



# URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

May, 2022



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## Urban Governance Study in Ballari

Praja Foundation was invited by the Municipal Commissioner of Ballari City Corporation for conducting a comprehensive study of the corporation and thereby assisting us in improving and building upon urban governance in Ballari city, Karnataka.

Praja Team visited Ballari, Karnataka in the third week of April 2022 to study the urban governance structures and reforms implemented in the state. Field interviews with elected representatives such as the Mayor and councillors of the Ballari City Corporation (BCC), administrative officials such as the Municipal Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), Health Officer, Environmental Engineer, etc and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) were conducted.

Ballari city is located in Karnataka state adjoining the border of Andhra Pradesh. Ballari city presently has jurisdiction over an area of 81.95 sq. km with a population of about 4.1 Lakhs as per the 2011 census. The city also has significant small-scale industrial activity and is one of the major centres of Jeans manufacturing in the country, and it is the second largest city in Asia in manufacturing ready-made garments.

The Ballari City Municipal Council came into being in 1867. It was later converted to Ballari City Corporation on 28 September 2004. It functions according to the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976 (KMCA).



## Mayoral System

The Mayor in Ballari is indirectly elected by the councillors of the corporation. The term of the Mayoral post is one year. This makes the post of the mayor ceremonial rather than an executive one. According to the KMCA, 1976, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor do not have voting power in any standing committee, but only the ex-officio members. The Mayor does not hold the power to write the Annual Performance Assessment Report (APAR) of the Commissioner.

## Committees in BCC

The KMCA, 1976 mandates the formation of four 'standing committees' at corporations other than Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), namely, i) The Standing Committee for taxation, finance and appeals, ii) The Standing Committee for public health, education and social justice, iii) The Standing Committee for town planning and improvement, and iv) The Standing Committee for accounts. Municipal elections took place in 2021, and the committees have also been made functional, but the chairpersons have not been elected yet.

## City Administration

The 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act 1992 (74<sup>th</sup> CAA) mandates all the state governments to devolve the 18 functions mentioned in the Twelfth Schedule of the Act to the municipal corporations. Ballari performs eight functions independently, such as planning for economic and social development, solid waste management public health, sanitation and conservancy, birth and death registration, etc. Six functions are delivered along with other parastatal agencies like Ballari Urban Development Authority (BUDA), Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board (KUWSDB), Department of Social Welfare, Karnataka, Kannada and Culture Secretariat, Kannada and Culture Secretariat, Commissionerate of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, and Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The rest four functions are under the purview of the state government.

## Municipal Finance

BCC collects property tax, water tax, user charges and rent from municipal properties. Although the KMCA 1976 allows city governments to impose new taxes according to the list in section 103 of the Act, BCC has to take approval from the state government for imposing any new tax. Also, BCC cannot revise the existing tax rates without the approval of the state government. The self-assessment method is used for the calculation of property taxation.

There is Fund Based Accounting System (FBAS) prepared by the state government for city governments in Karnataka under the Directorate of Municipal Administration. All accounts are maintained by the city governments in Karnataka as per Karnataka Budget and Accounting Manual. The challenge of the accounts department is the untrained manpower due to outsourced staff.

## Citizen Participation

Karnataka Government has a common platform for citizens across all cities in the state to raise grievances related to city governance, known as *Janahitha*. Citizens can also register their grievances through various platforms using a web application, Facebook, Twitter,

WhatsApp and call center. These grievances would be forwarded to the designated city government's department and shall be escalated to the Municipal Commissioner if not attended within the stipulated time. Apart from grievance redressal, the city is also moving towards implementing ward committees in order to increase citizen participation.

**Important Links:**

Ballari City Corporation Website (<http://www.ballaricity.mrc.gov.in/>)

Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976

([https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/8129/1/14\\_of\\_1977\\_%28e%29.pdf](https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/8129/1/14_of_1977_%28e%29.pdf))

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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)

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