



URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

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"Equipping Elected Representative from Uttar Pradesh"

Highlights from Capacity Building Workshops

Over the last two decades, [Praja Foundation](http://www.praja.org) has been working towards enabling accountable governance. It conducts data-driven research on civic issues, inform citizens, media, and government administration. Praja also works with Elected Representatives (ERs) to equip them to address inefficiencies in work processes, bridging the information gaps and mobilizing them in taking corrective advocacy for change. Praja initiated a Capacity Building workshop around 10 years ago in Mumbai Municipal Corporation. Since then, we have organized over 100 training sessions for Municipal programs for councillors in three former municipalities in Delhi. Praja has successfully conducted workshops with Elected Representatives in Latur, Jalgaon, Patna, Jammu and Srinagar.



Honourable Mayor of Kanpur Municipal Corporation with Councillors, Praja and Ekjut Kanpuria team

Praja, conducted **2-day Capacity Building workshops for the Elected Representatives for Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi and Gorakhpur Municipal Corporations**. The workshops aimed to enhance their

understanding of 'Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act 1959 (UPMCA) and Municipal Finance.' **P. C. Pisolkar**, a subject expert and former Chief Municipal Auditor of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) along with **P D Hariprasad**, former Deputy Comptroller of Accounts in Delhi Municipal Corporation, facilitated the session on 'Municipal Finance'. For these workshops, training modules were specifically designed to simplify the Corporation Act and Finance documents for the Councillors.



Praja Team with Councillors of Lucknow Municipal Corporation

From Vision to Action

In July 2023, Praja Foundation signed a MoU with Directorate of Urban Local Bodies (DULB) and Urban Development Department (UDD) of Government of Uttar Pradesh (GoUP) on **Capacity Building of Elected Representatives on Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act 1959 and Municipal Finance**. Praja developed **modules for all the selected cities that simplifies the understanding of UPMC Act and Municipal Finance for the respective cities**. The module will serve as a handbook for the Councillors that can be readily referred to understand the basic Governance structure and processes for the Councillors. The training module booklets were provided to all the Councillors during the workshops.



Praja Team with Councillors of Varanasi Municipal Corporation

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 and deliberation at local level. It also aimed to facilitate networking and collaboration among the councillors.



Honourable Mayor of Kanpur Municipal Corporation with Praja and Ekjut Kanpuria team

Capacity Building Sessions

The workshop in Kanpur was organized on 6th and 7th of August 2024 which was inaugurated by **Honourable Mayor of Kanpur Municipal Corporation Mrs. Pramila Pandey** while a similar event was organized in Lucknow on 8th and 9th of August 2024.



Honourable Mayor of Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation with Municipal Commissioner and Accounts Officer



Additional Municipal Commissioner of Gorakhpur

The Workshop for the city of Varanasi were organized on 26th and 27th November 2024 which was joined by Deputy Chairman of Executive Committee along with the its members. Gorakhpur had similar workshops on 28th and 29th of November 2024. The workshop in Gorakhpur was joined by the **Honourable Mayor Dr. Mangalesh Shrivastav along with Municipal Commissioner, Mr. Gaurav Singh Sogarwal, Additional Municipal Commissioner Mr. Durgesh Mishra and Accounts Officer Ravi Singh.** The workshop was taken up in two parts: Day 1 focused on understanding Governance, specifically at the local level while Day 2 had an elaborate discussion on Municipal Finance and Budget.



Praja Team with Councillors of Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation

Day One:

The workshop in the city of Lucknow, Varanasi and Gorakhpur were conducted by Praja Foundation while the workshop in Kanpur was possible in collaboration with **Ekjut Kanpuria**. The sessions were initiated with an engaging keynote address by Mrs. Priyanka Sharma, Director of Programs at Praja Foundation and Mr. Aviral Dubey, Program Manager at Praja Foundation, explaining the flow and content of the session.

