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## **Civic bodies to voluntarily disclose services offered by them**

S. Rajendran

*An attempt at ensuring transparency and accountability*

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*Rules being drafted under the RTI Act for the transparency scheme*

*Disclosures will be published in newspapers, municipality websites*

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BANGALORE: Municipalities in the State, including the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, will periodically disclose the services being rendered by them from the next two months.

This is to ensure transparency and accountability.

The Department of Urban Development has drafted rules under the provisions of the RTI Act to implement the novel transparency scheme, Public Disclosure Rules. These rules are now being vetted by the Law Department and the authorities have commenced a debate on the same with 218 municipalities in the State.

If need be, the rules will be modified before they are notified in two months.

The voluntary disclosure will also ensure that the funds allocated under various schemes are appropriately utilised and there is transparency in public spending and accountability on the part of the officials concerned.

There is also a penal clause under the new rules wherein an official found violating the rules will have to face disciplinary action under the Karnataka Civil Service and Conduct Rules. Sources in the Secretariat told *The Hindu* that disclosures would be published in newspapers, municipality websites and on the notice boards of the municipal offices concerned periodically. The Union Government and the Union Ministry of Urban Development, in particular, directed Karnataka some time ago to enact a Public Disclosure Law since the State is one of the important beneficiaries of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

It is mandated under JNNURM that the municipalities should voluntarily disclose what they are doing for the benefit of the people which would ensure that they are people-friendly and funds released under various schemes are appropriately utilised.