CITY LEADERS

A systematic leadership programme to empower elected leaders, particularly women, in India's cities for a sustainable urban future - A study
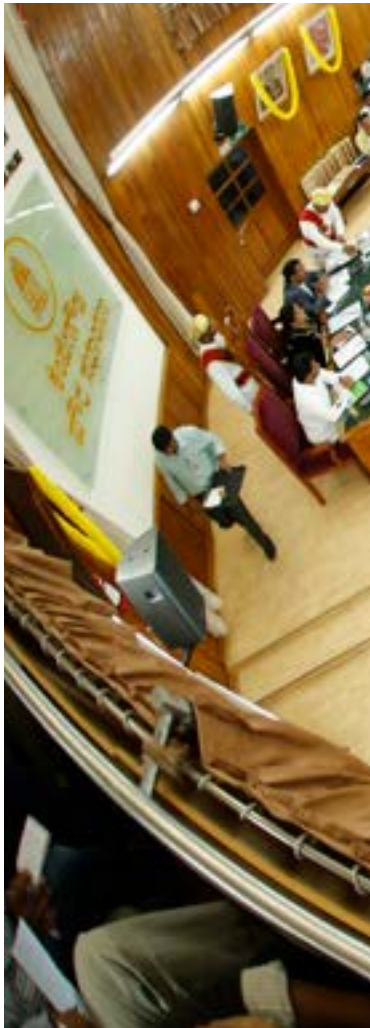
MARCH 2022

About Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (Janaagraha) is a Bengaluru based not-for-profit institution that is a part of the Jana group. Janaagraha's mission is to transform quality of life in India's cities and towns. It defines quality of life as comprising quality of infrastructure and services and quality of citizenship. To achieve its mission, Janaagraha works with citizens to catalyse active citizenship in city neighbourhoods and with governments to institute reforms to City-Systems.

Find out more at www.janaagraha.org

About Dasra

Dasra, meaning 'enlightened giving' in Sanskrit, is a strategic philanthropic organisation with a vision to transform India where a billion thrive with dignity and equity. With a two-pronged approach, it aims to spearhead a strategic philanthropy movement by supporting funders to deploy equitable philanthropic capital, creating funding vehicles and building the infrastructure for family philanthropy for India as well as deepening impact by championing collaborative action in focused fields that include adolescents, urban sanitation, informal workers and child protection.

Dasra's work has always been guided by a strong belief in prioritising the lives of vulnerable communities, trusting and respecting the wisdom of local, home-grown nonprofits, and leveraging the power of trust-based networks of funders, non-profits, government, and other stakeholders to come together as equal partners towards collaborative action to accelerate social change.

Over the last 22+ years, Dasra has shaped the philanthropic movement in India with 70+ research reports and actively worked with more than 3500 corporates, foundations, and philanthropists to channel USD 200+million towards the development of India.

Find out more at www.dasra.org

<u>Authors</u>

Srinivas Alavilli, Head – Civic Participation

V R Vachana, Manager – Advocacy | Advocacy & Reforms

Neha Malhotra Singh, Manager – Research & Insights

Shilpi Sinha Ray, Senior Associate – Civic Participation

Mythreyi Mugundan, Associate – Advocacy | Advocacy & Reforms

Priyanka Tibrewal, Associate – Advocacy | Advocacy & Reforms

Aishwarya R, Intern – Advocacy | Advocacy & Reforms

Advisory Group

G Mathivathanan IAS
Principal Secretary
Housing & Urban Development Department
Government of Odisha

Sarada Muraleedharan IAS
Additional Chief Secretary
Local Self Government Department
Government of Kerala

Vandana Chavan
Member of Parliament
17th Rajya Sabha

Vandana Ramchandani
Regional Head of Corporate Philanthropy &
Employee Engagement
Asia Pacific Bloomberg LP

S M Vijayanand IAS (retd.)
Chairman, Sixth State Finance Commission
Government of Kerala

Steering Group

Abdul Wajid
Former Councillor
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Cyanam Rajyalakshmi
Councillor
Hyderabad, Telangana

Fulan Bhattacharya
Former Mayor
Agartala, Tripura

Gangambike Mallikarjun
Former Mayor
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dr Narayana A
Associate Professor
School of Policy & Governance
Azim Premji University

Harini Shetty
Project Coordinator
Urban Research Centre

Hemakshi Meghani
Co-Founder
Indian School of Democracy

Payal Kishorbai Sakariya
Councillor
Surat, Gujarat

Dr Joy Elamon
Director General
Kerala Institute of Local
Administration

Dr Lalitha Kamath
Chairperson
Centre for Urban Policy &
Governance
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
- Mumbai

Dr Mercy Samuel
Associate Professor
Faculty of Management
CEPT University

Padmanabha Reddy
Former Councillor
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Acknowledgement

This report 'City Leaders' is a result of collaboration and teamwork.

