



URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

May 2025



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Empowering Local Elected Representatives

Highlights from Capacity Building Workshops in Uttar Pradesh and Assam

Praja conducted the first **Capacity Building Workshop** around 10 years ago in Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Since then, we have organised over 100 training sessions for Municipal Councillors and administration of Mumbai, Delhi, Latur, Jalgaon, Patna, Jammu, Srinagar, Lucknow, Varanasi and Gorakhpur.

In the month of March, Praja Foundation conducted capacity building workshops for the Elected Representatives (ERs) of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation and Meerut Municipal Corporation. The workshops focused on enhancing the councillors' understanding of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation Act, 1971 (GMC Act) and Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act (UPMCA) to equip them with tools for effective governance and deliberation.



Aviral Dubey (Manager at Praja) leading an activity to understand the expectations of the Councillors.



Pratiksha Deolekar (Manager at Praja) leading an activity to understand the expectations of the Councillors.

Empowering Local Leadership

The workshop in **Meerut** was organised on **March 19 and 20, 2025** and attended by Municipal Councillors, empowered standing Committee members across Political Parties. The workshop was taken up in two parts: Day 1 focused on understanding Governance, specifically at the local level venturing deeper into the three tiers of the government, the 74th Amendment of the Constitution, structure of Meerut Municipal Corporation specifically, effectively reading an Act, history of UP Municipal Corporation Act of 1959, and the importance of deliberations. On, day 2, there was an elaborate discussion on Municipal Finance and Budget.

This was followed by a detailed explanation of the three tiers of government, the legislature and **7th Schedule** of the Constitution which include the list: The Union List, the State List and the Concurrent List. The Councillors were introduced to the **74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992** followed by the **12th Schedule** along with an explanation of 18 functions a city government shall deliver under Article 243- W of the Constitution of India.

Praja discussed various aspects of the budget, its historical context, and definition. The speakers explained the objective of the budget and further elaborated on the **National Municipal Accounts Manual**, a simplified accounting toolkit formulated by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs on the recommendation of a Task Force formed by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India. In this session, an engaging activity was conducted wherein the Councillors were tasked with listing down their vision for their ward and city, the existing reality as compared to the vision and the steps taken by them to address the current reality.

In Guwahati, on March 19, 2025, the session covered crucial aspects of municipal governance including the Three-Tier System, the 74th Constitutional Amendment, the 12th Schedule, and the roles and

responsibilities of councillors. Participants were introduced to legislative reading techniques and key sections of the GMC Act that empower municipal governance. Through interactive exercises, councillors practiced interpreting the Act and drafting questions using formal devices like motions, resolutions, and points of order—tools that are essential for structured and meaningful deliberation during General Body Meetings. The session also included a deep dive into the functioning and business of sphere of municipal committees.



Understanding governance and administration.



Priyanka Sharma, Director – Programs giving training to Councillors in Assam

Active Participation and Knowledge Sharing

In Meerut, apart from the UPMCA and Municipal Finance, the workshop also focused on the three-tier system of Governance, 74th Constitution Amendment Act, various committees in a city, roles and responsibilities of a Councillor, deliberation at a local level, budget process, and ways to boost city's own revenue. It also aimed to facilitate networking and collaboration among the Councillors.

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In Assam, the workshop began with an expectation-setting exercise, to understand their learning goals and expectations. Participants, particularly women councillors, showed keen interest in understanding their roles and rights under the GMC Act. There was an engaging exchange on best practices from other cities such as Mumbai, with a focus on enhancing deliberative capacities.

Key Highlights:

In Guwahati:

- The workshop was attended by 27 councillors, including 14 women.
- Attendees included 6 municipal administration officials, including the Municipal Secretary.
- Deliberative practices from other Indian cities were shared.
- Councillors expressed interest in future workshops on Municipal Finance and provided positive feedback.

In Meerut:

- The workshop in Meerut was attended by a total of 55 out of a total of 90 Councillors, including members of the executive committee.
- The session highlighted best practices in Urban Local Governance and encouraged the participants to
- identify problems and brainstormed for solutions faced by the city.
- Councillors expressed their positive feedback, stating that the session proved beneficial in enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities outlined for Councillors in the Act.

Way Forward

- Praja Foundation is in discussions for long-term partnerships with the Department of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of Assam, and Assam Urban Infrastructure Development & Financial Corporation Ltd. (AUIDFCL) to continue building governance capacity in Guwahati and Dibrugarh Municipal Corporations.
- Upcoming workshops will include sessions on municipal finance, aimed at helping councillors better understand budgeting processes, relevant GMC Act provisions, and strategies for enhancing local revenue generation.
- Praja remains committed to empowering city governments with knowledge, tools, and practices that lead to accountable and citizen-centric urban governance.
- There is need to constitute ward and wards committee as per UPMCA-1959. We would like to push reform of wards committee with Councillors and Mayor of the corporation so that all the Councillors could be a part of all committee other than the board meeting.
- There should be regular Councillors training where details of deliberation like relevant sections from the Act, functioning of board /committees meeting, role of Councillors in deliberation etc. are discussed.
- The cities need to focus on increasing their own sources of revenue to initiate their own policy.



Praja's Capacity Building Workshop in Guwahati



Praja's Capacity Building Workshop in Meerut

"We need such workshops to empower the Councillors. The session gave me clarity on my role as a Councillor, which will allow me to fulfil my responsibilities more effectively."

**Naresh Saini, Councillor, Ward 7,
Meerut Municipal Corporation**

"I've never learned about budget analysis in such a clear and easy way. The topics were broken down into simple parts, which helped me understand budgeting much better. Now I feel confident to ask questions and take part in budget discussions. I'm excited to join more budget sessions from now on."

**Rampal Singh, Councillor, Ward 13
Meerut Municipal Corporation**

"This was a wonderful experience for me, huge thanks to Guwahati Municipal Corporation for organising this event. I am glad to be a part of it. Thanks to Praja Foundation."

**Labanya Devi
Nominated Councillor, Guwahati Municipal Corporation**

We would like to know your views and feedbacks based on the above information shared. Feel free to reach us at info@praja.org

Kind Regards,



Nitai Mehta
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CEO, Praja Foundation