



Edition 29  
Date: 2nd December, 2020

Dear All,

Greetings from Praja Foundation!

We hope you are doing well and are safe.

In this edition of the Urban Governance Dialogue E-newsletter, we bring to you an overview of Praja's Urban Governance Index (UGI) ahead of its launch. The index is associated with Praja's initiative towards transforming urban governance in the country.

### THE NEED FOR AN URBAN GOVERNANCE INDEX (UGI)



Cities are largely known to act as the economic engines of the country which thrives on outcomes of economies of scale. However, increasingly generic issues such as traffic, various forms of pollution, increasing impact of climate change, inadequate infrastructure, and poor service delivery is what continues to impede cities across India from achieving its true economic potential. India's growth story was majorly driven

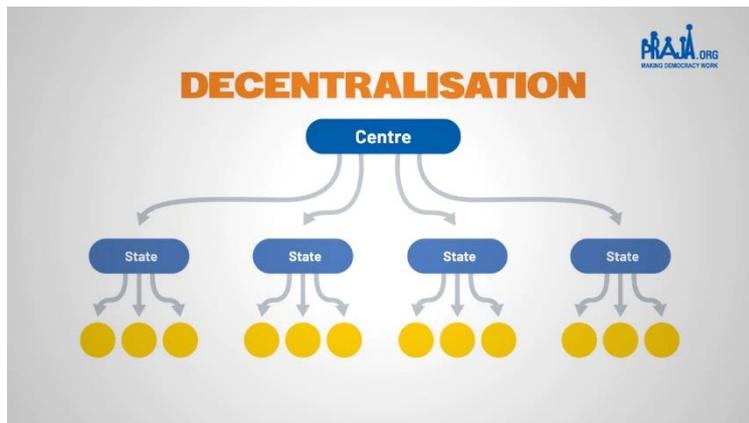
by the major cities. But, to propel the growth in much larger scale, the focus needs to shift towards creating both competitive and sustainable cities. For enabling this shift, the aim must be to bring in structural reforms towards facilitating grassroots democracy in cities through democratic empowerment and accountability of City Governments and through citizen engagement.

There have been many interventions in the sphere of urban governance at a national level such as the Constitution (Seventy Fourth Amendment) Act, 1992 (74<sup>th</sup> CAA), including various national schemes and missions – JNNURM, Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT. In addition to this, there are many global and national level indices that map performance of cities. However, majority of the schemes and indices have focused predominantly on the aspect of mapping the performance/delivery of urban services. It is important to recognise that delivery of urban services as an 'output', and any achievement through this approach will only lead to mere visible temporary surface level changes. But, what we require, is changes in the 'enabler' i.e., core reforms in structure of City Governments and management of our cities. Therefore, the approach should be



aimed towards achieving sustainable and incremental changes towards better quality of urban life. The above-mentioned premise forms the exact principle over which the Praja's Urban Governance Index (UGI) is built. The index aims to help in the mapping and monitoring of implementations of the urban governance reforms which mainly looks at democratic empowerment and accountability in urban governance across states in the country.

## JOURNEY OF BUILDING THE URBAN GOVERNANCE INDEX



Recognising the dire need for urban governance reforms, given the direction our cities are headed in the country, Praja has been on the journey for the last three years of creating the pathways towards transforming the urban governance system in the country. As part of the journey, a robust Urban Governance Reforms Study has been conducted in 39 cities across 28 states and National Capital Territory (NCT) of

Delhi. Further, for the validation and dissemination of the findings from the study, 20 state level consultations, 1 regional consultation (involving 6 states) and a National Level consultation on Urban Governance have been held. Overall, this involved a total of 1568 interviews held with key stakeholders such as the city Elected Representatives (ERs), city administrators and city based CSOs.