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We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of interns and volunteers who have been associated with us at various phases of the report development – Apurva Sinkar, Aswin Jayakumar, Dhavan Jahagirdar, Rohith Vishwanath, Shambhavi Ajila, Sreya Vaidyan and Zeeshan Aaqil Siddiqui. Undertaking primary surveys across 21 cities came with its own linguistic, cultural, and geographical challenges. Their contributions have been instrumental in bridging these gaps and bringing out relevant cultural context to conversations with councillors. We would like to thank Vivek Mishra for his support in accessing academic journals and papers.We would like to express our gratitude to Mallu Kumbar from Karnataka sexual minorities forum who offered his expert guidance through discussions on empowerment and political representation of transgenders. Additionally, this report would not have been possible without the kindness of several nameless employees of city governments and citizens who helped us to find municipal offices, provided alternative contact numbers and made our visit more comfortable by offering refreshments.

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Foreword

"Participatory democracy and active citizenship will be key differentiators in surmounting 21 st century human development challenges such as equity (including gender equality), climate change, public health, jobs and livelihoods, and water and sanitation. Both participatory democracy and active citizenship require a foundation of trust and engagement between citizens and governments in our city neighbourhoods. Empowered mayors and councils, formal platforms for citizen participation such as ward committees and area sabhas, participatory processes such as participatory budgeting, and radical transparency in finances and operations are all ingredients for such trust and engagement. Councillors who are our elected representative at the "first mile" of governance, i.e. at the street, neighbourhood and ward levels, have a huge role to play in all of the above. Of the 87,000+ councillors in 4,700+ cities in India, close to 50% are women. We need to strengthen the hands of councillors, particularly women councillors, for transformative change in our cities and neighbourhoods. We at Janaagraha believe a city leadership programme with emphasis on women councillors is much-needed and timely."

Srikanth Viswanathan
Chief Executive Officer
Janaagraha

"Today, there is an undeniable momentum towards massive reform agenda in our cities. A wide range of aspects including waste management, mobility, water, and air quality is being worked on. Governments everywhere are partnering with civil society organisations, think tanks, experts, and organisations with the domain expertise to design and implement sustainable solutions. However, the political leadership of the city - the elected municipal councillors, and the council are missing in this ecosystem. Councillors are closest to the citizens, and often get called upon to help with many things, beyond their call of duty due to this physical proximity. They understand the issues at the micro level unlike anyone else since their political fortunes depend on improving the quality of life in their constituency. Janaagraha has been working with councillors to understand their perspective. We believe empowering councillors with the knowledge and tools in a sustained manner is critical to fighting the toughest global challenges coming our way. This report bears witness to the missed opportunities and numerous possibilities that could make a profound impact in our cities, one street at a time. Global challenges cannot be addressed without local leadership, and that's the primary reason for investing in councillors as 'city leaders.'"

Srinivas Alavilli
Head – Civic Participation
Janaagraha

"Having studied various facets of urban governance for several years across states in India, we often find that our energies are not adequately directed toward building the leadership of our councillors. Despite councillors being a key force in driving local action for global challenges such as climate change, affordable housing, gender inequalities etc, they are highly disempowered in India compared to their global counterparts. They are not often equipped with the knowledge and tools to govern their city and ward effectively. Through this study, 'City Leaders' we analysed municipal laws and the landscape of systematic leadership programmes for councillors in India. We interviewed 65 councillors from 21 cities across 16 states, including 41 women and one transgender councillors, to capture their voices on the needs and opportunities in a systematic leadership programme. We also interviewed fifteen urban thought leaders to understand the significance and nuances of leadership building of councillors. Our study indicates that there is a crucial need for leadership building of councillors to equip them to govern effectively, and be 'city leaders'. We see it as a critical area for intervention and innovation. Through this study, we hope that you will find the need for strengthening the hands of councillors for a sustainable urban future."

