

# PRAJA FOUNDATION



## ANNUAL REPORT 2013

PRAJA DIALOGUE PROJECT

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## I. Executive Summary

Praja Foundation is a non-partisan voluntary organisation which empowers the citizen to participate in governance by providing knowledge and enlisting people's participation. Praja aims to provide ways in which the citizen can get politically active and involved beyond the ballot box, thus promoting transparency and accountability. Praja Foundation works towards four core sectors in Mumbai's development and issues faced by Aam Mumbaikar namely *Education, Health, Civic issues and Crime*, and publish regular reports on the same.

For Praja, the year 2013 started with meeting various elected representatives across Mumbai and arranging for Training Workshops for them. Praja believes in building capacity of the elected representatives so that they can perform their roles more effectively. Hence, we organised several training workshops for the Councillors focusing on all the 17 ward committees of Mumbai. The councillors were trained on various aspects related to the functioning of MCGM. 11 workshops and a round table on education were organised for the elected representatives that were addressed by domain experts and were well attended by the elected representatives.

This year, we released four white papers, one Councillor Report Card and one MLA Report Card that provided rich analysis on citizen's issues and the workings of the elected representatives. All of them were widely covered by the print and electronic media. Constant media communication has played a tremendous role in making people aware of ground realities including making the administration and elected representatives take note of the problems at the ward level and act on them.

## II. Data Management

Collection of data and its management has always been the core of our organisation. We are continuously working to improve the richness of the data that we collect. Our data management team is very efficient and dedicated and contributes effectively to help in achieving our goals. This year we added several new data points in addition to the usual for the purpose of our white papers; in the area of Education we applied multiple new RTI's to know more about the performance of the MCGM run Schools. Similarly, for Health and Crime issues we have added additional data to our already extensive data collection scope. In the Health area we have additionally expanded the scope of our collection to the Railway, Port Trust, ESIS and Police hospitals. The data on Crime is also yielding interesting findings as we are in the process of collecting the details of acquittals from the Courts of Mumbai and the reasons for the same. Our approach to data collection has gone from the originally requested basic data to issue based data, giving us depth in the areas of our study.

This year we had less difficulty in collecting the data as compared with last year and have fewer appeals for data pending. The most exciting achievement for data collection was the two State Appeals, which was attended and won by us. One was for the police manual and the other pertaining to the M/East Ward Education Department. This has given us encouragement and more faith in the RTI system.

Along with the survey for the MLA Report Card and Councillor Report Card, we had asked our research agency, Hansa Research, to conduct a primary survey on the status of health, education and policing/crime. The data collected, provided further insights in the issues affecting Mumbaikars and gave us a succinct view of the '*State of Mumbai*'

### III. Research and Analysis

#### 1. Ward Committee White Paper:

Praja's first publication in the year 2013 was the **Report on Working of Ward Committees in the City of Mumbai and Civic Problems Registered by Citizens (January 2011 to December 2012)**. This white paper presented an analysis on Ward wise citizen's issues, and the issues raised by the councillors of the MCGM in their respective Ward Committees. As it was the first white paper for the new councillors, media took it up and continued to run related stories for the entire the month.

**Highlights of the report:** By analysing the questions asked by the Councillors in various ward committees across Mumbai during March 2012 and December 2012, we found that 1 out of every 5 questions asked by the Councillors were on naming/renaming of roads/chowks. Also there was an increase by 53.9% in the civic complaints filed by the citizens in 2012.



## 2. Health White Paper :

In the month of July, Praja published a Report on **The STATE of HEALTH of MUMBAI**. The white paper had two sections, one was the data collected in four years through RTI and another was the Survey conducted by Hansa Research Agency on health issues. This paper had a big impact, as we got very good coverage time for the health report and the success is also evident from the fact that the MCGM had to come up with a counter Press Conference in response to our Report. Many councillors and health committee members called us to understand the report. It was very well received by media, Elected Representatives and various NGO's who are working in the Health space in Mumbai.



