



**Praja Foundation**

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SAO/SD  
10/01/19

To, Principal/Professor

Motilal Nehru College

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019

Students Notice Board  
11/01/19

**Subject: Introducing Praja's ER fellowship to your students.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing this letter to you to introduce Praja Foundation and the Elected Representatives Fellowship 2019 offered to students in your College/University. Praja is a non-partisan organisation working in the field of Urban Governance since 1999. As part of our work, we seek to assist elected representatives to voice people's concerns on their platforms, thus helping to deepen democracy.

We are pleased to introduce you to the ER fellowship, an initiative to let students work closely with councillors of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) while enhancing their own understanding of governance in this process. This ER fellowship is a 6-month paid fellowship which helps graduates and post-graduate students to work very closely with government mechanisms.

Fellows will be information sources to their respective Elected Representatives and learn much more about government policy. Our ER Fellowship hence brings together informed young graduates and post-graduates to help our Councillors become more informed and engaged.

The fellowship requires motivated and bright students. Thus, we would like to conduct a workshop and put up posters in your campus to invite and introduce your students to this fellowship program.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope to work in coordination with your institution in the future to conduct workshop and projects in order to make democracy work.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Isha Shandilya  
Project Officer  
Citizens Engagement  
Praja Foundation, Delhi

**Mumbai Head Office Address**

Victoria Building, 1st Floor, Agiary Lane, Off Mint Road,  
Fort, Mumbai - 400001, Tel: 022 - 2261 8042 / 65252729.

## ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Praja is a non-partisan voluntary organisation enabling accountable governance. Praja empowers citizens to participate in governance by providing knowledge and perspective so that they can become politically active and involved beyond the ballot box. It undertakes extensive research and highlights civic issues to build the awareness of, and mobilise action by the government and elected representatives.

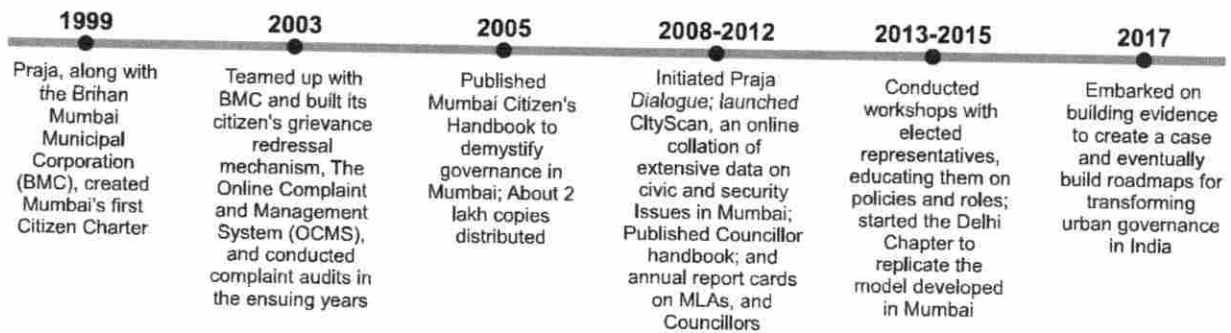
### THE PROBLEM

Indian cities have long suffered the neglect of policy makers and with increasing urbanisation, there is an urgent need to transition from the colonial mind-set of ruling to governing

### PRAJA's RESPONSE

This will mean that we will need to tip the status quo and strive for not just "smart cities" but "smartly governed" cities

## HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



## WHAT DOES IT DO?

Praja engages the three constituents of governance in an informed dialogue that ultimately enables improved quality of urban life for all:

- Elected Representatives (Councillors, MLAs, MPs);
- Government (including administration); and
- Citizens (including all citizens, citizen groups and media)

It conducts in depth - research on civic issues, health, crime, education, working of elected representatives and housing in Mumbai and Delhi. Upon analyzing data collected from surveys and the government through Right to Information (RTI) applications, Praja reports its findings to the concerned constituents of governance with feedback and recommendations. The end products of its work are:

