertinent diagnostic questions (DQs) and the participants engaged in a brainstorming exercise to map out the relevant challenges for each of the question. Based on the secondary research, some challenges were identified and were provided to the participants for reference.

Observations

Based on the inputs from the session, the following challenges were identified for each DQ.

DQ1: How can cultural pride and heritage be leveraged?

- People identify themselves in groups based on religion, caste or area of interest (art, sports etc.)

- Unwillingness to support/help the group they don't belong to.

- Awareness: understanding the importance of our heritage, and

- Accessibility to cultural festivals and programs

DQ 2: How can institutional space be created for citizen groups to participate in governance?

- Lack of awareness around the possibility of participation. Though citizens are interested, they are unsure about where and how to begin.

- There is a lack of mechanism in place to follow through with grievances from the point of reporting until it is addressed.

- Lack of communication between different bodies: city, area, locality.

- No ownership of the city.

- Citizen participation in civic bodies does not exist; and

- Isolation of vulnerable sections: no engagement

DQ 3: How can the private sector be engaged in protecting common assets?

- There needs to be a common and accessible inventory of the organizations that can be approached for specific types of activity. Also, a list of what is being done and what is planned for the future will be useful.

- Lack of awareness - many citizens don't know where to enquire, what to do next etc.

- Incentives for volunteering: current laws do not invite volunteering.

- The CSR laws stipulate that CSR funds be spent in the neighborhood, leaving out large geographies from access to these funds.

- Reporting based on the impacts made rather than just the money spent; and

- To address and take care of any asset, involvement is needed at the micro level.

DQ 4: How can we cultivate champions and agents of change in schools and colleges to instill a greater sense of civic consciousness?

- Though college curricula mandates EVS, there are few opportunities for practical application.

- Not enough resource capacity to teach students EVS/sustainable living.

- Civic education is not part of ALL curricula.

- Engaging students in their language, in suitable formats, rather than through the current and one-size-fits all approach; and

- Tie up clubs with NGOs whose presence will continue till college or later. For example, EXNORA has a large presence in schools similar organizations do not exist at the college level.

DQ 5: When citizens desire a 'clean city', how can we inspire action that ensures cleaner public spaces?

- Lack of involvement from public figures

- Lack of enforcement of rules: traffic, road safety, littering, bans etc.

- Strong hesitation to call out inappropriate behavior of fellow citizens; and

- Lack of individual responsibility.

Session 2: Interventions

This session comprised of a prioritization exercise to help identify stakeholder-driven preferences. This exercise was meant to capture possible solutions relevant to each DQ. Based on the secondary research a list of possible interventions was provided to the participants for reference.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for the initial list of interventions. Further, they were given the opportunity to add other interventions/solutions of their choice. The interventions recommended by the participants are listed below:

S.NO	INTERVENTIONS
1	EDUCATING THE SLUM DWELLERS
2	INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS
3	DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS
4	CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Following this, the participants identified and ranked the top ten interventions from the list, based on what they thought were absolutely necessary for strengthening civic engagement among Chennai residents. From which, the following list of interventions (see below) were consistently placed in the top ten. This prioritization will be crucial to identifying the interventions that should be shortlisted for Chennai's Resilience Strategy.

Top Ranked Interventions

INTERVENTION	RANK
MAPPING OF CIVIC AMENITIES / BEST PRACTICES	1
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	2
FILM AND STREET DRAMA AS EDUCATION	3
STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES	4
STRENGTHENING THE DIGITAL PLATFORM	5
FACILITATING CSR INITIATIVES	6A
EDUCATION	6B
PUBLIC EVENTS	7

The second session also sought to flesh out low priority interventions identified by participants (see below).

Low Priority Interventions

S.NO	INTERVENTION
1	COMPETITIONS / REWARDS
2	INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE IN CURRICULUM
3	"ADOPT A - " PROGRAMS

Session 3: Opportunity Assessment

In this session, participants were tasked with justifying their selection for three high priority interventions chosen in the earlier exercise, based on the following parameters:

Funding, Immediate requirement for the city, Alignment with ongoing programs/activities, Citizen participation, Nature of government support (permission, policy, enforcement), Time required, Area of impact and Major policy change.

Based on which the following list of interventions were scrutinized.

