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South Asia



PRAJATANTRA 2024

National Youth Festival

Citizen Participation: Building Blocks of Democracy



OVERVIEW

Citizen participation in public decision-making is the foundation of a democratic system. Recognising citizens as vital stakeholders and incorporating their collective wisdom, concerns, and innovative ideas in local decision-making is valuable for city governments. Governments gain valuable insights into local issues and dynamics by listening to diverse voices. They are empowered to make decisions that will take public-spirited action.

India is the largest democracy in the world, with over half under the age of 30. Young citizens bring unique perspectives, ideas, and potential for transformation. They can shape our cities with innovation and diversity. By empowering youth and giving them a platform to share their ideas, we can harness their potential to build a better future.

Prajatantra 2024, co-organised by the Praja Foundation, National Institute of Urban Affairs and UN-Habitat India with support from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom South Asia, introduces a celebration of participatory city governments. This festival is designed for youth to advocate for their vision, and ideas and actively participate in debates and discussions on city governance.

Through Prajatantra, our goal is to empower Indian youth, increase citizen participation in local decision-making and create inclusive cities for everyone.

BACKGROUND

Prajatantra: National Youth Festival was conceptualised by Praja Foundation in 2019 with the core objective of engaging youth in city governance. Prajatantra facilitates a dynamic exchange of ideas, visions, and practices. Young participants immerse themselves in the decision-maker's role to present their vision of model city governance. Through active dialogue with experts & changemakers from the government, public policy, and academia sectors at Prajatantra, participants also expand their horizons on how they can shape urban futures. Inclusivity is at the heart of Prajatantra. Prajatantra 2023 witnessed enthusiastic representation from 1919 participants, representing 106 cities from 26 states and 6 union territories. Praja team actively reached out to 2376 Academic Institutes and Community Organisations to ensure the representation of youth across the socio-cultural realities of India.



COMPETITIONS AND ACTIVITIES



MAYOR'S SPEECH



POLICY PRESENTATION ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE & PARTICIPATORY BUDGET



POLICY PRESENTATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



POLICY DEBATE



QUIZ COMPETITION



OP-ED WRITING



DIGITAL POSTER MAKING

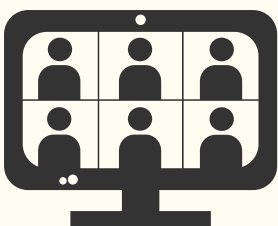


FIELD ENGAGEMENT

(Teams participating in Prajatantra should participate in all events, otherwise it will impact overall team performance)

VIRTUAL

Qualifying round
Semi-finale



IN PERSON

Grand finale



REGISTRATION STARTS FROM:

4th July 2024

LAST DATE TO REGISTER:

15TH AUGUST 2024



WHO CAN TAKE PART IN PRAJATANTRA

A team of four (4) to eight (8) members can participate. Prajatantra celebrates diversity among participants with respect to class, caste, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. Everyone is welcome to share their vision on this platform.

Participating teams are encouraged to name their team and design a symbol for themselves like a real political party. While participants should use their creativity and originality, we strictly prohibit the use of a name or a symbol associated with any existing political party. Plagiarism is also not allowed.

Teams will be eligible for the 'Best Team Award' based on their performance in all competitions. Participating teams are recommended to take part in all events, as it will give them an edge. Each competition will have an individual Winner and 2 Runners Up. All participants will get a Certificate of Participation.

A participant can engage in multiple events but must adhere to the following participation guidelines:

- The same participant cannot participate in the Mayor's Speech and Policy Presentation on Participatory Budgeting and Civic Engagement.
- There must be two (2) different participants for two (2) Policy Presentation events. Remember Municipal Committees in a city government are chaired by different persons.

