



Greetings from Team Prajatantra,

We are pleased to announce that, **Praja** in collaboration with the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** is celebrating **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**, the 75th year of Independence of India, through **Prajatantra 2022-23**. Prajatantra is a National Youth Festival that enables the youth of India to advocate their beliefs, opinions and understanding of city governance. It facilitates the youth to participate in large numbers across India. It also encourages participants to form and function as a Model city government through various competitions such as Mayor's Speech, Policy Presentations, Debate and Quiz competition. As we go ahead with this journey, we are happy to announce that we have successfully completed the **Quarter Final Round of Prajatantra 2022-23** and now we all are eagerly waiting for the results. The Semi-Final round will be held on 10th September 2022 and the Grand Finale will be held in Delhi in Physical form in January 2023.

It is essential to understand the workings of our urban institutions and its challenges to be able to actively participate in local democracy. **Prajatantra 2022-23** created a stage for the youth of India to think, examine and impart their considerations and insights on issues of urban governance. The core objective of this festival is to mobilise young leaders across India and help them to understand the importance of democracy & functioning of a democratic government to increase their active participation in governance.

This year we are conducting the 4th season of the Prajatantra festival and it is truly representing the entire country's youth. 216 teams including more than 1000 participants across 23 States, 5 Union Territories and 79 different cities including metropolises as well as emerging towns registered for the event. In this venture, we are attempting to make the Prajatantra experience as smooth as conceivable.

Over the past few days, through the Quarter Final events, we witnessed immense energy, enthusiasm and dreams of the youth for enhancing urban governance.



PRAJATANTRA
Samvad CELEBRATING DEMOCRACY
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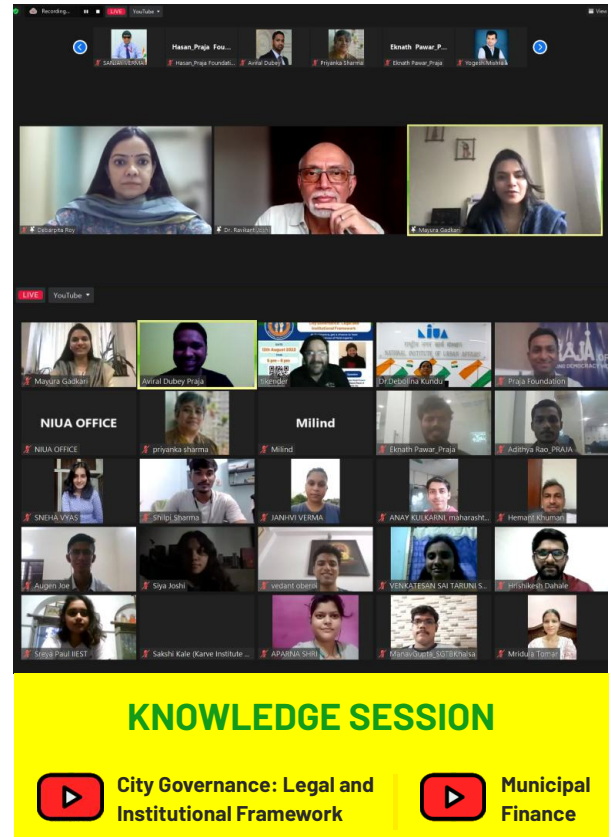
BOOT CAMP

Prajantra 2022-23 began with a Bootcamp which was conducted on 6th August 2022 for all participating teams & colleges. The participants were briefed on all the events & competitions of Prajantra along with their rules & regulations. The main objective of this Bootcamp was to give clarity & knowledge on the various events happening in Prajantra and address all the questions of the participating teams!

KNOWLEDGE SESSION

To this date, as part of Prajatantra 2022-23, we have conducted two Knowledge Sessions for participants and attendees. These knowledge sessions were good energizers and helped participants gain a deeper knowledge on key topics of Urban Governance. It also served as a stepping stone for various competitions of Prajatantra. The first knowledge session was held on **City Governance: Legal & Institutional Framework**. The session was moderated by **Prof Debolina Kundu**, Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs with expert speaker **Mr Tikender Singh Panwar**, former Deputy Mayor of, Shimla city.

The second knowledge session was on **Municipal Finance** that featured **Dr Debarpita Roy**, Research Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), New Delhi as the expert Moderator and **Dr Ravikant Joshi**, Urban Finance and Management Specialist & Former Chief Accounts Officer of Vadodara Municipal Corporation, as the expert Speaker. These knowledge sessions led interesting discussions between students & the expert speakers. We will be soon organising two more interesting knowledge sessions.



OPENING CEREMONY

This ongoing mega festival of youth started with the inauguration ceremony that was moderated by **Mr Ajay Suri**, Senior Adviser, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and special guest speakers **Ms Roshni Nugehalli**, Executive Director, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) and **Mr Nitai Mehta**, Founder & Trustee, Praja. This was followed by Quarter Final Competitions.