	COMPLAINT NUMBERS
	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
	MAPPING OF CIVIC AMENITIES/BEST PRACTICES
HIGH PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS	STRENGTHENING THE DIGITAL PLATFORM
	FACILITATING CSR INITIATIVES
	STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES

Observations

High priority interventions

- They had strong support from citizens.
- They were deemed to be immediate requirements for the city.
- The type of government support was spread evenly between seeking permission and enforcing existing rules.
- None of the interventions required major changes in policy.

- Most of the interventions were implementable within 3 years.

Session 4: Call to Action

In the final session, with the problems and respective solutions marked and prioritized, participants provided open-ended suggestions on how they as individuals or organizations may better support implementation of the discussed interventions. Their modes of engagement could be related to the following:

Funding, Data, Knowledge, Technology, Training, Volunteer, Advisory, Design and Implementation and Project design.

This exercise was positioned to understand if specific interventions have higher stakeholder support and interest. Participants chose to contribute to the following interventions:

INTERVENTION	NO. OF STAKEHOLDERS WILLING TO PARTNER
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES	5
MAPPING OF CIVIC AMENITIES / BEST PRACTICES	4
STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES	3
PUBLIC EVENTS	3
CULTURAL EVENTS	3

Observations

- Most of the participants chose Advisory and Volunteering as their preferred mode of engagement

- Other preferred modes of engagement were spread across Knowledge Transfer, Project Design and Implementation; and

- Data sharing as a preferred mode of engagement gained minimal traction even among government stakeholders.

Conclusion

Based on responses from Sessions 2, 3 and 4, the following list of interventions are likely to make their way into Chennai's resilient strategy:

S.NO	INTERVENTIONS
1	MAPPING OF CIVIC AMENITIES / BEST PRACTICES
2	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES
3	FILM AND STREET DRAMA AS EDUCATION
4	STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES
5	STRENGTHENING THE DIGITAL PLATFORM
6	FACILITATING CSR INITIATIVES
7	EDUCATION

8	PUBLIC EVENTS	
9	CULTURAL EVENTS	
10	COMPLAINT NUMBERS	

List of Participants

S.No	Name	Organization	Role	Contact
1	Ahamed Hanifa	Chennai Trekking Club	Volunteer	ahamehani@gmail.com
2	Shrimathi Porchezian	Urban Workshop	Architect	shrimathiporche@gmail.com
3	Solachi Rama-nathan	Urban Workshop	Architect	uw@urbanworkshop.com
4	N.M.Mythreyan	Indra Gardens	Founder	indragardens@gmail.com
5	Rochish	Chennai Trekking Club	Volunteer	rochish.5@gmail.com
6	Jaya Srinivasan	Ennovent/Cities Rise	Chennai Co-ordinator	jaya@cities-rise.org
7	Yashaswini K.S	Chennai Smart City Limited	PMC	yashaswini.pwc@gmail.com
8	Ganga Sridhar	Mandeiveli RWA	Volunteer	gangasridhar@hotmail.com
9	Balasubrama-nian K.L	TAKSRA	Volunteer	
10	Sumithra Srikant	SWM-PF MARWA	Volunteer	srikantsumii@gmail.com
11	Archana R	UWC	ED	archana.r@unitedwaychennai.org
12	Dawn William	Blue Cross Of India	E.M Rescues	dawn@bluecrossindia.org
13	M. Yogalakshmi	Indira Garden	Co-founder	indragardens@gmail.com
14	Gayatri Ramdas	Eco Works/ 100 RC	Intern	gayathri@ecoworks.in
15	Archana M	The Magic Bean	Co-founder	themagicbeanchennai@gmail.com
16	Sandhya Sridhar	Voice of People	Member	sandhyasridhar@gmail.com
17	Nalinikumari.T	GCC, Education	AEO	aeo4zone6@gmail.com
18	Helmut Schip-pert	Goethe Institut	Director	helmut.schippert@goethe.de
19	Prasanna Ra-man	100RC/MIT	Scholar	praman@mit.edu

20	R.Jayakumar	GCC, SWM	AEE	
21	P.Balchand	City Connect	Director	balchand.parayath@gmail.com
22	Karthik S	Cities Rise	Project Manager	karthik@citiesrise.org

