URBAN GOVERNANCE RESEARCH INTERNSHIP
COHORT III

For over two decades, Praja Foundation has been working towards enabling accountable city governance. The hallmark of Praja's work has been the extensive collection and analysis of data where we highlight trends and gaps on various civic issues. Simultaneously, we extensively publish materials such as reports and white papers. They are kept in the public domain to guide urban policies as well as ensure information transparency.

To expand public outreach and engage young Indians in city governance procedures, Praja Foundation initiated the Urban Governance Internship programme for college students in 2020. The principal objective behind this initiative is to enhance interns' understanding of urban governance and encourage them to channelise their energy, skills and creativity to take a step towards solving civic issues. The internship focuses on extensive thematic research on urban topics such as health, housing and finance. At the end of the internship programme, interns are assigned to draft op-eds on their subjects. They can write it as an individual or as a group.

Following the successful conclusion of the first two batches (Batch 1 from July 2020 to September 2020 and Batch 2 from February 2021 to May 2021), the third batch of Urban Governance Internship was conducted between July 2021 to September 2021. This batch comprised of research interns who focused on researching topics of Citizen Participation, Urban Finance, Housing and WASH & Health. Additionally, we introduced Media & Communication internship. Interns shared a chance to work on live projects such as op-eds writing, report writing, video making and testimonials collection on urban governance. Each theme has its coordinator who mentored interns throughout the programme.

From the overwhelming number of applications from institutes across India, 10 interns joined the programme for this cohort. They rigorously worked on their theme for the past three months. Based on their learnings, interns have authored the following op-eds where they have expressed ground realities and personal views on the particular theme.

10 Interns

3 Months

7 Op-Eds

CONTENTS

URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Can Citizen Journalism Revitalise Civic Issue-Led Media?

Abhishek Gijare

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As part of communication team, I closely worked with other verticals of Praja. Working on the national virtual festival, Prajatantra 2021 was a particular highlight. It gave me deeper understanding of the importance of communication amidst the digital shift. I participated in the program to understand how media can support civic issues and leaving with the expansion of personal horizon on the subject.

Abhishek Gijare, Communication Research Intern

Abhishek has completed his graduation in Mass Media from St. Xavier's College (Autonomous) Mumbai. He is also trained in photojournalism at Ranade Institute, SP Pune University. Since last two years he is working in the hybrid space of media and research and exploring the role of media to support development.

OP-ED ARTICLE

Can Citizen Journalism Revitalise Civic Issue-Led Media?

A recurring point in the participant testimonials of Prajatantra 2021 was their lack of familiarity with the issues of urban governance. While Students from the corners of India stated that Prajatantra encouraged them to engage in urban governance, they did not shy away from saying they do not get detailed information on subjects such as urban mobility or solid-waste management from the sources at their disposal. Even expert speakers who participated in Knowledge Session highlighted the need to address the lack of citizen awareness on the matters of their cities to empower Indian democracy. As a young media professional, I was intrigued to understand the role of the media; the fourth estate of democracy and the principal gatekeeper of information in reporting civic issues.

Last year, BCCL, the parent company of Times of India, India's most circulated English Daily Newspaper announced the trimming of their tabloid arm.[1] Pune Mirror was shut down while Mumbai Mirror was made weekly from daily. The end of the daily Mumbai Mirror was particularly seen as a major blow to civic reporting in the whole country. Mumbai Mirror focused on hyper-local issues that directly affected the lives of Mumbaikars. Beyond reporting Mirror was known to take up causes and led campaigns and dedicate its front page to the pressing issues of the day.

The closure of civic-issue led media is part of the larger crisis in Indian media. In his 2020 TEDxGateway Talk Gangadhar Patil,[2] Founder & CEO 101Reporters[3] (a network of pan-India network of reporters that connects grassroots, journalists, with mainstream media) highlighted the trend of higher desktop journalism in place of ground reportage. He also emphasised that with a limited news budget newsrooms cannot afford to hire experienced journalists & editors and are left with untrained cub reporters. In the aftermath of Mumbai Mirror's closure, Mumbai-based senior journalists have warned that in the absence of senior staff, newspapers are losing the institutional understanding and memory

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[1] https://scroll.in/latest/980387/mumbai-mirror-and-pune-mirror-to-stop-publication-times-group-says-indian-economy-in-recession

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_0wtEKttbo

[3] https://www.ted.com/speakers/gangadhar_patil

of the city, which reflects in their reporting. Veteran journalist Kalpana Sharma even calls it the shrinking of democratic space. "Not having these spaces for city news affects the citizenry, their involvement in civic issues and their ability to be heard by the powers that run the city," she quotes in an article published by Scroll.in [4]

While digital media has been on the rise in the last decade, most of the digital-only medias focus on macro news and do not rigorously pursue local and hyperlocal news. The majority of the prominent digital-only publications are headquartered in big cities such as Delhi-NCR or Mumbai . Teams are small and often run on a tight budget.[5] In this purview, their ground reporting largely addresses the peripheries of the city. On a more perilous end, the internet especially, social media has opened the floodgates of content. Ultimately this content torrent has shrunk the attention span of a reader. To survive, news portals have to package news in a sensationalised manner that will grab eyeballs. It is also important to stress that platforms like Twitter and Facebook should never replace journalistic reporting regardless of their reach and attention-grabbing ability. It is easy to circulate misinformation, disinformation and propaganda through social media as they lack editorial checks and verifications.

Amidst the shrinking coverage of urban issues in traditional new media, citizen journalism could pave the way to prevent their complete disappearance. Citizen Journalism is also known[6] as participatory journalism or public journalism and is a way to engage and work with local audiences. The goal of public journalism is to re-engage citizens in civic life. The citizen journalism phenomenon was crystalised internationally in the late 1990s and in India in early 2000 when the internet offered a platform where anyone can self-publish content at low to zero cost.

Even newspapers took notice of it and dedicated a segment for citizen reporters. Any citizen can photograph a local issue such as dysfunctional street lights or littering, add a caption and submit it to newspapers such as The Times of India[7] and Sakaal.[8] Issues raised by citizen reporters have played a vital role in prompting city authorities to take swift action on the issue. To their credit, citizen journalists have also filed a follow-up report on the successful conclusion. Taking a step forward, digital publications like The Quint are tapping the potential of an AV Medium by inviting viewers to contribute to the portal by capturing local hard and soft news through short videos.

One of the most impactful models of urban citizen journalism is Citizen Matters.[9] In 2008 Citizen Matters started its journey in Bengaluru when its founders noticed a gap[10] in civic journalism in their city. Citizen Matters focuses on issues that affect the daily lives of citizens and making the readers feel involved in the reporting. Editors say that the proactive nature of their readers has helped them to prepare most stories. Last year, journalists across the country faced a challenge to get on-the-ground stories as public movement was severely restricted. Citizen Matters was able to tap into a strong network of contacts[11] in civil society get in touch with some of the most vulnerable people affected by the pandemic.

They broke the story of growing hunger among children in Chennai[12] as shut down of anganwadis deprived

[4] https://scroll.in/article/981577/how-the-closure-of-the-mumbai-mirror-and-the-erosion-of-local-news-coverage-will-hurt-a-city
[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_0wtEKttbo
[6] https://oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-786
[7] https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/citizen-reporter/crstories/curpg-1.cms
[8] https://www.esakal.com/citizen-journalism
[9] https://citizenmatters.in/about-us
[10 & 11] https://gijn.org/2020/09/22/a-small-publication-in-india-plays-a-big-role-in-citizen-matters/
[12] https://chennai.citizenmatters.in/hunger-and-malnutrition-among-urban-poor-in-chennai-during-covid-19-17175

them of mid-day meals. While the centres were told to supply dry rations to the children's families, that was not being done, since staff were diverted for COVID-19 relief measures. After the story was published, the state department of women and children reached out to offer a solution. Citizen Matters' quest to provide accurate information, deliver news and hold the government accountable during this unprecedented crisis reasserted the importance of the local press. Citizen Matters is a reader-funded media and also supported by Oorvani Foundation.[13] Still, it is yet to overcome the challenge is sustainability in the absence of anchor donors.[14]

Reader-funded media is picking up in India. We, young Indians can be its custodians and help to expand its community reach as well as impact. Media performs several constitutional rights and duties on behalf of the public such as practising freedom of expression and being the watchdog of three arms of government—Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Independent and public-spirited is media goes hand in hand with a strong democracy.

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[13] https://oorvani.org/
[14] https://gijn.org/2020/09/22/a-small-publication-in-india-plays-a-big-role-in-citizen-matters/

• Byatnal, Amruta. 2020. Global Investigative Journalism Network. September 22. Accessed October 8, 2021. https://gijn.org/2020/09/22/a-small-publication-in-india-plays-a-big-role-in-citizen-matters/.
• Foundation, Oorvani. 2021. oorvani.org. Accessed October 8, 2021. https://oorvani.org/.
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URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Re-Usability of Open Government Data As a Principal Indicator of Citizen Empowerment

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"As an intern in the citizen participation vertical, I was introduced to a comprehensive database comprising of functions and services of municipal corporations of cities, which helped me learn a lot of nuances of the relation between different stakeholders. The great experience here allowed me to develop a stronger research interest in the citizen participation aspect of urban governance which has motivated me to work and research more in this area to create innovative ways of building a decentralised system of governance.

Charul Verma, Citizen Participation Research Intern

Charul Verma has a Master's in Public Policy and Governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics hons from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University. Her research interests include urban policy, sustainable and decentralised governance, intersectional urban mobility, transit systems, urban morphology and behavioural studies.