"I would like to thank the Prajatantra team for organizing this kind of events which make us feel the leaders of our city. Where we can place opinions of our own to tackle the problems of our city. We have the right to freedom of speech but we don't get the chance or opportunity to so.

But Prajatantra is providing such kind of event where we really exercise our right to freedom of speech and expression.

Thank you so much Prajatantra team".

Binita Kumari Prasad

Participant, Prajatantra 2022-23,
Sikkim Government Law College Burtuk Gangtok Sikkim



MAYOR SPEECH

The question of municipal leadership is of great significance in urban governance across India. In many countries, a mayor is the highest-ranking official in a municipal government of a city. Worldwide, there is a wide variance in local laws and customs regarding the powers and responsibilities of a mayor as well as the means by which a mayor is elected or otherwise mandated.

In the **Mayor's Speech Competition**, participants were expected to present their precise vision as a mayor of the city including the main goal of the government for the betterment of the city. Participants effectively highlighted preparedness for city policy, good governance and a futuristic view.

The presentations during the mayoral speech not only highlighted the issues our cities are facing but also came up with innovative solutions to overcome these problems, for instance, how converting non-recyclable materials into electricity and heat could generate energy source and reduces carbon emissions by offsetting the need for energy from fossil sources. All the participants beautifully presented comprehensive policy frameworks that highlighted major decisions and changes in the administrative structure.



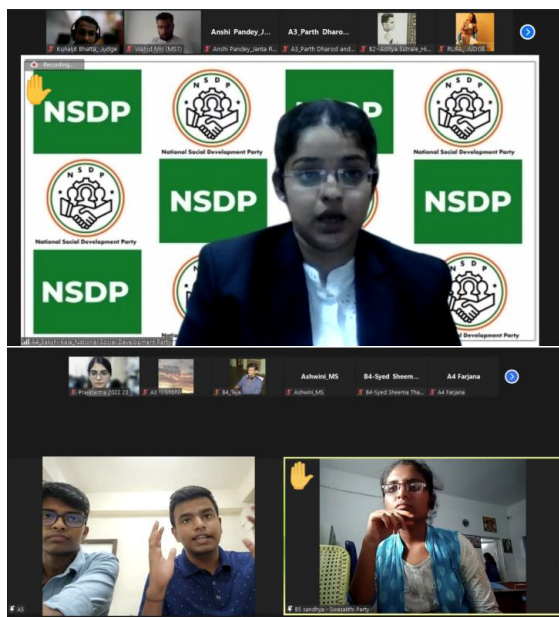
During the Mayoral speeches, participants exhibited a very good understanding of urban governance. They also presented their vision as mayor for the betterment of the city. Judges were amazed to see a futuristic view of the candidates and also shared their insights and experiences with the participants throughout the event.



"Being the judge for the event, I witnessed an excellent quality of work. The moto of the program was fulfilled effectively and efficiently. The performance of the students was the spotlight of the event. The way in which they conveyed their views was pretty impressive".

Prabha Mangla,
Prajatantra 2022-23 Judge,
Executive Director,
WINGS Foundation

DEBATE COMPETITION



"It was a good experience and a nice interactive session. I gained more knowledge on the particular topic discussed during the debate".

Manasa G S
Participant, Prajatantra 2022-23,
Avinashilingam University,
Tamilnadu

Democracy must be built through open societies that share information. When there is information, there is enlightenment. Where there is a debate, there is a resolution.

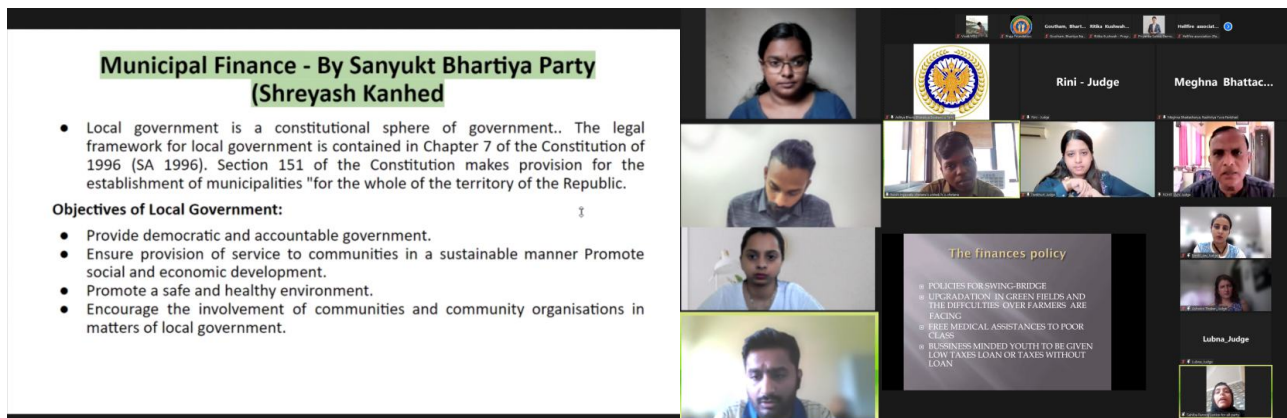
Debates truly cherish the idea of democracy. Freedom of speech and differences of opinions are from the many ideals of democracy, and these were nurtured in this debate competition.

