



Edition 21

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Dear All,

Greetings from Praja Foundation!

Praja Team visited Imphal, Manipur between 2nd and 6th February 2020, to study the urban governance structures and reforms implemented in the state. Field interviews with elected representatives such as Mayor, councillors of the Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC), administrative officials at IMC, Public Works Department (PWD), Planning and Development Authority (PDA) etc., and CSO representatives were conducted. Some of the key findings from the study conducted are discussed below.

Manipur Municipalities Act, 1994

The Manipur Municipalities Act was enacted in 1994 providing legal mandate for constitution of Nagar Panchayats and Municipal Councils. The mandate to constitute Municipal Corporation came in later through Chapter IIIA in Manipur Municipalities (Tenth Amendment) Act in 2016. IMC is the only municipal corporation in Manipur State.

Ward Development Committee and Traditional Practice of local governance



Ward Development Committees have been formed at the ward level. The committee consists of the committee chairman (ward councilor), two elected members and two appointed members. The committee is supposed to take up various responsibilities at ward level in terms of planning and executing ward development projects. However, councilors have reported that the committees do not have regular meetings and lack decision making powers.

An interesting finding however was the traditional practice of local governance by the local community. The communities have set their boundaries known as *Leikeis*. These community groups are generally referred to as *Singloops*. The groups elect their respective heads, who have powers to take decisions and resolve disputes within the respective boundaries. Members of the community are completely indebted towards their *Singloop*. Due to this, the heads of the *Singloops* are consulted before any government projects are executed in their locality and these projects are also monitored closely by the group. But, this local practice has not been formally recognised and do not form a part of the governance structure. *Singloops* in Imphal are not formally integrated within the

city governance structure. Thus, there is a disconnect between the level of ward development committees and the *Singloops*. Although *Singloops* are active and have strong influences over decisions made in their locality, a lack of bottom-up planning and implementation of projects is observed to be taking place because of this disconnect.

Multiple Agencies involved in urban planning and regulation of land-use

Some of the parastatal bodies and state government agencies that interacts with the corporation in terms of service delivery within city's administrative jurisdiction are Public Works Department (PWD), Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Town Planning Department (TPD), Planning and Development Authority (PDA), Manipur Urban Development Authority (MUDA) etc. In terms of Urban Planning, the Town Planning Department of the State Government has prepared the Masterplan. The function of regulation of land use is only partially handed over to the IMC. The IMC only provides the service of forwarding of building proposals to TPD, handing over building licenses and collection of the license fees. However, the Town Planning Department and Department of Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development (MAHUD) exercise the authority making decisions and approval of proposals.

Acute shortage of Human Resources and lack of capacity of IMC

The IMC faces a grim situation in terms of human resources. The IMC has 107 vacant posts out of the 236 sanctioned posts. Hence, the vacancy stands at 46%. On top of this, the common issue raised is that of existing officers' and employees' lack of technical skills and knowledge to perform duties and implement projects. There are no mandatory and regular trainings taking place. On the other hand, municipal cadres have been formed but supporting interventions such as capacity building initiatives need to also be mandatorily given.

IMC is a young corporation, having been set up in 2016. Hence, the corporation requires support through devolution of powers and authorities to raise its revenue, recruit its staff and thereby build capacity as a whole for delivering services efficiently and controlling the function effectively under its control.

Important Links –

Imphal Municipal Corporation website (<http://imc.mn.gov.in/>)

Manipur Municipalities Act, 1994 (<https://manipur.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/the-manipur-municipalities-act-1994.compressed.pdf>)

Kind Regards,



Nitai Mehta
Managing Trustee, Praja Foundation



Milind Mhaske
Director, Praja Foundation