An activity was conducted to understand the expectations of the Councillors from the session. A brief pre-session test was also conducted to estimate the awareness and understanding of the elected members on the basics of 74th constitution amendment and sections of UP Municipal Corporation Act.

This was followed by detailed explanation of the three tiers of government, the legislature and 7th Schedule of the Constitution which includes the list of subjects under the Union, State & Concurrent List were highlighted. The councillors were introduced to the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 followed by the 12th Schedule which includes the explanation of 18 functions a city government shall deliver mentioned under Article 243-W. An important aspect of the session was "How to Read an Act?" was highly beneficial and informative for the Councillors. It involved listing the important sections of



Councillors attempting the Pre-test exercise



Councillors during the session in Varanasi

the Act, providing an overview of the history of the UPMCA, 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.



Councillors of Lucknow Municipal Corporation engaged in the workshop activities

Furthermore, the councillors actively participated by highlighting their experiences and challenges encountered in the communities, discussing the lessons learned, and offering valuable suggestions to address the identified problems. It was also inferred that the councillors have a collective power as opposed to a singular approach to the issues they face in their respective community.

Kanpur



Lucknow



Varanasi



Gorakhpur



Councillors of all the four cities were actively involved in the workshop

In another activity, the councillors started reflecting and listed the functions delivered by their respective Municipal Corporation. An extensive discussion took place regarding the various types of committees along with necessity of formulating Ward and Wards Committees. 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 for Kanpur, Lucknow and Varanasi** was conducted by **P. C. Pisolkar**, the former Chief Municipal Auditor of BMC while for **Gorakhpur, P D Hariprasad** (former Deputy Comptroller of Accounts in Delhi Municipal Corporation) conducted the session. The second day

commenced by decoding the concept of a 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.

The finance session included 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, Budget grants and the importance of conducting reviews to revise the budget in order to ensure a minimum cash balance at the end of the year. A detailed explanation of sources of income and its categories for the corporation was also given. Additionally, detailed explanations were provided regarding the financial calendar and various sections pertaining to finance in the UPMCA.



Mr Pisolkar with the Councillors of Lucknow Municipal Corporation

In another activity, councillors were also given out summarized budget handouts where they could develop a better understanding of their respective Municipal Corporation’s budget as per the explanation from Mr. Pisolkar.

Day two concluded with a session on e-Governance reforms and initiatives to facilitate better service



Mr. Pisolkar (former chief auditor of BMC), explaining best practices in Kanpur



PD Hariprasad (former deputy comptroller of DMC) and Priyanka (Director, Praja) during session in Varanasi

delivery and citizen participation. Mr. Aviral Dubey, Program Manager from Praja Foundation **conducted a session on e-Governance** reforms that could be implemented in Kanpur as well as Lucknow 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.

The Workshop held in Kanpur involved session on Solid Waste Management conducted by the team of Ekjut Kanpuria where they discussed the pilot project initiated in a selected ward of Kanpur Municipal Corporation. The Councillors of Kanpur Municipal Corporation showed interest in scaling the initiative in other wards as well.

Key Insights from the session

- The workshop in Kanpur was well-attended, with a total of **63 participants** out of a total of 110 councillors, including **members of the executive committee**.
- The participation in Lucknow was up to a total of **14 participants**.
- Varanasi saw a total of **58 participants** out of 100 councillors in the Corporation.
- Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation has 80 enlisted councillors out of which **49 councillors attended** the workshop.
- The session highlighted **best practices in Urban Local Governance** and encouraged the participants to **identify problems and brainstorm 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.
- There are 37 female councillors out of a total of 110 councillors in Kanpur Nagar Nigam, 38 female councillors out of 110 councillors in Lucknow Municipal Corporation, 35 female councillors in Varanasi out of 100 while 21 female councillors in Gorakhpur among 80 councillors. Female participation in all cities of Praja's workshop was significant, with active involvement from all those who participated.
- The analysis of pre and post-test done by the Praja team clearly indicates that almost all of the councillors who participated both days were able to rectify their shortcomings about the basics of municipal governance and finance.
- 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. They also suggested to conduct similar workshops on regular basis.
- It was concluded in the session that the Corporations do not hold regular meetings as recommended by the UPMC Act 1959.
- The Councillors mentioned that ward and wards committees do not exist in any of the cities and there are no forums for citizens to participate in the deliberation of the city either.