TEAM DETAILS

COMPETITION	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
MAYOR'S SPEECH	1
POLICY PRESENTATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	1
POLICY PRESENTATION ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE & PARTICIPATORY BUDGET	1
DEBATE OVER PROPOSED POLICIES	1
QUIZ COMPETITION	2
OP-ED WRITING	1
DIGITAL POSTER MAKING	1



TIMELINE FOR PRAJATANTRA 2024



Qualifying Round (Virtual) : 30th,31st August and 1st September 2024

Semi Final (Virtual) : 14th and 15th September 2024

Grand Finale (In person) : 16th, 17th and 18th
November 2024

SCHEDULE FOR PRAJATANTRA 2024

Registration begins:4th July 2024

Last day to Register: 15th August 2024

Boot Camp: 3rd & 4th August 2024 : **1st Phase**

17th & 18th August 2024: **2nd Phase**



KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 1

Date: 21st August 2024 (Wednesday)

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 2

Date: 24th August 2024 (Saturday)

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 3

Date: 26th August 2024 (Monday)

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 4

Date: 28th August 2024 (Wednesday)

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 5

Date: September 2024

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 6

Date: October 2024

Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

*Dates of Knowledge Sessions 5 and 6 will be shared closure to the event.



PRAJATANTRA ACTIVITIES

BOOTCAMP

A Boot Camp will be organised for all teams registering for Prajatantra 2024. In this session, members of the organising team will provide a comprehensive orientation on the format and rules of Prajatantra events. The activity plan will also be explained. Boot Camp is a crucial preparatory phase, ensuring that all teams are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge to engage effectively in the event. Hence, it is mandatory for participating teams to attend the Bootcamp. Bootcamp is also for the participants to directly engage with the organising team and clarify their doubts.

KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS



The Knowledge Sessions of Prajatantra 2024 are designed to provide participants with a foundational understanding of policy-making for the competition. During these sessions, experts in the field will impart valuable information and insights related to the subject matter, equipping participants with the knowledge they need to formulate well-informed and effective policies. These sessions serve to enhance the capacity of participants by broadening their understanding of the topic and enabling them to delve into the intricacies of policy development. With the knowledge gained from these sessions, participants will be empowered to present their policies in a comprehensive and detailed manner, highlighting their expertise and contributing to meaningful discussions on urban governance and related issues.

1. MAYOR'S SPEECH



The Mayor is the first citizen of the city and presides over the Municipal Corporation. The Mayor is elected directly by the citizens or by the councillors, depending on the state legislation.

In the Mayor's Speech competition, participants are required to present a speech that is to be delivered by the Mayor in the first General Body Meeting of the Corporation following a fresh election. The Mayor presents the policy framework of the city government for the upcoming term, highlighting significant decisions and key changes in the administrative structure. The competition aims to enhance participants' leadership skills and provide them with insight into the preparation of a comprehensive development vision for the city.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Encourage Innovative Solutions: The mayor's speech competition catalyzes innovative thinking by challenging participants to address pressing local issues with fresh, creative solutions.
- To Build Leadership Qualities by stepping into the mayoral role. Participants must analyse current problems, envision practical and impactful strategies, and articulate these ideas.
- Participants develop the critical skills needed to communicate effectively and persuasively by preparing and delivering speeches on topics of municipal importance. This experience allows them to practice organising their thoughts and engaging with an audience.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.



2. POLICY PRESENTATION



2.1 POLICY PRESENTATION ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE & PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Municipal Budgeting plays a crucial role in shaping the execution of public works and services within a city. Recognizing its importance, many cities across India have adopted a participatory approach, inviting citizens to actively engage in the budget-making process for their local wards and the city at large. Participants will create an action plan designed to boost community engagement in local economic planning. The goal is to integrate citizens' voices into the financial decision-making processes of their cities, ensuring that budget allocations reflect the collective priorities and needs of the local community.

2.1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY PRESENTATION ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE & PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- To encourage the participants to engage with Budgetary procedures. They will understand the science behind creating a budget for a city including detailed aspects of financial planning, management, and implementation.
- Participants will have the opportunity to simulate the work of a municipal budgeting committee, presenting policy briefs and recommendations based on their research. This competition will highlight the significant role that citizens can play in shaping effective and responsive municipal budgets.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.