Initial List of Interventions

1	CULTURAL EVENTS	13	STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WARD COMMITTEES
2	FILM AND STREET DRAMA AS EDUCATION	14	PUBLIC EVENTS
3	COMPLAINT NUMBERS	15	"ADOPT A -" PROGRAMS
4	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES		
5	COMPETITIONS / REWARDS		
6	MAPPING OF CIVIC AMENITIES / BEST PRACTICES		
7	STRENGTHENING THE DIGITAL PLATFORM		
8	FACILITATING CSR INITIATIVES		
9	EDUCATION		
10	CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT		
11	CITIZENS AND SOCIAL MEDIA		
12	INTRODUCTION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE IN CURRICULUM		

APPENDIX 02 : PHOTOS

Working Group Workshop

Focus Group Discussion - Resident Welfare Association

APPENDIX 03 : SURVEY ANALYSIS

A brief summary of the Civic Engagement Survey which includes responses from 515 participants is present below. The survey was structured under the following 5 categories :

A. Waste, B. Traffic, C. Communication, D. Governance, E. Engagement

## Socio economic background of respondents

Gender of respondents
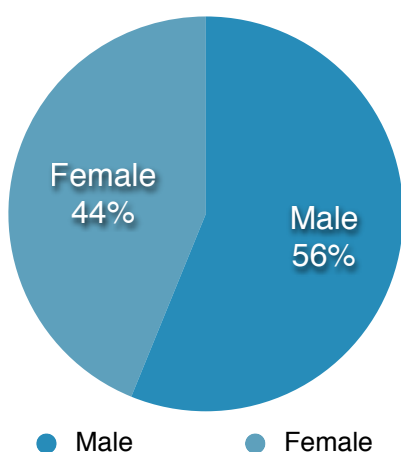
An overwhelming number of participants (497 out of 517) 96% had a graduate degree, while a small number (17 participants) had a diploma and among the remaining three - 2 participants had studied up to 10th standard or below, and only 1 participant couldn't read or write.

Educational Background
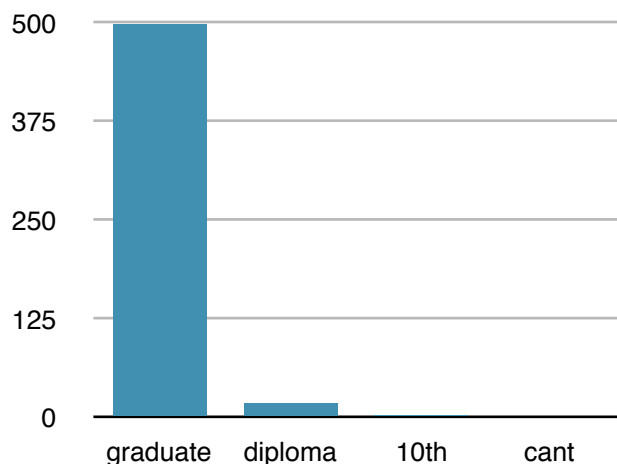
Employment Status
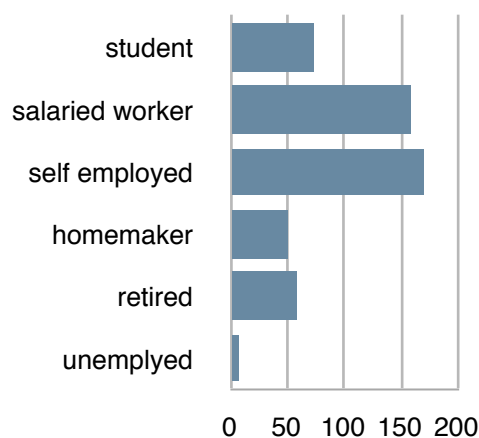
Type of Residence

● Flat   ● Independent house

42%   58%
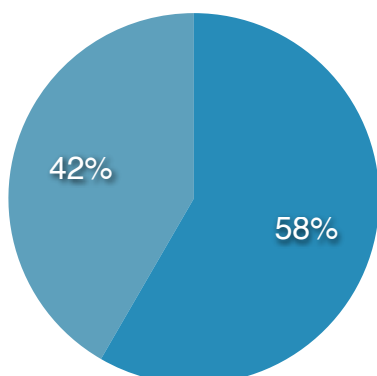
Waste

Segregation: As seen in the pie chart below, 34% of the participants(178 participants) do not segregate while 27% (141 participants) partially segregate. The reason for not segregating was stated as primarily due to the uncertainty of what happens to the segregated waste once it leaves the residence. Other reasons for failing to segregate included: lack of time, knowledge and the amount of effort required.