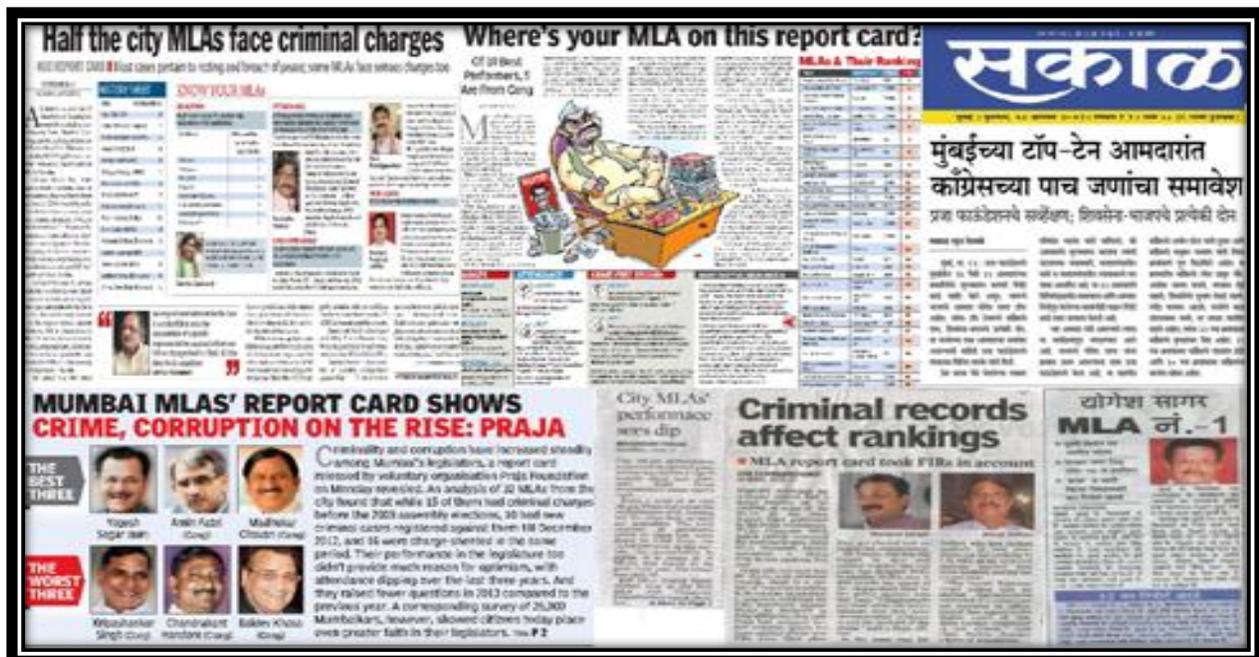
**Highlights of the report:** This year, Praja's report on Health brought to fore the fact that the government's Public Health Surveillance (Health Information System) needs to be immediately augmented and the Government should get data from non-government sector healthcare practitioners as our survey showed that only 31% of the Mumbaikars were using government dispensary/hospital facilities.

One more major finding of the report was that MCGM was successful in bringing down Malaria cases in Mumbai during 2012-13, however other diseases such as dengue, cholera and tuberculosis were all on the rise.

### 3. MLA Report Card 2013:

This was the third year launch of the Annual Report card of the MLA's, which gives a ranking to Mumbai's MLA's. It was launched in August 2013. We received good press coverage and the MLA who stood first came to meet us and discuss the report as well. We have sent copies of the MLA Report Card all over India to MLAs, MPs, NGOs and administrators. This years' Report Card was launched by Shri Prabhat Kumar, former Cabinet Secretary and former Governor of Jharkhand.

The matrix used for ranking the MLA's was divided into 3 sections- Past Records, Present Performance and the Survey. The media covered our report card widely and we received a good response from the citizens.



**Highlights:** After the release of the MLA Report Card 2013, the top ranking MLA as per our report card, Mr. Yogesh Sagar, was amongst the few MLA's and their representatives that came to meet us at our office. They were very keen to understand the matrix of the report card and the basis on which Praja ranks MLA's.

#### 4. Councillor Report Card 2013:

Praja launched Councillor Report Card 2013 in the month of September 2013, ranking the Councillors of the MCGM. Our report card was widely covered in the Press and we received a very good response from the Councillors who not only wanted to know their own ranks but have started making attempts to improve their ranking by getting more involved in the legislative process which is emphasised in the ranking matrix.



