

## MEETING WITH DR. RAJAN CHEDAMBATH (C-HED DIRECTOR)

Meeting date: 08.01.2021

Meeting Time: 11.00 am – 12.00 noon

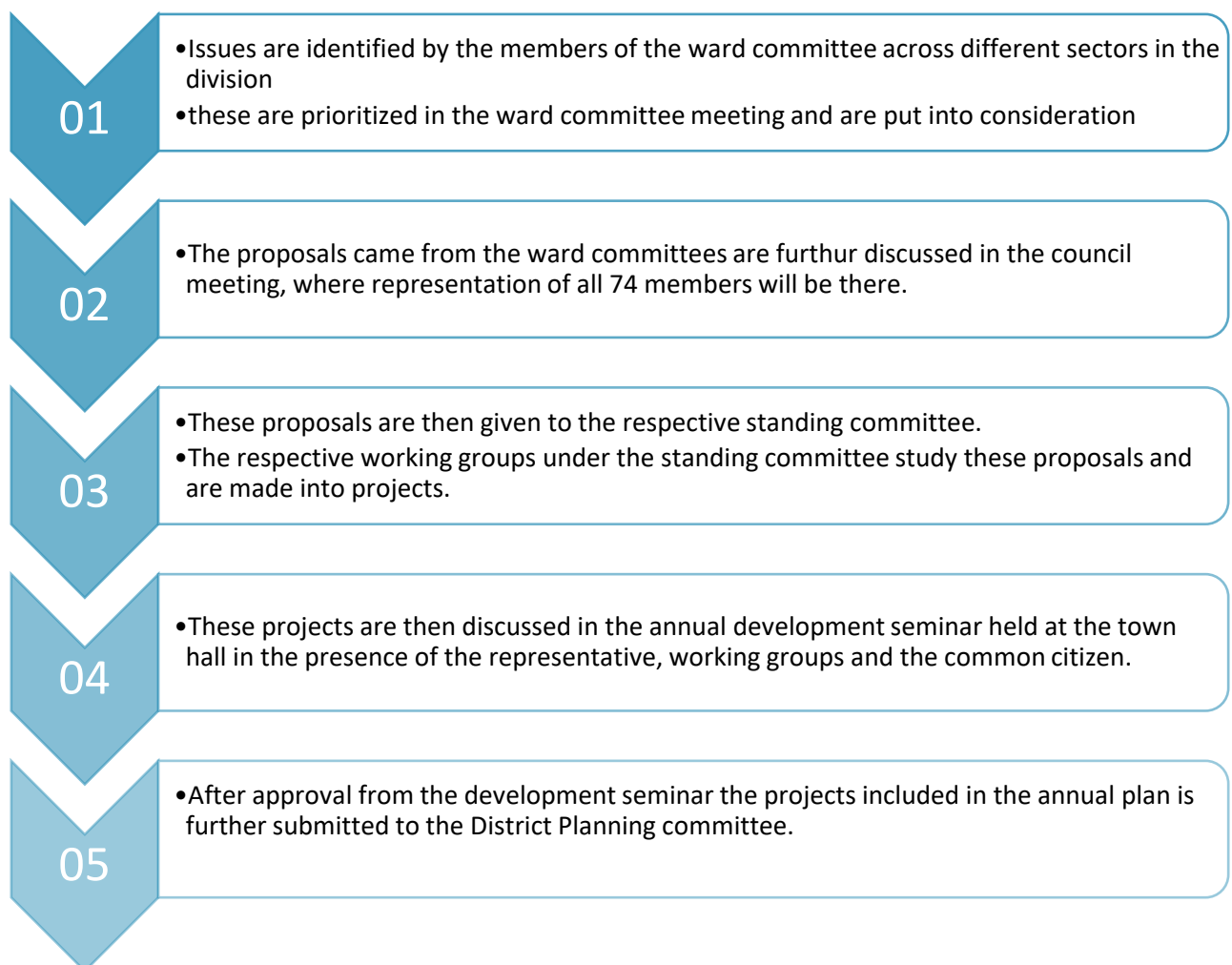
Meeting Venue: C-HED office, Kacheripady, Kochi

Meeting Attendees: Dr. Rajan Chedambath, Director C-HED

Simi, Secretary (Dr. Rajan)

Nandana L S, DRP student, CEPT University.

→ How the projects are made?



→ Not sure that the Kudumbashree plays a prominent role in Janakeeyasootranam.

- They address the issues at the grassroots level in a different manner and that is not through the plan fund allocation discussions or proposals. That process should be looked at entirely separate ways.
- Involvement of active RWA at the ward level as well as the city level is an often-unaddressed segment when talked about citizen participation.
- When they talk about the citizen participation platforms the people under consideration are the lower strata of the society who participate through NHGs and the higher income group who participate through vested interest, RWA on the other hand represent the middle-income group who are not visibly catered.
- Participatory approach is very important and it also helps the citizen to feel they are an important part of the community/ society.
- Flip side of the participatory planning:
  - The funds are coming in as state grants, central grants, special grants etc. and these are divided across the division for resolving the issues at ward level, councilors are competing to get these funds to get to their divisions as proposals.
  - When such a thing happen the overall development of the city is left unmonitored and this affect the overall infrastructure of the city.
  - E.g.: To prevent flooding in the city during monsoon the city needs canal system but when priority is enlisted to the individual division issues, they do not need canal they need roads; unfortunately, roads (division level) is given more importance thus the flooding of the city is left unsolved.
  - The overall development is stagnated most of the time when individual division development progress.
  - E.g.: Kochi does not have a sewerage network/ system in place, but that is never raised as a concern nor as a project. The waste removal from local dumping area in a division is taken up as a project and funds are allocated for it. The overall picture is often not seen through this participatory approach.
  - Another flipside of this approach is that there is the prominence of vested interest, like certain sector of the society influence the larger population.
  - These interest group turn the mob according to their will and benefit, there is a hidden oligarchical movement.

- When the whole participatory planning process is concerned Kudumbashree is acting as a facilitator/ catalyst to address the issues of the very marginalized sections of the society.
- Need of a top-down as well as bottom-up approach:
  - There is more spill over projects every year from all the divisions because it small scale projects and there are even certain projects which has unwanted constructions as a part that the funds are utilized. E.g.: Nehru park, Fort Kochi.
  - Housing issues in the city should have a top-down as well as bottom-up approach, kudumbashree as a sole organization cannot solve that issue. This is mainly due to the social exclusions being a part.
  - When you take up any heterogenous society there are power structure everywhere and kudumbashree is a formal power structure in the lower strata of the society, knowing unknowingly there are certain social exclusions that happen when one organization is given the sole power this might be because of religious, community, political interests etc. based reasons. Because of this same reason there are certain well deserving beneficiaries who get excluded from the lists. This is the reason why there is a top-down approach that should be in place along with the bottom-up approach.
  - These kinds of social exclusions are mainly there because we are not a developed society and it should not be a liberal democracy as the people are not ready yet to imbibe the idea of liberalism without the negative implications, so it should be a balanced act from both sides.
- Development seminar will happen in the usual timeframe if the state did not ask to push it away, but since the state government election is coming up in may there is high chances that there is an extension for the development seminar and related process.
- Considering the overall scenario, the participatory platform is a place the government formally allotted to let know the people they are included in the decision-making process, the own revenue budget utilization is not discussed with the citizen.
- There are around 50 lacs allocated as division funds for each councilor, they can use this fund to do various activities in the division but only after discussion and approval from the council. Mostly these funds are used to complete the project that are lapsed or allocated as emergency funds.