"Interning at Praja has been an extremely enriching experience. I have learned a lot about the citizen participation and urban governance. At Praja I have learnt to work closely with data and understand data in a public policy context. I also received immense guidance and mentoring in the research I undertook.

Abhishree Choudhary, Citizen Participation Research Intern

Abhishree holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science (Honours) from St. Xaviers College, Kolkata. Her research interests include public policy, data and feminism.

OP-ED ARTICLE

Re-Usability of Open Government Data As a Principal Indicator of Citizen Empowerment

The significance of Open Government Data (OGD) is highlighted because of the interlink it creates between transparency, accountability, collaboration and participation which has a substantial impact on citizen empowerment. Despite OGDs potential transformative value there is limited evidence of this value creation. In order to comprehensively bridge the gap, this article attempts to establish the direct link between reusability of (OGD) and citizen empowerment.

About the article

The article studies the link between the Open Government Data (OGD) and citizen empowerment. The literature review highlights the gap in literature about the evidence based academic research regarding the value creation by OGD. It goes on to hypothesize that re-usability of data is the principal indicator of citizen empowerment. The methodology constructed by the paper delves into studying various institutions that have re-used OGD prior to launching WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) initiatives and studying the impact created. The discussion links the elements of reusability, collaboration and participation and OGD to prove the hypothesis.

Literature Review

Open data can be defined as data that is freely accessible online, available without technical restrictions to re-use, and provided under open access license that allows the data to be re-used without limitation.[1] When the data and information produced by government or government-controlled entities[2] are opened up for use and re-use by public and private agents alike, it is referred to as Open Government Data (OGD).[3] OGD enables the public sector to relinquish its role of 'gatekeeper of information' and become 'information provider' causing a change in the power dynamics between the public and private sectors.[4] This realignment of power when governments become open to help in transitioning from the traditional buyer-seller relationships resulting in strong connections between public and private as well as the social and economic dimensions.[5]

OGD is considered[6] a public good as it creates opportunities to benefit the society like – promotion of economic development,[7] effective governance through information-based policies,[8] and strengthening of civic engagement through democratic accountability.[9] As openness and transparency creates more accountable and less corrupt governments, opening data is a path that restores trust in the government and paves the way for meaningful citizen participation. There is a vast literature that highlights the varied advantages of sharing government data. According to Odongo and Rono, the aim of OGD is to foster innovation, efficiency and collaboration across and within public agencies and departments.[10] Furthermore, publication of data sets enables the government to interact with different stakeholders with diverse interests to engage in decision making.[11] Open data also becomes an enabler in attracting new entrants like technologists, resulting in evidence-based government action.[12] More crucially, the objective of production of public information re-orients towards adaptability, creating a citizen centric outlook of policies with the commitment to OGD.[13]

The significance of OGD has been highlighted very often due to the impact it creates on citizen participation and citizen empowerment. As the article seeks to dig deeper to understand the role of

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[1] *Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF). (2012). Open Data Handbook version 1.0.0 (revised November 14, 2012).*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Jetzek, Avital and Bjørn-Andersen. (2013). Generating Value from Open Government Data.*
[4] *Odongo and Rono (2016). Open Government Data as a Right for Effective Citizen Participation.*
[5] *Jetzek, Avital and Bjørn-Andersen, supra note 3.*
[6] *Nilsen, Kirsti. (2010). Economic Theory as It Applies to Public Sector Information.*
[7] *Ubaldi. (2013). Open Government Data: Towards Analysis of Open Government Data Initiatives.*
[8] *Weinstein & Goldstein. (2012). The Benefits of a Big Tent: Opening Up Government in Developing Countries.*
[9] *Jetzek, Avital and Bjørn-Andersen, supra note 3.*
[10] *Ruijer, Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer. (2017). Open data for democracy: developing a theoretical framework for open data use*
[11] *Meijer, de Hoog, van Twist, van der Steen and Scherpenisse. (2014). Open Government: Opportunities and Challenges for Public Governance*
[12] *Weinstein & Goldstein. Supra note 8.*
    Ibid.

OGD in creating a value for citizens by empowering them, the following section aims to cover the literature which highlights the relevance of OGD for citizens. The research by Hossain et al[14] revealed that the basic four pillars of OGD namely transparency, accountability, participation and collaboration are interlinked with one another and have significant impact on citizen empowerment. Purwanto et al[15] specifies that governments around the world are progressively opening and sharing their non personal and non-confidential data online so that it leads to higher citizen engagement in turn creating valuable societal benefits. Moreover, the ability to access and explore the data creates a value for them through enhanced opportunities to examine and critically analyse the actions of their governments. And this in turn "unlocks the potential for open data to produce better government decisions and polices".[16]

Therefore, governments around the world have created repositories of open data to make the government data more accessible motivated by the values specified above such as transparency, citizen collaboration, participation and innovation.[17]   Despite OGD's potential transformative value, there is limited evidence about this value creation particularly due to the lack of data.[18] This points towards a gap in literature about the evidence based academic research regarding the value creation by OGD. Many researchers have elaborated about this gap. Although, anecdotal evidence about the potential of social and economic impact of OGD exits in abundance, its exact impact still remains unclear.[19]   Furthermore, the literature on OGD has been mostly conceptual[20] and lacks empirical evidence especially regarding the role of citizens[21]   and the impact on the data use.[22] This results in creating tremendous pressure on the governments facing worsening economic conditions along with continuous costs of production, maintenance, storage and publication of large number of data sets, without exactly knowing the proposes fulfilled by OGD nor what value unfolds in practice.[23]

OGD movement has been a supply driven initiative facilitated by new availability of datasets,[24] however, the current research indicates that the data use is less than optimum, with restricted involvement of NPOs and private sector while citizen participation is almost non-existent.[25] There can be varied factors that play the role of barriers preventing the intended impact of OGD. These barriers range from long publication process, lack of willingness, legal and regulatory issues, technical challenges, skills and knowledge gaps, economic factors like resources needed by govt agencies, to challenges for data innovators, lack of knowledge, difficulty to access data, inadequate data quality and lack of dialogue between data providers.[26]

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14 *Hossain, Talukder, Hoque, Bao. (2018). The use of open government data to citizen empowerment: an empirical validation of a proposed model.*

15 *Purwanto, Zuiderwijk and Janssen. (2020). Citizen engagement with open government data Lessons learned from Indonesia's presidential election.*

16 *Peixoto. (2013). The Uncertain Relationship between Open Data and Accountability: A Response to Yu and Robinson's' The New Ambiguity of Open Government'.*

17 *Brito. (2007). Hack, mash and peer: Crowdsourcing government transparency*

18 *Martin. (2014). Barriers to the Open Government Data Agenda: Taking a Multi-Level Perspective.*

19 *Huijboom, and Van den Broek. (2011). Open data: an international comparison of strategies.*

20 *Jansse, Charalabidis, & Zuiderwijk. (2012). Benefits, Adoption Barriers and Myths of Open Data and Open Government.*

21 *Wirtz, Weyerer and Rosch. (2017). Open government and citizen participation: an empirical analysis of citizen expectancy towards open government data.*

22 *Ryad Titah. (2017). Conceptualizing citizen participation in open data use at the city level.*

23 *Haberer. (2020). Implications of open government data for the digital economy.*

24 *Ohemeng & Ofosu-Adarkwa. (2015). One way traffic: The open data initiative project and the need for an effective demand side initiative in Ghana.*

25 *Safarov, Meijer, & Grimmelikhuijsen. (2017). Utilization of open government data: A systematic literature review of types, conditions, effects and users.*

26 *Reggi, Luigi & Luna-Reyes, Luis & Gascó, Mila & Martin, Erika & Pyo, S. (2018). Promoting the use of open government data: Cases of training and engagement. Government Information Quarterly. 35. 233-242.*

These challenges regarding the use and implementation of OGD signify that the mere presence of OGD is not sufficient for the fulfilment of its potential. Cranefield et al[27] also states that open data does not create value on its own, it requires to be supplemented and facilitated through enablers,[28] which would remove the barriers and challenges in the use of OGD. Through this article, we aim to understand how OGD can be best used in order to create social and economic value for the citizens. Further, as the objective is to stimulate OGD in a manner which helps in reaching its potential level, this research proposes deeper exploration of re-usability of OGD as an indicator for citizen empowerment.

As technical and conceptual skills are required for the creation of value from OGD, it is crucial to note that through the product and services of skilled intermediaries who synthesise content by combining data and information from diverse sources in new ways that the average citizen will be able to obtain value from Open data.[29] Therefore, governments could rely on intermediaries to generate value for citizens through modes like OGD apps, projects, campaigns, websites, mashups and representations. Therefore, re-using and combining data from more than one source to form a new product or user experience[30] shall create synergies of collaboration, increasing efficiency, transparency, participation and innovation.[31] These new initiatives represent the new value-delivery vehicle for OGD by transforming the raw data into useful information and thereby bringing out the full potential of open government data.[32]

Hypothesis Formation
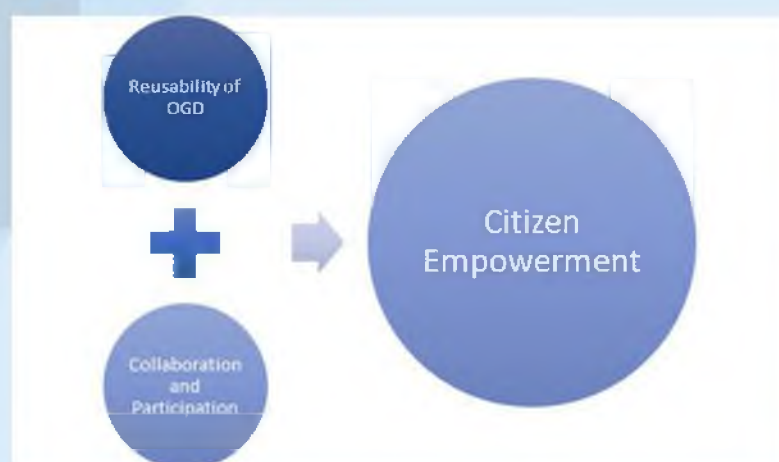
This paper hypothesizes that Reusability of Open Government Data is the principal indicator of citizen empowerment through OGD. According to Jassen the basic assumption holds that once data is more discoverable, accessible, available in alternative formats desired by multiple users and with licensing schemes that allow free reuse, diverse stakeholders will develop innovative data application.[33] While datasets are usually published in their raw form and thus have little value on their own, public entities can leverage on other stakeholders, such as private actors, community groups and citizens to innovate upon the published data and strive to achieve the utmost potential of OGD initiatives.[34]

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27 Cranefield, Robertson & Oliver. (2014). Value In the Mash: Exploring the Benefits, Barriers and Enablers of Open Data Apps.

