



URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

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"Equipping Patna's Elected Representatives"

Highlights from Capacity Building Workshop

Praja Foundation, in collaboration with **Save the Children** (Bal Raksha Bharat), conducted a **capacity building workshop for the Elected Representatives (ERs) of Patna Municipal Corporation**. The workshop aimed to enhance their understanding of 'Municipal Finance.' **P. C. Pisolkar**, a budget expert and former Chief Municipal Auditor of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), facilitated a session on 'Municipal Finance'. For this workshop, training modules were specifically designed to simplify the municipal act and finance documents for the councillors. **The workshop spanned over a duration of two days.**

The event was inaugurated by the Honourable Mayor & Deputy Mayor. Mr Rafay Ejaz Hussain, Head of State Project Office at Save the Children first welcomed all the participants, introduced the speakers and explained why Praja and Save the Children have organised the capacity building sessions.



From Vision to Action

In November 2021, Praja and Save the Children had conducted an Urban governance study in the city of Patna where the team engaged with key stakeholders like the Municipal Commissioner, administrators, Standing Committee members and Councillors. Moreover, **a comprehensive need assessment for a training program was conducted to better understand the requirements of local elected representatives.**

During the study, councillors highlighted the importance of devolving functions to the city government and empowering it with certain powers. These powers included the authority to hire Class C and Class D positions within the corporation, the establishment of wards committees at the aanchal/circle level, and the provision of training for Councillors.

In response to the needs identified during the assessment, Praja Foundation and Save the Children collaborated to develop a module that simplifies the municipal act and municipal finance. The module served as the foundation for the capacity building workshop, ensuring that the training addressed the specific requirements of the councillors. The capacity building workshop was organised with the aim to address the insights gained after the need assessment and to strengthen Urban Governance by providing tools to the Councillors. The training module booklets and kit were provided to all the Councillors during the workshop.

The primary objective of the workshop was to educate councillors on effective governance practices and community engagement strategies. It aimed to facilitate networking and collaboration among councillors. Additionally, the workshop aimed to **enhance councillors' understanding of policy development, decision-making processes, and the responsibilities associated with local government.**

Capacity Building Sessions

On the first day, the session covered the Municipal Act, Municipal Committees, Departments of the Corporation, and Councillors' duties. The second day focused on Simplifying the Budget-Making Process and Understanding Budget Documents.

Day One:

This session started with an engaging keynote address by Ms Priyanka Sharma, Director of Programs at Praja Foundation. The session started with explaining the flow and content of the session. A brief pre-session test was conducted to estimate the awareness and understanding of the elected members of the Municipal Act and their duties. The session covered range of topics from **methods of reading an act, roles, and responsibilities of councillors, to how to draft a question and raise issues in the municipal corporation meetings.**



The session started with a detailed explanation of the three tiers of governance. The role & function of the local government, the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 and seventh schedule of the Constitution which includes the list of subjects under the Centre, State & Concurrent List were highlighted. The councillors were introduced to the 12th Schedule which includes the 18 functions a city government shall deliver mentioned under Article 243 W. The councillors started reflecting and listed the functions delivered by the Patna Municipal Corporation.



The session on "How to Read an Act?" was highly beneficial and informative for the Councillors. It involved listing the Important sections of the Act, providing an overview of the history of the Bihar Municipal Act, and discussing important amendments that have been made. The session also delved into the discretionary and obligatory functions outlined in the act, while elaborating on the roles and responsibilities of the councillors.

Furthermore, the councillors actively participated by sharing their success stories, highlighting the challenges encountered in their communities, discussing the lessons they learned, and offering valuable suggestions to address the identified problems. The session also included group activities aimed at fostering collaboration, problem-solving, and teamwork skills among the Councillors. During the open discussion, the elected representatives had an opportunity to raise issues they faced, which briefly resulted in a passionate argument between male members of the standing committee and female councillors regarding the provision of meeting agendas in advance.



An extensive discussion took place regarding the necessity of formulating Ward Committees according to the act. This started with the discussion on tools to enable effective deliberation which highlighted the need for creation of ward committees. It was agreed that Ward Committees would provide a better platform to address local issues effectively.

Day Two:

On day two, the session on Municipal Finance was conducted by P. C. Pisolkar, the former Chief Municipal Auditor of BMC. The session commenced by decoding the concept of a budget, its historical context, and definition. Mr Pisolkar 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 calculating and determining whether the Patna Municipal Corporation had a surplus or deficit budget. The councillors were divided into teams, and notably, the team consisting of female councillors promptly provided the correct answer.

The finance session concluded by providing a comprehensive explanation of the General Principles of Municipal Budgeting. This included discussions on estimated income and expenditure, a comparison between estimated and actual budgets, and the importance of conducting reviews to revise the budget in order to ensure a minimum cash balance at the end of the year. Additionally, detailed explanations were provided regarding the financial calendar and various sections pertaining to finance in the Bihar Municipal Act.



Day two concluded with a session on e-Governance reforms and initiatives to facilitate better service delivery and citizen participation. Aviral Dubey, Program Coordinator from Praja Foundation **conducted a session on e-Governance** reforms that could be implemented within the Patna Municipal Corporation. This session aimed to explore potential digital governance initiatives and advancements for the betterment of municipal operations. He highlighted the best practices followed in India with use cases from cities across the country.

Key Insights from the session

- The workshop was well-attended, with a total of **65 participants**, including **members of the empowered standing committee**.
- The session highlighted **best practices in Urban Local Governance** and encouraged the participants to **identify problems and brainstorm for solutions** faced by the city.
- **Female participation in both sessions was significant, with active involvement from female councillors**. It is noteworthy that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in Patna are both women, it is further highlighting the representation and engagement of women in municipal governance.
- The exercise of using a household budget as an example to **understand the municipal budget** proved to be an engaging and effective. It facilitated a better understanding of the concepts for the councillors, making the session more interesting.
- **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.

"As a councillor, I have greatly benefited from this workshop, which has increased our awareness of our rights and duties. I strongly advocate for the continuity of such workshops in the future. Often, due to a lack of training, new councillors lack the necessary knowledge for effective deliberation. This workshop has significantly empowered newly elected councillors, making it essential to organise similar workshops in every municipal corporation."

Angi Rai, Councillor, Patna Municipal Corporation

"The workshop educated us on our duties, rights, and responsibilities. The workshop provided us tools for effective project planning and execution within our respective wards. This was a first-of-its-kind workshop to be organised in the past fifteen years, and it has proven to be beneficial for both new and experienced corporators."

Pinky Yadav, Councillor, Ward 32

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,



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