The studies were conducted mainly from the perspective of mapping the necessary urban reforms required for individual states. Later, it was realised that we need to make a broader national level comparison matrix for the purpose of tracking the implementations of reforms by individual states. Therefore, this led to the quantification of the findings from the state level urban governance studies and finally culminated into the UGI. At the initial stages of preparing the index, there did exist a dilemma with regard to criteria for selection of the cities from the state, given that we have 4000 plus cities across the country. On this note, it was decided that cities that are best in class from and representation of the states shall be chosen. With this, the UGI entails a total of 29<sup>1</sup> cities across 28 states and NCT of Delhi. However, in case of



<sup>1</sup> Andhra Pradesh (Vijayawada), Bihar (Patna), Chhattisgarh (Raipur), Delhi, Goa (Panaji), Gujarat (Ahmedabad), Haryana (Gurugram), Himachal Pradesh (Dharamshala), Jharkhand (Ranchi), Karnataka (Mangaluru), Kerala (Kochi), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal), Maharashtra (Mumbai), Odisha (Bhubaneswar), Punjab (Amritsar), Rajasthan (Udaipur), Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore), Telangana (Warangal), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow), Uttarakhand (Dehradun), West Bengal (Kolkata)



monitoring the implementation of reforms for a particular state is necessary, the UGI can be modified accordingly by choosing best representative sample number of cities from that State.

On the whole, UGI is primarily a mapping

across states on indicative themes of democratic empowerment and accountability pertaining to urban governance. The index is definitely a collaborative product from all the interactions with many key stakeholders across all states.

## WHAT IS THE URBAN GOVERNANCE INDEX (UGI)?

The UGI is built on foundations of 4 main themes which are divided into 13 sub-themes and consists a total of 40+ indicators. The thematic focus is primarily on the structural aspects of Urban Governance. The structural aspects entail the necessary decentralisation of powers from the State Government to City Government and the mechanism of accountability of the City



Government towards citizens of the city. The source for the indicators range from primary data through interviews with stakeholders and secondary sources such as the State Municipal Acts, the Urban Data Explorer (AMPLIFI) set up by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and other relevant official documents. Experts were consulted in preparation of this Index for guidance and validation at various stages during the preparation of this Index.

The idea behind building the UGI is to understand the extent of decentralisation of the Urban Governance framework and the associated devolution of powers to the City Governments across states in the country. The corresponding gaps and necessary reforms to improve with respect to each state has been distinctly outlined through this Index report. The UGI can be used by the states to evaluate their urban governance systems vis-à-vis other states, and in identifying the necessary reform actions that are to be taken for improvisation in the system. Stakeholders from civil society, academia, experts from the sector, media, administrators, and more importantly elected representatives can use the index as a base to monitor implementations, and further can collaborate towards advocating for reform actions included in the UGI for their respective state.

## RELEASE OF THE URBAN GOVERNANCE INDEX

**Praja Foundation invites you to the e-launch of the first 'Urban Governance Index, 2020'.**

The event details are as follows:

**Event link:** <https://zoom.us/j/94925394916>

**Date:** Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**Time:** 3:00 P.M.

We are pleased to announce our **keynote speaker** for the event, **Mr Prabhat Kumar**, President, IC Centre for Governance (ICCFG); Former and First Governor of Jharkhand; and Former Cabinet Secretary, Government of India.

### Recent Publications:

We recently published the State Level Urban Governance Reports of the North Eastern States. Please access the reports through the links given below:

- [Urban Governance Report on Arunachal Pradesh](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Assam](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Manipur](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Meghalaya](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Mizoram](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Nagaland](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Sikkim](#)
- [Urban Governance Report on Tripura](#)

**We have also released a video on the need for Praja's Urban Governance Index. You can learn more on the same here:**

1. [Praja's Urban Governance Index 2020 Problems and Need for an Index Hindi - YouTube](#) (Hindi)
2. [Praja's Urban Governance Index 2020 Problems and Need for an Index English - YouTube](#) (English)

We would like to know your insights based on all the information mentioned. Feel free to reach us at [urbandialogue@praja.org](mailto:urbandialogue@praja.org)

Kind Regards,



Nitai Mehta  
Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation



Milind Mhaske  
Director, Praja Foundation