28 Jetzek, Avital and Bjørn-Andersen. (2013), supra note 3

29 Bertot, Jaeger, and Grimes. (2010). Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies.

30 Koschmider, Torres and Pelechano. (2009). Elucidating the mashup hype: Definition, challenges, methodical guide and tools for mashups.

31 Odongo and Rono (2016), supra note 4.

32 DiFranzo, Graves, Erickson, Ding, Michaelis, Lebo, Patton, Williams, Li, Zheng, Flores, McGuiness &Hendeler (2011). The web is my back-end: Creating mashups with linked open government data.

33 Janssen, M., Charalabidis, Y., & Zuiderwijk, A. (2012). Benefits, adoption barriers and myths of open data and open government.

34 Attard et al (2015) A systematic review of open government data initiatives

Furthermore, this article views the twin OGD pillars of Participation and Collaboration as the primary facilitators of Reusability of OGD. Participation in OGD initiatives is supported by social media applications which create an architecture for participation that enables users not only to be passive consumers of content and services, but also active contributors and designers in their own rights[35]. The emergence of the OGD movement combined with new technologies is becoming key enablers and drivers of citizen self-empowerment, higher e-participation and public engagement[36]. Collaboration is the most "evident" pillar of OGD and closely related to participation. Collaboration enables people to join their efforts with government and work together towards achieving a common goal[37]. It can be imagined as engagement of citizens, businesses and government in complex tasks or projects that aim to produce specific outputs. Hence, through participation and collaboration – private, civic, NGO, government ministries and other types of organisations can re-use OGD to develop initiatives that will empower citizens.

Hypothesis 1: Reusability of data is the principal indicator of Citizen Empowerment in OGD
Hypothesis 2: Reusability is viewed through the lens of twin pillars of Collaboration and Participathan

Methodology

As cities are the engines of economic growth and face extreme pressure on its resources, we decided to study the initiatives under the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene rubric of Urban Governance. One of the world's most urgent issues is lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Water-related improvements are crucial to meet the development goals, reduce child mortality, and improve health in a sustainable way. Hence, we decided to study re-usability of OGD under the WASH initiatives. In order to gather relevant data, we explored the various WASH initiatives which have an online presence and through data mining and interviews gathered whether these organisations employed the use of OGD prior to launching their initiatives. In total we found 20 initiatives – 10 water and 10 health and sanitation initiatives. We assorted the components of each initiative to assess them, namely- description of initiative, type of organisation, the impact made and whether OGD was employed. There were numerous limitations to our research. Websites did not explicitly mention if they used any OGD. Furthermore, many NGOs refused to divulge if they used any OGD during the interviews. Lastly, many organisations did not respond to our calls and emails. Hence, non-response and opaqueness of the use of data was a major road-block in our research.

Discussion

The first part of the discussion comprises the key creators of the WASH initiatives. In our study we noted that the majority of initiatives where the institutions have used OGD, have been undertaken by NGOs and Ministries of the Government. From the data we collected, approximately 10 out of the 20 WASH initiatives which used OGD were spearheaded by NGOs, NPOs and Public Charitable Foundations. The other 10 initiatives that used OGD belonged to the different ministries of the government. Interestingly, in our research, we did not find any private initiatives that employed the use of OGD. Additionally, we found that many NGOs do not use OGD but are in favour of collecting and generating their own data. There are a considerable number of private initiatives that are actively involved in the WASH domain which collaborate with private agencies to gather data. For example, the Himmotthan

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[35] *Hossain N.M. et al (2018). Supra note 14.*
[36] *Ibid*
[37] *Ibid*

Initiatives carried out by various organisations that re-use OGD

initiative launched by Tata Trusts assigned Knowledge Links, a private consulting company to gather data prior to launching its WASH initiative. This begs the question, why is the OGD not being re-used at the intended scale? The literature suggests, government data can be a possible inhibitor of value generation[38] due to the risks of validity, relevance, and trust.[39] Thus, simply the presence of OGD does not ensure the transparency, accountability and participation that it promises. Rather the creation of enablers and facilitators enhances the value creation ability of OGD which advances reusability. Hence, it can be deduced that the citizenry is empowered from the reusability of OGD and not the OGD itself.[40]

The second part of the discussion focuses on the modes of the output by which these initiatives are represented. In our study we have found that the types of output ranged from reports, projects and campaigns, geospatial mapping and monitoring and evaluation. These initiatives which stem from the re-usability of OGD reflect the interaction between the citizens and the data. This represents how the reusability of OGD becomes a tool for citizen centric value creation. The idea of Open Government draws in part on the philosophical perspective that citizens not only have access

Types of initiatives
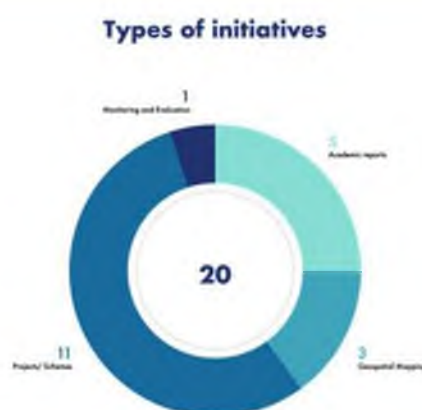
to information, documents, and proceedings, but they can also become participants in a meaningful[41] way. The final part of the discussion revolves around the impact generated from these initiatives. These water initiatives have made impacts in the lives of the citizens in multiple aspects- augmenting water security, providing reliable water services, sustainable management of water-bodies and sensitivizing the population vis a vis the groundwater realities. The initiatives relating to health and sanitation have impacted citizens in a myriad of ways- promotion of hygiene, creation of demands for toilets, effective ways of management of solid and liquid wastes, generation of awareness around the topic as well as inclusive health missions and schemes. Given that openness of data in itself creates an opportunity and ability to explore and play with itself, along similar lines, our research identifies that when OGD is being reused in a creative and innovative manner it results into the creation of citizen centric impact which aids and empowers them.

38 Hogge. (2011). Open Data Study: New Technologies. London: Transparency and Accountability Initiative.
39 Gurstein. (2010). Open Data: Empowering the Empowered or Effective Data Use for Everyone?
40 Jetzek, Avital and Bjørn-Andersen, supra note 3.
41 Harrison, Guerrero, Burke, Cook, Cresswell, Helbig, Hrdinová and Pardo. (2011). Open government and e-government: democratic challenges from a public value perspective.

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Conclusion

The importance of OGD has been highlighted across the literature in increasing citizen empowerment. Through our discussion we have successfully established that it is the re-usability of OGD that creates an effective link to citizen empowerment. As mentioned in our article, government data can be a possible inhibitor of value generation due to the risks of validity, relevance, and trust. Thus, simply the presence of OGD does not ensure the transparency, accountability and participation that it promises, rather the creation of enablers and facilitators enhances the value creation ability of OGD which advances reusability. Reusability of OGD becomes a tool for citizen centric initiatives. Finally, it must be highlighted that these initiatives aid and empower citizens and thus it can be concluded that reusability is the principal indicator of citizen empowerment through OGD, proving our hypothesis.

• Open Knowledge Foundation (OKF). (2012). Open Data Handbook version 1.0.0 (revised November 14, 2012). Available at http://opendatahandbook.org/pdf/OpenDataHandbook.pdf

• Jetzek, Avital and Bjorn-Andersen. (2013). Generating Value from Open Government Data. International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS 2013): Reshaping Society Through Information Systems Design http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis2013/proceedings/GeneralISTopics/5/

• Odongo and Rono (2016). Open Government Data as a Right for Effective Citizen Participation. Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, 365–366 https://doi.org/10.1145/2910019.2910035

• Nilsen, Kirsti. (2010). Economic Theory as It Applies to Public Sector Information. ARIST. 44. 419-489. 10.1002/aris.2010.1440440117.

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URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Needful Paradigm Shift Towards Enhancing Status of Municipal Finance in India

Shubham Kadam

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> It was an enriching experience and I got to learn about municipal finances, their setups, their working, budget analysis, financial devolution of powers of major cities, data interpretations, etc. Praja team has guided and enlightened me throughout the internship program which made the 3 months journey with involvements and with having responsibilities, which was one of my first experiences working under time-bound tasks.

Shubham Kadam, Municipal Finance Research Intern

Shubham has completed his graduation in BA Political Science from MIT-World Peace University. He holds key interest in the topics of governance, polity and social justice. He has worked around these areas as part of academic and internship experiences.

