



Annual Report | **2024-2025**

Praja's Vision, Mission, and Guiding principles



To improve quality of urban life,
Praja has adopted a three pronged approach:

Vision

Improved quality of urban life
by making democracy work

Mission

Praja seeks to transform urban governance by



Empowering
local elected
representatives



Making
governments
accountable
& transparent



Increasing
participation
of citizens in local
governance
matters

Guiding Principles

Data-driven

Non-partisan

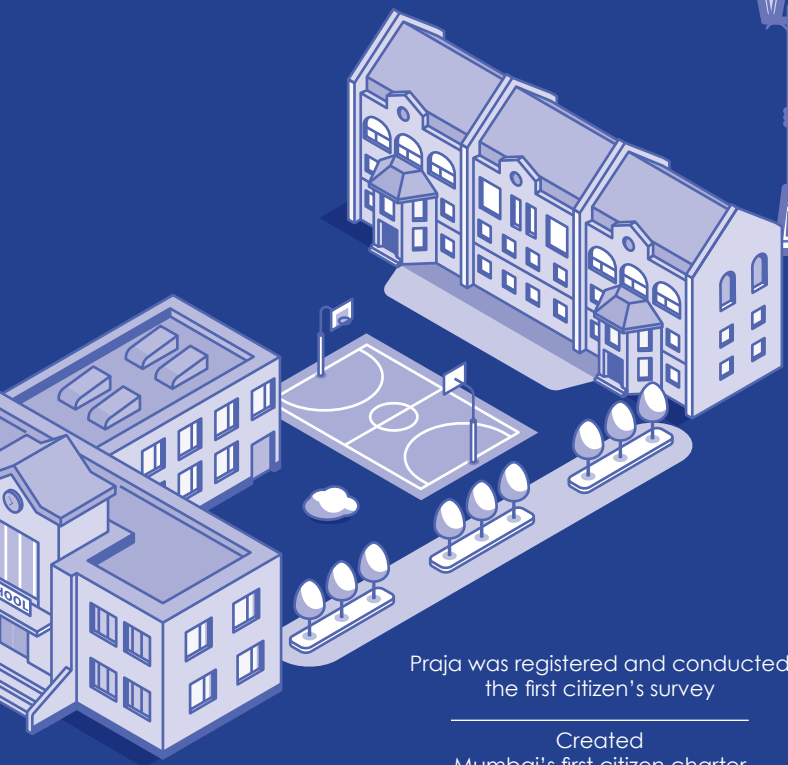
Collaborative

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1. Praja at a Glance



Praja was registered and conducted the first citizen's survey

Created
Mumbai's first citizen charter
in collaboration with BMC

01

Realised the need to engage
with governance in order
to improve quality of life of
citizens through a systemic and
sustainable approach

Founding members of
Praja adopt a
school in Mumbai

1993

Inception of Praja to
enable accountable
governance

1997

1999

2003

Built BMC's
citizen's grievance
redressal mechanism
and conducted
complaint audits in
the ensuing years

Published and
distributed 2 lakh copies
of Mumbai Citizen's
Handbook to demystify
governance

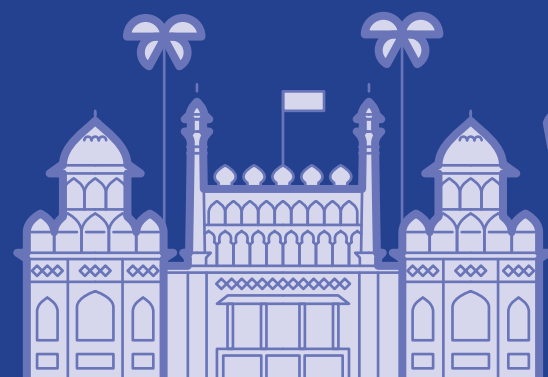
2005

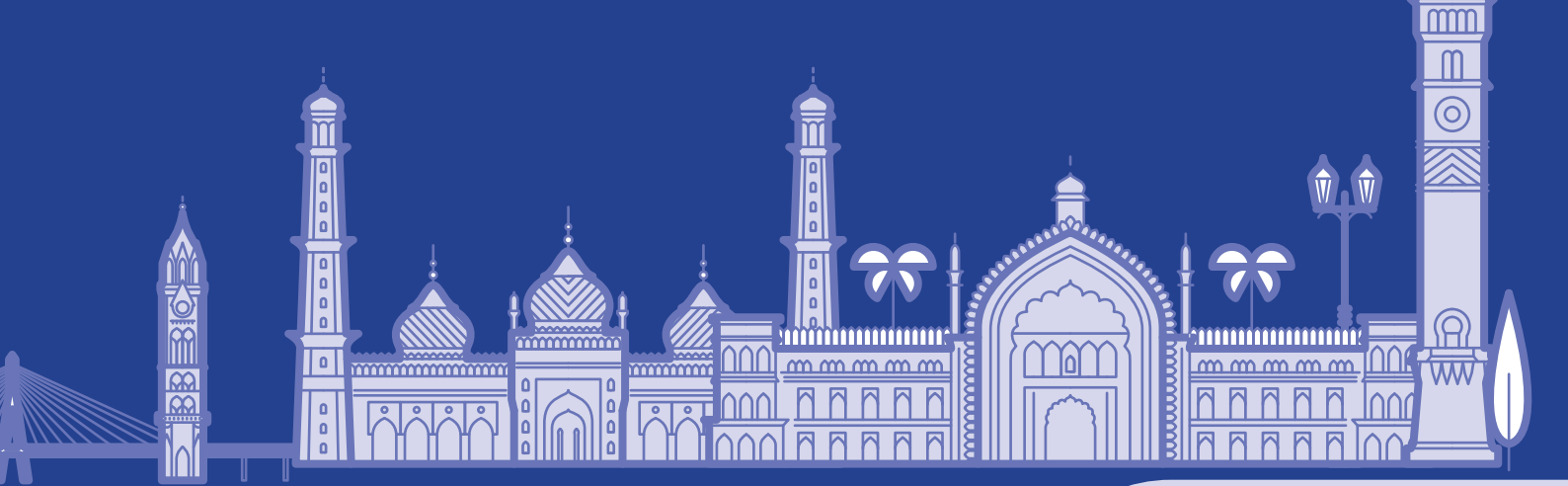
Undertook interventions,
such as: Praja Dialogue,
CityScan, Councillor Hand-
book publications and
Annual Report Cards eval-
uating the performance
of MLAs and Councillors
representing Mumbai

2008-12

02

Focused on creating tools of
good governance with BMC





Initiated an project to improve city governance structures in India

2017

Praja started its operations in Delhi and released the first Handbook to orient Delhi councillors on acts, devices and functioning of the corporation

2014

Initiating Urban Governance Index 2.0, Started operations in Uttar Pradesh to strengthen urban governance in the state

2023

Launched the Urban Governance Index

2020

Launched 2nd Edition of Urban Governance Index along with urban governance reports on Municipal Finance and Town Planning

