



BBMP's Miscalculation: Why Bengaluru Residents Are Resisting Sankey Flyover

Over 55 old trees will be felled if the infrastructure project moves forward.

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Considering that **traffic** is one of the major hassles at India's IT capital Bengaluru, the **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike** (BBMP) proposed road-widening and construction of a 600-metre flyover on Sankey Road.

However, residents and experts have opposed the project claiming that not only will it negatively impact the rich biodiversity of the area but also not help in reducing traffic.



Speaking to **The Quint**, Ashish Verma, Professor at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) pointed out that instead of expensive and redundant infrastructure projects, alternate solutions can be adopted to solve the traffic problem.

"It's complete madness, there is no logic in this. If you really want to go for solving the problem from its core and doing it in a cost-effective way, there is no logic that will justify the flyover or road widening," Verma said.

Residents Gather To Raise Their Voice

On 31 January, residents in and around the Sankey Tank area, organised themselves under the banner 'Citizens for Sankey' and gathered for a meeting to discuss BBMP's plan to widen the Sankey road along the Bhashyam Circle to Malleshwaram 18th Cross and construct a four lane flyover.

Speaking to **The Quint**, Kimsuka Iyer, a management professional and a resident of Malleshwaram, said, "The consequences of the flyover is that in this 1,500-metre stretch, we are going to see six different traffic congestion points. So that's six choke points of increased traffic congestion. Thanks to this flyover."



Impact of BBMP's proposal, as presented by Professor Ashish Verma. (Photo: Accessed by The Quint)

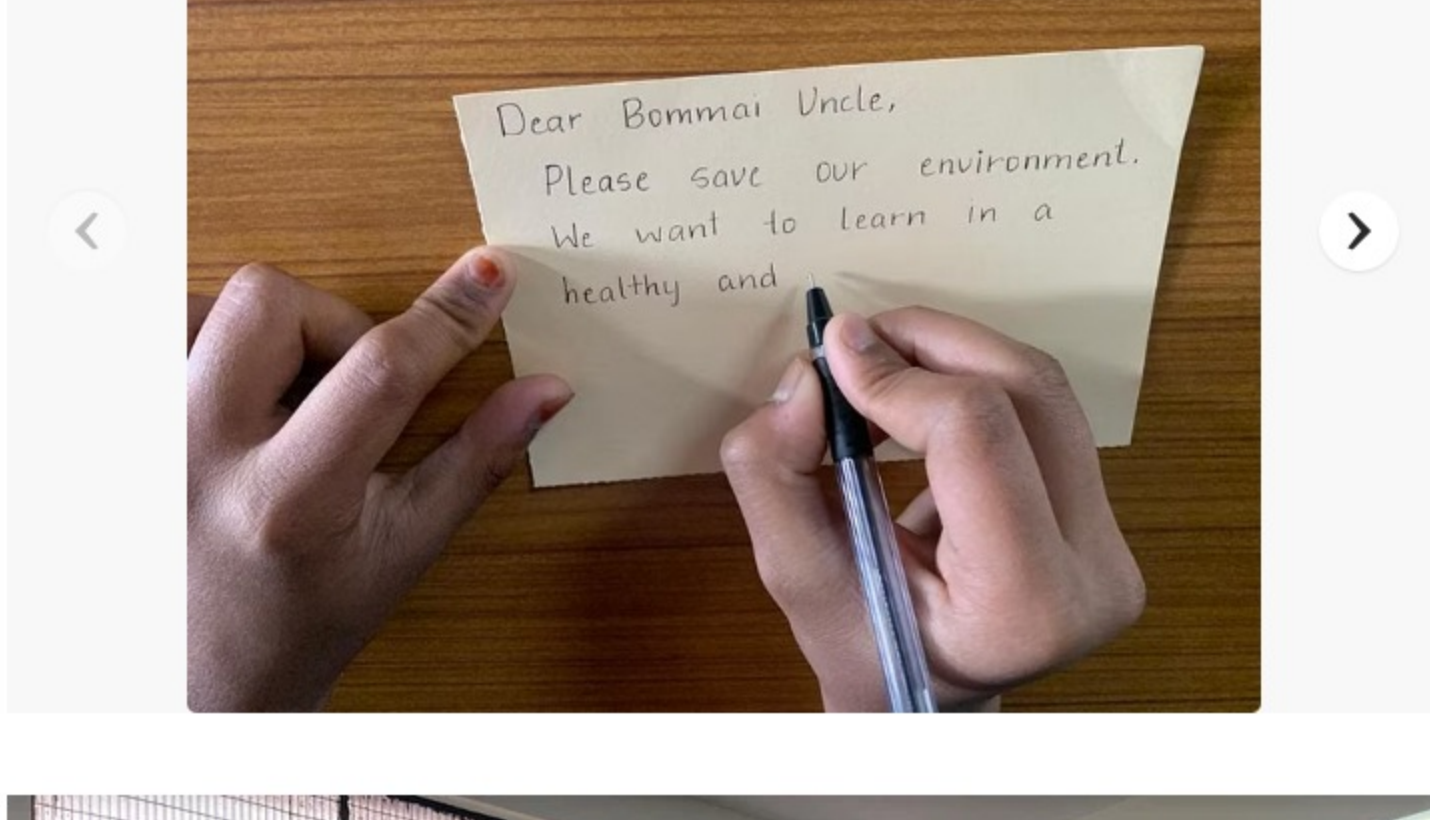
"Beyond that," she added, "We have also spoken to mobility experts who have performed a basic traffic analysis using BBMP's data and they've found that from day one of this flyover being operational we will see an increase in traffic congestion."