**Highlights:** Like every year Report card attracted a good media attention. Even it was taken up by the TV news debates too. Even throughout the year, several Councillors approached Praja to understand the matrix of our Report Card. They were keen to understand what steps they need to take in order to improve their ranking in Praja's report card. E.g. one particular councillor who was ranked among the top 10 said that the high rank gave a huge motivation and now would work more and more for the constituents. Another, a senior leader, who was ranked amongst the last quartile was upset but later said that would start attending ward committee meetings which he was not before as he was too busy with the Party works.

## 5. Crime White Paper:

The White Paper on the **STATE OF POLICING AND LAW & ORDER IN MUMBAI** was launched through a Press conference in the month of November 2013. The press conference was a big success. Many MLAs called Praja wanting to know the key issues and the solutions highlighted in the report. We also met A.K. Jain, Principal Secretary of Chief Minister of Maharashtra with the findings of the report.



**Key Highlights of the report:** Our Crime White Paper brought out the serious issue of decrease in conviction rates and increase in cases of Rape and Molestation in Mumbai. It showed that the conviction rate in serious offences went down to 7% in 2012 from 10% in 2011. Also, there was a sharp increase of 57% and 43% in the cases of Rape & Molestation in the last two years (2011-12 & 2012-13) respectively.

## 6. Education White Paper :

Praja's Education White Paper titled: '**State of Municipal Education in Mumbai**' was released in December 2013. The objective behind launching the white paper was to monitor the learning outcome of the students and to ensure that CCE reports and inspection reports are filled rigorously and are audited by third party and linked to the performance appraisal of respective teachers. The previous year, after releasing the 'State of Education of Mumbai', Praja had organised a Round table Discussion in May 2013. The discussion had focused on the solutions to improve Municipal Education.



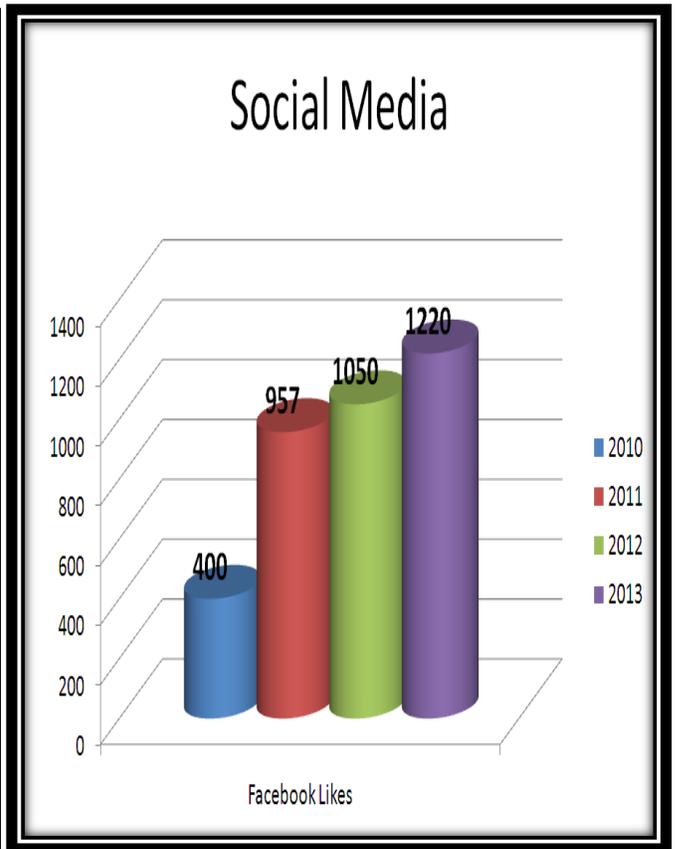
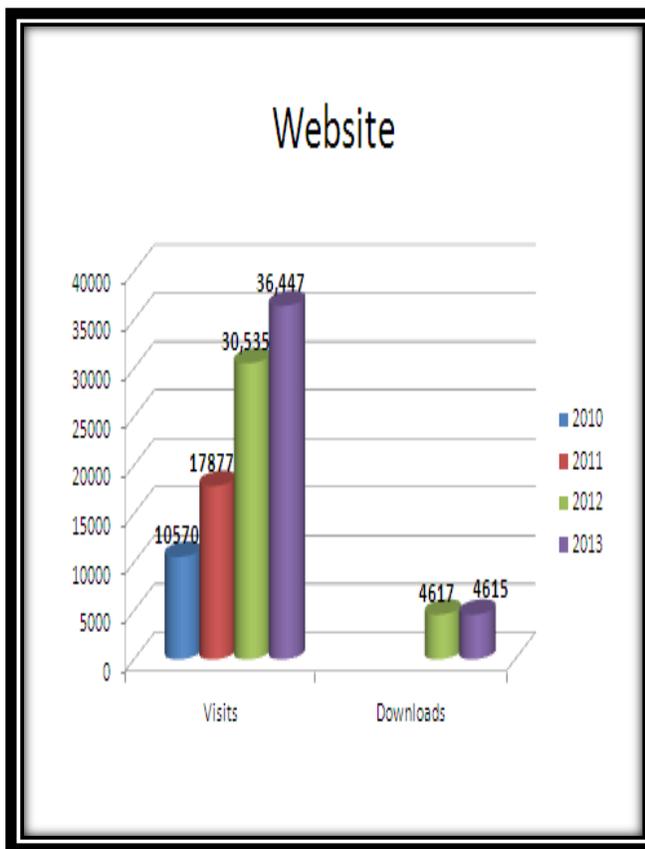
**Key Highlights of the report:** The data collected from Municipal Schools across Mumbai through RTI shows that the schools have an adequate budget, 100% RTE norms on infrastructure, well qualified teachers and excellent school inspection reports. However, our reports showed that over the years, students are leaving and going to private schools and students are passing their Secondary and Scholarship Exams with poor results. The Education white paper reflected the poor status of Municipal Education in Mumbai.