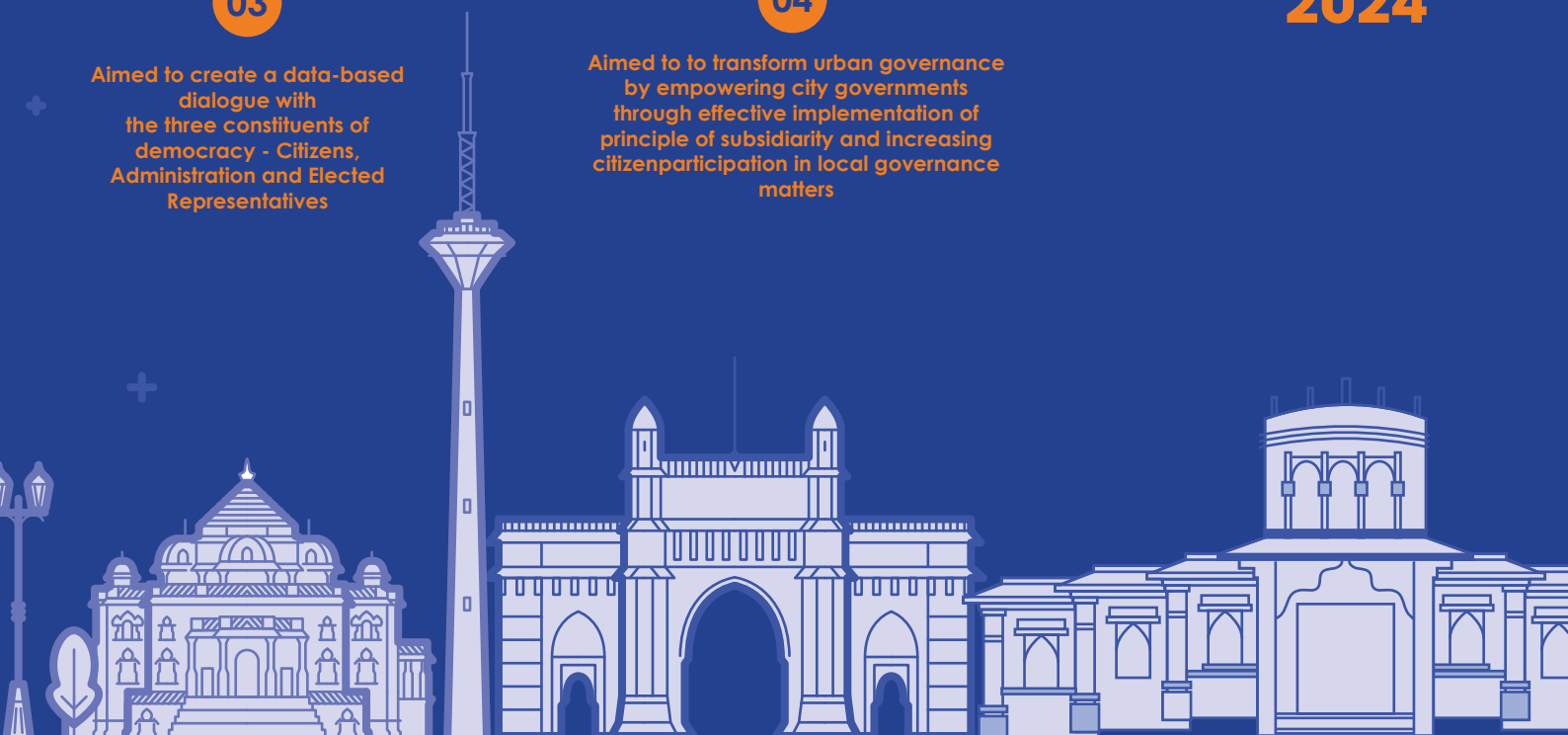
2024

03

Aimed to create a data-based dialogue with the three constituents of democracy - Citizens, Administration and Elected Representatives

04

Aimed to to transform urban governance by empowering city governments through effective implementation of principle of subsidiarity and increasing citizen participation in local governance matters



2. Praja in Numbers



Praja's network across geographies:

Research:

43 cities
across 28 States and 3 Union Territories

Strategic Partnerships:

States and Union Territories: 3 - Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi

Cities: 6 - Mumbai, Vasai Virar, Lucknow, Kanpur, Delhi, Gurugram

Colleges: 5



Research Reports

- Urban Governance Index 2.0
- Fiscal Empowerment of City Governments Report 2024
- Spatial Planning Index 2024 (In partnership with UDRI)
- Strategic Framework to Strengthen Municipal Finance of Indian Cities: Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Guwahati, Raipur
- Report Cards assessing performance of Elected Representatives: Mumbai, Delhi
- Whitepapers monitoring public service delivery at city-level: Civic: Mumbai, Delhi; Health: Mumbai

Capacity Building Workshops:

01

Administration

102

Officials participated

14

Elected
Representatives
(ERs)

368

ERs
participated

12

Resident Welfare
Associations
(RWAs) and CSOs

237

Citizens participated

47

Colleges

2,669

Youth participated

Consultations:

05

City level
consultations

100

Participants

01

National level
consultations

150

Participants

Advisory Meetings:

964

Elected
Representatives (ER)

124

Civil Society
Organisations (CSOs)

611

Administrative
Officers

680

Colleges

271

Issues Raised by Elected Representatives
in their respective forums based on
Praja's work

Youth Engagement

4,431

Youth Engaged

22,155

Youth Reached

Media and Citizen Engagement

318

News
Coverage

21,193

Website
Visitors

901

Instagram
Followers

8,850

LinkedIn
Followers

3,644

Facebook
Followers

1,589

Twitter
Followers

3. From the Founder's Desk



Nitai Mehta

Founder and Managing Trustee,
Praja Foundation

“

For the past 27 years, Praja has been at the forefront of urban governance reforms, working towards **decentralisation, financial empowerment of cities, and enhanced civic participation** in urban affairs. As India's cities continue to grow, so does the pressure to ensure they remain **inclusive, accountable, and responsive** to the needs of every citizen. Over time, we have witnessed encouraging shifts such as a greater recognition of municipal governance issues and a growing discourse around strengthening local bodies. However, critical challenges persist.

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2024 was a turning point; the launch of the Urban Governance Index (UGI) 2.0, alongside our reports on Municipal Finance and Spatial Planning, showcase our increasing resolve to **understand systemic gaps in urban governance and lay the groundwork for reform**. These tools continue to serve as roadmaps for empowering city governments.

But data alone cannot drive change. It takes visionary leadership to translate insights into impactful actions. Accordingly, our focus in the coming years will be on engineering a strong pipeline of **urban governance leaders**: local, state, and national; who can put this knowledge into practice. Whether it's equipping leaders with knowledge, facilitating peer networks, or supporting data-driven decision-making, we are investing in the people who will shape India's urban future.

To deepen our impact, we have identified three key geographies: **Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Assam**; these will serve as focal points for our current and future work. Each of these regions presents distinct urbanisation patterns, but together, they hold immense significance in India's urban landscape. Cities across these regions face similar challenges like insufficient devolution of powers, limited financial autonomy, and inadequate citizen participation in local decision-making. Without timely interventions to address these issues, municipal bodies will struggle to meet the needs of their rapidly growing populations.

At Praja, our goal is to work alongside these state and city governments to identify governance bottlenecks and unlock opportunities for systemic reform. The knowledge and practices developed through these interventions will serve as scalable, replicable models for cities across the country. By showcasing what empowered, accountable, and well-resourced city governments can achieve, we aim to influence policy frameworks that will scale these successes nationally.

Ultimately, our mission is rooted in a simple but powerful belief: that **urban governance is foundational to democracy**. Empowered cities are not just better managed, they are more just, more inclusive, and more attuned to the everyday realities of the people that inhabit them.

The road to reimagining urban futures in India is long, but it is also full of promise. Through collective action, I believe we can build the cities our democracy deserves.