2.2 POLICY PRESENTATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Civic Engagement Committee will be responsible to design and present policies to encourage active citizen participation in local decision-making processes. This initiative will involve the development of comprehensive strategies and policies designed to enhance public engagement in civic activities. The aim of the Subject Committee is to provide citizens with opportunities to voice their opinions, contribute to community discussions, and influence decisions that impact their localities. The Committee will work to ensure the promotion of an accessible, inclusive, and effective culture of civic responsibility and community involvement. Participants will engage in discussions and activities centred on innovative strategies, effective policies, and impactful initiatives, all geared towards increasing public participation and fostering a more engaged and informed citizenry.

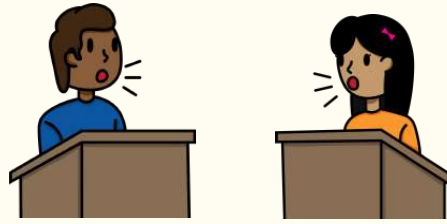
2.2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY PRESENTATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Motivating participants to craft innovative policies on citizen engagement ensures the development of programmes and platforms citizens can use to better understand their government, communicate their needs and wants with city governments and also share their grievances and feedback with the government.
- Designing action responsive to evolving community needs and continues to promote inclusive governance among young minds.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.



3. POLICY DEBATE



The Policy Debate focuses on urban governance and policies through formal and systematic discussions. The debate provides a platform for participants to critically analyze and discuss current events, and socially, culturally, politically, and economically relevant topics. The competition is structured in the form of debate in which teams advocate for and against a resolution that calls for a change in governmental policy.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Policy Debate are as follows:

- **Promote critical analysis** of proposed policies and their potential impact on urban governance.
- Encourage participants to **develop persuasive arguments** in favour or against proposed policies.
- Enable participants to **assume the role of municipal councillors** in the city government's legislative body, fostering a realistic and immersive experience.

The topics for Policy Debate will be provided during the Prajatantra 2024 Boot Camp.

The competition follows a specific format replicating a General Body Meeting of a city government and a set of instructions for the participants. The Motion of the debate will be decided on the day of competition and participants will be assigned a side (government or opposition) to debate on the spot. Participants can raise questions to the opposing participant during the Q&A session. can raise questions to the opposing participant during the Q&A session.

Overall, the competition provides an opportunity for participants to engage in constructive debates, simulate the roles of policymakers, and develop critical thinking skills on urban governance and policies.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.



4. QUIZ COMPETITION



The Quiz Competition tests knowledge and understanding of Urban Governance and Civic Engagement among participants. It aims to promote healthy competition, a deeper understanding of the system of governance, and amplify the learning experience. The competition serves as a platform to assess participant's knowledge and skills related to the theme and stimulate their political and constitutional awareness. This will improve fast decision-making and spontaneous and rational thinking among the participants.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- **Assessing participants' knowledge** and understanding of City Governance through the quiz.
- **Stimulating** participants' political and constitutional **knowledge** through the quiz.

4.2 THEMES FOR THE QUIZ COMPETITION

- Constitution of India
- Urban Governance
- Democracy (history, concepts, theory)

All the questions of the quiz competition will be prepared on the above themes.

The Qualifying Round and Semi Final of the Quiz Competition will consist of multiple rounds conducted on an online quiz software. The Grand Finale, on the other hand, will be held in person and will feature multiple rounds such as a rapid-fire round, audio-visual round, etc.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

5. OP-ED WRITING



Opinion-Editorial is a platform where individuals can express their views towards a certain issue. It is generally accommodated in the left side of a newspaper called the 'editor's column', Op-Ed focuses on Inclusive and Participatory Civic Engagement & aims to celebrate the skill of writing and the talent required to create well-researched articles on this important topic. Participants will have the opportunity to delve into various aspects of citizen engagement and convey their thoughts and opinions through informative Op-Eds.

