



Edition 23  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear All,

**Greetings from Praja Foundation!**

Praja Team visited Kohima, Nagaland in the second week of February 2020, to study the urban governance structures and reforms implemented in the state. The Kohima Municipal Council (KMC) was formed under the Nagaland Municipal Act, 2001. There are 3 municipal councils and 20 town councils in Nagaland. The first elections of KMC were held in 2005, the council served its period of 5 years and was dissolved in 2010. The council elections are however pending due to



resistance from the community on reservation of women in council elections.

### **Ward Panchayats**

Nagaland has a traditional system of governance practiced in rural areas. Before Kohima was converted into a Council, the traditional governance systems prevailed. The ward panchayats from the traditional systems are still practiced in Kohima city limits. Each ward has a ward panchayat. The panchayat chairman is elected by the citizens of the ward every 5 years by show of hands. Subsequently, the ward panchayat chairman selects the officials of the panchayat. The ward panchayat consists of office bearers, joint secretaries and Gaon Burhas (GB). The ward panchayat is consulted for any development work carried out in the city and respective wards. The meetings of ward panchayat are held as and when required. Ward panchayats are recognised by the District Commissioner office. The main responsibility of the ward panchayat is to maintain peaceful existence of the community, resolve any issues within the community and raise concerns of the community to the government. However, the responsibility of collection of house taxes are placed on the GBs of the ward since they know all the households in their wards.

These traditional institutes have a huge potential to be institutionalised and sanctioned under the municipal act. This will ensure the traditional system being incorporated in the administrative structure of municipal councils. The powers and duties of the councillors can be transferred to the Ward Panchayat chairman and the ward panchayat can function as ward committees.

## Municipal Finance

Kohima Municipal Council performs only 4 functions out of the 18 functions listed in the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act. Thus there are limited avenues for KMC to generate income and become financially healthy. The major source of revenue is trade licence along with import coupons. Expenses of establishment cost is covered by the council through income generated. Any other capital project work that has to be implemented requires funds from the State government or grants from the central government.

There is need to transfer funds, functions and functionaries to the city government in order to ensure effective service delivery. Unless the funds are transferred to the city government, the functions cannot be devolved.

It is also important to note that Kohima does not have any sitting council, due to which numerous funds are not transferred. A solution needs to be initiated to ensure effective service delivery in the city, incorporating the traditional governance structures as well as the constitutional mandates.

## Important Links –

Kohima Municipal Council website (<https://kmc.nagaland.gov.in/>)

Directorate of Urban Development Department, Nagaland (<http://www.uddngl.nic.in/>)

Department of Planning and Coordination, Nagaland (<http://www.nagalandplanning.in/>)

Nagaland Municipal Act, 2001

(<https://www.nagaland.gov.in/Nagaland/UsefulLinks/The%20Nagaland%20Municipal%20Act,%202001.pdf>)

Kind Regards,



Nitai Mehta  
Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation



Milind Mhaske  
Director, Praja Foundation