Amid the campaign to stop the project, residents tied heart-shaped cloth on trees marked for felling. (Photo: The Quint)

The citizens had become aware of the proposal in December on hearing about the tender. After not finding enough details about the project, the citizens approached transportation systems expert Ashish Verma, at IISc.

Professor Ashish Verma, who analysed the BBMP's detailed project report (DPR) for the project, presented in the meeting held on 31 January, that flyovers do not solve traffic congestion but that they shifted the point of traffic congestion. He also said that flyovers follow a vehicle-centric approach instead of a people-centric approach.



Three weeks ago, around 2,000 students had also sent handwritten postcards to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's Office at Vidhana Soudha, urging him to drop the proposed Sankey flyover.

Addressing the CM as 'Bomma Uncle,' the students from schools around Malleshwaram, Sankey Tank, Vyalikaval, and Sadashivanagar wrote: "Dear Bommai Uncle, Please save our environment. We want to learn in a healthy and safe atmosphere. We do not want Sankey flyover."

Alternative Solutions Are Better

"When we did this analysis, on the parameters of queue lengths at these intersections, delay per vehicle, or travel time from end to end. The traffic signal optimisation scenario is giving us better results than any of the infrastructure scenarios," Verma told **The Quint**.

Pointing out that this might result in an increase in floods in the city, he said:

"We have seen this with these indiscriminate infrastructure projects and not understanding how this will change drainage patterns. It has impacted the city negatively and the lives of people. We have seen this last year in August – how areas that never used to get floods are getting flooded. It's all because the built-up area is changing around you. Somewhere you are raising the level of the road. White topping is a classic example of this, where you have put the concrete slab on top of existing road. By doing so you have raised the level of the road and the adjoining properties go down in terms of their level so that increases the chances for flooding."



With the citizens' campaign gaining momentum, the Karnataka government is now considering dropping the project.

Malleshwaram MLA CN Ashwath Narayan, who had so far not met the residents, also broke his silence on the issue stating, "I did not interfere in the issue at all, assuming BBMP officials would resolve it considering it was their proposal. However, with the issue taking multiple dimensions, I will ensure it is taken up for discussion on priority and a decision is made as per the citizens' wishes."

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