



# URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance



May 2025


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## Praja's Governance Fellowship 2025: Mumbai, Delhi & Lucknow

[Praja Foundation](https://www.praja.org) is committed to transforming urban governance through citizen participation and capacity-building initiatives. Over the last 26 years, we have been dedicated to fostering accountable governance through extensive data-driven research on civic issues. We believe that public participation in local governance is essential for empowering elected representatives and ensuring an accountable administration.

In its pursuit of better governance, the Praja Foundation engages the youth through various programmes, the Governance Fellowship Programme is one such way. It is a unique and exciting opportunity for young citizens to learn how city governments function and be part of running their cities. It is designed to build understanding on urban governance and encourages youth participation in democracy. The objective is to raise awareness among participating fellows about ground reality, practices followed, and roles and functions of elected representatives through research, data, and consultations.



Since 2017, Praja Foundation has successfully conducted 16 cohorts of the 'Governance Fellowship Programme' in five cities - **Mumbai (since 2017), Delhi (since 2019), Srinagar (2022), Lucknow (since 2023) and Gurugram (2024)** where city-based youth got an immersive opportunity to understand local governance while working with political, administrative, and civil society leadership.

Over 120 fellows graduating from the programme collectively contributed over 60,000 hours towards improving public service delivery. The latest cohort across all three cities commenced on February 14, 2025, and is expected to conclude in December 2025.

Throughout the fellowship, fellows will engage with administrators and field experts, support capacity-building workshops, and contribute to the Prajatantra National Youth Festival. Regular expert-led sessions, peer learning reviews, and mentorship will contribute to their continuous growth and impact in governance.

Interviews

For the Governance Fellowship 2025, a total of **870 applications** were received across Mumbai, Lucknow, and Delhi. After a rigorous **shortlisting** process based on telephonic interviews and application reviews, **67 candidates were shortlisted for Mumbai, 52 for Lucknow, and 60 for Delhi**. The in-person interviews were conducted on February 8 and 9, 2025, at the respective Praja Foundation offices with panels comprising experts from diverse backgrounds to ensure a comprehensive selection process. Eventually, **10 fellows were selected for Mumbai, six for Lucknow, and six for Delhi**.

Orientation

The fellows underwent a week-long orientation that included theoretical sessions and field visits. The theoretical orientation covered:

- Praja’s work, mission, and vision
- Three tiers of government and local self-governance
- 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992
- The respective Municipal Corporation Acts
- Structure of respective Municipal Corporation and their departments
- Urban Governance Index
- MLA Report Card Matrix
- Mock meetings with elected representatives

Mumbai Governance Fellowship Cohort 6

The initiation was held at the IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with field visits to the **Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI)** and **BMC F-South Ward Office**. The keynote address was delivered by **Adv. Ashish Shelar, Cabinet Minister of Information Technology and Cultural Affairs of Maharashtra**. The fellows also interacted with former Councillors **Shri Sachin Padwal** and **Smt. Rukhasana Siddiqui**.



Field Visits

1. Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI):

This session focused on urbanisation, planning, and spatial frameworks, emphasising the need for decentralised planning and UDRI’s Spatial Planning Indicators (SPI). It also covered Geographic Information System (GIS), and insights from flagship reports comparing planning hierarchies across states. The discussion reinforced the importance of citizen participation and government accountability in ensuring sustainable urbanisation.



2. BMC F-South Ward Office

During this field visit, the fellows gained insights into the functioning of various municipal departments and the roles of officials in city administration. They interacted with the Assistant Municipal Secretary and Assistant Health Officer, who emphasised the importance of collaboration between elected representatives and the administration in solving civic issues. The officials also discussed the need to increase citizen awareness and participation and the challenges faced by the administration.



*"During the orientation, I learned about Praja's core principles and the three tiers of governance. Visiting the BMC ward office helped me in understanding Mumbai's municipal structure in detail, helped me see my city in a new light, and helped me grasp how local governance works."*  
– **Shubham Tiwari**, Mumbai Fellow, Cohort 6

Delhi Governance Fellowship Cohort 4:

The fellows underwent a week-long orientation and field visits to the Delhi Municipal Civic Center and outreach visits with councillors **Smt. Rekha Rani**. The keynote address was delivered by **Shri. Mahesh Kumar, Hon'ble mayor Delhi Municipal Corporation**, and Councillor **Smt. Nazia Danish, leader of Congress in Municipal Corporation of Delhi**.



Field Visit

1. Delhi Municipal Civic Center:

This visit focused on the demonstration and understanding of the varied facets of urbanisation, planning, and official frameworks. The fellows, along with the interns, visited all the 17 departments under the guidance of **Shri. P.D. Hariprasad (Former Deputy Controller of Reforms)** and gained deep insights about the working of the whole Municipal Corporation. During this visit, they learned about the functioning of various municipal departments and the roles of officials in city administration. The discussions during this visit reinforced the importance of citizen participation and government accountability.





2. Elected Representative Field Visit

The fellows interacted with **Councillor Smt. Rekha Rani**, who emphasised the importance of collaboration between elected representatives and the administration in solving civic issues. She also discussed the need for citizen awareness and participation and shared the challenges faced by the administration. She spent time getting to know the youth, learnt about the fellowship and shared valuable insights and experiences from her work with them.



*"The orientation gave several key insights about Urban Local Governance. It was indeed a dreamy first step toward my aspiration to work in public policy and governance."*  
– **Satyam Kumar**, Fellow, Delhi Cohort 4

Lucknow Governance Fellowship Cohort 3:

The fellows underwent a five-day orientation at the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies, Lucknow. The keynote address was delivered by **Deputy Director, Smt. Vijeyta, Directorate of Urban Local Bodies, UP**. She interacted with the fellows and encouraged them to work on Urban Governance reforms laying special emphasis on improving the Fiscal Empowerment of the city governments. Her closing remarks highlighted the importance of youth in Governance and motivated the fellows to do their best to utilise the opportunity.



Field Visit

1. **Mayor, Camp Office:** The fellows along with the Praja Team went to the Mayor’s Camp Office where they met with **Smt. Sushma Kharakwal, Honourable Mayor, Lucknow Municipal Corporation**. She interacted with each fellow to understand their diverse backgrounds and explained the challenges and initiatives taken by her office.



2. Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC):

During this field visit, the fellows gained insights into the functioning of various municipal departments and the roles of officials in city administration. They interacted with the City Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Chief Tax Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Health Officer, Junior Traffic Engineer, Assistant Health Officer and Councillors who emphasised the importance of collaboration between elected representatives and the administration in solving civic issues. The officials also discussed the need for citizen awareness and participation, and the challenges faced by the administration.



*"Our field visit to the Mayor's Camp Office and Lucknow Municipal Corporation was an eye-opening experience, providing deep insights into local governance. Meeting officials like the Mayor, councillors, and finance officers helped us understand policy implementation and public service challenges. This visit enriched our knowledge and reinforced our commitment to meaningful civic engagement."*

– Yashi Yuvraj, Lucknow Fellow, Cohort 3

Important links

- [Bombay Municipal Corporation Act, 1888](#)
- [Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957](#)
- [Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Uttar Pradesh Website](#)
- [Lucknow Nagar Nigam](#)

We would like to know your views and feedback based on the above information shared. Feel free to reach us at [info@praja.org](mailto:info@praja.org)

Kind Regards,

Nitai Mehta, Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation

CEO, Praja Foundation