



PRAJATANTRA 2023

National Youth Festival

Model City Government

Theme: Inclusive and Participatory Urban Economies

Prajatantra Samvad 2023

Issue 01



EDITORIAL

Greetings from Prajatantra Team!

In the 5th edition of **Prajatantra, National Youth Festival**, we experienced remarkable growth in the number of participants and a strong representation of young voices across India. This year, we were thrilled to see **1800+ active participants** from **343 teams**, representing **106 Cities and Towns, 26 States, and 6 Union Territories**. The diverse and enthusiastic engagement from these participants truly embodies the spirit of India's youth, highlighting their dedication to making positive changes in their communities. **Prajatantra 2023, National Youth Festival** has been organised by **Praja Foundation** in collaboration with the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** and with the support of **UN-Habitat** and **Friedrich Nauman Foundation South Asia**. This festival aims to provide a platform for the **youth of India** to advocate their beliefs, opinions, and understanding of city governance. This year we are celebrating the theme of **"Inclusive and Participatory Urban Economies."**

The core objective of Prajatantra is to mobilise young leaders and help them understand the importance of democracy and the functioning of a democratic government. By increasing their knowledge and involvement in governance, we aim to empower these young minds to actively participate in decision-making processes and contribute to shaping the future of our urban landscape.



Participants are encouraged to collaborate and share their vision and ideas of a **Model City Government** through various competitions like the Mayor's Speech, Policy Presentations, Debate, and Quiz competition.

We are delighted to announce that the **Qualifying Round of Prajatantra 2023** has concluded successfully, showcasing the incredible talent and ideas of our aspiring youth. The Semi-Final round is scheduled on September 16th and 17th, 2023, where the top contestants will compete for a place in the Grand Finale. The **Grand Finale**, set to take place in **Delhi** in from October 30th to November 1st 2023, promises to be a momentous occasion. Through this newsletter, let us explore some intriguing insights about the Qualifying Round of Prajatantra 2023.





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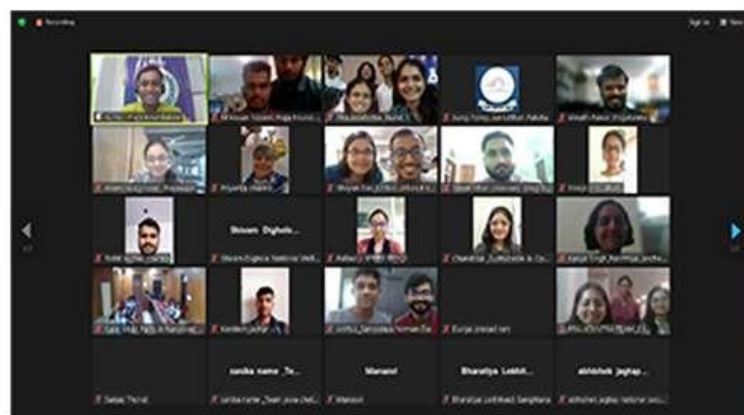
Theme: Inclusive and Participatory Urban Economies

BOOT CAMP

Prajatantra 2023 kick-started with a bootcamp. It played a pivotal role in preparing participating teams and colleges for the upcoming competitions of Prajatantra. It served as an all-encompassing orientation session, aiming to equip attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the upcoming events and competitions.

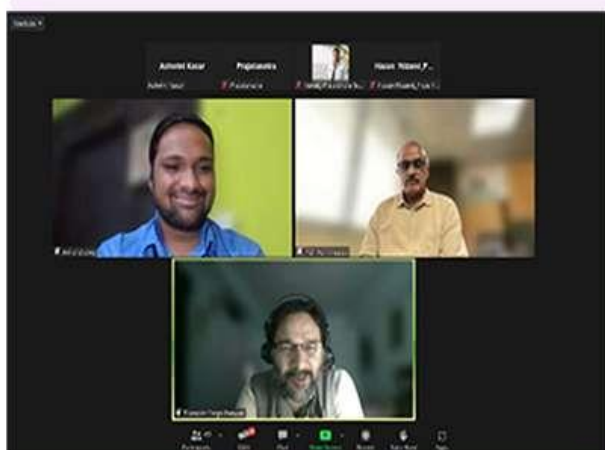
During orientation, participants had the opportunity to gain valuable insights into the diverse and exciting activities planned for Prajatantra 2023. These insights covered not only the event schedule but also the nature of competitions, rules, and expectations. It was a platform for them to get a clear picture of what they could expect and how they could best prepare themselves for the challenges ahead.

