

Citizens, Councillors Must Work Develop A Rapport

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Citizens are usually worried about civic issues like the state of the roads, drainage, garbage collection and water supply. But only 34 per cent of the questions raised by city councillors in the BMC come under categories relevant to people, the Praja Foundation's 'Mumbai Municipal Councillors' Report Card' has found, recently.

There were some points that showed it is important for councillors to be accessible to people. They also need to have their ear to the ground when it comes to daily problems of the people. These statistics show that they seem removed from what is irking common people in the area.

The number of questions asked by councillors, and their quality, has fallen from 2,609 in 2018 to 2,270 in 2020. Over 60 per cent councillors got a poor grade for the quality of questions and 13 councillors asked no questions.

Many of their questions had less than 50 per cent relatability with citizens' complaints.

Why talk about the upper echelons of political administration being unresponsive to people's problems when the lower rung itself, seems not to score high in this context?

First of all, citizens need to organise themselves well and speak in coherent, cohesive voices about the civic issues that are troubling them. That is fundamentally the most effective platform to make your political representatives answerable. Simply ranting and raving or spewing bile on social media is not going to cut it.

Councillors then, need to make themselves available. There are times when certain wards have an excellent rapport with their councillors and they can at least get a hearing from them. For that, even citizens need to be aware of their rights and the way to exercise them. Let us see this gap lessening and basics being addressed swiftly and solutions found when needed.

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