

# 'Public deserves transparency on civic body's progress, shortcomings'

**Calls grow for a dedicated section in the civic budget to assess past outcomes highlighting achievements, completed projects, and those that remain stalled**

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BMC Budget 2025: 'Public deserves transparency on civic body's progress, shortcomings'

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Despite the city receiving a massive infrastructural boost year after year, with ambitious projects like the Coastal Road and Atal Setu taking centre stage in the [civic budget](#), local issues such as dug-up streets, stalled concretisation projects, missing pedestrian ways, lack of enough open spaces, public health, and education continue to take a backseat. These persistent challenges remain a major concern for Mumbaikars, highlighting the need for a more balanced approach to urban development, said Milind Mhaske CEO, Praja Foundation.

Speaking with mid-day about expectations from the civic budget and key focus areas for Budget 2025, Mhaske said, "While various aspects are covered, the BMC needs to introduce a dedicated section on budget outcomes. This should include an assessment of successes and shortcomings from the previous financial year, highlighting achievements, completed projects, and those that remain stalled. There may be valid reasons for delays, but the public deserves transparency."

On the health budget, Mhaske acknowledged the [Mumbai civic body's](#) commendable initiative in launching the Hindu Hruday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Clinics (HBT Aapla Dawakhana). However, he pointed out that these clinics, along with other public health posts, have the potential to offer much more.

"Most of these clinics operate for limited hours with minimal staff. The BMC must focus on employing adequate full-time personnel and extending operational hours from at least 7 am to 9 pm or 10 pm. This would significantly benefit citizens. Additionally, many municipal health clinic buildings are well-maintained and spacious enough to be converted into 10-15 bedded nursing homes, budgetary allocations should be made for this.

Mhaske emphasised the need to fill vacancies in civic hospitals, stating: "Even at existing [civic hospitals](#), vacancies remain unfilled. The BMC should prioritise hiring staff. If permanent hiring proves expensive, trained contractual employees can be recruited. Providing healthcare is the BMC's obligatory duty."

Commenting on the education budget, Mhaske said, "The BMC had proposed creating [cluster schools](#) by merging institutions with low enrolment, but this plan has yet to take off. Additionally, while the civic body has been pushing for non-state board schools, why isn't it investing in improving the quality of education in its existing civic schools? Instead of changing the curriculum to attract students, the BMC should focus on enhancing educational standards and facilities in its own schools."

Mhaske also highlighted how the city's major infrastructural developments have sidelined basic citizen needs, "Mumbai is undergoing a massive infrastructural overhaul, yet essential amenities and public welfare are being neglected. There are not enough open spaces in the city, not due to a lack of potential, but due to poor planning and execution. Footpaths and pedestrian pathways are either in disrepair, missing, or encroached upon. To put things in perspective, we allocate massive funds for projects like the Coastal Road, which is fine, but at the same time, we don't have the budget to buy new BEST buses. This is happening while we are actively advocating for improved public transport."

## 'Strengthen state board schools'

Prasad Gokhale, a parent and convenor of Marathi Shala Aapan Tikavlya Pahijet (We Must Save Marathi Schools), an awareness group, said "For the past five to six years, we have seen the BMC converting state board schools into CBSE, ICSE, and IB schools. Simply changing the board affiliation will not improve the quality of education. Labelling a school as CBSE or ICSE without ensuring quality improvements is misleading.

They are diverting all the funds toward these conversions, which is a misuse of resources. Have they consulted educationists? Have they reviewed the performance of these newly converted schools before announcing more non-state board schools? How are these schools different from the state board civic schools?" Gokhale said that instead of conversions, the focus should be on strengthening existing state board civic-run schools and improving student enrollment.

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