4. From the CEO's Desk



Milind Mhaske
CEO
Praja Foundation

Our research outputs continued to inform and shape discourse across policymakers and civil society. The **Urban Governance Index 2.0**, developed through rigorous research on critical themes relevant to urban governance in **31 cities across 28 states and 3 union territories**, identified gaps and opportunities in empowering cities and urban governance systems. Our report on **Municipal Finance** evaluated the fiscal health of 46 cities and offered evidence-based insights to strengthen local financial autonomy. We also launched the **Spatial Planning Index**, our first structured effort to benchmark spatial planning frameworks at regional and local levels. These reports serve as critical documents that support Elected Representatives, administrators, and urban leaders in making informed decisions.

The National Urban convention, attended by over **150 participants from 22 states**, facilitated a platform for dialogue on participatory planning, fiscal decentralisation, and service delivery improvements.

Our Councillor Training Programme has expanded across multiple states, equipping Elected Representatives with core competencies in governance, financial literacy, and technical expertise. We have also conducted state-level case study programmes and stakeholder consultations; such as our work with GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), to weave together a consortium of empowered urban leaders.

Our strategic focus on strengthening the financial independence of city governments in Uttar Pradesh enabled the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies to identify new revenue streams projected to generate an additional INR 1,700 crore. This will improve

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This year marked a monumental shift in Praja's journey, accelerating our efforts towards **transforming urban governance** through **systemic reforms, data-driven advocacy, strategic capacity building, and citizen engagement**. Our work has expanded in scale, geography, and depth this year. Every intervention has been rooted in the pursuit of **accountable, transparent, and responsive** urban governance as we are still deeply committed to the belief that **empowered local governments are the bedrock of an effective democracy**.

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financial stability and service delivery for millions of urban residents in India's most populous state.

Increased citizen participation, a cornerstone of democratic governance, remains central to our mission. The National Youth Festival, Prajatantra 2024, marked a milestone in civic engagement, drawing over 2,500 youth from across all 28 states and 6 union territories. Our Fellowship Programme, now active in Mumbai, Delhi, Lucknow, and Gurugram, has evolved into a robust leadership pipeline.

Praja's vision for 2030 is clear: **to establish thought leadership in urban governance and drive systemic reform by engaging with political leaders, government officials, and citizens.**

Over the next five years, we will work across all three tiers of governance:

- Advocating reforms at the Union level,
- Bring systemic policy shifts at the State level, with a special focus on Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Assam,
- Building the capacity of over 1,000 political and government leaders and 15,000+ youth leaders to lead and implement these reforms across Indian cities.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to our supporters for their unwavering faith in our initiatives. I would also like to thank the entire Praja team including our young fellows and interns for their dedication towards the collective vision. Your faith in our mission fuels our drive to make Indian cities not just better governed, but truly democratic.

5. Thought Leadership

In line with Praja Foundation's vision to establish thought leadership among urban stakeholders by 2030, the year 2024–25 was a significant turning point in our engagement with national policymaking and strategic platforms for urban reforms.

At the Chintan Shivir 2024, organised by MoHUA under the theme **“Reimagining Urban Governance and Spaces,”** Praja was invited to contribute to the working group developing strategies for India's evolving urban landscape. The event convened Principal Secretaries and Municipal Commissioners from across the country, underlining Praja's position as a credible partner in national reform dialogues.

In a significant acknowledgement of our work, multiple political parties including the Indian National Congress, incorporated Praja's recommendations on **full implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment and Empowerment of the Mayor in their 2024 Lok Sabha election manifestos.** This milestone affirms Praja's role in influencing long-term structural reforms through evidence-based advocacy.

Regionally, Praja Foundation participated in the **Parvat Manthan Regional Conclave 2024**, organised by the National Institute of Urban Affairs, where we presented strategies to strengthen municipal finance and financial management in hill towns and cities of the Indian Himalayan Region. The conclave brought together experts to discuss themes such as climate-sensitive waste strategies, sustainable finance, and integrated water resource management, further embedding Praja's expertise in cross-cutting issues of governance and sustainability.

Praja was invited by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to be a part of four out of five national **Working Groups on Urban Governance Reforms**—focusing on political reforms, administrative reforms, redefining the role of parastatals, and capacity building at the local level. These working groups are instrumental in shaping sustainable, incremental reforms that aim to strengthen city governments and deepen democratic accountability across India.

Praja's growing network engagements were also bolstered through active participation in the U-CAN Network, a collaborative consortium working on a unified agenda for urban development in India. Additionally, at the **Asia Liberty Forum 2024** hosted by the Atlas Network, Praja presented its work on strengthening municipal finance as a foundation for participatory governance, engaging with a diverse community of civil society leaders from across Asia.

In recognition of our efforts, leaders such as Naveen Patnaik, former Chief Minister of Odisha, and Shri M. B. Rajesh, Kerala's Minister for Local Self Governments, acknowledged the relevance of Praja's Urban Governance Index (UGI) 2.0 in shaping urban policy.

Together, these engagements reaffirm Praja's growing influence as a thought leader in India's urban governance ecosystem—working collaboratively with government, civil society, and political leadership to push the agenda for empowered, transparent, and accountable city governments.



6. Empowering Local Elected Representatives

National Urban Convention 2024

Praja Foundation hosted the **National Urban convention** in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI).

The one-day convention brought together over **150 key stakeholders**, including **Elected Representatives, administrators, urban practitioners, and civil society leaders from 24 states across India**. The event served as a crucial platform to deliberate on much-needed reforms in urban governance and celebrate a shared commitment to democracy.

A key highlight of the convention was the launch of three landmark reports:

- **Urban Governance Index (UGI) 2.0**
- **Spatial Planning Index 2024**
- **Report on Fiscal Empowerment of City Governments**

These reports provide critical insights into the structural challenges and opportunities in strengthening city governments, ranging from participatory planning and financial devolution to transparency in municipal functioning.

A recurring concern discussed by the panellists was the inconsistent publication of municipal budgets. Discussions also touched upon the financial health of city governments, drawing attention to the Smart Cities Mission, challenges in property tax collection, and the urgent need for technology-enabled systems that can enable transparency in fiscal management and support efficient service delivery.

The convention reaffirmed Praja's long-standing belief: **Empowering the urban governance ecosystem is not merely a policy imperative; it is a democratic necessity. As our cities grow, so must our commitment to citizen-centric urban futures.**

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I am honoured to be a part of this conclave alongside several dignitaries who shared valuable insights on the future of Urban India's development. It was also a pleasure interacting with councillors from across the country. We are taking back something positive that we hope to implement in our state.

– **Vikramaditya Singh, Minister of Local Public Works & Urban Development, Government of Himachal Pradesh**

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Urban Governance Index 2.0

On 26th September 2024, Praja Foundation launched the second edition of the Urban Governance Index (UGI), a national, data-driven matrix for assessing and ranking the performance of Indian states in empowering urban governance structures, while also offering an in-depth analysis of the gaps and opportunities within India's urban governance ecosystem.

Over the past two years, the Praja team conducted extensive research across **31 cities spanning all 28 states and 3 union territories**, engaging with **2,213 key stakeholders**, including Elected Representatives, bureaucrats, urban planners, academics, civil society members, journalists, and policy experts.

The Index evaluates states on four core pillars that are critical to strengthening urban governance:

1. Empowered Elected Representatives and Legislative Structure
2. Empowered City Administration
3. Empowered Citizens
4. Fiscal Empowerment

These pillars are further divided into 13 sub-themes and comprise 42 measurable indicators in total.