OP-ED ARTICLE

Needful Paradigm Shift Towards Enhancing Status of Municipal Finance in India

Urban challenge that India faces

City Governance is the most decentralised unit of governance at the local level in urban areas. This is significant as it connects to the daily life of citizens in the city, right from services such as water supply to building and maintenance of roads and provision of public amenities. Therefore, there is a direct connect between citizens needs and the functioning of city governments towards addressing these needs.

Also, Cities need to constantly upgrade themselves sustainably for accommodating the day-by-day increasing urban population. The scale of the challenge is quite evident from the fact that 300 million urban residents will be added by 2050, as mentioned by a United Nations Development Programme report. With regard to this, cities need to enhance efficient usage of resources for providing quality services to the urban population. It is not only about provision of services, but it is also about sustainable development and resilience to crisis such as the COVID 19 pandemic and climate change disasters.

At the heart of all of this lies the ability of city governments to raise its financial resources independently and efficiently to address such challenges. The article further explains the status of cities across India on this front, and innovative ways in which challenges could be overcome.
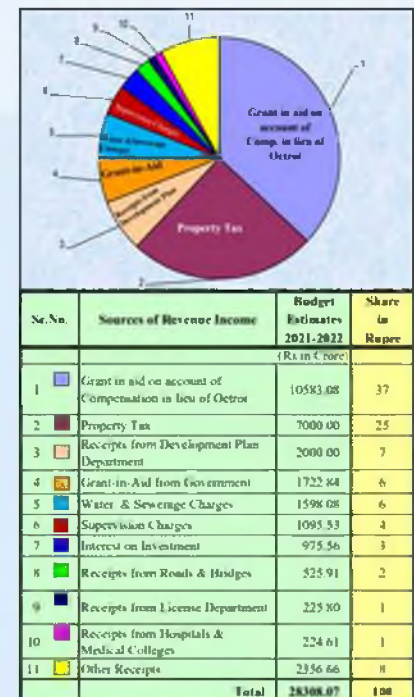
Status of municipal finances in India

Taking the case of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, MCGM (City government for Mumbai City), which is claimed to be the richest city government in Asia, we see that the total revenue income totals to ₹28,303 Cr. Out of this total, the own source of revenue stands at ₹14,002 Cr (49%) and the revenue on which MCGM is dependent on the state stands at ₹14,306 Cr (51%). This is the case of the richest city government and one can only imagine the dire state of finances in the smaller city governments across the country. The smaller city governments are supposed to hold the baton towards economic and sustainable development in the country.

The Urban Governance Index report by Praja, which has assessed the status of urban governance systems in 28 states and NCT of Delhi have drawn out the following insights pertaining to municipal finances:
• 17 states do not have independent authority to introduce new taxes/charges.
• 17 states do not have independent authority to revise the tax rates/charges.
• 14 states do not have independent authority to approve the budget.

The conclusion from the above is obvious i.e., cities lack their own sources of income and therefore they are mostly dependent on the state governments for grants. This means that city governments are long way from achieving financial independence and therefore in functioning as a local self-governing institute. However, there are multiple innovative solutions that various city governments across the country are experimenting and scaling up in phased manner. The article throws light on some of these in the following paras.

Sr.No.	Sources of Revenue Income	Budget Estimates 2021-2022	Share in Rupee
		(Rs in Crore)	
1	Grant in aid on account of Compensation in lieu of Octroi	10583.08	37
2	Property Tax	7000.00	25
3	Receipts from Development Plan Department	2000.00	7
4	Grant-in-Aid from Government	1722.64	6
5	Water & Sewerage Charges	1598.08	6
6	Supervision Charges	1095.53	4
7	Interest on Investment	975.56	3
8	Receipts from Roads & Bridges	525.91	2
9	Receipts from License Department	225.80	1
10	Receipts from Hospitals & Medical Colleges	224.61	1
11	Other Receipts	2356.66	8
	Total	28308.07	100

Innovative financial mechanisms to augment revenue for urban development

1. Improvised Property Taxation
In case of Bengaluru, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) managed to increase its property tax collection through technological interventions and mechanisms such as online self-assessment.The idea behind was to make the property taxation system as simplified and transparent as possible. So, the property tax system is more about the assessment of current tax regime (i.e., the tax base, tax rate) as well as frequent and regular reassessment and proper administration (billing and collection efficiency).

2. Public-Private Partnership
Through Public-Private Partnership city governments are able to finance for the infrastructures of the cities. The risk-factor is shared between both. In the case of Pune, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has decided to involve private funds in the infrastructure development of particular projects. To put it simply, the PPP module on a premium basis means a contractor/builder/developer will invest in infrastructure development and in return would get a credit note in the form of a hardship premium.

3. Financing through money markets and capital markets
One of the ways through which city governments can finance the infrastructure projects is through issuing the bonds. Under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme, urban local bodies (ULBs) are encouraged to tap the bond market. Bonds help ensure improved credit profiles, direct transfer of funds by the Centre, transparency, and efficient revenue generation. For eg - Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) to launch municipal bonds in January 2021. With this, it will become the third Urban Local Body (ULB) in Gujarat to use this method to raise money to fund development work sanctioned under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).

4. Financing projects through smart city mission
Smart Cities Mission (SCM) was launched by Govt. of India for 100 cities in 2015 by the government of India with the objective of investing in the core infrastructure of cities. As part of the SCM, every city has to formulate its concept, vision, mission, and plan which is appropriate to its local context, resources, and level of ambition. The funding for the mission will come from the center, state, and through PPP through the Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs). For eg., Indore city has a vibrant street food culture, and

through the smart city mission, the streets of Chappan bazaar (56 shops) have been revived through decongestion and pedestrianisation. This was possible through access of funds from centre, state and from private players through the Indore smart city development limited.

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URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Green Municipal Bonds: An Insight into the Indian Situation

Vidhi Garodia

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> My internship experience with Praja Foundation was enriching. As an intern working in the Municipal Finance division, I got the opportunity to learn a lot about how it works, the various stakeholders involved in it and the indicators considered while measuring a city's performance with respect to this segment. Through this internship, I was able to get a deeper understanding about the contemporary events in and around this issue. Overall, interning with this organization has given me a lot of clarity on how our city governments function and their cruciality in our day to day lives.

Vidhi Garodia, Municipal Finance Research Intern

Vidhi holds a BA in Economics from Christ University. She has had previous internship experiences at Hooghly Mills Ltd. Co. and Franklin Templeton. She was also a peer trainer as a part of Centre for Academic and Professional Studies (CAPS) in her university.

OP-ED ARTICLE

Green Municipal Bonds: An Insight into the Indian Situation

What are Green Municipal Bonds?

Municipal bonds are essentially debt securities that are issued by a government body. Primarily used to finance its capital expenditures that include raising funds for infrastructure projects such as schools, civic construction etc. Green Municipal Bonds are bonds that are used to finance environment friendly projects that aim at promoting sustainability. It functions like a mainstream bond, wherein the issuer guarantees to repay the borrowed amount after a certain period and remunerates the creditors through a coupon with a rate of return (OECD).

According to a report published by Deutsche GIZ GmbH, India has played a crucial role in the issuing of green bonds. It was estimated that until 2016, a sum of USD 2.7 billion was raised through such bonds.

Though, the primary issuers of green bonds have been private and public banks, and energy and power companies, this market holds opportunities for municipalities operating at a local level as well. There are various countries where green municipal bonds have already gained prominence. For instance, the green municipal bond market in The U.S. was around USD 4.1 billion in the year 2015. Another example

Issuance of green bonds 2016 (country-wise data)

Country	Amount (USD)
USA	111.3 billion
France	63.9 billion
UK	61.8 billion
Canada	27 billion
Germany	14.3 billion
Netherlands	10.4 billion
Sweden	6.1 billion
Norway	4.9 billion
India	2.7 billion
Brazil	2.4 billion
Denmark	1.4 billion
Mexico	1.2 billion

Source: Deutsche GIZ GmbH

could be the French Green Bond Market. The 'Ile-de-France' government had issued large sub-sovereign public green bonds amounting to EUR 350 million in the year 2012 (OECD).
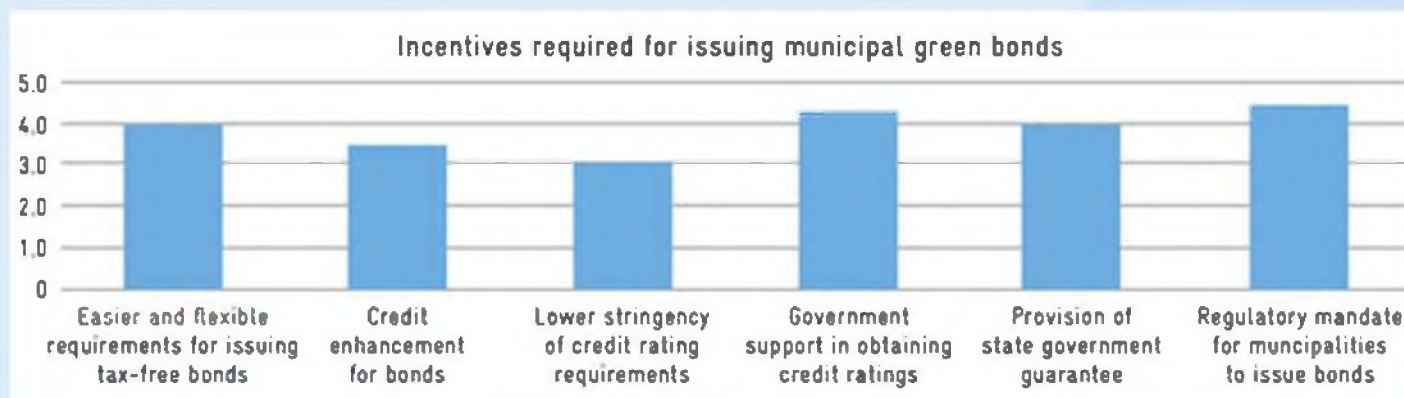
Green Municipal Bonds in India