V R Vachana
Manager – Advocacy | Advocacy & Reforms
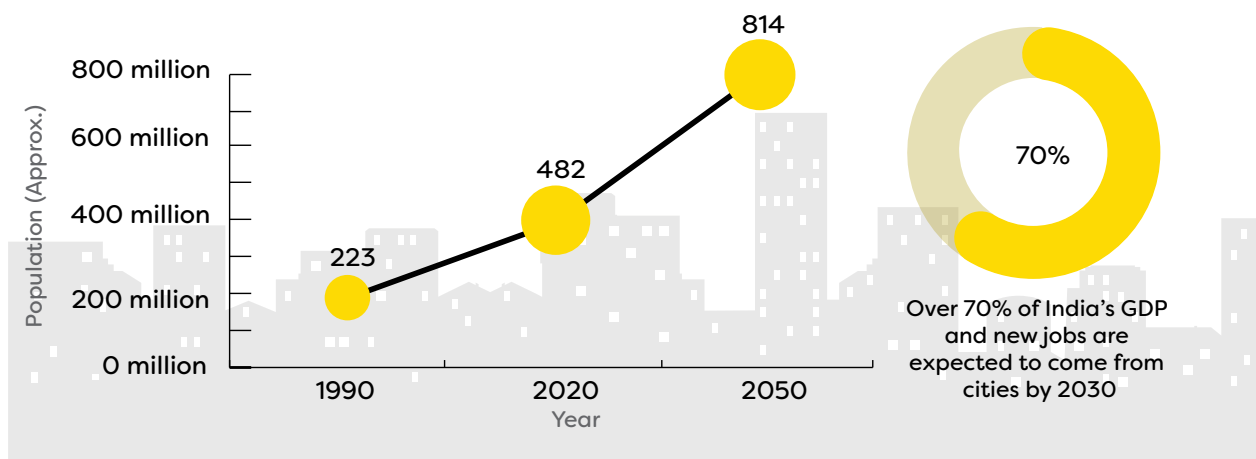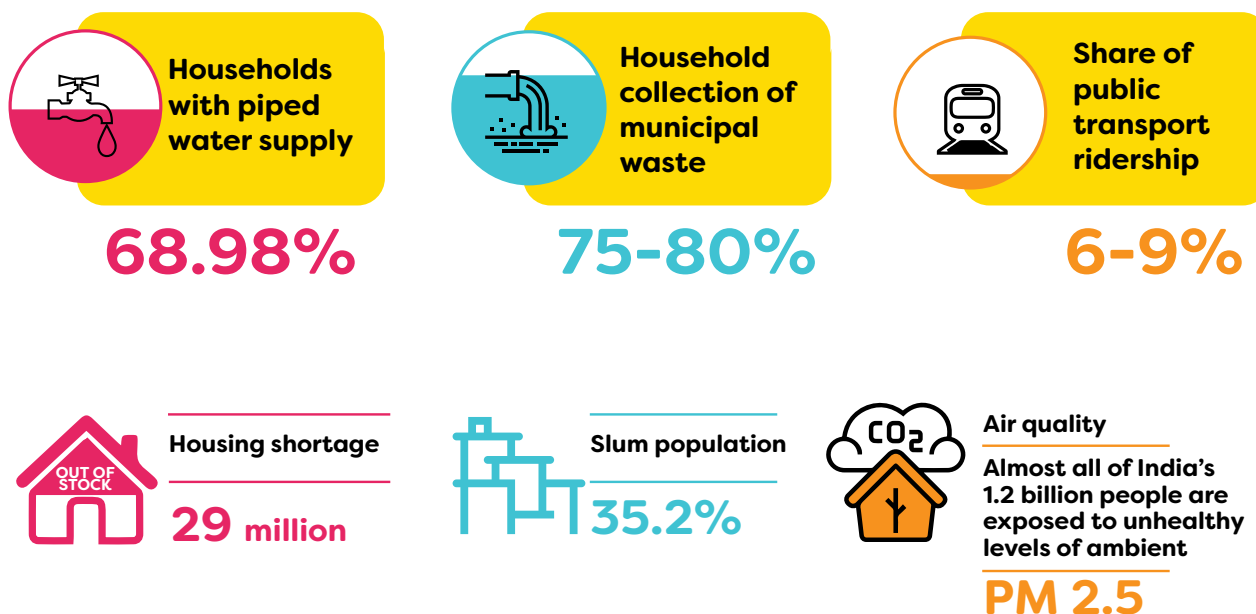Janaagraha