The session concluded with an extensive Question and Answer segment, ensuring that all the queries of the participants were addressed.



KNOWLEDGE SESSION

Prajatantra brings insightful Knowledge Sessions for participants featuring key note speaker experts from Urban Governance. This year we conducted four insightful knowledge sessions:



Knowledge Session 1: City Governance: Legal & Institutional Framework:

In this session, expert speaker P.D. Hari Prasad, former Deputy Controller of Accounts, East Delhi Municipal Corporation delved into various aspects, such as the functions of Municipal Corporations, the significance of Municipal Acts, and the intricacies of Mayor elections. On the other hand, Tikender Singh Panwar Author and former Deputy Mayor of Shimla city discussed the crucial role and responsibilities of a Mayor within a city's administrative landscape. He emphasised the importance of the 74th Amendment Act and its pivotal role in the nation's governance framework.



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Knowledge Session 2: Role of Youth to Ensure Water Secure Urban Ecosystem:

In this session, expert speaker Prof Tushar Bose, Associate Professor, Faculty of Technology, CEPT University, Ahmedabad shared valuable tips for participants aiming to develop better policies for the upcoming Prajatantra 2023 competitions.

He discussed water management projects implemented in Ahmedabad and shed light on urban and rural schemes/projects of some Indian cities to tackle water-related issues like floods and water scarcity, and how youth can play a vital role in it. The session was moderated by Lovlesh Sharma, Head, Urban Youth Unit (uYu) National Institute of Urban Affairs.



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Knowledge Session 3: Municipal Finance:

In this session, the expert speaker Dr. Debarpita Roy, a Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP) in New Delhi provided valuable insights on fundamental concepts and general trends of municipal finance in India. She also highlighted important aspects to be considered while drafting policies for model city government, pertaining to upcoming competitions of Prajatantra 2023.

On the other hand, Dr. Ravikant Joshi, an expert in Urban Finance and Management and a Former Chief Accounts Officer of Vadodara Municipal Corporation, highlighted the significance of citizen participation in local government.



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Knowledge Session 4: Inclusive Urban Spaces for Resilient Urban Economies:

In this session, expert speaker Parul Agarwala, Country Manager, UN Habitat India explained the link between inclusive and diverse public spaces and urban economy across the world.

In opening remarks, the Moderator for the Session, Pushkal Shivam, Urban Planner with UN-Habitat India, highlighted the opportunity to harness different public spaces like gardens, open areas, and plazas to improve the economic prospects of cities.



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These knowledge sessions served as energisers and catalysts for the participants, equipping them with a deeper understanding of urban governance and setting the stage for the upcoming competitions of Prajatantra.



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OPENING CEREMONY

The youth festival began with immense enthusiasm and energy. The event commenced with an Opening Ceremony featuring Keynote speaker: **Hitesh Vaidya**, Director of the National Institute of Urban Affairs; and Guest speakers **Parul Agarwala**, Country Programme Manager at UN-Habitat India; and **Nitai Mehta**, Founder and Trustee of Praja Foundation.

During the inaugural speech, the keynote speaker, Hitesh Vaidya, read the Letter from the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, that emphasises the role of youth in the country's development. Through this letter, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India conveyed his best wishes for the National Youth Conclave organised in March 2023 and Prajatantra Grand Finale was a part of it.

In the opening ceremony, the central topic of discussion was the significance of youth understanding their city governance and their role in it.

It was followed by the Mayor's Speech Competition, where participants not only effectively addressed the challenges, their cities are facing but also presented innovative solutions to overcome these issues.



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Scan the QR to Register
or follow the Link
<http://tiny.cc/PT2023>

Friday, 01 Sept 2023
02:00 PM - 03:00 PM
Online



It was a great learning experience. Not only participants highlighted crucial issues in their cities but also the questions posed by the judges were truly enlightening. The event is well-conceived, well-organised, and offers valuable insights to the young participants.

- **Prachi Dangi**,
Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan.
(Participant, Mayor's Speech Competition)



MAYOR'S SPEECH

The Mayor's Speech Competition was held on September 1, 2023. In this competition, participants were asked to present their visions and policies for their cities as if they were mayors. Many of them proposed innovative solutions to address the challenges their cities are facing.

The judges were impressed by the creativity and thoughtfulness of the presentations. They also noted the participants' commitment to improving their cities as admirable.

The Mayor's Speech Competition provided a valuable opportunity for young people to share their ideas and learn from one another. It also served to raise awareness about the challenges our cities are encountering and to inspire people to get involved in making a positive impact.





