



Dear Readers,

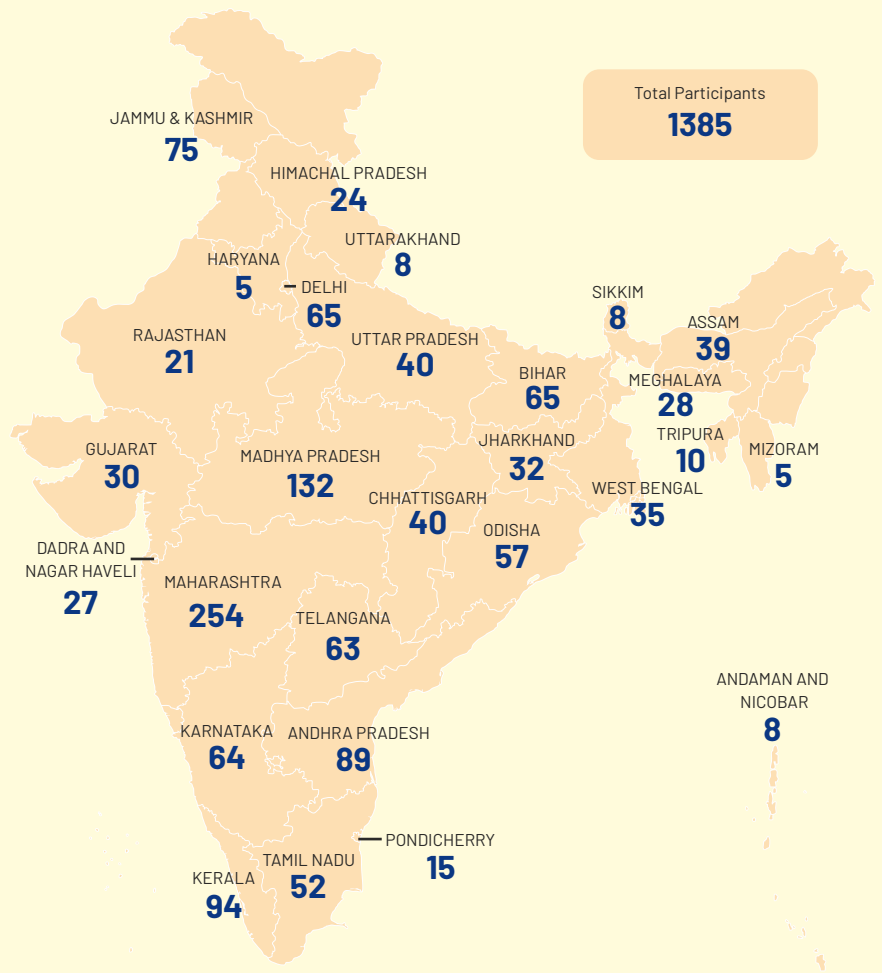
Greetings from Team Prajatantra,

**Praja** in collaboration with the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)**, successfully concluded the semi-finals of Prajatantra 2022-23. We are excited to share that, out of the 216 competing teams who participated in the quarter-final, 101 teams made their way to the semi-final.

The semi-final rounds were an absolute delight to watch. We have seen an impressive radical change in the perspectives of our semi-finalists. Beginning with Mayor's speech competition till the last round of the policy presentation competition, the passion and hard work of participants was evident. The dedication with which the policies were framed and the way ideas were conveyed to the masses, we not just witnessed immense capabilities of youth participants but also a promising future of the nation's democracy.

The raised issues and policies drafted were multifaceted and all the participants did a splendid job of presenting their views in a simple and comprehensive way.

Youth Participated in Prajatantra 2022-23 from different states of India.