## IV. Dissemination

### 1. Website and Social Media Outreach

Praja's website contains comprehensive data related to Civic, Health, Crime and Education. We also have data related to the Elected Representatives of Mumbai. The data base is updated at regular intervals. All our publications and media coverage's are also available on our website.

Ward level details are uploaded regularly on our website which can be used as a resource for anyone needing information on the administrative wards of Mumbai. It also has an independent report creating system where the media, researchers, social activists and citizens in general can obtain reports on various wards of Mumbai, the performance of elected representatives, compare details, etc.



## 2. Newsletter

This year, Praja's monthly newsletter covered a wide range of topics including a special feature on Municipal Budgeting, Online Complaint Management System of the MCGM, A Report on Praja's workshops and Handbooks and the genesis of the Clinical Establishment Act, in addition to features on our reports and publications. We reach out to over 13000+ people through our Newsletters. The target audience of the newsletter are:

- The Government (Municipal and State)
- Elected Representatives – Mumbai Councillors, MLAs from Mumbai and MPs from Mumbai
- Administration – includes MCGM officials, Police administration in Mumbai and key officials in the state administration
- Praja Members (registered on the website)
- Volunteers
- A Select database of NGOs and civil society activists in the city

**What is Praja?**  
 Founded in 1998, the PRAJA Foundation is a non-partisan voluntary organization which empowers the citizen to participate in governance by providing knowledge and ensuring people's participation. PRAJA aims to provide ways in which the citizen can get politically active and involved beyond the ballot box, thus promoting transparency and accountability.

Concerned about the lack of awareness and agility of the local government among citizens, and hence the challenge in its functioning, PRAJA seeks change. PRAJA strives to create awareness about the elected representatives and their constituencies. It aims to encourage the citizen to raise his/her voice and influence the policy and working of the elected representative. This will eventually lead to efforts being directed by the elected representatives towards the specified causes of public interest.

The PRAJA Foundation also strives to revive the waning spirit of Mumbai City and increase the interaction between the citizens and the government. To facilitate this, Praja has created [www.praja.org](http://www.praja.org), a website where the citizen can not only discuss the issues that their constituencies face, but can also get in touch with their elected-representatives directly. The website has been equipped with information such as the issues faced by the ward, the elected representatives, the responses received and a discussion board thus allowing an informed interaction between the citizens of the area.

PRAJA's goals are: empowering the citizens, elected representatives & government with facts and creating awareness of change to improve the quality of life of the citizens of India. PRAJA is committed to creating a transparent, accountable and efficient society through people's participation.

provisions of the "Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act" (MMC). The Act which came into force in 1888 and has been amended from time to time states the duties of the Municipal Corporation, provisions to accomplish them and rules for their implementation.