India is urbanizing, rapidly. The GIZ report mentions, by 2030, more than 590 million will be living in cities. This makes financing urban infrastructure quite an important topic. Additionally, the increasing focus on climate change and the danger it poses make it vital for municipal finance to work in collaboration with sustainable and green practices. ULBs can contribute immensely and extend support to national programmes that aim at a greener future. Initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, National Solar Mission and many others can benefit immensely with the support provided by the Municipal corporations. However, there is a wide gap between the funds that the ULBs can generate and their expenditure needs. Therefore, utilizing the bond market to issue green bonds can provide an impetus to sustainable initiatives. Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation is India's first Municipal Corporation to have listed a green municipal bond on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Though green bonds can prove to be a useful tool as an innovative financing instrument for the ULBs, it sure is not free of certain barriers. The market for green municipal bonds in India is not that developed and the main reasons for the same are lack of creditworthiness, deficiency in project management, non-bankability of the projects and fear of greenwashing. Lack of trained professionals to handle the issue of municipal bonds is also one of the barriers towards effective functioning of such bonds.

The following graph represents what a major proportion of municipalities felt, regarding the incentives that should be provided for the issuance of green municipal bonds.

Perceived incentives for the issue of green municipal bonds

Incentives required for issuing municipal green bonds

Source: Deutsche GIZ GmbH

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation

The Ghaziabad municipal Corporation (a ULB in Uttar Pradesh) is India's first municipal corporation that listed our country's first green municipal bonds on the BSE on the 8th of April 2021. It is said to have raise Rs. 150 crores at the rate of 8.1%. The proceedings will be utilized to set up tertiary water treatment plans as well as provide piped water through the water meters in Ghaziabad. In an article by The Hindu Business Line, it is mentioned that Ashish Chauhan, MD and CEO, BSE has stated that this listing will help to develop the market for green bonds for the ULBs. It is also mentioned that issuance of such bonds can be expected from cities such as Agra, Varanasi and Kanpur.

Conclusion

The importance of green Municipal bonds cannot be denied as they provide innovative ways to finance projects that enhance sustainability. Despite all shortcomings, there exists a good scope for them to contribute towards green finance and initiate a sustainable change in financing the ULBs. The Municipal Corporation can focus more on increasing its credit rating so that investors can be sure of investing in those bonds. The bankability of projects, upgradation in the management of municipal bond market as well as awareness towards innovative financing are some preliminary steps that can be undertaken to promote green municipal bonds.

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URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

A Glimpse of the Housing Scenario in Mumbai Region

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"During my internship, I understood the institutional framework, the issues of jurisdiction, the real estate market, and the actual conditions of the houses that helped me build a comprehensive insight of this sector which was also augmented with secondary research on the policies. The primary data collection and data cleaning work that I did on the SRA projects through the RERA website was very helpful as it helped us identify the issues with actual SRA projects in the Mumbai region. The internship played a key role in building my analytical skills."

Apurva Deotale, Housing Research Intern

Apurva is pursuing masters degree in Urban policy and Governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. A former architect, she has recently completed her summer internship under Haryana Urban Development Authority and is keen on pursuing her career in the Urban governance sector. She is passionate about art, poetry, architecture, and public policy.

"Working in the Housing vertical of Praja Foundation has given me an incredible opportunity to explore the field of Urban Planning and Development. With the freedom to choose which aspect of housing and housing policies we wanted to focus on, it really helped us grow not just as a team, but also from the perspective of thinking independently."

Esha Gupta, Housing Research Intern

Esha is a Bachelor's graduate in Economics from Jai Hind College, Mumbai, and is a YLAC fellow in public policy. A passionate environmentalist, she has been bringing about changes in her personal life and is now looking towards extending it to her professional life by working in the field of Sustainable Urban Development. In her free time, she also works with a screenplay writer in writing movies and TV shows.

OP-ED ARTICLE

A Glimpse of the Housing Scenario in Mumbai Region

Statistics by the World Bank in 2018 has placed 35.2% of the Indian population in slums. Slums are generally inhabited by the migrant population and those belonging to the lower-income groups (LIG) or economically weaker sections (EWS). Categorised mainly by poorly built temporary houses, poor availability of amenities like water, electricity and sanitation, and a lack of opportunities for growth, Mumbai is home to several slum settlements, including Dharavi, one of the largest slums in the world which houses over a million dwellers. With increasing population and volatility in the employment market, real estate, especially in metropolitan cities like Mumbai has become largely unaffordable.

Since independence, the central and state governments have implemented various schemes and policies for slum rehabilitation and to provide affordable housing to all. The central government in

2015 implemented the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) to provide assistance to the urban and rural poor in the purchasing and up-gradation of houses. With public-private partnership and financial assistance, PMAY aims to make affordable housing accessible to all. In Mumbai, Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) aims to build and provide solutions to achieve affordable housing, and has provided 2 lakh houses till date. However, the housing units built under MHADA are not being aligned with civic services that render them as unfit dwellings.

The housing crisis in Mumbai is twofold. As migration rates continue to rise, the urban population is seeing a harsh spike, leading to over 60% of the population being expected to inhabit urban areas by 2050. With this, we see an increase in congestion on roads and housing settlements. In Mumbai, places such as Dadar, Bombay Central, Bandra East, Mazgaon, etc. are experiencing such congestion, giving rise to slum settlements. MHADA responded to this by building public housing units for the urban poor and middle class. However, land economics has pushed these

Dosti Complex,,MMRDA Housing, Vartak Nagar-Thane West, Image courtesy-Esha Gupta

housing units to the periphery of Mumbai suburbs, as well as into the Navi Mumbai and Thane districts. Not only does this increase travel time and costs for the inhabitants of the MHADA colonies, but they are also criticised for their poor designs and paucity of space. Slum families of 6-10 members are forced into apartments of 1RK with limited water supply, a lack of sanitation and cleanliness, and a deficiency of community involvement - a feature most important to slum dwellers, and largely ignored by developers. These have resulted in pushing the intended beneficiaries back to the city centre in their slum settlements.

On the other hand, as per the 2011 census, Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is home to 10,16,776 vacant houses that remain unattainable by the urban poor or even middle class due to their exuberant rent rates. A 2BHK flat of around 1000-1200 sq. ft. in Pune rents at around Rs. 25,000-Rs. 30,000, in Bangalore, at Rs. 30,000, whereas in South Mumbai, a 600 sq. ft. 1BHK flat is given at a rate of Rs. 70,000 monthly, and in Andheri at Rs. 32,000 for 510 sq. ft. For the poor to be able to afford a house, they'd be compelled to move into a tiny 1RK house at the periphery of the city or in slum settlements.

In order to aid the urban poor financially, the Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) of the PMAY provides subsidy of Rs. 2.67 lakh to the EWS and LIG categories and several housing finance banks and companies (HFC) provide loans to beneficiaries for the purchase of houses. However, it has been found that despite a decent implementation of the scheme, (i) The subsidies provided through CLSS aren't sufficient to help the LIG and EWS to buy a house and (ii) banks and HFCs are shying away from lending money to these categories due to the non-performing assets acquired through bad loans in the past. As per the National Housing Bank Report (2018), the year-on-year growth in the disbursement of loans up to Rs 200,000 for this group has dropped to 8.31% per cent in 2017-18 as compared to a 50.77% per cent year-on-year increase during 2016-17.

After conducting secondary research on the housing status in Mumbai, we mapped the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) projects from 2019-2021 registered with RERA (Maharashtra Real Estate

Regulation and Development Act). Here, we found over a thousand projects spanning across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region by SRA, MHADA and the state government. However, the completion status of all the projects are ongoing, and most projects did not have access to at least a few of the basic amenities such as street lighting, parking, sanitation, etc. As per Free Press Journal, in Mumbai, around 16,000 dilapidated buildings and about 2,000 SRA projects require redevelopment. On-site inspection further corroborates the poor quality of the amenities provided, limited supply of water, lack of cleanliness and most importantly, poorly designed units as mentioned earlier. Moreover, as most projects are located in Raigad or Thane district, travel time and cost shoot up for those working in Mumbai city or suburbs. We found that travel was one of the most important considerations of the intended beneficiaries in choosing a housing location, and especially with COVID-19 induced travel restrictions, the extra few hours spent on travelling proves to be far too expensive for the urban poor. Since these factors push the poor back into slum settlements, it is imperative that they be taken into consideration while deciding the location of the house.

As the secondary reports also suggest, many of the projects are stuck/dead and there are delays in the project. In many projects the details regarding eligibility of the dwellers has not been decided. In a few projects Letter of Intent (LOI) has not been given. In a few others, despite giving LOI the projects are being delayed by developers. Also, the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) housing projects are affected by lack of liquidity. For a very long time developers were directed to pay the entire premium amount to the SRA and MHADA to get approval for the project. Few SRA projects, despite No Objection Certificate (NOC), have not started for the last 25 years. Many of these projects are also illegally occupied. Developers also indulge in the practice of fake beneficiaries, thus deceiving the slum dwellers as well as the government. Diversion of money has caused inordinate delays in the SRA projects in Mumbai.