PRAJATANTRA 2022-23

# PRAJATANTRA

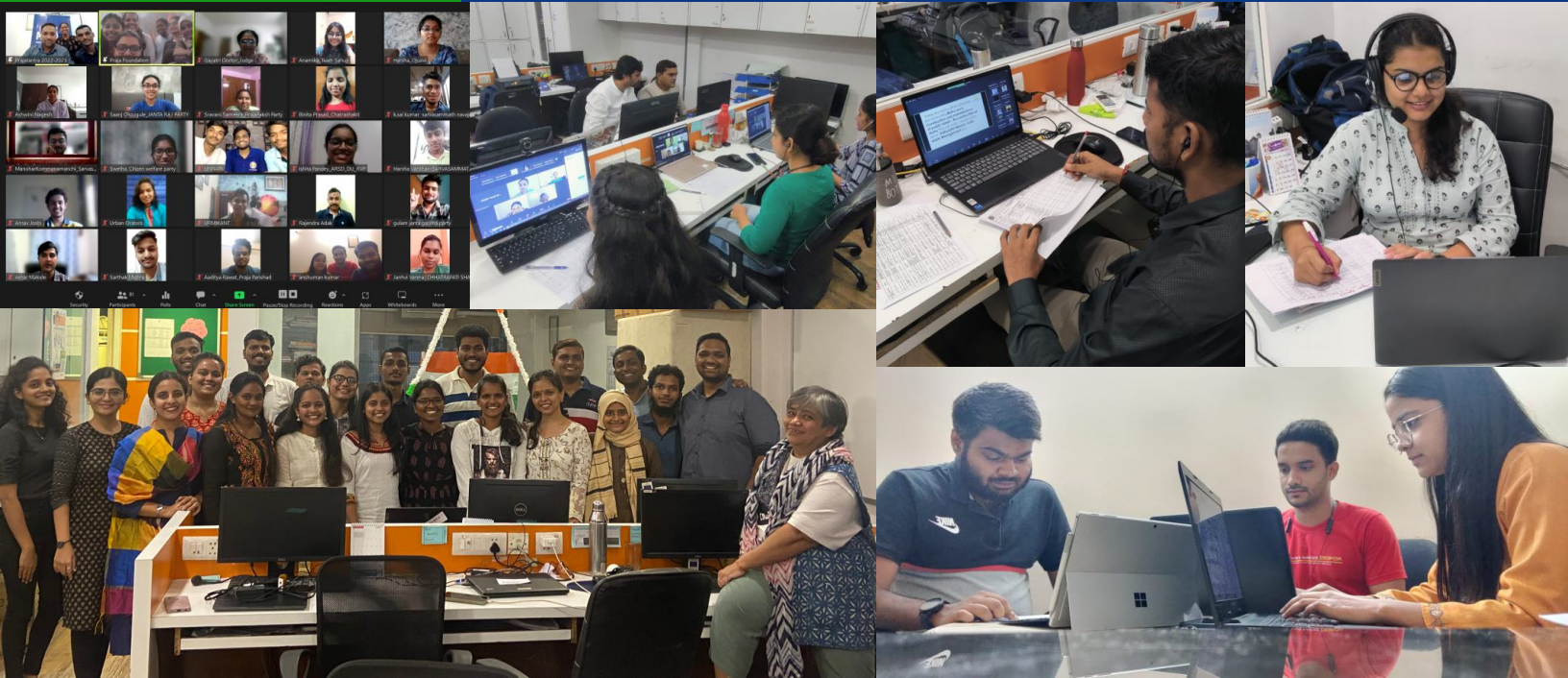
CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY

2022-23

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**KNOWLEDGE SESSION**

In Prajatantra 2022-23, we conducted three Knowledge Sessions for participants and attendees. The first knowledge session was on **City Governance: Legal & Institutional Framework** and the second knowledge session was on **Municipal Finance**. For our third knowledge session on Pillars of e-Governance, we had **Mr Manpreet Singh**, Chief Programme Officer for the National Urban Digital Mission at the National Institute of Urban Affairs as an expert moderator and **Mr Kunal Kumar**, Joint Secretary & Mission Director (Smart Cities Mission) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs as an expert speaker.