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The Urban Governance Index provides insights to local self-government institutions for the way forward. Such reports help us understand where we can improve and what should be our policy priorities for urban governance.

– **M.B. Rajesh, Minister for Local Self Governments, Rural Development and Excise, State Government of Kerala**

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Scan to read the full report

Factoid table:

Indicator	Details
Top Performer	Kerala scored 59.31/100, securing the highest rank in UGI 2.0
Next Best Performers	Odisha – 55.10 Maharashtra – 52.40 Chhattisgarh – 51.31 Madhya Pradesh – 50.83
Lowest Performing States	Nagaland – 19.57 Manipur – 20.72 Meghalaya – 21.53
National Average Score	Across 28 States, 2 Union Territories, and the NCT of Delhi, the average UGI 2.0 score is 39.70/100
City Administration – Staffing Crisis	Patna has the highest percentage of vacant posts at 89%. Nine other cities (Ahmedabad, Gurugram, Shimla, Bhopal, Imphal, Aizawl, Amritsar, Greater Jaipur, and Kolkata) have over 40% vacancies.
Devolution of Functions	Only Maharashtra (Mumbai) has devolved 11 out of 18 functions listed under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution to city governments. However, these functions are increasingly managed by multiple agencies, diluting the authority of urban local bodies.

Report on Fiscal Empowerment of City Governments 2024

Praja Foundation, in collaboration with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), undertook a comprehensive study on the Fiscal Empowerment of City Governments. Anchored in the belief that empowered city governments are critical to effective urban governance, this study highlights the extent to which financial authority and autonomy have been devolved to the local level.

The study covers **43 cities across 28 states and 2 Union Territories**, tracked over a four-year period from **January 2021 to August 2024**. The analysis is based on an extensive review of **320 municipal budget** documents covering seven financial years (from 2017–18 to 2023–24).

The report focuses on four core themes that are central to fiscal decentralisation:

1. Devolution of Financial Powers
2. Municipal Income
3. Municipal Expenditure
4. Accounting Practices followed by City Governments

Through this data-driven framework, the report highlights the need for urgent policy reforms to ensure greater financial autonomy for urban local bodies (ULBs) and to improve the fiscal health of Indian cities.

Factoid table:

Indicator	Details
Lack of Authority to Introduce New Taxes	23 out of 43 cities do not have the independent authority to introduce taxes listed in their respective State Municipal Acts.
Budget Approval Powers	20 cities lack the authority to independently approve their municipal budgets.
No Devolution of Financial Powers	10 states (Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, J&K, Jharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim) have not devolved any of the three key financial powers to city governments.
Dependence on External Revenues	The average share of Own Source Revenue in total income for all 43 cities is just 34.72%, indicating a heavy reliance on grants and external funding.
Low Share of Tax Revenues	Tax revenue comprises only 18.05% of total municipal income.
Property Tax vs. Non-Tax Revenue	Property tax contributes 13.85%, which is lower than non-tax revenue at 16.93% of total income.
Transparency in Credit Ratings	Only one city (Raipur) has made its credit rating publicly available on its official website.
Gender-Inclusive Budgeting	Only nine cities (Visakhapatnam, Raipur, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Shimla, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Nagpur, and Asansol) publish gender-inclusive budgets.
Comprehensive Welfare Budgeting	Visakhapatnam is the only city that includes budgetary allocations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women, and Child Welfare in its municipal budget document.



Scan to read the full report

Spatial Planning Index 2024

The Spatial Planning Index 2024 was developed by the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI) in collaboration with Praja Foundation as a **benchmarking tool to evaluate and compare the status of spatial planning across Indian cities**. The Index assesses cities against a comprehensive set of indicators that reflect the presence and effectiveness of a decentralised planning framework, from the regional to the Ward level.

The report presents a detailed analysis of planning structures in **25 cities across 23 states and 2 union territories**. SPI is structured around five key themes, which are further divided into 15 sub-themes and measured through 45 actionable indicators. The framework equips state and local governments with critical insights to evaluate and strengthen their spatial planning systems in a context-specific and decentralised manner.

Factoid table:

Indicator	Details
Regional Plan Preparation	Only 15 out of 25 cities are currently preparing regional plans. Dehradun, Kolkata, and Shillong are doing so voluntarily, despite the lack of a legislative mandate.
Non-Compliance with State Mandates	Cities such as Hyderabad, Patna, Raipur, and Ranchi where regional plans are mandated by state legislation, have yet to initiate the planning process.
Devolution of Planning Functions	The devolution of spatial planning functions to urban local bodies (ULBs) remains limited to a few cities.



Institutionalising Capacity Building of Councillors

Praja Foundation has been actively working in multiple geographies to conduct capacity building of Elected Representatives and to institutionalise Councillor Capacity Building Programme in the State Administrative Training Institutes. Throughout the year, Praja has conducted capacity building workshops in Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Delhi.

The workshops are aimed at deepening their understanding of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, which provides the constitutional framework for decentralised urban governance. The sessions cover State Municipal Corporation Acts, the structure and functioning of municipal committees, and the roles and responsibilities of councillors, deliberation at the local level, and the municipal budgeting process.

These workshops not only built the capacities of Elected Representatives but also cultivated a spirit of collaboration and peer learning, laying the groundwork for stronger, more informed, and empowered Elected Representatives.

Uttar Pradesh:

Praja conducted two-day capacity-building workshops for Elected Representatives from the municipal corporations of Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Gorakhpur and Meerut. Over **200 councillors**, including **Mayors of Kanpur and Gorakhpur, Committee Chairpersons, and other elected officials**, actively participated in the workshops.

Praja is working with the Uttar Pradesh Urban Training and Research Institute (UTRI)–DULB to develop a dedicated training curriculum for Elected Representatives.



“

The workshop was excellent and provided me with valuable insights into various sections of the Nagar Nigam Act. It significantly enhanced my understanding and deepened my knowledge on important governance topics. The session was well-conducted, and the resource person was excellent. I plan to apply the sections and learnings from this session in future official correspondence and daily work.

– **Councillor, Kanpur Municipal Corporation**

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Delhi :

Praja Foundation's workshop in Delhi brought together councillors from across political parties and regions of Delhi, creating a platform for cross-party dialogue and collaborative learning.

Acknowledging the relevance and quality of the sessions, councillors expressed strong interest in deeper engagement and invited Praja to conduct similar workshops at the ward committee-level, across the city, indicating a growing demand for structured capacity-building in local governance.



“

The workshop was well-organised and informative, particularly on the budget process. It highlighted the importance of understanding the budget while preparing and tracking proposals. The sessions were helpful and relevant, and I would recommend organising such workshops regularly.

– **Councillor, Delhi Municipal Corporation**

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Assam:

The workshop began with an expectation-setting exercise, to understand their learning goals. Participants, particularly women councillors, showed keen interest in understanding their roles and rights under the GMC Act. There was an engaging exchange on best practices from other cities such as Mumbai, with a focus on enhancing deliberative capacities.

“

The workshop on the 74th CAA and the Guwahati Municipal Corporations Act, 1971, was very good and highly informative. The session was well-timed, and the resource person explained the concepts clearly and effectively. I found the session extremely helpful, and I look forward to applying this information precisely and elaborately in my work as a councillor.