Prajatantra 2022-23 had two topics around which participants shared their perspectives. The first topic of the **Debate Competition** was "Should Urban Local Body levy user charges for Solid Waste Management Services from citizens or should generate its revenue through efficient solid waste management" and the second topic was "Should the mayor be elected directly (by citizens) or indirectly through (municipal councilors)". For each team, topics were selected using the chit-box method.

All the participants presented their views with a solution-oriented approach that reflected their critical thinking ability. Be it for the motion or against they defended their positions and gave their unique perspectives. This competition was successful in engaging the youth with the topic via a research and solution-oriented approach, comparing both pros and cons of the assigned topic.



POLICY PRESENTATION



In the Quarter Final, we conducted two rounds of **Policy Presentation Competition**; the first was on e-Governance & Citizen Participation and the second was on Municipal Finance.

1. e-Governance & Citizen Participation

Citizen Participation is the core of democracy and it will always be the most significant aspect of Governance. This first policy presentation competition revolved around issues like digital illiteracy, accessibility of digital facilities, sustainability and security of digital interference hindering effective governance.

The solutions and perspectives of participants on the use of an Online Grievance Redressal Mechanism and a citizen-friendly transition to e-governance were impressive.

2. Municipal Finance

Municipal Finance plays a vital role in acquiring the financial resources required for an economy to achieve its social welfare.

In this competition, participants formulated policies on one of the most important dimensions of present-day governance. Policy presentation on Municipal Finance was a platform for participants to present their vision with respect to the budgeting of an urban local body. Also, it boosted conceptual knowledge among the participants with respect to policymaking and budgeting at the city level. Apart from the existing property tax, user charges and other fees as our revenue base Participants suggested the use of other income sources such as consumption-based taxation and income-based taxation like a professional tax to provide buoyancy to revenues which were commendable. These new revenue sources will reduce the dependency on State Government and can be leveraged to borrow and meet our capital expenditure requirements.

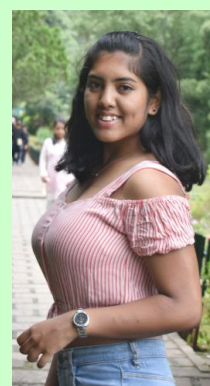


Sarika Nair,
Prajatantra 2022-23
Judge, Consultant,
Hasiru Dala

"It has been a pleasure to judge the Municipal Finance competition of Prajatantra 2022-23. I was surprised and happy to see Heavy number of participants in this national level Youth Festival. All the participants put good efforts in presenting their Municipal Finance Presentation although this topic is a little tricky to understand".

The Question-And-Answer session after each presentation was also very insightful since it reflected a thorough understanding of policy-making at the city level as well as a realistic vision among the participants.

"It's my second year participating in the Prajatantra competition and I'll never deny that this has given me, personally, a platform for not only learning but also getting to know my potential and understanding in certain fields. Being the winner of the year 2021's Social Media Strategy, I'd say it has been an honour that Prajatantra has even given me an opportunity to showcase my opinions, my presentations and my ways of looking at democracy or city planning as a whole, with the amazing opportunity to also have been judged by some extraordinary minds. Thanks a lot".



Abhinanda Das,
Participant, Prajatantra 2022-23,
St. Edmund's College, Meghalaya





QUIZ COMPETITION

Quiz Competition is a fun and competitive way to test and amplify learning experience. It enabled students to think from different viewpoints or simply 'think out of the box' and promote a healthy inquisitiveness amongst participants in order to learn from each other. Prajatantra, through the quiz competition on the theme of Urban Governance, tested students' 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. It was very competitive as the participants had to answer the questions within the given time limit.



The journey has just begun. In just a month, from promotions to registration and commencing the actual competition of Quarter Final, Youth of India were at the centre of our focus and we tried to make your Prajatantra 2022-23 experience as smooth as possible. As youth comprise one-fifth of the Indian population, they are the most important group in India's demography. We are glad to highlight that in the quarter-final we came across the most enthusiastic, vibrant, innovative and dynamic participants.

We believe that all the participants have been encouraged to raise their voices on the subjects they care about and present their ideas to solve contemporary challenges. We are proud to see that majority of them are keen to participate in the process of urban governance and some even hold a roadmap for the betterment of their city. This optimism and creativity combined with high energy will help us to transform our cities into Smartly Governed cities.

Regardless of what the Quarter Final's competitions results are, we urge participants to proceed with their dedication toward the space of administration and citizenship.

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

See you in Semi Final!

Best regards,

Team Prajatantra

This newsletter has been written by Palak Dubey and Swaraj Malekar who are fellows of the Elected Representative Fellowship Program – cohort 4 of Praja Foundation. 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.