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01. Executive Summary

Cities – the theatres for 21st century challenges

Over 70% of India's GDP and new jobs are expected to come from cities by 2030

Source: The world's cities in 2018. United Nations, World Bank data bank, HPEC report 2011

Households with piped water supply

68.98%

Household collection of municipal waste

75-80%

Share of public transport ridership

6-9%

Housing shortage

29 million

Slum population

35.2%

Air quality

Almost all of India's 1.2 billion people are exposed to unhealthy levels of ambient

PM 2.5

Source: MoHUA Handbook Of Urban Statistics 2019, ORF report on Solid Waste Management In Urban India, 2020, KPMG report on Public Transport in India 2017, ICRIER report on Housing For India's Low-Income Urban Households 2020, World Bank data bank 2018, Central Pollution Control Board 2022.

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Councillors - the elected leaders of our cities are key to solving 21st century urban challenges. Councillors are the bridge between citizens and the government at the "first mile"
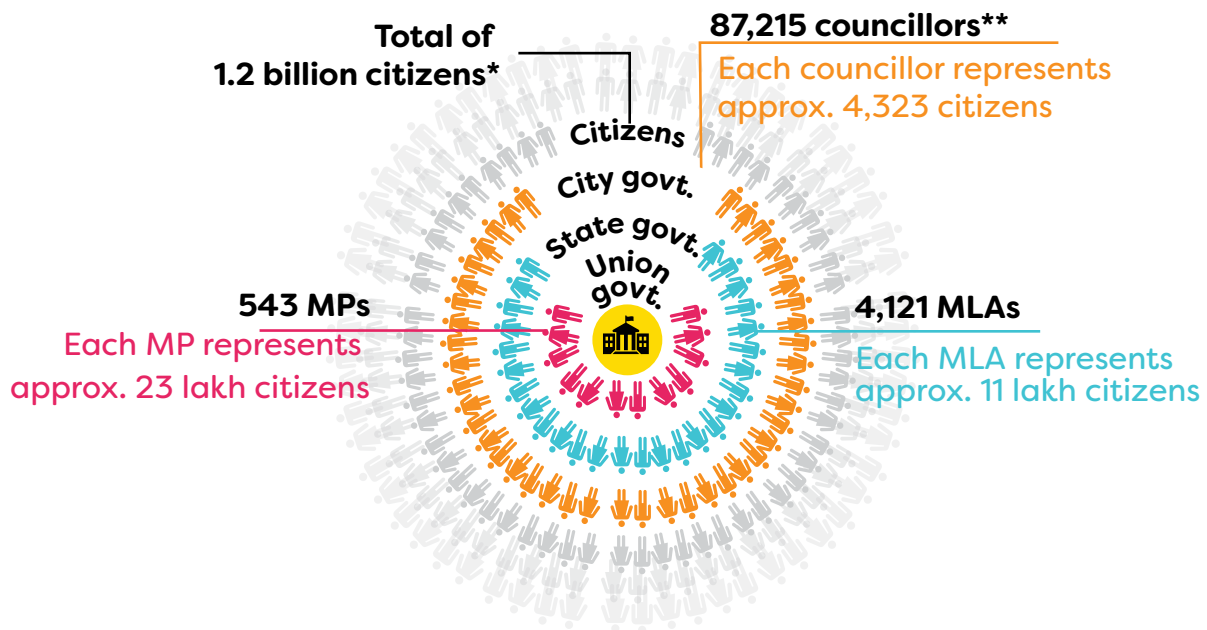
Total of 1.2 billion citizens*

87,215 councillors**
Each councillor represents approx. 4,323 citizens

Citizens
City govt.
State govt.
Union govt.

543 MPs
Each MP represents approx. 23 lakh citizens

4,121 MLAs
Each MLA represents approx. 11 lakh citizens

Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the websites of Lok Sabha, respective state assemblies, and Local Government Directory