By engaging in this competition, participants will enhance their cognitive abilities, deepen their understanding of urban governance issues, and improve their communication skills, thereby empowering them to effectively advocate for and contribute to the development of better citizen-centric governance practices in the future.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Promoting Dialogue and Debate: Op-Ed contributes to public discourse by sparking discussions and debates on important topics. Participants are encouraged to engage critically with different perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of complex issues and promoting a diversity of perception.
- Op-Ed competition allows participants to articulate their viewpoints on various topics ranging from politics and social issues to culture and economics. It provides a space for individuals to share their perspectives and insights based on their expertise, experiences, or research.
- Writing an OP-ED is fulfilling and intellectually stimulating. It challenges participants to clarify their thoughts, refine their arguments, and communicate their ideas effectively, thereby enhancing their writing and analytical skills.

5.2 TOPIC FOR THE OP-ED

Citizen Participation: Building Blocks Of Democracy

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.



6. DIGITAL POSTER MAKING COMPETITION



Prajatantra 2024 understands the importance of technology and the crucial role it plays among youth today. Keeping this in mind, the Digital poster-making competition aims to promote the healthy inclusion of budding technology & creative abilities and amplify the learning experience. The competition serves as a platform to assess a participant's knowledge and skills related to the theme and stimulate new perspectives on Civic Engagement.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- By leveraging digital platforms, the competition transcends geographical boundaries, allowing participants from different states and cultures to showcase their artistic talents and perspectives on the theme given
- Motivate participants to engage in digital mediums to improve the transparency of governments, engagement of citizens, efficiency of government structures, and accessibility of the facilities.
- Make participants realise the potential of digital mediums in improving citizen engagement in city governance & provide an opportunity for participants to hone their digital design skills, including graphic design, illustration, and digital editing.

6.2 THEMES

Citizen Participation Platform in Local Governance - Best practices in your city/ Indian City

7. FIELD ENGAGEMENT



After the declaration of the results of the Semi-Final round, finalists of Prajatantra 2024 will be engaged in fieldwork. Fieldwork tasks will span over a period of two weeks and will focus on the theme of Citizen Participation.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

- To enhance participants' awareness about urban governance and enable them to actively participate in the same by engaging themselves in the field.
- To enable participants to gain hands-on experience about city governance and be more aware of the components and functions of the existing plans and missions.

7.2 ACTIVITY

Finalists will be required to participate in two tasks:

- They will conduct a literature review of the urban policies on citizen participation in their respective cities and then meet with the administration to validate their findings. This will involve assessing the status of the policies in the city.
- Finalists will conduct qualitative research in the field by surveying local communities; street vendors, self-help groups, elected representatives and citizens to analyse the implementation of citizen participation policies and the service delivery of the urban local body. The finalists will be responsible for mapping the citizen participation pattern of the urban local body, evaluating the impact of policies on the citizens and presenting the findings and experiences to a team of experts during the Grand Finale.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.



DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed by students, teachers, and other faculty during or after the event are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Praja Foundation or supporting organisations.

PARTICIPATION DISCLAIMER

By participating in Prajatantra 2024, you agree to the following terms:

- The use of inappropriate language or references to real-life political parties or ideologies will result in immediate disqualification.
- Any form of cheating or dishonest behaviour during the competitions will result in immediate disqualification and a ban from future events.
- Colleges/Institutions will be responsible for their students, and it is mandatory to have cameras switched on during certain events such as the Quiz competition.
- By participating, you consent and authorise Praja Foundation to use and post any photographs, videos, recordings, or other records of the event, including full names of participants for promotional purposes, media reporting, and publication on the organisation's website or blog. You will not be entitled to any compensation for the use of your name, image, or video by the Praja Foundation.
- Praja Foundation reserves the right to exclude any individual from the competition at any time, providing appropriate reasoning to college/institution authorities.



+91 9820190892, +91 9654366222, prajatantra@praja.org