In our primary findings of the SRA projects we encountered these issues as well. The names of the developers have changed probably due to the large duration of the projects making the identification impossible. Many projects have been modified recently (latest-July 2021) but the corresponding names on the RERA portal have not been changed, making them still unidentifiable. There are few projects whose completion (even revised date) status is over as long as two to three years ago but the homes are still unoccupied or the project status is still shown as "on-going". The location of some projects, despite being revised in 2021, have not been updated on the portal. In some projects, detailed specification (viz-1BHK/2BHK and corresponding specifications like carpet area) of the type of accommodation has not been given. This makes it difficult to identify the unoccupied households.

More pictures from the Dosti Complex

The Census figures indicate an increase in the vacant housing stock from 1991 (11.6%) to 2011 (14%). The MMR Regional plan also suggests that most of these investments in vacant housing are speculative in nature that leads to the formation of a speculative market. A report by Hindu Business also corroborates these findings suggesting that Mumbai itself has 0.48 million vacant houses as of 2018.

Overall, there is spatial imbalance in terms of housing stock availability in the rural and urban MMR region. Many housing schemes cater to the needs of Urban households, neglecting the houses in the rural MMR region. Nearly a third of the households in MMR (27 per cent) are currently living in slums. Many houses are unaffordable to the LIG and EWS groups. Based on secondary research and data analysis, we can infer that the interventions and measures that are taken must not be restricted only to the components of PMAY, but must extend to schemes such as microfinancing, upgradation instead of vertical development alone, better infrastructural facilities, etc. Based on our findings, we also posit that developmental issues such as this must be tackled while taking human behavioural and preferences into consideration, such as the importance of community involvement amongst the slums.

URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Mental Health Policy in India

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" I was fortunate enough to have been associated with praja foundation and to gain detailed knowledge on health research and understand various aspects of urban governance. Also, I was given the opportunity to moderate a few sessions of prajatantra that helped me build my managerial skills. Hence, this experience has uplifted my knowledge and skills that will help me in my future. "

Dr. Himanshu Sharma, Health Research Intern

Himanshu is a BDS graduate and is currently pursuing masters in public health from Indian Institute of Public Health from Delhi. He also has 3 years of clinical experience and 7 years of experience in working with various NGOs.

OP-ED ARTICLE

Mental Health Policy in India

In developed countries, policymakers find mental health to be a difficult subject. "No other subject, except probably leprosy, has seen as much uncertainty, misdirection, and discrimination against the patient as mental illness," according to a 2006 Canadian report. This is especially true in India, where several laws dating back to the 19th century criminalised some forms of mental illness until as recently as 2017. However, as part of India's overarching focus on increased public support for healthcare, mental health is getting more funding and attention.

In the realm of legal frameworks, for example, India's national government has decided to embark on a major reform of mental health laws, aimed at implementing policies so that "people are treated in a humane way": the Mental Health Care Act, passed in 2017, is a laudable step in the right direction, providing a special spot in the judicial system for the mentally disabled and decriminalizing suicide. Other projects, as part of a larger attempt to develop an integrated national healthcare framework, include mental health programmes in remote areas on a trial basis, which are intended to minimise inequities in mental healthcare already in place (greater than in other forms of basic healthcare).

In most low- and middle-income nations, progress in mental health service delivery has been modest. The lack of a mental health perspective in public-health leadership, as well as existing public-health priorities and their influence on funding, challenges to providing mental health care in primary-care settings, low numbers of those trained in mental health care, and the lack of a mental health perspective in public-health leadership are all barriers. There have been several demands for evoking political will, improving advocacy, and enlisting community participation, all of which have resulted in little improvement in outcomes.

Despite recent progress, India's mental health policy and mental health care delivery confront numerous hurdles. Uneven distribution of public resources (more so than in those certain forms of primary healthcare), a diverse array of caregivers (including various types of counsellors as well as medically trained psychiatrists), severe deficiencies of trained personnel (again, much more so than in other areas of healthcare), and, of course, continued social stigma and/or lack of understanding of

mental illnesses such as depression are just a few of them. This article aims to provide a comprehensive picture of India's evolving mental health policy and treatment delivery situation.

Mental Health Awareness

Positive results have come from mental health awareness efforts. Participation by family members, sensitization to treatment, and social inclusion are some of the tactics that are used to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental illness. The mental health care delivery system faces a problem due to a lack of understanding of mental diseases. The importance of community-based systems in low-income countries has been underlined in research, which has also generated beneficial outcomes in terms of raising awareness and thereby influencing participation.

Health literacy and awareness are two sides of the same coin. Ignorance and misinformation have negative consequences such as stigma and prejudice. There have been a few studies in India that have measured mental health literacy. According to one study, adolescent mental health literacy is extremely low, with just 29.04 percent of adolescents recognizing depression and only 1.31 percent recognizing schizophrenia/psychosis. Help-seeking was shown to be fraught with stigma.

These findings highlight the need to raise mental health awareness. Mental health literacy is a similar term that is becoming more widely recognised as a significant indicator of mental health issue understanding and knowledge. "The ability to obtain, interpret, and use information to enhance and preserve good health" is how health literacy is defined. Recognition, causes, self-help, facilitation of professional intervention, and navigating the information highway are all part of mental health literacy. Information that is already widely available in the public domain can be used to counteract attitudes that prevent recognition and proper help-seeking. There are numerous examples of public awareness campaigns that have had a good impact on mental health outcomes, such as the Norwegian effort to minimize the duration of untreated psychosis.

Roadmap to Mental Health Awareness

The only way to get majority of Indian people actively involved in assessing their own mental health is to raise mental health awareness, which will create its own demand. With increased knowledge, we can expect early detection and access to treatment, as well as the adoption of preventive measures. It's also reasonable to expect that when public knowledge grows in a democratic society, advocacy, political will, money, and cross-synergies will follow. The following six platforms are expected to provide the majority of the awareness contributions.

Indian Context

In India, there are some basic statistics on mental health. The Census of India (2011) gathered data on disability related to mental illness and "mental retardation," reporting that roughly 3% of the country's population was affected by these mental illnesses. A National Mental Health Survey5 (NMHS) done by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, NIMHANS, in 2015-16 provided the most recent data on occurences (Gururaj, et al. National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Summary, 2016). A review of state mental health care services was also done as part of the same study.

The survey's findings portray a bleak picture of the prevalence of mental illnesses, the gap between demand and availability for health care, and the state of health-care delivery.

According to the NMH study, prevalent mental disorders6 (including co-morbidities such substance abuse) represent a significant burden, affecting over 10% of the population. Individuals and families are also guilty of ignoring and neglecting these disorders until they become serious. Nearly 1.9 percent of the population has been affected by severe mental disorders at some point in their lives, and 0.8 percent is now suffering from one. The frequency is highest in the 30-49 age groups, and the majority of those diagnosed with such conditions were severely disabled and unable to work for long periods of time.

Provision of Mental Healthcare – Infrastructure

District or Sub-divisional Hospital
Services: medical specialists, round-the-clock emergency obstetric care, blood

Community Health Centers (CHC)
Services: medical specialists, laboratory, X-ray, and other facilities.
Coverage: 80,000 to 120,000 people

Primary Health Center (PHC)
Services: Medical officer, curative and preventive services
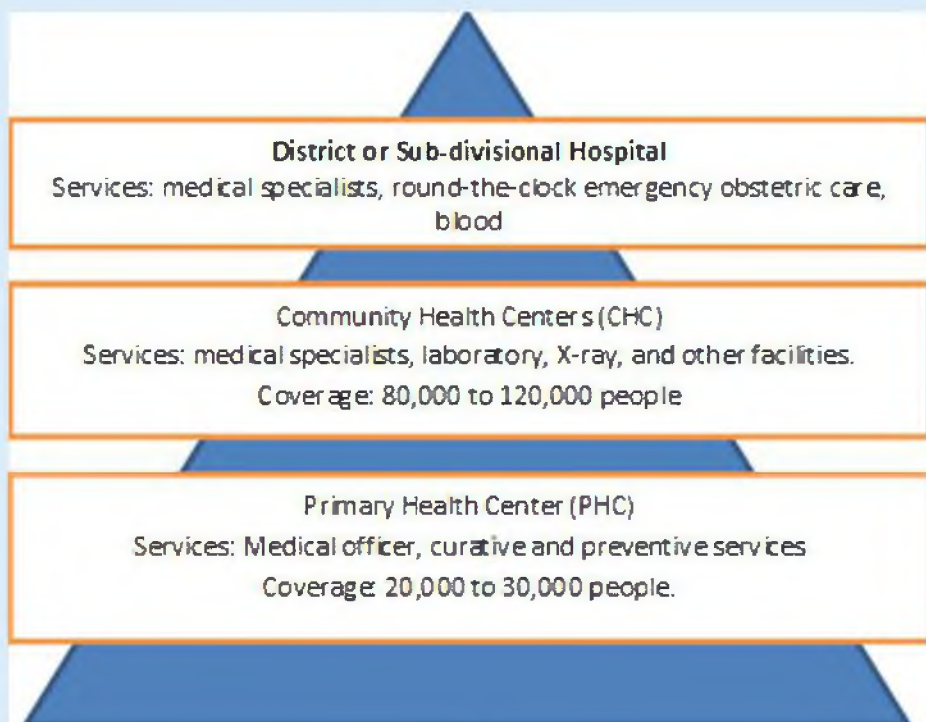Coverage: 20,000 to 30,000 people.