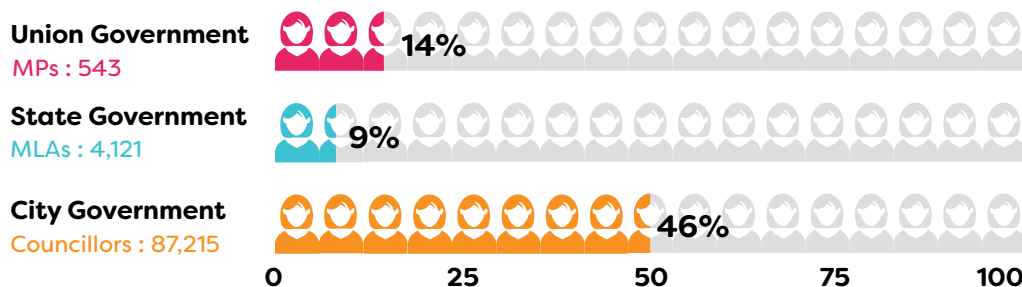**Population as per Census 2011 | **Councillors represent only urban population*

Women councillors are a significant leadership force in India's cities

The Constitution of India provides for 33% reservation for women in the city council. 50% of the states have provided for 50% reservation for women in the city council. At least, 46% of our councillors are women.

Union Government
MPs : 543
14%

State Government
MLAs : 4,121
9%

City Government
Councillors : 87,215
46%

0   25   50   75   100

Source: 17th Lok Sabha, Gender-wise representation of members. (2019). Lok Sabha House of the People. https:/bit.ly/3MQtyg3
Analysis based on the data made available by the websites of respective state assemblies and city governments, and respective state mandates on women's reservation.

However, councillors are highly disempowered, as city governments are yet to be recognised as a unit of governance in India

Councillors are disempowered over the proverbial 3 Fs – Funds, Functions, and Functionaries and have no role in the core functions of a city such as planning, transport, climate, law enforcement etc.

#	Functions	New York	London	Joburg	Mumbai	Bengaluru	Faridabad
1	**Legislative powers**	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
2	**Judicial powers**	✔	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖
3	**Powers over finance**						
	1. *Taxation**	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔	✔
	2. *Budget*	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	3. *Investment*	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔
	4. *Borrowing*	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
4	**Powers over functions**						
	1. City planning (incl. socio-economic planning)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	2. Transport	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	3. Climate	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
	4. Water supply	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	5. Solid waste management	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	6. Police (Law and order, Traffic)	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
	7. Education	✔	✔	✖	✔	✔	✖
	8. Health	✔	✖	✔	✔	✔	✖
	9. Fire and emergency	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔
5	**Powers over staff****	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖

Source: Analysis based on respective municipal legislations and city government websites

*   Power over taxes include the city government's power to collect all four taxes - property, advertisement, entertainment and profession taxes
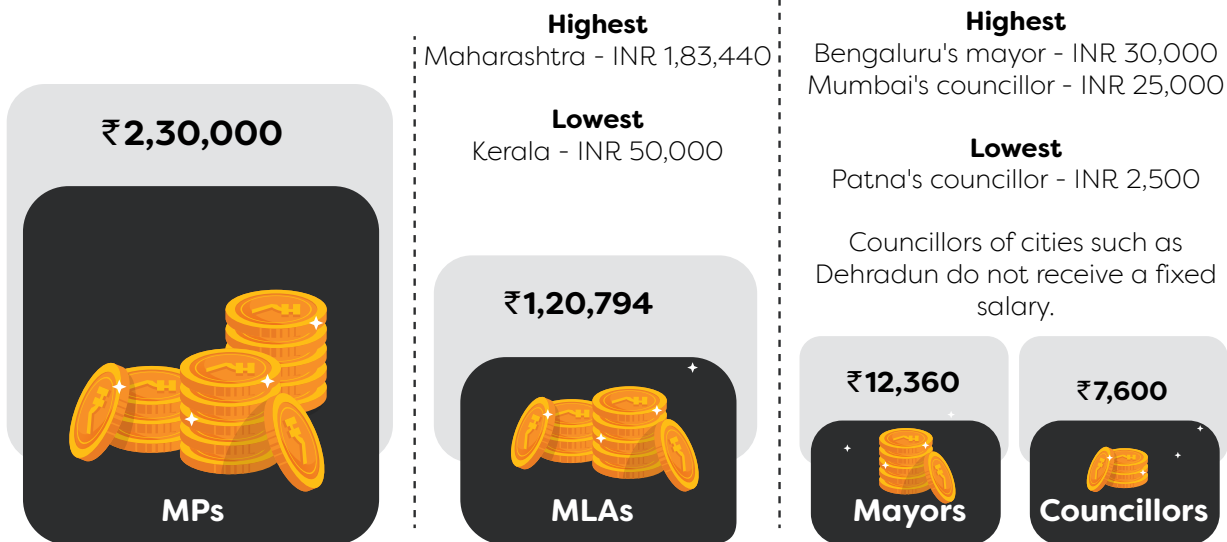
**   Power over staff checks whether the city government can appoint, terminate service and initiate disciplinary action against municipal staff