**Big Story**  
**Report on Praja's Workshops & Handbooks**  
 The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) is the most crucial institution for governance in the lives of the people of Mumbai. It is 'Governed' by the 227 municipal councillors, who are elected by the citizens every five years. Citizens elect the councillors with the expectation that their representatives will ensure availability of municipal services and address issues in their respective wards.

The existing team of 227 councillors comprises many individuals who have continuously strived to provide a vision to develop the city to offer the highest standards of living. However, issues cannot be resolved by a single person. It needs interaction with citizens as well as collective deliberation with the municipal administration. The elected representative needs to be well informed in order to ensure that procedures are aligned with the provisions of the "Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act" (MMC). The Act which came into force in 1888 and has been amended from time to time states the duties of the Municipal Corporation, provisions to accomplish them and rules for their implementation.

It is in this context that Praja conducts workshops for councillor and brought out three handbooks on the working of the corporation and roles of the councillors. Councillors have shown tremendous enthusiasm in participating in the workshops and have also been referring to the handbooks and/or have been seeking assistance from various domain experts.

"Grass root democracy is all about citizens (individually and collectively), their elected representatives, the institutional mechanism of governance and the bureaucracy working together in a decentralised, accountable, participative and transparent manner." Mr. DM Sukhtankar, Former Municipal Commissioner, Mumbai and former Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra, in the introduction to Praja's Mumbai Municipal Councillor Handbook, Volume III

**COUNCILLORS FEEDBACK**  
 "It is a good initiative as issues in governance can only be solved in collaboration with councillors to exchange plausible ideas towards finding solutions for citizen's issues. More such sessions are required to analyse issues such as Development Plan etc."

Kindly check our July'13 Newsletter to know more about the STATE of HEALTH of MUMBAI

**Praja's Councillor Handbooks**  
 To lodge a Civic complaint (Eg. Road Works, Municipal School, Municipal Dispensary, SWM and others). Please log on to [www.mcgm.gov.in](http://www.mcgm.gov.in) and file your complaint in option given under 'Complaint' tab in the menu or You may Call 1916 and register your complaint.

**Vol. 1: Overview of Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888**  
**Vol. 2: Corporation Procedure, Rules Municipal Budgeting, and Development Plans**  
**Vol. 3: MCGM Departments: Functions**

To support Praja Foundation you can write a cheque in the name of "Praja Foundation" and post it to the address given below, with a summary of your memo, email ID, contact details so that we can send you regular feedback and an 80G certificate for tax exemption.

You can reach us at:  
**Praja Foundation**  
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 1113, Horniman Circle East,  
 Mumbai 400 023, Phone: 022 - 42532729  
 Website: [www.praja.org](http://www.praja.org)  
 Email: [info@praia.org](mailto:info@praia.org)

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### 3. Workshop for the Elected Representatives on 'The Proposed Clinical Establishment Act 2010'



Praja organised a workshop on the 'The Proposed Clinical Establishment Act 2010' in the month of November 2013. The objective of the workshop was to discuss and understand various viewpoints on the proposed Clinical Establishment Act. Experts from the field of health were invited to present different views

related to the Act. The workshop was attended by MLA's, health committee members and party heads of MCGM at the Press Club. A lot of quality questions were asked by the participants, which helped them to get a clearer picture about the act.

### 4. Education Round Table:



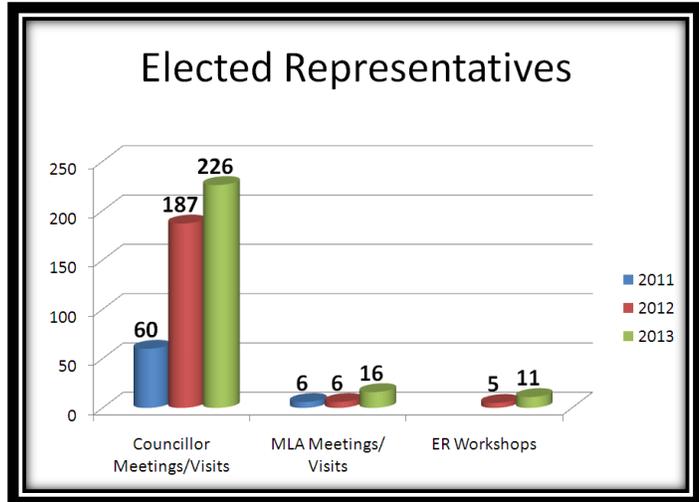
In collaboration with the Education Committee Chairperson Mr. M.R. Kotak, we arranged a round table on Education at the MCGM auditorium where we had invited different NGOs and Experts from the field of Education and representatives from the Political

parties, Councillors, Administration and the Education department head (EO) along with many teachers, beat officers and headmasters. The Round Table was the first step towards an open discussion between different stakeholders. We plan to organise a follow up meeting to deliberate on the points which were discussed at this Round Table Conference.