These knowledge sessions led interesting discussions between students & the expert speakers.

*Our city planning should be participatory & inclusive. While planning, we should also think about the climate change issue, which we have already started witnessing. I would also urge students to download the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and read PRAJA's reports. They have done an excellent job of nearly looking at all the states; where they are, where they should have been and what are the reasons, & why decentralisation is still a dream to be realised in the country.*



**Prof. Debolina Kundu,**  
Professor, National  
Institute of Urban  
Affairs



**Dr. Ravikant Joshi,**  
Urban Finance &  
Management Specialist,  
Former Chief Accounts  
Officer of Vadodara  
Municipal Corporation

*In our day-to-day life, around 70 to 75% of the facilities are provided by the local government. We depend on the local government for facilities like good roads, solid waste management, school, playground etc. Hence, we should take more interest in our local government. It is important for us to actively communicate with the local government, and ask them questions. Active citizen participation can happen through proper knowledge of urban governance. Citizens should know how does the urban development of their city works? How the budget is made? The government can only run effectively if its citizens actively participate in governance.*



**City Government** is a kind of interface between people and government structure that we have built under the ambit of our constitution. We have to go back to the basics & this has to be bottom top. The future has to be that the city belongs to the people and it has to be extremely participatory and extremely inclusive to ensure our cities must sustain.

**Mr. Tikender Singh Panwar,**  
former Deputy Mayor of Shimla city



**Mr. Kunal Kumar,**  
Joint Secretary & Mission  
Director (Smart Cities  
Mission), Ministry of  
Housing and Urban Affairs

E-governance is a conjoined term between E and governance where governance plays more essential roles than E, which is something people often forget. In order to make people's experience better with government, it won't happen by only putting computers and software or by creating a system that acts as a bridge between government and people, but people will actually need to change the routine of government & business processes in order to change the way government functions for E-GOVERNANCE TO SUCCEED.



**Dr Debarpita Roy,**  
Research Fellow at the Centre for Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi

*To build a model city government, it is very important to be aware of terms of money and in terms of finance where does your city government stand? India has three levels of government, the central; at the top, then we have the state government, then we have the local self-government. We couldn't have realised how important this local government is to us If the covid would have not impacted us in the last 2-3years.*

**KNOWLEDGE SESSION**



**City Governance:**  
Legal and Institutional  
Framework



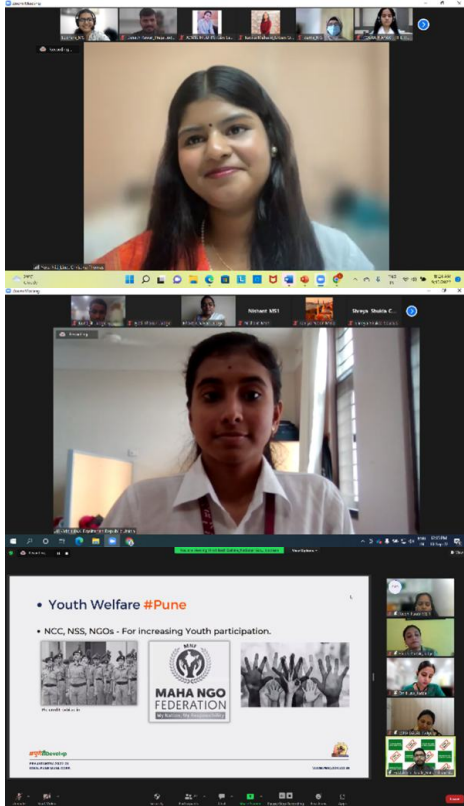
**Municipal  
Finance**



**e-Governance**



MAYOR SPEECH



The performances during the mayoral speech emphasised the issues our cities are facing and showcased how effectively we can tackle those issues. In the Mayor’s speech competition, participants exhibited a comprehensive understanding of urban governance and a role of a mayor.