– **Councillor, Guwahati Municipal Corporation.**

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Strategic Interventions

Strengthening Municipal Finance:

Praja conducted a study titled '*Strategic Framework to Strengthen Municipal Finance of Indian Cities (with cross-cutting theme on gender and climate responsiveness)*' in collaboration with GIZ India. The study was complemented by consultations in four cities: Bengaluru, Guwahati, Ahmedabad, and Raipur; providing a platform for dialogue among Elected Representatives, administrative officials, and civil society organisations. The consultations focused on understanding municipal finance trends at the city-level and identifying areas for reforms. By bringing key stakeholders together, the intervention empowered elected leaders with data-driven insights and enabled informed participation for better fiscal governance.

The study culminated in a report on '*Strategic Framework to Strengthen Municipal Finance of Indian Cities (with cross-cutting theme on gender and climate responsiveness)*' which is accepted and being implemented jointly with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



Driving Urban Climate Action Through Reforms and Capacity Building:

Urban areas are increasingly at the frontline of climate challenges, facing rising temperatures, extreme weather events, poor air quality, and the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. Rapid urbanisation, inadequate infrastructure, and fragmented governance have further intensified these risks, leaving cities ill-prepared to cope. There is an urgent need for strategic interventions that not only addresses these environmental stresses but also empowers city governments to implement climate-responsive solutions. Praja recognises this gap and works to enable systemic reforms and build the capacity of city governments to respond effectively and sustainably to the growing climate crisis.

- **Research study of city characteristics and climate vulnerabilities of 6 cities in Maharashtra**

Praja conducted a study in collaboration with the HT Parekh Foundation in cities of Thane, Navi Mumbai, Pimpri-Chinchwad (PCMC), Nashik, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Nagpur in Maharashtra to map city profile, conduct stakeholder analysis, map climate initiatives amongst other details.



Factoid:

City	Initiatives
Pune	PMC, along with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has chalked out a strategy, Climate Action Plan, to make the city “carbon positive” and remove more carbon from the atmosphere than it emits by 2050.
Nashik	Urban greening with vertical gardens is to be taken up under Nashik Climate Action Plan.
Navi - Mumbai	The municipal corporation is actively developing mini urban forests using Miyawaki technique along with the annual plantation activities. The Miyawaki technique uses native plants to create forests in urban areas. Navi Mumbai has 2,18,400 native tree species.
Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar	In January 2022, CSMC, Aurangabad Municipal Smart City Development Corporation Limited along with Ecosattva and Varroc Industries started working together on the Kham River to restore and rejuvenate the water body.

Implementation of Gurugram Climate Action Plan

Praja Foundation initiated a strategic implementation of the Gurugram Climate Action Plan (GCAP). This initiative aims to develop a structured, actionable roadmap for key climate interventions, and transform Gurugram into a more sustainable and climate-resilient city. Praja is also closely collaborating with the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, and other key stakeholders, to ensure a coordinated approach.

At the heart of the programme is the development of a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together Elected Representatives, government agencies, climate experts, and civil society to collectively strategise on climate interventions. In addition to policy execution, Praja is focusing on capacity building, including engaging with implementing agencies and citizens, particularly the youth, to enhance their understanding of GCAP and their role in driving sustainable urban change. Through collaborative action and community participation, this initiative sets the foundation for a greener, more climate-resilient Gurugram.

MLA Report Cards:

The 2024 edition of Praja Foundation's *MLA Report Card* for Mumbai and Delhi marked the final evaluation of legislators before the conclusion of their current term. A flagship initiative by Praja, the report reinforces the principles of transparency and accountability by offering an objective, data-driven assessment of the performance of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

In this year's report, we broadened the scope to include:

- A consolidated performance review of MLAs who have served for a minimum of three years;
- An evaluation of the overall productivity of the Maharashtra State Assembly, assessed up to the 2024 Budget Session; and
- An assessment of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, evaluated until April 2023.

The findings highlight the strengths and shortcomings of the outgoing term using key indicators such as attendance, participation in debates, legislative initiatives, and constituency focus. The report empowers citizens with critical insights to make informed electoral decisions. It also underlines the continuing need for committed, responsive, and policy-oriented leadership. Praja Foundation is actively engaging with newly Elected Representatives to promote a culture of productive legislative performance and citizen-centric governance.



7. Making Governments Accountable & Transparent

Research and Advisory Support: Urban Development Department, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh

Praja Foundation has consistently supported the Urban Development Department (UDD) in Uttar Pradesh with research and policy inputs, particularly in municipal finance. Focused efforts have been made to enhance the own source revenues (tax and non-tax) of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and discussions are underway to develop a tool for continuous monitoring of municipal finances across ULBs. Praja has also extended assistance for key initiatives such as the Capital Investment Scheme, Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF), State Urban Development Fund (SUDM), and the restructuring of the municipal cadre.

To further strengthen municipal revenue systems, Praja has supported the Principal Secretary, UDD, and various Municipal Corporations in conducting a detailed analysis of tax and non-tax revenue collections. This data-driven analysis informed strategic recommendations that contributed to a **34% increase in own source revenue in FY 2023–24, with collections** rising from INR 2,340 crore in 2022–23 to INR 3,137 crore in 2023–24.

The Directorate of Urban Local Bodies (DULB) also sought Praja's assistance in drafting a proposal for the "Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023–24" – Parts III and IV, and in designing a framework to monitor its implementation. **As a result, the Government of Uttar Pradesh received INR 200 crore as a 50-year soft loan from the Central Government.**

Additionally, Praja provided research support in drafting the Rules for Property Tax for 745 ULBs (Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats). Once these rules receive Cabinet approval, the revised property tax structure is projected to **yield an estimated increase of INR 500 crore** in municipal revenue.

Whitepaper on the Status of Civic Issues in Mumbai and Delhi

Praja Foundation's Whitepaper on the Status of Civic Issues in Mumbai and Delhi, 2024 presents a comprehensive analysis of key urban challenges, particularly related to water supply, sanitation, pollution, and grievance redressal. It reveals critical service delivery gaps that significantly affect the daily lives of urban residents.

Through civic data assessment, the report identifies systemic inefficiencies and underscores the need for better urban governance in urban infrastructure. It also recommends policy reforms, improved planning, and stronger accountability mechanisms. As rapid urbanisation continues to strain infrastructure, the whitepaper calls for urgent action to ensure safe drinking water, effective sanitation, and pollution control, making it a vital resource for policymakers, civic bodies, and engaged citizens.



Report on Civic Issues in Mumbai



Report on Civic Issues in Delhi

Whitepaper on the Status of Health Issues in Mumbai and Delhi, 2024

Praja Foundation's Whitepaper on the Status of Health Issues in Mumbai and Delhi highlights pressing urban health challenges, including the rising burden of lifestyle diseases, respiratory illnesses, and mortality trends. It also points to systemic issues such as a shortage of healthcare personnel and a fragmented Healthcare Management Information System (HMIS).

The reports call for streamlined healthcare management, improved disease surveillance, and better resource allocation. It underscores the urgency of investing in preventive healthcare, robust infrastructure, and data-driven policymaking to ensure efficient and accessible urban health systems.



Mumbai Debate:

In the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, Praja Foundation, in collaboration with The Free Press Journal and Mumbai Press Club, organised the Mumbai Debate—a public forum where Lok Sabha candidates from Mumbai shared their vision for the city and the nation. This debate provided an open platform for direct engagement between citizens and political leaders, fostering meaningful discussions on key urban issues such as governance, infrastructure, public services, and sustainability. It encouraged transparency and accountability by allowing voters to hear candidates' perspectives and question them on their commitments.