## V. Outreach and Communication

### 1. Elected Representative Meetings

As our Project is ER Centric; we meet Councillors and MLAs on a regular basis. Sometimes we are also invited by them for an understanding of our data or issues faced by the Citizens. As a strategy this year we had focused on meeting ward committee chairpersons to improve the functioning of the ward committees, the most important creation of the 74<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution if these committees become active, we will really see grassroots democracy in action.



### 2. Workshops for Councillors:



MCGM has multiple departments and committees, each having their own set of rules and regulations enough to confuse an Elected Representative. As a result, most councillors are silent observers of proceedings or seek guidance from their colleagues and administration executives. They have little understanding of their responsibilities and are unaware of how to effectively use their powers. For this reason,

Praja has been organising workshops for Municipal Councillors on various related topics such as General Issues on Budget, Corporation Procedure Rules and Regulation (CPR), '66A' and 'Point of Order'.

### 3. Praja's Interaction with Media:

Throughout the year, Praja communicated with the media for various projects. For the launch of our White papers and Report Cards, we use the media as a tool to reach out to the citizens. During our launches, media covers our report findings widely.



Apart from this, media also contacts us various times in order to get data from us. For the media, Praja has now become a one point source for authenticated, non-partisan information on Civic, Crime, Education and Health issues in the city and information on the role of the Elected Representatives in solving these issues. During the year there have been number of instances when not only did the media source information directly from Praja but also quoted our research in various media reports. Journalists have now routinely started calling us to check the authenticity of statements made by the administration and to understand the opinion of Praja on certain issues.

### 4. Praja's Interaction with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs):

During the year, we have been associated with various NGOs and CSO's in order to share our views and opinions. Like the previous year, we continue our partnership with Healix Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health for Praja's Health issues reports. Janvani, from Pune is one of the organizations who have reached us to replicate the Report card for the councillors in their cities. CCS requested our participation in their I-Policy program held in Delhi. Haiyya and Blue Ribbon movement are also working closely with us for our Praja Katta project. We have also interacted with the Observer Research Foundation, Mumbai for our health based issues and Pratham was with Praja for the Education Round Table in 2013. Apart from this, we have also conducted sessions with the stakeholders of various NGO's.

## 5. Interaction with the Administration:

The team had meetings on several occasions with different key officials including the Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai and his deputies, Principal Secretary to the CM and many other officials to share the analysis done by Praja. The administration at various levels right from the Municipal Commissioner, Chief Secretary, Police Commissioner to the Ward Officers, Police Inspectors all are not only aware of Praja as an organisation which monitors the state of the city but also someone who dialogues with the key stakeholders to create solutions for better governance. After the launch of our White Papers, we meet relevant people from the administration in order to share our findings.

## 6. Praja Katta :

Later in the year, Praja launched a project called Praja Katta, with the aim to promote active citizenship and thought leadership amongst youth. Under the project, workshops and discussions were facilitated with college students to understand issues such as Right to Information Act, Functioning of Mumbai Municipal Corporation and Roles of different elected representatives. Also the students were encouraged to take 'live' projects to better understand



governance such as the complaint management system of the corporation. We have had on-going programmes with Ruia College, M.D. College Siddharth College and Chetna College in the city during this period. Nirmala Niketan college, SNTD and TISS placed their MSW student in good numbers. Who was a year long placement student who

helped Praja in various projects. In total 14 session/ workshop was taken in different colleges. Throughout the year 21 Volunteers / Interns worked with Praja on long term basis.

## VI. Impact Stories 2013

- a. **Capacity Building for Municipal Councillors:** Since the year 2012, Praja has been organising capacity building workshops for Councillors. The trainings help the councillors to get a clearer picture of the functioning of MCGM, which further helps them in performing their roles effectively.