One of the striking aspects of this competition was the realisation amongst the youth about the fact that how crucial it is for the mayor to get executive power in order to strengthen local governance at the grass-root level.

Key highlights from Mayor’s Speech:

- The Constitution Amendment Act, 1992, envisions Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as “vibrant units of self-government” still the elected representative lacks executive powers.
- An empowered Mayor leads to better transparency and accountability in local governance.
- The powers of the ULB’s chief executive are meaningful only if the ULBs are fully empowered.
- Transparency, accountability and audit mechanisms that are central to the principles of good governance.

Therefore, the question of the ULB leadership is undistinguishably tied to the empowerment of ULB itself.



POLICY PRESENTATION

Public policy is a crucial part of governance. It plays important role in forming the guidelines and principles of society and influences how important decisions are made. In the Semi-final, we conducted two rounds for Policy Presentation; the first was on E-governance & Citizen Participation and the second was on Municipal Finance.

The policies formulated by our semi-finalists were broad, encompassing laws and regulations. It was also up to date with the current needs of the citizens. The participants were well aware of the fact that public policy tends to change with the times, as public opinion on various matters changes and thus shapes interests, priorities, and values.

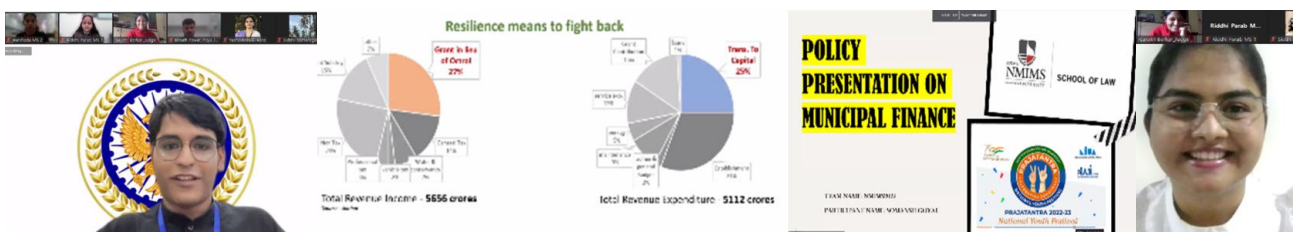
Key highlights of Policy Presentation

1. **E-governance**

- Dashboard with Real-time updates on projects and programmes proposed should be at ward level and Pan-City Level.
- E-governance is the government’s use of Information and Communications Technology to reach out to the citizens and solve their issues. This will make the system SMART, which is, Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent.

2. **Municipal Finance**

- The city plans on increasing the revenue sources by tapping into new and innovative sources such as municipal bonds and also learn from cities which have successfully implemented the same.
- The expenditure of the budget is based on the priority areas of effective solid waste management, education, health, safe cities and environment friendly cities. The budget expenditure is formulated by keeping these areas in mind.





## QUIZ COMPETITION



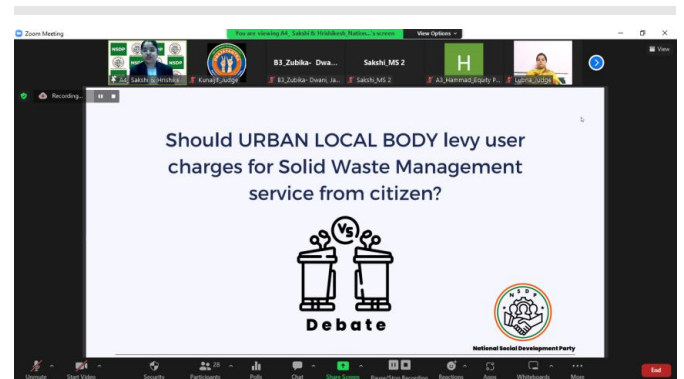
The Quiz Competition was a fun and competitive way to test and amplify the learning experience. It enabled participants to think from different viewpoints and promote inquisitiveness, knowledge and skills to understand and recall the various aspects of the theme.