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POLICY PRESENTATION

In the Qualifying Round, we conducted two rounds of Policy Presentation Competition; the first was on Policy Presentation Urban Economy and the second was on Municipal Finance.

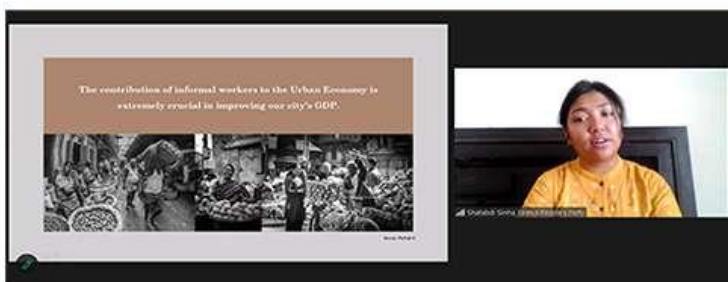
URBAN ECONOMY

In the Urban Economy, participants were tasked with presenting policies aimed at fostering economic growth within urban areas. They proposed a range of strategies to stimulate economic growth and promote entrepreneurship.

One notable suggestion was to introduce tax incentives and grants for startups, small businesses, and industries that create local job opportunities. By providing financial support and reducing tax burdens on these entities, the participants aimed to encourage economic growth and foster entrepreneurship. This approach would not only stimulate job creation but also contribute to the overall economic vitality of the region.

Another noteworthy proposal centred on the development and marketing of sustainable tourism attractions. Participants emphasised the importance of preserving local heritage and natural assets while simultaneously generating revenue and employment opportunities through tourism. By promoting sustainable tourism, they envisioned a scenario where the unique cultural and natural features of the area could be harnessed to benefit both the local economy and the community.

Overall, the policy presentation competition showcased the participants' commitment to finding innovative solutions while maintaining a focus on sustainability, job creation, and need for the fiscal empowerment of city government.



I always believed in the saying; Be the change you want society to be! It was fascinating to listen to so many young minds expressing their views on urban governance. I was pleasantly surprised by the level of preparation and the ideas presented by the participants. It was a true pleasure to listen to the young minds of today.

Dr Anjali Sane,
Dean, School of Economics & Commerce, MIT World Peace University, Pune.

I have learnt about the functioning of my city, the challenges it is facing, and how to find solutions. I also gained insights about other cities by listening to the presentations of other participants. It has been an amazing experience.

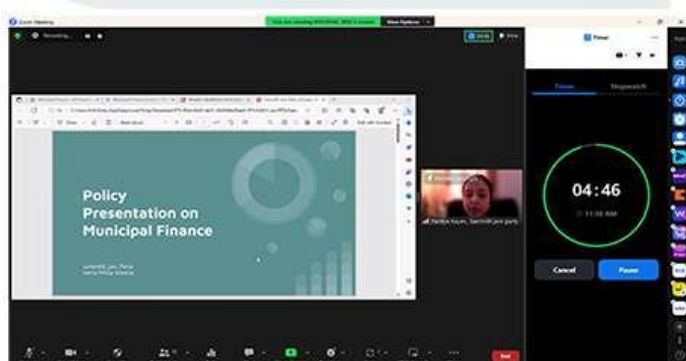
-Yash Asati,
Hindu College, Delhi University.
(Participant, Policy Presentation on Urban Economy)

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

The event was a platform for participants to present their vision with respect to the budgeting of an urban local body. The participants were asked to suggest new revenue sources for municipal governments and to discuss how these new revenue sources could be used to improve the delivery of essential services.

The participants put forth several thoughtful suggestions, including the use of municipal bonds for revenue generation, investments in public transport to alleviate traffic congestion and increase revenue for the corporation, and a focus on solid waste management charges.

The policy presentation was a success. It was a great way for participants to learn about the different ways to budget for an urban local body and to suggest new revenue sources.





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DEBATE COMPETITION

In the Debate Competition, the participants presented their views with a solution-oriented approach that reflected their critical thinking ability. They were able to defend their positions and give their unique perspectives. The judges were impressed with the level of research and preparation that the participants had put into their arguments.

The debate competition was a valuable opportunity for the youth to learn about these important issues and to develop their critical thinking skills. It was also a way to raise awareness of these issues and to encourage people to get involved in the decision-making process.

The participants turned out to be exceptionally well-prepared! As a judge event I ended up gaining valuable knowledge from their arguments and presentations, rather than critiquing the competition. It was indeed a wonderful experience to witness the passion and creativity of the next generation of leaders and I am grateful for this opportunity.