- Handbooks and report cards for MLAs and Councillors, rating their performance against parameters such as attendance, money spent, questions raised in committees, and pressing issues in their constituencies. It has published 8 MLA and 6 Councillor Report Cards on Mumbai's and Delhi.
- Capacity building initiatives such as one-on-one meetings and workshops to guide elected representatives on their roles. It has conducted over 773 Councillor meetings, 50 MLA meetings and 28 workshops for elected representatives.
- White papers identifying civic-security issues. The monthly newsletter reaches out to over 13,000 readers including government officials, non-profits, and civil society.

## KEY INTERVENTIONS

1. Building awareness and mobilising citizens
2. Training citizens for public engagement
3. Creating knowledge and evidence
4. Advocacy for policy design and implementation
5. Technology platforms and solutions
6. Facilitating independent and inclusive journalism
7. Capacity building of government officials
8. Capacity building of local partners
9. Facilitating platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement



## WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

- In 2011, Praja released data showing that 1,222 people died of malaria in different wards of the city in FY 2010-11. This was eight times the number being used by the municipal government. This contributed to a stronger response to malaria by the government - The Fight the Bite campaign. By FY 2013-14, malaria deaths fell by 84% from FY 2010-11.
- On 30th May 2017, Praja launched its report on Malnutrition in Municipal Schools in Mumbai. Following that, when releasing MCGM Budget Estimates for 2018-19, the Municipal Commissioner's speech highlighted the efforts planned to be undertaken to combat malnutrition.
- In the Health whitepaper released on 12th July 2017, Praja highlighted the increasing burden of tuberculosis in Mumbai. Soon after, on 29th July, MCGM identified 70 areas that are vulnerable to tuberculosis (TB) and created a team of 374 health officers for 'door-to-door' surveys to identify patients.

## VOICES FROM THE GROUND



Praja's Capacity Building Workshops and Handbooks for Municipal Councillors:

***"Praja's workshops gave me an understanding of the working of the BMC. I learnt a lot from the experiences of senior leaders. Hard work, patience and perseverance have paid off"***

Snehal Ambekar, Mumbai's former Mayor

Praja's Fellowship and Internship for students:

***"Praja foundation helped me understand the functioning of the various government departments. Handling large data sets was initially challenging but very interesting. My experience at Praja, which was a combination of both theoretical and practical knowledge, was an enlightening one"***

Bhumica Veera, Student, Kirit P. Mehta School of Law



## QUALITY INDICATORS

### Leadership

Nitai Mehta, Founder Trustee of Praja

- Entrepreneur and head of Madhu Mehta Foundation

### Partnerships

- **Funders:** Ford Foundation, Friedrich Naumann-Stiftung, Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation, European Union, Dasra Governance collaborative fund
- **Collaborative Research and Advocacy:** Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) for research on crime, Centre for Civil Society (CCS) for research on education, Hansa Research for conducting social surveys, Initiative for Change - Centre for Governance headed by Prabhat Kumar (Ex-Cabinet Secretary and Ex-Governor of Jharkhand) for replicating its model in Delhi
- **Academic:** Pravin Gandhi College of Law, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, SNDT, Jamia Milia Islamia

### Endorsements

- Pravinchandra Gandhi Award 2013-14 for excellence in Public life by Rotary Club of Bombay
- Praja's work has received about 352 media mentions in year 2017.

*"While the work that direct service NGOs do in plugging the gaps unaddressed by the government is commendable, I believe that such initiatives are limited in scale as they only create islands of excellence in limited geographies. In the long run, the government has to take ownership and the civil society has to hold it accountable. Praja strongly believes in a collaborative approach in which our objective research is taken back to the government to aid it in corrective decision-making."*

Nitai Mehta, Founder Trustee of Praja

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elections budgets urbanguovernance panchayatiraj accesstojustice technology  
humanrights independentmedia