Councillors in India do not receive adequate pay

Councillors on an average receive a monthly remuneration of INR 7,600 compared to an MLA, who on an average, receives INR 1,20,794 and an MP who receives INR 2,30,000.*

Constitutionally empowered to decide their own salaries and allowances by enacting laws in their respective legislatures

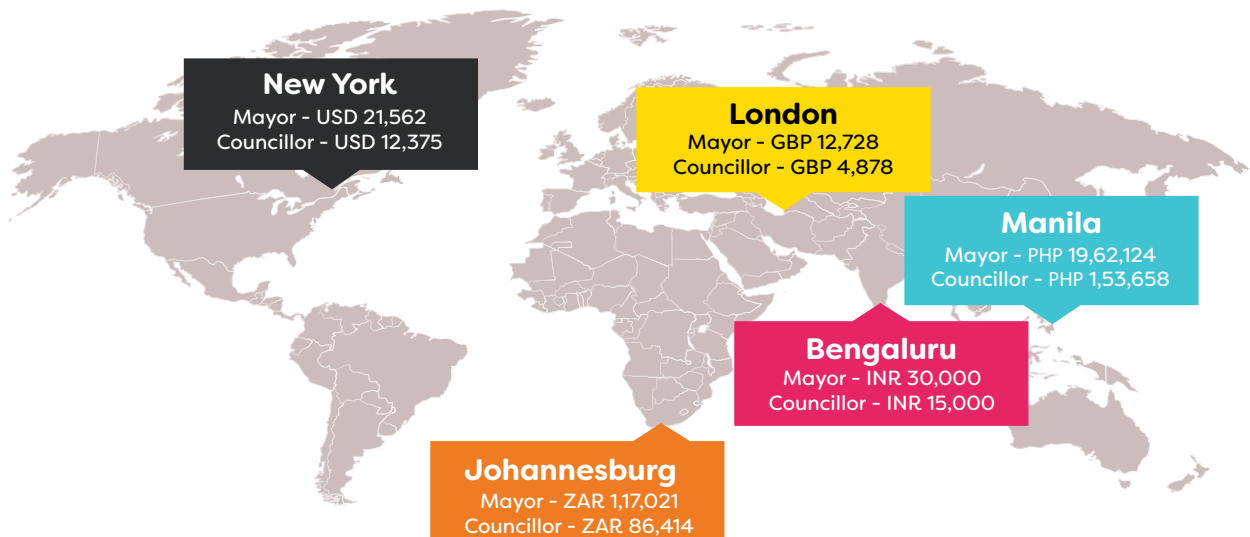Cannot determine their own salary/honorarium

Highest
Maharashtra - INR 1,83,440

Lowest
Kerala - INR 50,000

Highest
Bengaluru's mayor - INR 30,000
Mumbai's councillor - INR 25,000

Lowest
Patna's councillor - INR 2,500

Councillors of cities such as Dehradun do not receive a fixed salary.

₹2,30,000

MPs

₹1,20,794

MLAs

₹12,360

Mayors

₹7,600

Councillors

*Average of sample states

Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the Lok Sabha website, respective state legislations on salaries and allowances for MLAs, and data shared by the respective city elected representatives and officials

Note : Figures are based on monthly salary and do not take into account salary reduction owing to COVID-19 pandemic

Elected representatives of India's cities are paid much lower than their global counterparts.