Revati Gokhale,

**Mission and Research Coordinator, Mumbai First.
(Judge, Debate Competition)**

In my role as an Event Coordinator for the Policy Debate Competition, I gained valuable experience of event planning and organisation. Additionally, I had the chance to expand my network and communication skills while coordinating with judges and participants from across India.

Sharvi Ambekar,

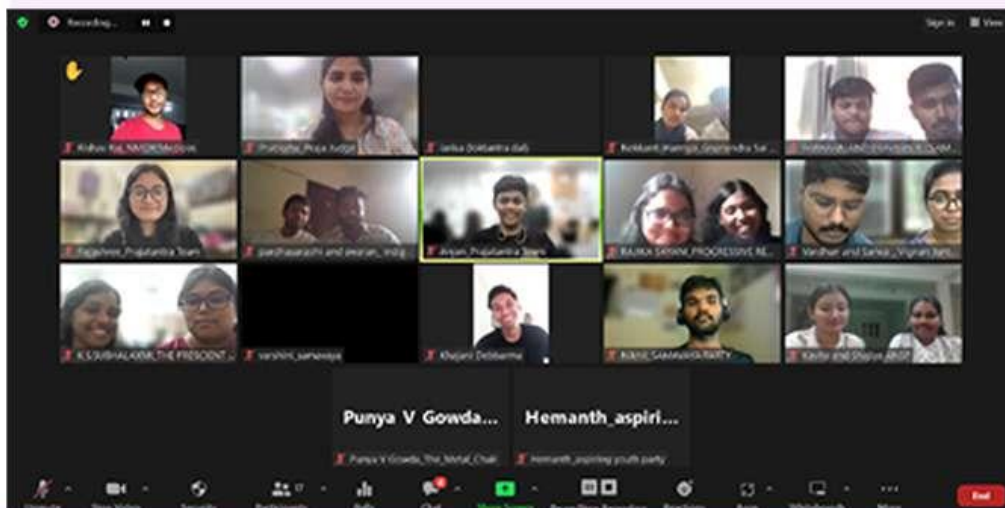
**SIES College of Arts Science & Commerce, Mumbai.
(Event Coordinator, Policy Debate Competition)**



QUIZ COMPETITION

The quiz competition assessed participants' knowledge across a wide range of topics related to urban governance, encompassing areas such as municipal finance, citizen participation, e-governance, the constitution, and climate change. The questions were thoughtfully crafted to be challenging yet fair, covering various levels of difficulty.

The competition proved to be highly competitive, featuring three rounds in which numerous teams competed vigorously for the top position. The quiz competition emerged as a resounding success, offering an enjoyable and engaging means to evaluate participants' knowledge of urban governance while fostering learning and active engagement.