The Quiz Competition tested participants' knowledge about Urban Governance which included the themes like Municipal Finance, Citizen Participation, E-governance, the Constitution, Climate Change, etc.

The final Rapid-Fire round was very competitive as the participants had to answer the questions within the given time limit.

*Prajatantra is doing a good job of involving the curious, ambitious, intelligent and innovative youth in participating in governing and managing. I am privileged to be a part of it.*

**Lubna Malik,**  
Lecturer at Holy Cross Convent  
Jr. college



## DEBATE COMPETITION

The participants of the debate competition successfully elucidated their standpoint with a great sense of poise and confidence. Our objective at Prajatantra 2022-23 Debate Competition was to connect, support, and inspire a diverse youth community committed to empowering society while nurturing and honing their oratorical, research and analytical skills.

The debate competition was conducted like an assembly session where the participants argued for and against the given topic. The topic was chosen at random. The participants were well prepared and asked quality questions to the opposition teams.

At the end of the debate, The Municipal Secretary (MS) opened the floor for live voting for or against the motion just like it is done in the assembly session while passing any resolution.

*It was indeed a great experience to be part of the Debate competition. Where we all participants dealt with each other's opinions, counter questions and balanced polling outcome.*

**Shilpi Sharma,**  
Team Unnati, IIT Guwahati

### Topic 1. Should ULBs levy user charges for SWM service from citizens or should they generate its revenue through efficient solid waste management (recycling, reusing and composting)?

**For** - Two decades since the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, we've realised that there is a lack of resources for municipal corporations to implement even basic functions like solid waste management. Thus, we contemplate levying charges.

**Against** - It is the state's responsibility to create a liveable environment in the form of a welfare model & where service has a public good characteristic, and user charges are not appropriate.

### Topic 2: Should the Mayor be elected directly (by citizens) or indirectly (by councillors)?

**For** - Indirect election is neither the poorest form of democracy nor the ideal, for the overall development of the city. However, it goes against the democratic values of the nation.