Vasai-Virar training:

Praja Foundation, in collaboration with WINGS NGO, conducted a two-day capacity-building workshop for officials of Vasai-Virar City Municipal Corporation (VVCMC) to enhance their understanding of municipal finance and revenue generation. The sessions covered key aspects of the Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act, budgeting processes, revenue strategies, and accounting practices. Officials engaged with best practices from across India and discussed the potential of the National Municipal Accounting Manual (NMAM) to improve transparency, efficiency, and service delivery.

This workshop marks a significant step in building the financial capacity of VVCMC and promoting data-informed, efficient urban governance.



“

I found the training session to be well-timed and efficiently conducted. The resource person was knowledgeable and presented the content in a clear and engaging manner. Overall, the workshop was informative and beneficial.

- **Bristen Rodrigues, Clerk, Accounts Department**

”

8. Increasing Citizen Participation in Local Governance Matters

To develop youth into active citizens, comprehensive engagement with a diverse range of social actors, including academic institutions, community-level organisations, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), is needed. These actors provide logistical and knowledge support for programme activities. Engaging academic institutions and CSOs enables leveraging their educational resources. These stakeholders, drawn from across India, are instrumental in scaling the programme to a national level, ensuring a broad and inclusive impact. Praja extensively facilitates capacity-building activities throughout the year where youth is empowered through experience-based learning about how to effectively use tools of governance and participate actively in the process.

Prajanubhav: Curriculum Based Governance Workshops

Prajanubhav is a series of governance workshops for college and university students, with the aim of providing the youth with valuable exposure and establishing a platform for constructive dialogue on city governance. The modules include three tiers of Governance in India and City Governance, status of Urban governance in India, Right to Information Act-2005 and Constitution and Citizens. Over 2,500 students have participated in the workshop and enabled to become active and aware citizens.



“

The workshop was informative and engaging, offering clear insights into governance structures. I especially appreciated the interactive sessions and learned how to file civic complaints and understand local administrative roles. It was a valuable experience that I hope to apply in daily life.

- Gayatri Shelare, SYBA (Political Science), R. J. College

”

Immersion Programme

Following the learning of active citizenship, an Immersion Program provides young students to gain practical exposure to governmental works and how they can engage with their government as well as Elected Representatives.

In the last year, over 120 youth interned with Praja gaining first-hand experience in civic issues. During their internship period, these interns regularly visited facilities of city governments such as Corporation Headquarters, Municipal Ward Offices, and Police Stations where they personally observed the workings of the offices and interacted with officials to collect data on civic issues of the city. Apart from these field visits, interns extensively studied and analysed civic data, Municipal Budgets, Acts, and other statutory documents.

Praja's Governance Fellowship gives a deeper and 360 degree understanding of urban governance to the youth. Last year, Praja launched the fellowship across Mumbai, Delhi, Lucknow and Gurugram. Total 28 fellows contributed over 16,000 hours towards urban governance. They played a key role in organising Praja's National Youth Festival.

The fellowship concluded with a closing ceremony where graduating fellows reflected on their journey and shared how they intend to carry forward their learnings to contribute meaningfully to urban governance and civic engagement.



“

The best part about this fellowship is that it's for those who genuinely want to create change—beyond just talking about it on social media. As an 18-year-old, I never imagined I'd get the chance to travel across the state and conduct such meaningful and impactful studies. This experience has been truly transformative.

- **Gargi Dave, Mumbai Governance Fellowship, Cohort 5**

”



“

My focus during the fellowship was on the empowerment of women councillors. I regularly engaged with them, driven by a simple yet crucial purpose: if women councillors don't raise their voices in General Body meetings, the intent of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act remains unfulfilled. This fellowship gave me the platform to support and strengthen their participation in governance.

- **Naman Pushkar, Delhi Elected Representatives Fellowship, Cohort 3**

”



“

The Lucknow Governance Fellowship has equipped me with invaluable skills, knowledge, and a strong network to drive positive change. I am deeply grateful to Praja Foundation for the opportunity to work across various sectors of Urban Local Bodies and to contribute meaningfully to the process of change-making.

- **Vaishnavi Mishra, Lucknow Governance Fellowship, Cohort 2**

”



National Urban
Youth Fellowship
Programme 2024

National Convening of Youth: Prajatantra 2024

Prajatantra is a national youth convention designed to engage young Indians in the ideas and processes of urban governance. Through immersive, role-based learning, participants simulate the functioning of city governments to collaboratively design solutions for urban challenges.

Building on the momentum of previous editions, we witnessed the most diverse and expansive participation yet in Prajatantra 2024. Over 2,500 youth from 102 cities and towns—ranging from metropolitan centres to small towns across 28 states and 7 union territories—registered for the programme. Participants represented 213 academic institutions and 6 civil society organisations working with youth. The cohort included a wide demographic spectrum, from high school graduates to mid-career students, and came from varied academic backgrounds including social sciences, engineering, media studies, architecture, medicine, and the humanities, which enabled vibrant peer learning.

Co-organised by Praja Foundation, the Urban Youth Unit of the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and UN-Habitat, Prajatantra continues to evolve into a robust ecosystem for youth-led engagement in urban democracy. The theme of Prajatantra 2024, “*Citizen Participation: Building Blocks of Democracy*,” emphasised the role of citizens as vital stakeholders in shaping local governance. The programme was structured around three pillars:

- Knowledge Sessions, where participants engaged with urban governance experts;

- Competitive Events, simulating the operations of fictional city governments;
- Field Engagement, where participants conducted real-world research and stakeholder interviews in their local communities.

The qualifying rounds and semi-finals were conducted virtually, while the Grand Finale was held in person in Lucknow, hosted at the premises of the Directorate of Urban Local Bodies, Government of Uttar Pradesh, which also served as the Governance Partner for the event. The top 110 participants, representing 22 states and 2 union territories, were selected to present their vision for participatory urban governance before a panel of experts.

The three-day finale featured both competitive and non-competitive activities, broadening participants' perspectives on active citizenship, democratic processes, and the role of local governments. Esteemed speakers and mentors—including Shri Amrit Abhijat, Principal Secretary, Urban Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh; Smt. Sanyukta Bhatia, former Mayor of Lucknow; and Ms. Parul Agarwala, Country Manager, UN-Habitat India—interacted with the participants and offered valuable insights.

The programme concluded with a guided visit to the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha, India's largest legislative assembly, giving participants a first-hand look at how legislative processes shape public policy and governance.

Prajatantra 2024 reaffirmed the importance of equipping youth with the knowledge, platforms, and confidence to be active participants in the democratic shaping of India's cities.

“

It is such a joy to see how participation and influence have grown over the years. This clearly shows that young people are eager for platforms where they can share their experiences and learn.

– **Parul Agarwala, Country Programme Manager, India, UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlements Programme)**

”

“

I would like to thank Praja Foundation for giving us the opportunity to participate in this amazing event. As a team, we learned the importance of cooperation, teamwork, and leadership through this competition.

– **Bemboy Salam, Participant from Manipur**

”

“

Praja Foundation has brought valuable intellectual stimulus to this space. The event is a commendable effort to enhance youth participation in civic engagement, and the knowledge sessions were truly insightful.