This year, Praja organized several such trainings, with a special focus on the General Issues on the Budget with emphasis on proposing ward works in the upcoming Budget 2014-15. Through these workshops, Praja reached out to all the 17 ward committees of Mumbai. As per the Councillors, Praja's trainings provided them with an opportunity to understand Municipal Budget in a simple and non-complicated manner and also helped them to solve their practical issues relating to proposing budgetary items and understanding the budget.

- b. **Praja's landmark judgements in the year 2013:** This year, Praja saw a lot of resistance from the administration to provide us the data in some areas. This indicates that the administration has now started to fear Praja's report which highlights the inconsistency in the system and hence show resistance to provide us the data. However, we took a strict stand on this and went for 1<sup>st</sup> appeals as well as state appeals in order to ensure that the administration gives us the data. Some of the landmark judgements have been listed below:

- i. In a landmark order Praja team has managed to get the State Chief Information Commissioner to get Mumbai Corporation to upload details of details of Corporator fund on the BMC website.
- ii. Praja team got the State RTI Chief Commissioner to change the Appellant authority for Corporator funds from executive engineers (who are departmental heads and hence cover their juniors for noncompliance) to the more responsive assistant municipal commissioner (who are more neutral)

This year, Praja even went to court to fight against the writ petition filed by the police department in response to our RTI application seeking a copy of the Police Manual from the said department. The case is under hearing right now and the judgement will be passed soon.

- c. **Response from the administration on our white papers:** This year, the administration reacted aggressively to our reports. For e.g. The additional

Municipal Commissioner of MCGM, Manisha Mhaisker, after the release of our White Paper on Health which highlighted the discrepancy of the MCGM in maintaining data related to death causes of Malaria, issued a statement in the press claiming that the cause of death mentioned in the death certificates are not the exact cause of death and that they were going to contact the state government in order to amend the Registration of Birth and Death Act to include a disclaimer in the death certificates to indicate that it cannot be used as a scientific document.

- d. **Strengthen Ward Committee:** When Praja team met the ward committee chairpersons of 17 ward committees and explained them how they can use monthly civic data to solve civic complaints of the citizens in their constituency and raise issues in the ward committees meetings. Which is a step towards strengthening ward committees; almost all of them were convinced with the idea and assured Praja that they will start using it at immediate basis. Few councillors even requested Praja to brief the admin to explain them how the civic data should be provided to ER in their particular ward.

## VII. PRAJA TEAM

### Board of Trustees and Advisors to Praja

<b>Nitai Mehta</b> Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation; Entrepreneur	<b>Sumangali Gada</b> Founder Trustee, Praja Foundation; Entrepreneur
<b>Anuj Bhagwati</b> Trustee, Praja Foundation; Entrepreneur	<b>Vivek Asrani</b> Trustee, Praja Foundation; Entrepreneur
<b>Jamal Mecklai</b> Trustee, Praja Foundation; Foreign Exchange Consultant	<b>Iris Madeira</b> Education Consultant, Board of Advisor's Centre for Civil Society, Trustee, Praja Foundation
<b>Rajan Mehra</b> Entrepreneur	<b>Vinay Sanghi</b> Entrepreneur
<b>Sonali Shahpurwala</b> Banker	<b>Juju Basu</b> Advertising Professional
<b>Shekhar Ghosh</b> PR Advisor, Praja Foundation	

### Praja Team

<b>Milind Mhaske</b> Project Director	<b>Priyanka Sharma</b> Project Manager
<b>Balwant Kirar</b> Project Co-ordinator	<b>Dakshata Bhosale</b> Data Entry Operator
<b>Devank Gurav</b> Data Entry Operator	<b>Diksha Redkar</b> Sr. Data Entry Operator
<b>Dilip Tambe</b> Chief Translator	<b>Eknath Pawar</b> Sr. Data Collection officer
<b>Harshada Gundaye</b> Data Entry Operator	<b>Kaustubh Gharat</b> Project Co-ordinator
<b>Nilam Mirashi</b> Jr. Data Analyst	<b>Pramod Mali</b> Data Collection officer
<b>Shraddha Parab</b> Data Checker	<b>Sadiqa Bagdadi</b> Admin & Accountant
<b>Swapneel Thakur</b> Data Checker	<b>Shreya Salvi</b> Data Checker
<b>Vipul Gharat</b> Data Administrator	<b>Sweta Singh</b> Jr. Project Officer