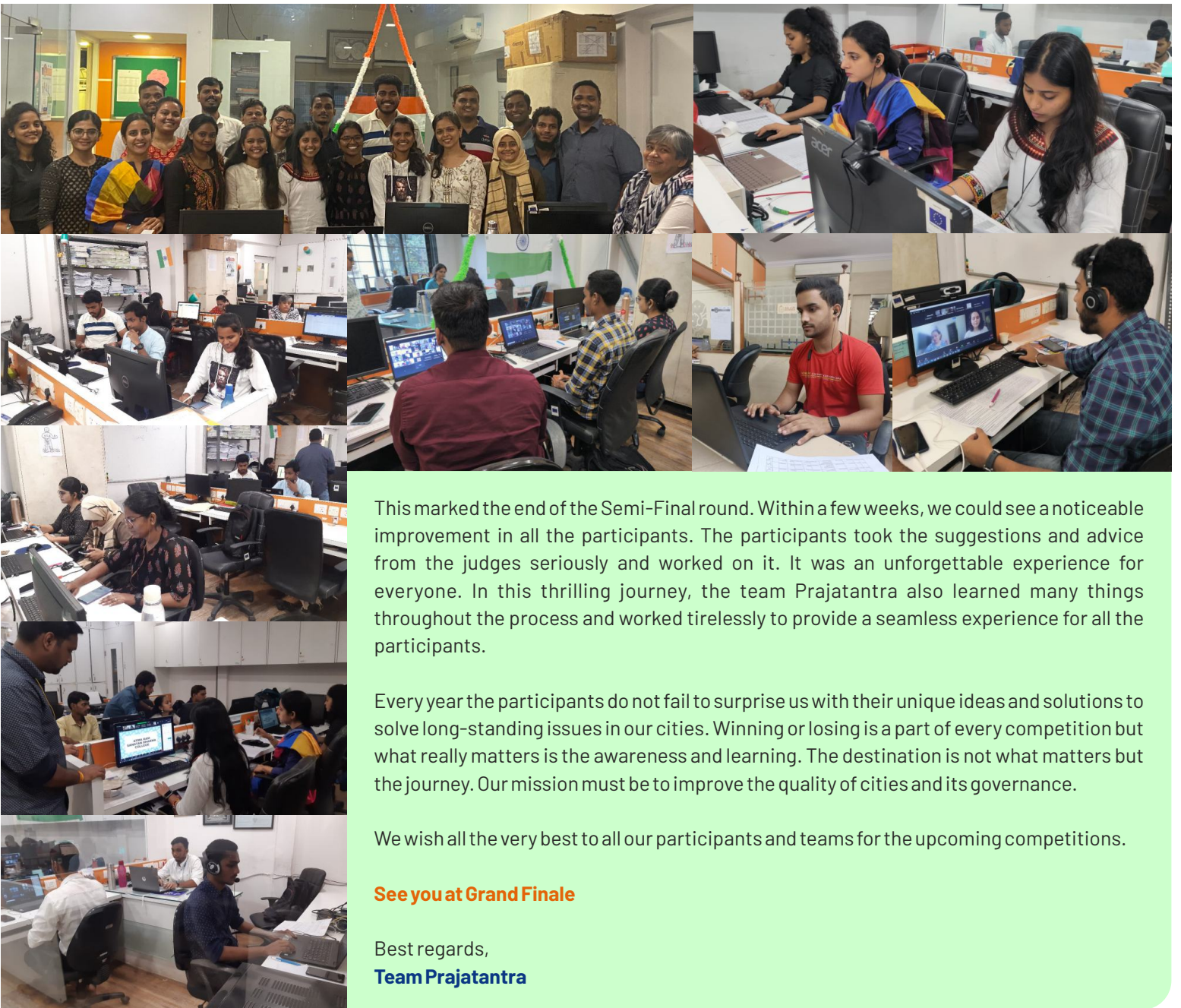
**Against** - An empowered elected executive can be achieved through an indirectly elected mayor-in-council system, in which much like the cabinet system in the state assembly and parliament, the mayor has to maintain the support of a majority of the council.

## **COMPETITION FOR ATTENDEES**

In order to promote active engagement with our audience, we also conducted Quiz competitions for our attendees during all the events. Attendees actively participated and winners were chosen who will be rewarded with exciting prizes.

*Enriching and eye-opening experience. Learnt a lot about the nuances of city governance, especially the essence of greater citizen participation.*

**Huma Khurshid,**  
University of Kashmir



This marked the end of the Semi-Final round. Within a few weeks, we could see a noticeable improvement in all the participants. The participants took the suggestions and advice from the judges seriously and worked on it. It was an unforgettable experience for everyone. In this thrilling journey, the team Prajatantra also learned many things throughout the process and worked tirelessly to provide a seamless experience for all the participants.

Every year the participants do not fail to surprise us with their unique ideas and solutions to solve long-standing issues in our cities. Winning or losing is a part of every competition but what really matters is the awareness and learning. The destination is not what matters but the journey. Our mission must be to improve the quality of cities and its governance.

We wish all the very best to all our participants and teams for the upcoming competitions.

**See you at Grand Finale**

Best regards,  
**Team Prajatantra**

This newsletter has been written by Palak Dubey, Fellow of Elected Representative Fellowship Program, Praja Foundation and the communications team of Prajatantra. The newsletter has been written by them solely based on their experiences of organising Prajatantra 2022-23. Whereas the contents of this publication have been published by Praja Foundation. This, in no way, can be taken to reflect the views of donors and sponsors.

### **Prajatantra Control Room**

B18, 2nd Floor, Shri Ram Industrial Estate, 13, G.D Ambedkar Marg, Wadala, Mumbai-400031  
**+91 98201 90892 / 022-6666 1442, prajatantra@praja.org**