Figure 1: Organisation of Public Healthcare in India

In India, the infrastructure for general public healthcare is organised as shown in the diagram. Primary Health Centers are the first point of contact between a medical officer and a patient, whereas Community Health Centers are the first level of specialist care. The larger towns in districts usually have a hospital with round-the-clock emergency care, inpatient facilities with numerous beds, and advanced diagnostic and specialist services.

In India, central and state governments share responsibility for providing public mental health care. Mental health is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the

federal level. Since 1982, there has been a National Mental Health Program, which iwas renamed the District Mental Health Program, or DMHP n 1996. The public mental health program's objectives include providing mental healthcare to all people, particularly the most vulnerable and underserved, as well as imparting mental health knowledge in general health care and encouraging community engagement in the development of mental health services.

The Central Mental Health Authority (CMHA) at the national level and the different State Mental Health Authorities make up the DMHP organisational hierarchy (SMHA). The creation, regulation, and coordination of mental health services in a State/Union Territory have been delegated to Mental Health Authorities.

According to the NMH study (Gururaj, et al., National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Summary, 2016), the treatment gap10 for practically all mental diseases is very wide: approximately 80% of people with mental disorders did not receive any therapy despite having been sick for more than a year. For serious mental disorders11, the treatment gap was more than 60%, and for depressive diseases, it was 85.2 percent.

Only a third of the twelve states, they investigated had more than 50% of the population covered by public mental health services. More than 60% of those who received this care, did so at a district hospital rather than a local primary health care clinic, and it was only available in psychiatric clinics (Patel, et al., 2017). Up to 40% of patients had to travel more than 10 kilometers to reach the district headquarters' first available services.

Many states have mobile mental units and de-addiction centers that provide mental health services, but the report emphasises that even with these efforts, existing facilities are "inadequate" and the overall picture is of "limited care accessibility" (Gururaj, et al., National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Summary, 2016).

According to the NMH study, even the pharmaceuticals indicated as essential for mental health care are not always available at local Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs). Many of these problems are common in India's health-care system, such as doctor absenteeism, medicine shortages, and poor sanitation, mental health treatment suffers more severely.

Provision of Mental Healthcare – Human Resources

Beyond hospital-based service providers, the situation of human resources in the mental health sector is unsatisfactory due to shortage of doctors and medical staff. There are supply shortages at every level of the system. The demand side is more difficult to analyse since it is linked to stigma and a lack of understanding of mental health concerns.

Mental health programmes around the world have a shortage of trained mental health care workers, but in India and other low- and middle-income countries, the shortage is acute and expected to worsen unless effective interventions are implemented (Kakuma, et al., 2011). Based on Khurana and Sharma's reporting, the table (next page) illustrates the availability of mental healthcare specialists per 100,000 persons, on average, in the country (2016). Note, in particular, the increased scarcity at lower skill levels, a startling disparity for a country that is still relatively impoverished.

	Need	Availability	Availability/ Need
Psychiatrists	11500	3800	33%
Clinical psychologists	17250	898	~5%
Psychiatric social workers	23000	850	~4%
Psychiatric nurses	3000	1500	50%

Due to a lack of expert mental health treatment in India, a variety of community mental health care models have emerged, which rely on lay - health workers rather than specialists. Van Ginneken, et al. (2017) examined 72 similar programmes in twelve states, in which non-specialists give care to individuals with serious mental illnesses. These non-expert care managers frequently got help from a variety of specialist and non-specialist groups, as well as public and private sector public and non-profit organisations.

The study suggests a redesigned framework for various community outreach and collaborative care models, but problems about cost-effectiveness, scalability, and the relative benefits of various modalities of organising such care remain unanswered.

The number of medical officers trained to administer mental health treatments at the district level (per 100,000 inhabitants) is extremely low and highly variable among India's states, ranging from 0.1 to 10. The salaries for the same positions also vary widely in different geographies.

In 2007, India's national government launched two programmes to alleviate the shortage of human resources in the mental healthcare sector, as part of its 11th five-year plan. The purpose of scheme A was to create a dozen mental health centres of excellence by improving existing mental health institutions/hospitals. For capital work, equipment acquisition, library creation, and teacher induction and retention, a grant of over USD 52 million (INR 3380 million) was sanctioned.

Scheme B was created to assist publicly financed medical colleges and hospitals to start post-graduate courses or expanding their capacity for mental health training. Departments of psychiatry, clinical psychology, psychiatric social work, and psychiatric nursing were all assigned to a specific location in each state. Each department received up to USD 77,000 (INR 5 million) in help from the national government.

Affordability, Subsidies and Insurance

The relative cost of mental illnesses and their treatment, the state of health insurance, and welfare transfers for mental illness-related impairment.

In India, government health services are provided to all citizens, but the poor quality of public care and the scarcity of doctors force families to seek pricey private treatment (Das, Hammer, & Leonard, The quality of medical advice in low-income countries, 2008). Because most families lack state or insurance coverage, a major amount of treatment costs are paid out of pocket, and mental health care

is no exception. According to the NMH survey (Gururaj, et al., National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Summary, 2016), the median out-of-pocket mental healthcare spending on mental healthcare per month was around INR 1000 to 1500. (USD 17-25).

The frequency of mental diseases decreases with household income, with the lowest quintile seeing the highest rate of 12 percent, posing a considerable financial barrier for those households. The expensive cost of treatment is one of the key causes for low effective demand for mental healthcare among low income households, according to Maulik et al. (2017) and Shidhaye et al. (2017) in their research (Maulik, et al., 2017; Shidhaye, et al., 2017).

There are currently no specialised public insurance plans in India for mental health care. There is a potential for building insurance products around mental illness in mind that may be sold to people who are suffering from or at risk of developing mental illnesses; for example, insurance that covers treatment costs as well as income loss during periods of disability.

Integrated Care in the National Health Policy and Mental Health Care Bill

The Mental Health Care Bill (2016) and The National Health Policy (2016) both include integrated mental health care in their current legislation and policy texts (2017). The consequences for resources, as well as prospective ramifications for a revised mental healthcare ecosystem, are discussed here and in the next sub-section.

The Mental Health Care Bill, which was signed into law in August of 2016, is a comprehensive document. The measure was debated in parliament for several years, and while the lower house approved it in 2013, the upper house did not approve it until three years later, with numerous significant revisions. The bill recognises that all people in the country suffering from mental illnesses have the right to receive treatment, assistance, and to live a normal life free of prejudice and injustice.

It also outlines the roles of several public agencies in defending these rights, including the police, the judicial system, and the public health care system; and it establishes the goals of public mental health programmes as well as the role of the DMHP.

The Bill also describes the establishment of state-level Mental Health Review Boards to defend the rights of those who suffer from mental diseases and are caught up in the judicial system. The boards will comprise of District Judges, administrative personnel such as District Collectors, psychiatrists and representatives from mental health non-profits, as well as people who have overcome mental illnesses and can represent public interest.

The boards will have the authority to determine if a person has a mental disorder, determine whether their rights are being violated, overrule earlier judicial directives, and arbitrate complaints filed by people who are on trial or serving time in jail.

The National Health Policy (2017) recognises a number of specific issues under mental health care and provides recommendations to address them. First, the strategy stresses to increase in specialist training through public finance mechanisms that are explicitly geared at individuals who are willing to work in public systems after graduation, recognising the critical shortage of specialists in mental healthcare.

A few recommendations in the National Healthcare Policy in the context of India's broader public

healthcare, which aims to strengthen healthcare more broadly and may further integrate mental healthcare with general healthcare. First, it is recommended that the government(s) should engage with private agencies to run 'health and wellness centres,' which will provide specialised preventative and care services, including mental healthcare, for a price for those who can afford it and for free for those who cannot.

Second, NMH suggests cooperation with the private sector via a referrals system as a tool for rapid expansion of the public healthcare system: charitable and non-profit hospitals may volunteer to accept referrals from public health facilities. If appropriate incentives are offered, for-profit hospitals/clinics may additionally designate free/subsidised services in their facilities.

Third, the policy recommends the establishment of a unified emergency response system, linked to a single universal access number (such as 911), with an emergency care network that includes life support ambulances and trauma management clinics (one per 3 million persons in urban and one per every 10 million in rural areas).

Fourth, the national health strategy proposes the establishment of Health Information Exchanges and a National Health Information Network by 2025, acknowledging the lack of good management systems. As previously stated, the current system was designed with an emphasis on maternal services and does not adequately address the demands of mental health care (Gururaj, et al., National Mental Health Survey of India, 2015-16: Summary, 2016).

The proposed integrated health information system is designed to track the overall health of all people in the country utilising real-time records gathered on phones and tablets, as well as the Electronic Health Record (EHR), which will be connected to everyone's unique identifying numbers (ADHAAR). If the system is properly implemented, this data could be very useful in understanding health systems and their limitations, and thus help to enhance resource allocation efficiency and transparency.

Conclusion

The National Health Policy (2016) and the Mental Health Act (2017) both propose ground-breaking concepts and adjustments. While there is cautious optimism about the new law and regulations, there are still numerous gaps in understanding of the obstacles of expanding access to and improving the quality of mental health care in India. These difficulties can be understood from two perspectives: one, the psychological and medical aspects of the problems, and the other, the system's management and administration.

Increasing the number of qualified professionals with training below that of a full medical degree, such as psychologists, counsellors, and social workers, will necessitate more resources because, while the training is less expensive, the scaling up necessary is considerably more. Technology could help here by offering knowledge tools to less-trained practitioners, as well as the capacity to consult individuals who are more qualified on a large scale and across geographies.

