

Praja Foundation relates poor civic amenities to rise of corona



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Mumbai: In a time when Mumbai continues to battle the Covid19 pandemic, NGO Praja Foundation has pointed how poor civic amenities have impacted the lives of people in congested areas, especially slums. In its annual white paper – ‘Status of civic issues in Mumbai 2020’, launched on Tuesday, Praja Foundation has correlated rise of Covid-19 cases and poor civic amenities in wards having highest containment zones. The report was compiled based on data obtained through Right to Information Act, 2005 for all 24 wards. According to the Praja Foundation’s white paper, one third of total complaints of overflowing/choked drains and garbage not collected and one fourth of total toilet related complaints were from five civic wards – L (Kurla), K (W) (Andheri-W), S (Bhandup), M (E) (Deonar, Govandi), R (S) (Kandivali), which incidentally have highest number of containment zones. Three (K (W), S and R(S)) out of the five wards with highest containment zones reported most water shortage complaints. The report states 1,28,145 complaints were filed last year, of which 96 % were closed by the civic body. The complaints were related to roads, buildings, drains, water supply, solid waste management, licence, gardens, colony officer, storm water drainage, health and pollution. However, the highest number of complaints (24,267) was related to drainages, followed by the buildings and water supply department with 20,317 and 15,507 complaints respectively. According to the report, from January-December 2019, 30 days is an average time taken by BMC to look into a complaint and resolve it. The average time taken to resolve a complaint was 46 days in 2018. As per the BMC’s citizen charter 1999 (a joint charter by BMC and Praja), the civic body

should fix complaints related to drainage, water supply, solid waste management (SWM) or any other civic complaints within three days. However, the BMC takes at least more than 30 days on an average to do so, the report revealed. The report revealed how 58% public/community toilets in Mumbai are without electric supply, while 72% are not connected to piped sewage systems. The report states that the water supply in Mumbai is still not equitable leading to some areas getting more water supply while many others struggle to get the basic amount of water needed. In 2019, total 29% complaints were about shortage of water and 13 percent of complaints were regarding contamination of water. "Despite launching a 24x7 water supply project in 2014, the average timing of water supply in the city in 2018-19 was only 5.9 hours. There is still no equity when it comes to water supply in Mumbai," said Yogesh Mishra of Praja Foundation. The report further pointed out the disparity between the number of toilet seats for males and females - only one in four toilet seats were for females. C ward (Charni road) has the largest disparity with 85%, while R/N ward (Dahisar) has the lowest disparity of 50%. When approached, a senior BMC official said, "We do not wish to comment on Praja's report. If there is something that needs to be addressed we will look into it and resolve it." The civic body in November 2017, declared Praja Foundation persona non grata, stating that the NGO had misinterpreted and misrepresented data.

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