– **Rohith Babu, Participant from Tamil Nadu**

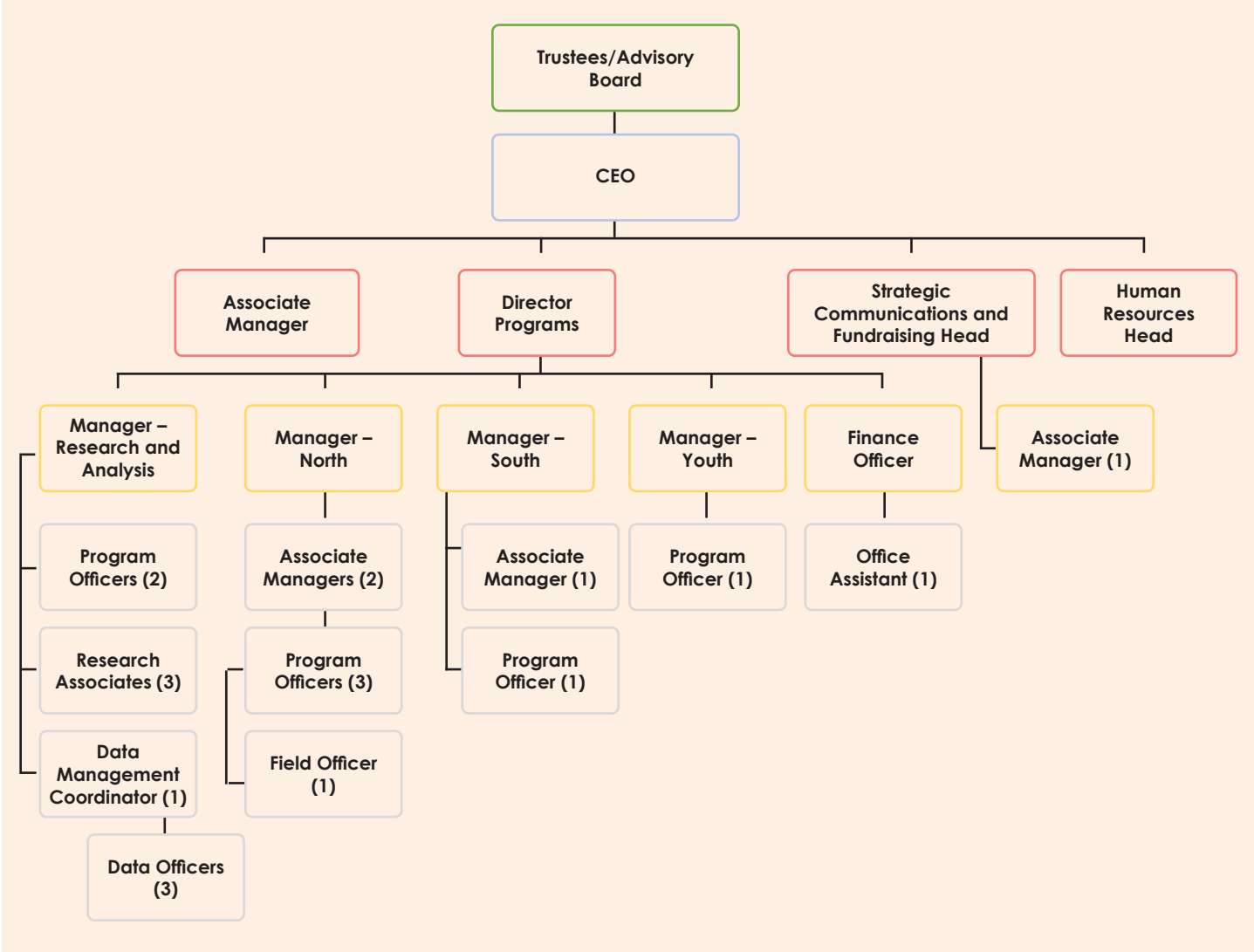
”



9. Organisation Development

Looking ahead to 2030, Praja's primary goal is to establish itself as a thought leader among urban leaders by strategically communicating and advancing urban reforms in India. To move towards this vision, the organisation maintained its three

core functions: Research and Analysis, Strategic Partnerships, and Strategic Communications. This also meant reallocating resources within these teams and bringing in additional support where needed.



Improving Individual and Organisational Performance Through Competencies

At the start of 2025, Praja incorporated Competencies into its performance management process (PMP) for Heads of Functions, Managers, and Associate Managers. Competencies refer to the specific skills, abilities, and behaviours needed for individuals to excel in their roles. To develop an effective framework, Praja conducted a thorough analysis of various job positions, identifying the unique tasks, responsibilities, and capabilities required for each. This ensured that competency development is closely aligned with the organisation's broader objectives.

Praja Staff Capacity Building Retreat

Praja's staff retreat is a lively blend of learning, creativity, and camaraderie designed to strengthen connections among all team members. Each retreat revolves around a central theme, thoughtfully conceptualized and brought to life by the staff themselves. Over the course of two days, staff

engaged in an array of interactive activities that spark innovation and keep spirits high. The retreat offers the perfect setting for both new and seasoned staff to mingle, collaborate, and build lasting relationships. In 2024-2025, Praja organized two such retreats.

The 2024 retreat, held on April 5th and 6th, focused on the theme "Embracing Sustainability – Recycle, Reuse, Rejoice". In 2025, the retreat took place on March 6th and 7th, centering on the theme "Sense The Moment," which encouraged staff to harness their five senses to boost creativity, connection, and mindfulness in the workplace and beyond.

Staff training

Praja offers a diverse range of training programs based on the 70-20-10 learning model, which suggests that 70% of development comes from hands-on experience, 20% from mentorship and social learning, and 10% from formal education. Our approach is designed to promote experiential learning and foster collaboration among peers, equipping employees with practical skills and deeper insights to support the organisation's ongoing growth.





Training

Internal staff training

Samvaad, a knowledge building series/workshop is planned and executed 'by the staff, for the staff'. The staff facilitated interesting sessions such as Embracing Sustainability - Recycle, Reuse, Rejoice; Sustainable Transport Planning; Team Dynamics – The Five Dysfunctions of a Team; Sense The Moment - Engaging our five senses to foster creativity, connection, and awareness in our work and beyond among others.

External staff training

Praja's staff was exposed to various trainings conducted such as **Citizens' Satisfaction with Urban Public Services in Mumbai** organised by Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work (Autonomous), Mumbai; **Moving towards a safer and resilient Mumbai** organised by World Resources Institute (WRI), Mumbai; **Moving towards a safer and inclusive Delhi** organised by World Resources Institute (WRI), Delhi.

10. Praja People

TRUSTEES

NITAI MEHTA,
Founder and Managing Trustee
Praja Foundation; Director Adity
Designs and Forest of Chintz

SUMANGALI GADA,
Founder Trustee Praja
Foundation; Director Adity
Designs and Forest of Chintz

ANUJ BHAGWATI,
Trustee Praja Foundation;
Director A.T.E. Enterprises;
Executive Committee and
Trustee UDRI

IRIS MADEIRA,
Trustee Praja Foundation;
Partner Madhavi Desai
Consulting Pvt. Ltd.