The relevance of information technology in rapidly expanding access to mental healthcare is recognised in the new legislative framework and policy. There is some evidence that ASHA workers can be trained to recognise symptoms of common mental illnesses and serve as the first responders in providing mental healthcare (Van Ginneken, et al., Non-specialist health worker interventions for the care of mental, neurological and substance-abuse disorders in low-and middle-income countries, 2013; Nadkarni, et al., 2016).

Increasing the number of mental health experts and providing integrated training to generalists in the medical profession will necessitate considerable organisational changes throughout the educational system, not just in medical schools. This is going to be a difficult task. Furthermore, developing high-quality software and engaging mental health specialists in its development, as well as encouraging their participation in a system where less-qualified professionals play a potentially greater role in diagnosis and even treatment, will necessitate changes in the system's culture, including how those at the top of the skill pyramid view their personal and social roles, will necessitate changes in the system's culture, including how those at the top of the skill pyramid view their personal and social roles.

Finally, discovering ways for decreasing the financial burden of mental healthcare is critical. Public-private cooperation in the insurance industry could be one solution. To understand how existing health insurance schemes address the specific requirements of people with mental disabilities, as well as how to design and market an insurance product or scheme that could cover disability and treatment costs associated to mental disabilities, extensive research is required.

Higher accessibility necessitates both greater cost and greater availability of care providers. All of these concerns are substantial challenges, according to the experience of healthcare in India and even sophisticated economies. The only saving grace in India's mental health situation is that the starting position is so bad that there is so much room for development.

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URBAN GOVERNANCE INTERNSHIP

Challenges to Urban Healthcare in India

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> Working with the Praja Foundation as an Urban Governance Research Intern has been an enriching experience for me. In my opinion, knowing the "how" and "why" of things is a crucial aspect of living in a democracy as accountable citizens. There is a stake that each citizen holds in every public policy that is made and for the sake of that stake, it is imperative to analyze the policies made by the government and evaluate the implementation of the same. The internship helped me actualize the solutions to invisible problems that lie at the ground level and has given me the rightful exposure in the areas of WASH and Health.

Pankhuri Jain, WASH & Health Research Intern

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OP-ED ARTICLE

Challenges to Urban Healthcare in India

Urbanisation has been associated with human development, growth, and progress. However, urban settings have led to significant inequalities and health problems. The Indian healthcare scenario presents a spectrum of contrasting landscapes which is discriminatory in nature and function. On one side there are infrastructures delivering high-tech medical services to the well-heeded. While the dilapidated state of outposts in remote reaches of Urban India, trying to live up to their identity as health subcentres. Urban populations have limited access to healthcare facilities especially when it comes to primary health care in India. The public health situation is poor in most urban areas, despite the number of public and personal health resources committed to urban areas. The policies have largely focused on improving healthcare services in rural and tribal areas however the poor and vulnerable in the metropolitan areas have been completely ignored. These people hold a large share of the urban population who come to the urban area aspiring for decent jobs and education but end up facing the brunt of poor healthcare infrastructure.

Accessibility to healthcare services in India is largely purchasing power dependent. A large majority (in both rural and urban areas) lack the purchasing power to even sustain basic nutritional requirements. For an increasing proportion of urban poor and vulnerable, it becomes extremely difficult to afford private healthcare services. Lack of economic resources and health insurance inhibits their access to available private facilities. Moreover, people not only lack financial resources but are even ignorant of basic medical knowledge and let go of even serious medical issues. People often make decisions in health care that aren't in their best interest, starting from failing to enroll in insurance to which they're entitled, to engaging in extremely harmful behaviors. The traditional economic theory provides a limited tool kit for improving behavior because it assumes that people make decisions in a rational way, have perfect knowledge, and are not open to manipulation. However, traditional understanding of economics in association with knowledge about psychology, behavioral economics acknowledges that individuals often don't act rationally within the economic sense.
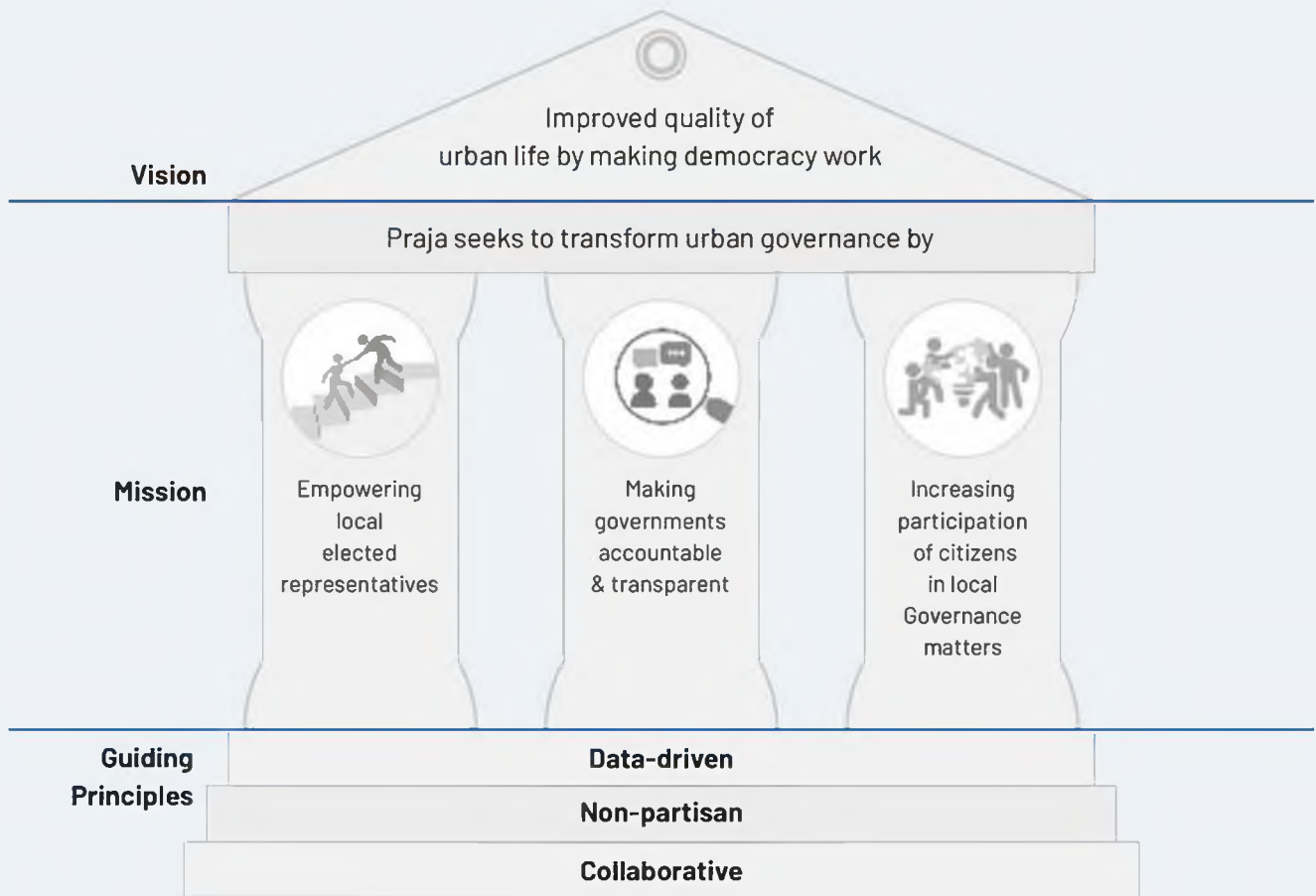
It is thus very important to impart basic information concerned with rational health practices and nudge people to become more health-conscious. Healthcare is one area where nudge intervention

should be able to make a difference. Behavioral economics must be used to advance population health and improve the quality of health care services. It has the potential to strengthen efforts to engage patients and providers. Fundamental areas such as healthcare, education, urban planning, and infrastructure will benefit greatly from relevant design which will make peoples' experiences with these areas more satisfying. This requires collective efforts and a multisectoral approach to deal with the situation. Building healthcare infrastructure alone might not lead to the desired outcome.

Healthcare systems require continuous intervention and innovation to meet the needs of patients and providers. Design thinking is an approach that uses "action-oriented prototyping "of solutions designed to keep the users central to the decision-making process. With the focus on improving empathy for users, design thinking is an iterative process, with innovation emerging only after cycling through several rounds of ideation, prototyping, and testing which distinguishes it from the top-down approach of health intervention design to more robust healthcare infrastructure, a 'user-centered design approach'. The focus should now be on improving patient experience, patient engagement, and community integration.

However, as urban health infrastructure is developed under various schemes and projects in several states, it is quite inconsistent across the country. Covering the entire urban population with standardised services and ensuring equitable health outcomes is a challenge for National Urban Health Mission (NUHM). Some of the other challenges in urban healthcare include crowding out of the urban poor from available urban facilities, multiple burdens of diseases and vulnerability in urban areas, and fostering coordination and convergence between various urban stakeholders including the private sector.

There is a need to empower Urban Governance to ensure effective delivery of healthcare services. The urban local bodies should be empowered and encouraged to enhance their revenue-generating capacity in order to overcome human resources challenges for both- implementation and monitoring. At the community level NGOs must work towards creating demand for strengthened public health services and should politicise the issue to healthcare to bring it at the forefront of the political agenda. It is equally important to learn from the experiences of the government globally. Governments around the world are increasingly devising policies based on the findings of behavioral economics, nudging people to make better choices and decisions. The need of the hour is to set up a multi-prolonged approach and work on a unified strategy for improving health and nutrition.

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