Way Forward

- This workshop aimed to strengthen the elected representatives through capacity building, thereby

transforming the overall working of the city resulting in better governance.

- With every new election we have newly elected councillors coming in, we have understood that these councillors need a support to guide them and function better.
- 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.
- Regular follow up meeting with councillor is suggested to be organised for better functioning.
- Councillors work very closely with SWM issues in their respective wards. To ensure the continuation of Ekjut Kanpuria Project in Kanpur it is important for project team to continuously hold regular meeting with Councillors of the project area.
- The cities needs to focus on increasing their own sources of revenue to initiate its own policy and program with or other than state and central government for the urban poor and informal settlements.

Glimpses from the Workshop

"As a newly elected 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. Each and every question was answered in a detailed manner. The workshop was highly beneficial and empowering."

**Saumya Shukla, Councillor, Ward 95,
Kanpur Municipal Corporation**

"I would like to express my gratitude to Praja foundation on organizing this informative workshop and educating my councillors on the Act and Budget. The unique way of explanation helped specially the new councillors to understand working and nuances of the corporation and the house. It was heartening to see the spirit of healthy competition amongst councillors while doing the activities under the workshop."

**Pramila Pandey, Mayor,
Kanpur Municipal Corporation**

"The workshop was very educative, I was able to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of a Councillor in short period of time"

**Rajni Gupta, Councillor, Ward 83,
Lucknow Municipal Corporation**

"I am a first time Councillor, I get knowledge from field and Sadan but the sessions by Praja have greatly increased my knowledge. Sessions like these are very helpful for first timer Councillors."

**Manju Kanaujiya, Councillor, Ward 3,
Varanasi Municipal Corporation**

"The workshop was very good, we received information on the workings of House, which sections are important and will help us to get our work done. I am a new councillor and did not have complete knowledge, such workshops are very helpful"

**Councillors,
Varanasi Municipal Corporation**

"Personally, my participation in the workshop has transformed me into a more mature and informed representative. Reflecting on my journey, I believe that if we had the opportunity to attend such a workshop early in our tenure as councillors, we would have developed stronger capabilities in all aspects of governance, whether of legislative or executive roles. Even as a fifth-term councillor, I found the workshop to be immensely enriching and insightful. One of the key takeaways was learning how to use budgets effectively and judiciously. Praja Foundation provided meticulously prepared booklets, the result of extensive research and hard work, which proved to be extremely helpful in enhancing our understanding and skills."

**Narsingh Das, Vice Chairman,
Varanasi Municipal Corporation**

"The workshop is knowledgeable and Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation will try to host similar workshops in the future as well."

**Manglesh Kumar Srivastav, Mayor,
Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation**

"The session organized by Praja has informed us about the practices of other states as compared to UP under the 74th Amendment, we were able to understand rights of councilors. It was a successful and knowledge imparting workshop"

**Rajendra Kumar Tripathi, Councillor, Ward 36,
Gorakhpur 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

Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation



Milind Mhaske

CEO, Praja Foundation



Mayor of KMC addressing the Councillors



Praja Team during Varanasi Workshop



Vice Chairman of Varanasi Municipal Corporation



Praja's Fellows engaging with Lucknow Councillors



Praja Team with Mayor of KMC



Female Councillors of Lucknow



Praja Team in Gorakhpur



Praja Fellows and councillors in Gorakhpur



Female Councillors and Praja team in Gorakhpur



Praja Team engaging with Councillors in Varanasi Workshop



(L-R) P D Hariprasad, P C Pisolkar, Nitai Mehta and Aviral Dubey in Varanasi workshop