● Yes   ● No   ● Partially

Partially 27%

Yes 38%

No 34%
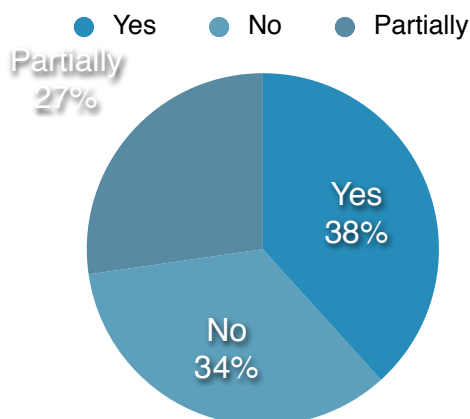
Apartment complex/housing community : 53.9% of participant apartments/housing communities do not practice waste segregation. 7.2% are unaware. 21% of participant complexes/ communities do segregate with a majority of them, 52.8% segregating and handing over.

Just 28% of the participants (166 participants) knew with certainty what happens to their waste once it leaves their residence.

Ward level/community level initiatives:
36% of participants are aware of ward level/community level initiatives that create awareness for segregation and waste management.
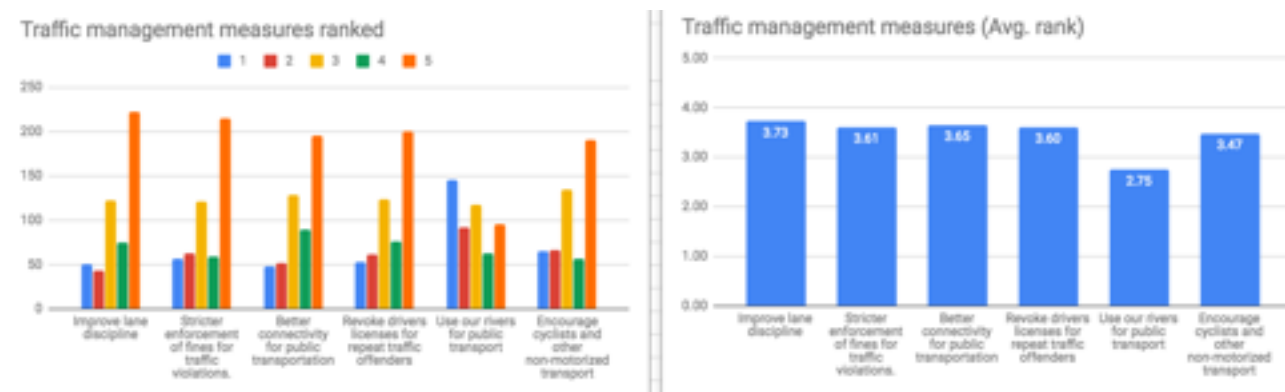60% of the participants are aware of RWAs in their area that work towards keeping the area clean, while 98% of participants feel that, as citizens, they should participate with local RWAs - as depicted in the pie chart below.

30
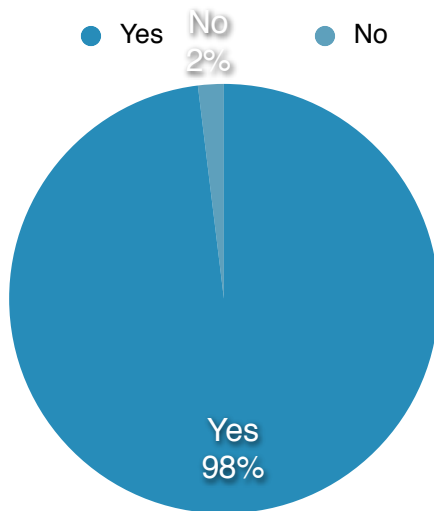
98.4% (506 participants) of the participants agreed to support government policy that mandates waste segregation.

Traffic

70.1% of participants always obey traffic rules and manners, while 27.7% sometimes break rules. A large majority, 75% have never been fined for any traffic related offence.