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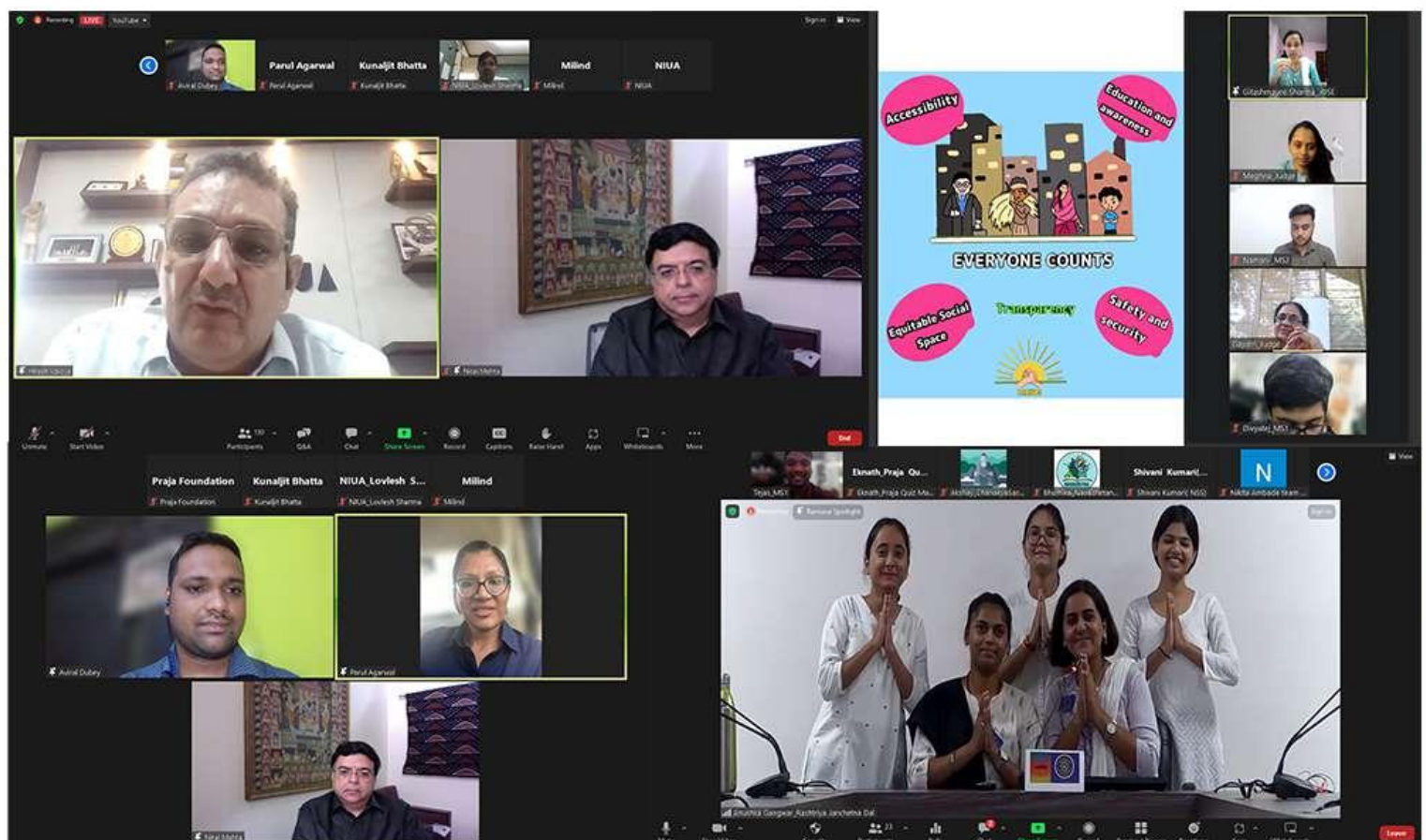
The journey has just begun! In just a month, we have witnessed the enthusiasm and dedication of the youth of India as they actively participated in various events of Prajatantra 2023. It is encouraging to see that the quarter-final participants presenting innovative solutions to address the current challenges in urban governance.

From promotions to registrations and now the Qualifying round competition, the focus has been on making your Prajatantra experience as seamless as possible. Kudos to the all young event coordinators and volunteers of Prajatantra 2023! Their hard work, dedication, and meticulous planning have transformed this event into an enriching experience for all participants, judges, and attendees. Their contribution toward empowering youth to drive positive change in our communities is truly commendable.

We take pride in the fact that many participants are actively interested in contributing to the improvement of their cities. Their optimism, creativity, and energy are crucial in transforming our cities into smartly governed spaces. Regardless of the results of the Quarter Final competitions, we urge all participants to continue their dedication to the fields of administration and citizenship.

We wish all the participants and teams the very best for the upcoming competitions. Together, let us strive for a better future and create impactful change in urban governance.

Best Regards,
Prajatantra Team.





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Prajatantra Steering Committee:

Hitesh Vaidya, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs; **Parul Agarwala**, Country Manager, UN-Habitat India; **Nitai Mehta**, Founder and Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation; **Milind Mhaske**, CEO, Praja Foundation.

Prajatantra Coordination Committee:

Dr Gayatri Doctor, Senior Associate Professor and Program Chair, Faculty of Management, CEPT University, Ahmedabad; **Dr Amit Singh**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, Delhi University; **Dr Geeta Kubsad**, Assistant Professor, Pravin Gandhi College of Law, Mumbai; **Dr Vikas Tripathi**, Assistant Professor, Dept of Political Science, Guwahati University, Assam; **Pushkal Shivam**, Urban Planner, UN-Habitat, India; **Lovlesh Sharma**, Head, Urban Youth Unit (UYU) National Institute of Urban Affairs; **Himani Verma**, Manager, Urban Youth Unit (UYU) National Institute of Urban Affairs; **Kaustubh Parihar**, Project Associate, Urban Youth Unit (UYU) National Institute of Urban Affairs; **Priyanka Sharma**, Director Programs, Praja Foundation; **Kunaljit Bhatta**, Program Coordinator, Praja Foundation; **M Hasan Nizami**, Program Officer, Praja Foundation.

