



# URBAN GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Transforming Urban Governance

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**PRAJA**.ORG  
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK



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## Praja's intervention in Srinagar



On 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022, Srinagar Municipal Corporation and Praja Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the vision to improve urban governance in Srinagar where Praja will act as an advisory member to SMC. The outcomes of the collaboration will involve sharing of existing data resources, conducting consultations to map perceptions across stakeholder groups and developing a plan of action towards ***'Empowering citizen participation through enhanced e-governance platform'*** and ***'Capacity Building Programmes for SMC and citizens (Youth) of Srinagar'***, creation of a defined communication channel to receive and coordinate inputs between parties and make necessary improvisations to achieved desired outputs as stated in the plan of action, and incorporate consultations with varied stakeholders at regular phases of the project to receive needful suggestions and feedback.

Urban governance in Srinagar is going through a revolutionary transition with the implementation of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 (74<sup>th</sup> CAA, 1992), in the recent past. Several reforms have been introduced by the Government of Union Territory (UT) of Jammu & Kashmir to enhance urban governance in the cities of the UT.

Noting this transition, Praja Foundation in collaboration with Srinagar Municipal Corporation had conducted a comprehensive study to map the status of implementation of the 74<sup>th</sup> CAA and the levers and barriers of various facets of the urban governance system in practice in Srinagar. This involved interviews and discussions with

Mayor, Commissioner, Councillors of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), civil society representatives and, ward visits to capture the ground situation along with interaction with citizens.

Praja in collaboration with SMC have planned to undertake specific programme interventions to strengthen urban governance in Srinagar:

1. **Empowering citizen participation through an enhanced e-Governance platform:** Praja will empower citizens by creating an e-governance platform, which will help **citizens to know what their city governments are doing and enable them to communicate their demands effectively**. The platform will promote a **sybiotic relationship between the Government, ERs and Citizens**, where all three will act both as service providers as well as service seekers, depending on circumstances.

SMC has an **OBPS – Online Building Permission System**. After a citizen submits an application, it goes through relevant SMC departments to add information. Finally, the approval comes under the ambit of the Joint Commissioner (Planning). The OBPS has been made completely functional since August 2021.

Since 2017, Srinagar had participated in the Smart City Project. The city has launched its first app, **mySrinagar**. E-Governance is being further enhanced through the **Programme Management System (PMS) with a dashboard for the Commissioner and the Councillors** which was launched in December 2021. The PMS is a one-of-a-kind system where the performance of the corporation can be tracked and monitored. Since monitoring is key to effective functioning of any workspace, the PMS will be extremely helpful in enhancing transparency, accountability and coordination within the corporation. Praja has been acting as an advisory member for preparing the PMS.

A Phase II has also been started where Praja and SMC has joined hands to include the following in the existing mechanisms of its e-governance intervention:

- Citizen grievance redressal mechanism
- Citizens' needs and wants
- Feedback system

2. **Capacity building of city elected representatives, administration, and youth:**

- i. **Elected Representatives and Administrators:**

Praja has conducted an **expectation setting workshop** with selected elected representatives on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022 to design need-based capacity building workshops for city elected representatives in Srinagar. An interactive session was organised where a questionnaire was provided to the ERs through which they expressed their requirements in the training/workshop sessions. The workshop was attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Srinagar along with the senior councillors. All the participants were very interactive where they suggested to include sessions on funds, functions and functionaries of SMC, duties and responsibilities of councillors, etc. Based on the suggestions received from the councillors in the expectation setting workshop, Praja has designed a **Councillor Workshop** module which is being held at Srinagar on 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The module has been divided over three days with sessions consisting of understanding the **functioning of committees, importance of deliberation, devices of deliberation, understanding departments of SMC**, etc.

Praja will conduct more such need-based capacity building workshops and training programmes for 'city elected representatives' **to improve the quality of deliberations** and, for 'city administrators' **to enhance administrative capacity**. All of the above will form the foundation towards improved deliberations, administrative functioning, and service delivery in cities.

- **Property taxation systems** with best case examples
- **Municipal budgeting processes**.

- Urban Governance Reforms required in the country with best case examples.

ii. **Citizens (Youth)**

Internships/Fellowships are also be planned to **engage the 'youth' with the city government**, wherein the city government will **receive research & data support**, and the youth will gain substantial understanding on the functioning of city government and participate in city governance processes.

The first cohort is being planned where fellows will be carefully chosen, through a structured selection process. These fellows will then be divided into pairs of two and each pair will be allotted specific wards to work on, with local elected representatives of Srinagar for a period of 10 to 12 months after rigorous trainings by Praja.

**Important Links:**

Srinagar Municipal Corporation Website (<https://www.smcsrinagar.in/>)

Jammu & Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000

([https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/9595/1/municipal\\_corporation\\_act%2C\\_2000.pdf](https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/9595/1/municipal_corporation_act%2C_2000.pdf))

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We would like to know your views and feedback based on the above information shared. Feel free to reach us at [urbandialogue@praja.org](mailto:urbandialogue@praja.org)

Kind Regards,



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