Communication

67% of the participants(170 participants)are aware of social media groups/whatsapp groups that discuss solid waste and/or neighborhood civic issues, while just 126 participants, or 24% of the participants are actually part of such social media/whatsapp groups.
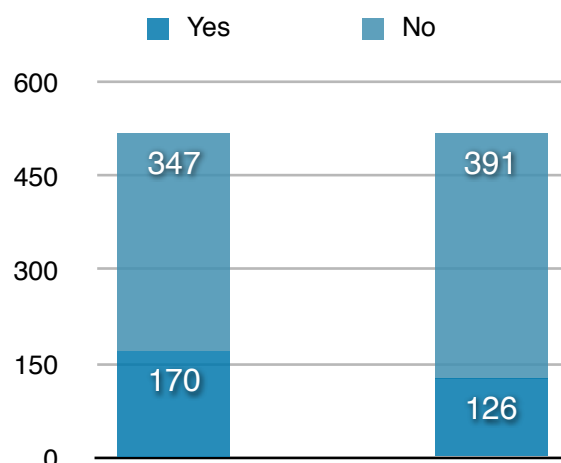
Social media and public hearings were respondents' most preferred platforms of communication to express opinions on government decisions. Dedicated website and press were also suggested as platforms, though only by 0.2% and 0.5% of the participants respectively.

Social Media is also the preferred platform for receiving information from the government, with 287 participants choosing this option. Newspaper and mobile apps are also preferred means with 18% and 15% of participants choosing them respectively.
However, 84.6% of the participants (435 participants) responded that they had have not downloaded the Namma Chennai app.
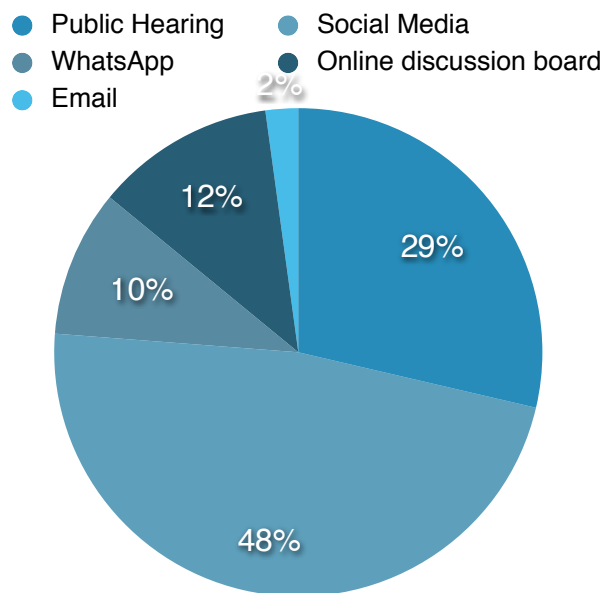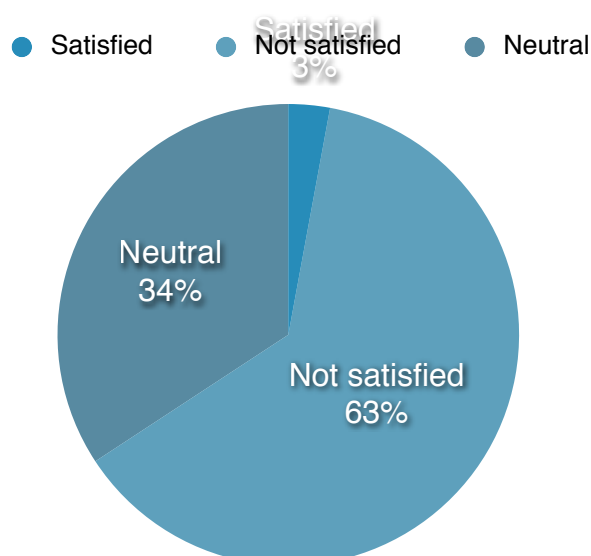

Ward/zone level :
78% of the participants have never interacted with their zone/ward level officials. An equal number (257 participants) of participants are aware and unaware of where their zonal office is.