VIVEK ASRANI,
Trustee Praja Foundation;
Managing Director Kaymo
Fastener Company

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Chairman at Somani Family
Office

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Advisor Praja Foundation;
Director and CEO Steel

RAJAN MEHRA,
Advisor Praja Foundation;
Partner March Capital and
Managing Director Nirvana
Venture Advisors

SITARAM KUNTE,
Former Chief Secretary of the
Government of Maharashtra
and Founder of Centre for
Research in Schemes and
Policies (CRISP)

LEADERSHIP TEAM

MILIND MHASKE,
CEO, Praja Foundation

PRIYANKA SHARMA,
Director Programs,
Praja Foundation

BENAIFER REPORTER,
Human Resource Advisor,
Praja Foundation

MEGHNA INDURKAR,
Head, Strategic
Communications,
Praja Foundation



PRAJA TEAM

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

AARTI NIGAM
Program Officer

ABHISHEK SINGH
Associate Manager

AVIRAL DUBEY
Manager

AYUSHI KHARE
Program Officer

EKNATH PAWAR
Associate Manager

KUNALJIT BHATTA
Manager

POOJA VERMA
Associate Manager

PRATIK JAGTAP
Program Officer

PRATIKSHA DEOLEKAR
Manager

RUTTU GAMRE
Program Officer

SHUBHAM SINGH
Field Officer

SOHAM JOSHI
Associate Manager

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

ANIKET MIRASHI
Data Officer

GANESH PHULSUNDAR
Research Associate

HARSHITA KATIYAR
Program Officer

KHUSHBOO MEHTA
Program Officer

MAHESH BHASKAR
Research Associate

NEELAM MIRASHI
Research Associate

NEHA KORI
Data Officer

NILESH KADAM
Data Management
Coordinator

PRASHANT SHIVADE
Data Officer

RAJESH
Data Officer

SANGEETA PATWA
Data Officer

SHREYAS CHORGI
Manager

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

ABHISHEK GIJARE
Communications Officer

SUPPORT TEAM

ASHWINI MORE
Finance Officer

GANESH JADHAV
Office Assistant



11. Media Gallery

INDIA TODAY	FREE PRESS JOURNAL	THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS	HINDUSTAN TIMES	PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
				
Delhi assembly saw 50% drop in issues raised, MLAs' performance declined: Study	FPJ MLA Audit: Parag Shah Faces Civic Challenges And Declining Ratings In Ghatkopar East While Awaiting BJP's Approval For Re-Election	Odisha among top five states in urban governance	Decline in Mumbai's revenue post-octroi worrisome, finds Praja report	Slums, tourism, drugs: Mumbai LS candidates spell out their focus areas



MID-DAY



Mumbai's governance and fiscal path forward: Praja Foundation unveils a roadmap from National Urban Convention 2024 reports

JK MONITOR



Central University of Jammu student Jagriti Gupta shines at National Youth Festival Prajatantra 2024

THE TIMES OF INDIA



Aapla Dawakhana's grapple with city's notorious space crunch

HINDUSTAN



Gorakhpur Municipal Councillors Oriented on Identifying Local Issues and Understanding Budgeting Nuances



BALANCE SHEET

of as at 31st March, 2025

THE BOMBAY PUBLIC TRUST
ACT, 1950
SCHEDULE VIII [VIDE RULE 17(1)]

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	Sh. No.	LOCAL	FCRA	FY 24-25	FY 23-24	PROPERTY AND ASSETS	Sh. No.	LOCAL	FCRA	FY 24-25	FY 23-24
<u>TRUST FUNDS OR CORPUS</u>						<u>INVESTMENTS</u>		38,29,518	-	38,29,518	7,54,702
Balance as per Last Balance Sheet		500,500	-	500,500	500,500						
Additional: during the year		-	-	-	-						
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>						<u>MOVABLE PROPERTIES</u>					
Sundry Creditors for expenses	G	-	-	-	-	Opening balance		3,35,255	1,01,611	4,36,866	4,94,904
Branch/Division		-	-	-	-	Addition during the year		5,00,940	1,34,127	6,35,067	1,29,609
TDS		3,00,962	57,452	3,58,414	5,704	Depreciation upto date		1,69,996	67,470	2,37,465	1,87,647
Provisions		33,500	4,175	37,675	24,323	Closing Balance	B	6,66,200	1,68,268	8,34,468	4,36,866
Grant - ISEF		-	60,56,980	60,56,980	-		C	12,56,000	40,000	12,96,000	5,85,376
<u>INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT</u>						<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>					
Balance as per Balance Sheet		27,67,839	30,87,441	58,55,280	15,87,892	Balance with Revenue Authorities	D	1,10,788	-	1,10,788	2,29,726
Less - Appropriation, if any		-	-	-	-	Advance to Creditors	E	-	-	-	60,000
Add- Surplus [As per income & Expenditure Account]		1,08,35,081	-	1,08,35,081	42,67,388		F	85,75,377	62,26,581	1,48,01,958	43,21,138
Less- Deficit		-	(27,71,199)	(27,71,199)	-	<u>CASH & BANK BALANCES</u>					
		1,44,37,881	64,34,849	2,08,72,731	63,87,807			1,44,37,881	64,34,849	2,08,72,731	63,87,807

FOR SN & CO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



CA. NIKI SHAH
(PARTNER)

MEMBERSHIP NO: 123409

FIRM REGN NO: 128887W

PLACE: MUMBAI

DATE: 08.09.2025

UDIN: 25123409BMIDS13057

For PRAJA FOUNDATION

The above Balance sheet is to the best of our belief contains a true account of the funds and liabilities and of the Property and assets of the Trust

TRUSTEE

PLACE: MUMBAI

DATE: 08.09.2025

TRUSTEE



NAME OF THE PUBLIC TRUST :
Praja Foundation
REGISTRATION NO : E-18023
(MUM)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

for the year ending 31st MARCH, 2025

THE BOMBAY PUBLIC TRUST
ACT, 1950
SCHEDULE VIII [VIDE RULE 17(1)]

EXPENDITURE	Sh. No.	LOCAL	FCRA	FY 24-25	FY 23-24	INCOME	Sh. No.	LOCAL	FCRA	FY 24-25	FY 23-24
To Salaries		1,12,57,946	32,98,538	1,45,56,484	1,18,35,217	Interest On Bank Account	H	6,90,277	1,38,147	8,28,424	2,52,461
To Depreciation		1,69,996	67,470	2,37,465	1,87,647	Dividend		-	-	-	-
To Establishment Expenses	J	41,77,327	6,56,457	48,33,785	36,84,900	Donation/Grant received	I	4,41,15,001	1,06,43,308	5,47,58,309	3,28,03,216
To Program Expenses	K	92,60,514	73,97,135	1,66,57,649	60,36,515	Consultancy Income		6,15,000	-	6,15,000	3,81,050
To Professional Expenses	L	6,52,948	-	6,52,948	2,50,420						
To Consulting Expenses	M	88,89,467	21,33,054	1,10,22,521	71,15,640						
To Payment to Auditors		1,77,000	-	1,77,000	59,000						
To Surplus carried over to Balance Sheet		1,08,35,081	-	1,08,35,081	42,67,388	Deficit carried over to Balance Sheet		-	27,71,199	27,71,199	-
		4,54,20,278	1,35,52,654	5,89,72,932	3,34,36,727			4,54,20,278	1,35,52,654	5,89,72,932	3,34,36,727

FOR S N & CO
CHARTERED ACCOUI



[Signature]

CA.NIKI SHAH
(PARTNER)

MEMBERSHIP NO: 123409
FIRM REGN NO: 128887W
PLACE: MUMBAI
DATE: 08.09.2025
UDIN: 25123409BMIDS13057

For PRAJA FOUNDATION

[Signature]

[Signature]

TRUSTEE



PLACE: MUMBAI
DATE: 08.09.2025

13. Supporters



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Nakul Toshnival (*Toshvin Analytical Pvt. Ltd*)

Vivek Asrani (*Managing Director Kaymo Fastener*)

And many other individual supporters.





www.praja.org/donate



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