



URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

October 2026



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Praja Foundation

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CAPACITY BUILDING for Women Elected Representatives

Praja Foundation convened a **three-day National Workshop on Capacity Building for Women Elected Representatives** at **YASHADA, Pune**, bringing together 25 women local elected representatives from **11 cities across 3 states**. The goal: sharper understanding of urban governance, municipal law, budgeting and leadership.

The programme wove together **technical sessions, interactive exercises, a panel discussion, and an exposure visit to the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)**, moving participants from concept to practice, and from practice to a concrete plan for their own wards.



Foundations of Governance

The session titled **“She Is the Change Maker - Effective Participation of Women Elected Representatives in Local Governance”** opened with the practical mechanics of being an effective representative: keeping a diary, systematic documentation through box files, managing correspondence, and building an organised workspace by **Mr. Rajiv Nandkar, Additional Collector, YASHADA**. Participants were pushed to take initiative on development works, map ward resources, and stay connected to citizens underpinned by careful decision-making, fairness and professional conduct.

An expectation-setting exercise on Day 1 surfaced recurring themes: **municipal budgets, municipal acts, effective policy implementation, networking with citizens and stakeholders, the 74th Constitutional Amendment, and challenges around informal settlements** themes that shaped the workshop's practical orientation throughout.



WORKSHOP EXPECTATIONS

- Strengthen understanding of urban governance and the constitutional framework
- Build working knowledge of municipal acts, corporation procedures and committees
- Connect municipal budgets to public expenditure and outcomes
- Encourage confident participation in General Body meetings
- Develop leadership, communication and negotiation skills
- Build familiarity with data, e-governance and citizen-facing municipal services
- Offer direct exposure to municipal systems via a visit to PMC
- Support participants in drafting actionable, ward-level plans



Towards Inclusive Governance - Three-Tier System, Urban Governance and the Constitution of India

An interactive session unpacked how **responsibility is divided across the Union, State and Local Governments**, working through the Union, State and Concurrent Lists. Participants then mapped the **18 functions** devolved to urban local bodies under the **74th Constitutional Amendment** onto the realities of their own cities, before being introduced to Praja Foundation's Urban Governance Index and its key themes.

Understanding Law/Municipal Acts for Effective Governance

Participants worked through **real ward-level situations**, practising how to frame sharp questions for General Body meetings. The session covered **Corporation Procedure Rules**, how to read a municipal act, the line between **obligatory and discretionary functions**, and through a dedicated activity how municipal committees are structured and what each one does.



Foundations of Governance



Capacity Building for Councillors matters most where it is hardest to see...

in budgets, in the right question asked to the right authority, and in the discipline to use data.

- Vandana Chavan,
former Rajya Sabha MP and former Mayor of Pune



A fireside chat brought together **Vandana Chavan (former Rajya Sabha MP and former Mayor of Pune)**, **Abhay Pethe (Senior Fellow at the Pune International Centre)**, and **Dinanath Kholkar (Director of the Pune International Centre)**. They engaged in a discussion about the importance of capacity building, focusing on aspects such as budgets, the art of incisive questioning, effective data usage, and understanding which authorities to approach.

Participants **examined how empowered their own Mayors and Corporations** really are to act, surfacing shared thoughts around implementation delays, bureaucratic hurdles, and systemic limits, alongside key findings from the Urban Governance Index. In a hands-on exercise, each **participant lodged an online complaint on another city's municipal corporation website, stepping into a citizen's shoes to feel**, firsthand, the friction in digital grievance systems. Praja's e-governance work in cities including Dibrugarh and Nashik was discussed as best practises.



The **Q&A** ranged across **water management, environmental concerns, concretisation, tree protection, encroachment and sewage** with panellists urging participants toward legislation, data and collective action, and floating ideas for permanent citizen committees and technology-linked grievance platforms.



Budgets and Negotiation

Day 2 opened with a **SWOT exercise** built around designing a hypothetical ward garden surfacing planning trade-offs, resource limits and implementation risk in miniature by **P. C. Pisolkar, Finance Expert and former Municipal Chief Auditor of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM)**.

Praja Foundation then led an activity distinguishing **capital expenditure, capital income, revenue income and revenue expenditure in municipal budgets**.

The session traced the history and purpose of the municipal budget and the **A, B and C budget classifications used by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)**, before introducing fund codes, functions, minor and major heads, administrative codes and the budgeting calendar. A recurring thread: **the value of citizen participation and Ward Committee discussion in the budgeting process**.



A session by **Arun Kumar Waghchoure, Researcher and Entrepreneur** on **negotiation as a leadership tool**, introducing techniques participants could apply immediately: **anchoring, mirroring, tactical silence, good cop/bad cop, the flinch, door-in-the-face, BATNA, the nibble, the ultimatum, and trading concessions** rather than simply conceding.



Inside Pune Municipal Corporation

The afternoon took participants inside **Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)** itself its structure, departments, budget and citizen-facing systems, turning the morning's theory into a walk-through of a functioning municipal corporation.



PMC EXPERIENCE

- The municipal services portal and PMC's single-platform approach to service delivery
- How online services and proactive data publication build citizen trust
- PMC's complaint management system and social media communication
- Nagrik Samwad the portal's hub for complaints, needs and wants, and feedback
- Disaster management systems and the Integrated Command and Control Centre
- Pune's 3D digital twin and its weather station dashboard, including flood monitoring and fleet tracking
- The Municipal Secretary's office the Standing Committee, special committees, and official record-keeping

Participants also met the **Pune Mayor** and visited the **General Body meeting hall** a close-up look at where the decisions they'd spent the day studying actually get made.



Leadership, and a Plan to Act On

The final day opened with a recap before introducing **five levels of leadership: position, permission, production, people development and pinnacle** by **Arun Kumar Waghchoure**. A 'Lost at Sea' simulation then pushed participants to prioritise survival resources under pressure surfacing lessons in decision-making, prioritisation and teamwork.

Each participant left with a ward-specific plan built around a real problem: **project title, description, location, proposed activities, estimated budget, funding source, stakeholders, relevant government departments, monitoring indicators and expected impact** with Praja Foundation committing continued support.

The workshop closed with a thread passed hand to hand around the circle: **each participant sharing one takeaway as the thread wove a web linking 25 women leaders from 11 cities and 3 states**. It stood for what the three days had really built not just knowledge, but a peer network participants can keep drawing on as they lead their cities.



Key Takeaways

- Effective representation combines knowledge, skills, attitude and sustained citizen engagement
- Understanding the Constitution, the 74th Amendment and municipal law is foundational to local governance
- Budget literacy lets representatives engage meaningfully with expenditure and outcomes
- Data, documentation and knowing the right authority strengthen a councillor's ability to act
- Transparent, citizen-facing digital systems improve service access and public trust
- Leadership and negotiation skills help representatives navigate institutions and influence decisions
- Direct exposure to municipal institutions builds a working understanding of how cities actually run
- Ward-level action plans turn training into concrete, measurable interventions

The workshop paired **institutional knowledge with practical skill-building, peer learning and hands-on exposure** spanning constitutional governance, municipal law, budgeting, data, e-governance, leadership and negotiation.

The visit to **Pune Municipal Corporation** grounded the classroom sessions in a **working institution**, and the programme closed with individual ward-level action plans, a direct line from three days of learning to the issues participants intend to solve at home.

In all, the workshop aimed to **strengthen women elected representatives as informed, confident and effective actors in local governance**, equipped to engage institutions, citizens and municipal systems in service of their wards.

We would appreciate your views and feedback based on the information shared above. Please feel free to reach out to us at info@praja.org.



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