Governance

A large percent of participants (63%) are not satisfied with the existing mechanisms to engage with the government.
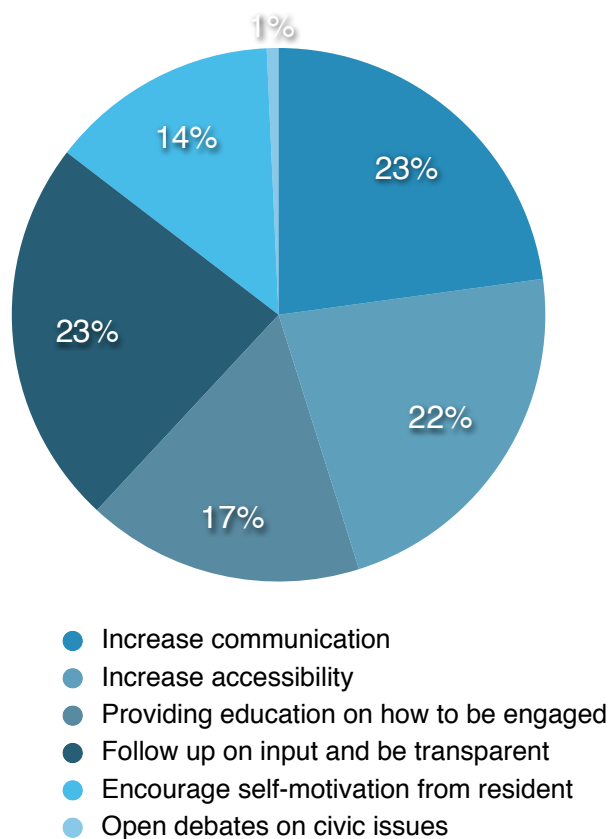
93.4% of the participants (480 participants) think there is a need for citizens to be more engaged amongst themselves and with the government.

The feeling of a lack of power to make a difference (33.6%) and a lack of communication from the government (33.6%) are the main factors preventing citizens from being more involved in government.

Engagement

226 participants (55.6%) stated that they are not satisfied with their ability to participate in improving the city.

Following up on inputs and transparency (23.3%) and Increased Communication (22.7%) are the main ways participants viewed as means to government increasing citizen engagement. Increased accessibility, education on engagement, self-motivation were other methods. A combination of increased communication, increased accessibility and follow ups on input and transparency are chosen by many participants.

- ● Increase communication
- ● Increase accessibility
- ● Providing education on how to be engaged
- ● Follow up on input and be transparent
- ● Encourage self-motivation from resident
- ● Open debates on civic issues

A large number of participants, 23.3% (339 participants) felt the lack of government action by the government was one of the main reasons preventing citizens from getting involved with civic issues. The lack of belief that one can make a difference and the lack of information about events/ activities is also preventing citizen involvement. A combination of lack of interest, lack of information and lack of knowledge is chosen by many participants.
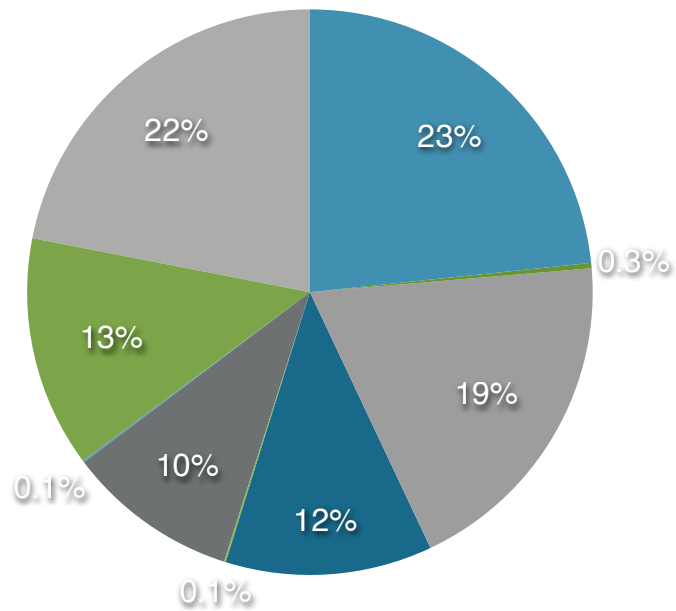
- ● Lack of action by the government
- ● Lack of faith in the government
- ● Lack of information about events/activities
- ● Lack of knowledge
- ● Lack of self discipline
- ● Lack of time
- ● Language barriers
- ● Lack of interest
- ● Lack of belief that one can make a difference