New York
Mayor - USD 21,562
Councillor - USD 12,375

London
Mayor - GBP 12,728
Councillor - GBP 4,878

Manila
Mayor - PHP 19,62,124
Councillor - PHP 1,53,658

Bengaluru
Mayor - INR 30,000
Councillor - INR 15,000

Johannesburg
Mayor - ZAR 1,17,021
Councillor - ZAR 86,414

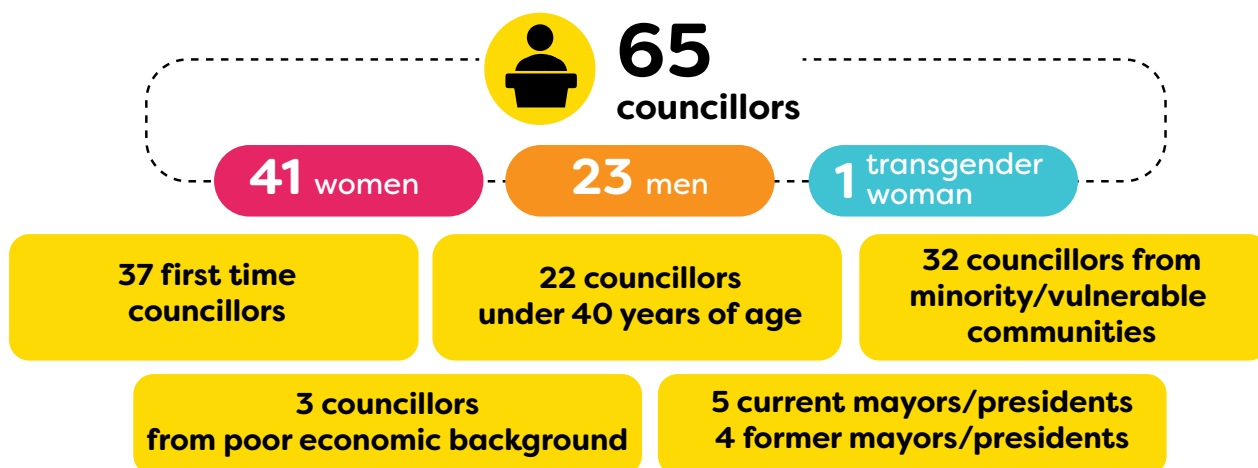*Source: Council. (n.d.). American Legal Publishing Corporation. Retrieved 16 March 2022, from https:/bit.ly/3q96cZD, GLA Elected Members Salary Determination.(2021). https:/bit.ly/3tdh3mX, Writer, S. (2021, November 2). Here's how much mayors and other top municipal workers earn in South Africa. BUSINESS TECH. https:/bit.ly/3MRqyQL, How Much do Politicians and Government Officials Earn? (n.d.). Announcement PH. https:/bit.ly/3MW3ksA*

Note - Figures show monthly salary

We spoke to 65 councillors from 21 cities across 16 states

65 councillors

41 women | **23** men | **1** transgender woman

37 first time councillors

22 councillors under 40 years of age

32 councillors from minority/vulnerable communities

3 councillors from poor economic background

5 current mayors/presidents 4 former mayors/presidents

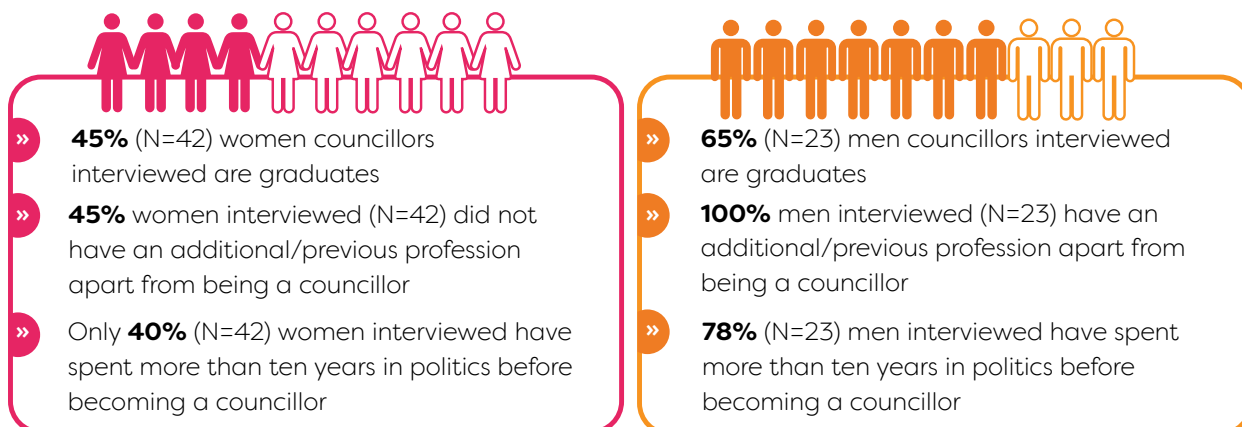# Councillors navigate several challenges

68%
Councillors find their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined
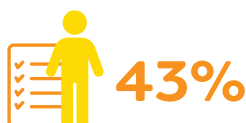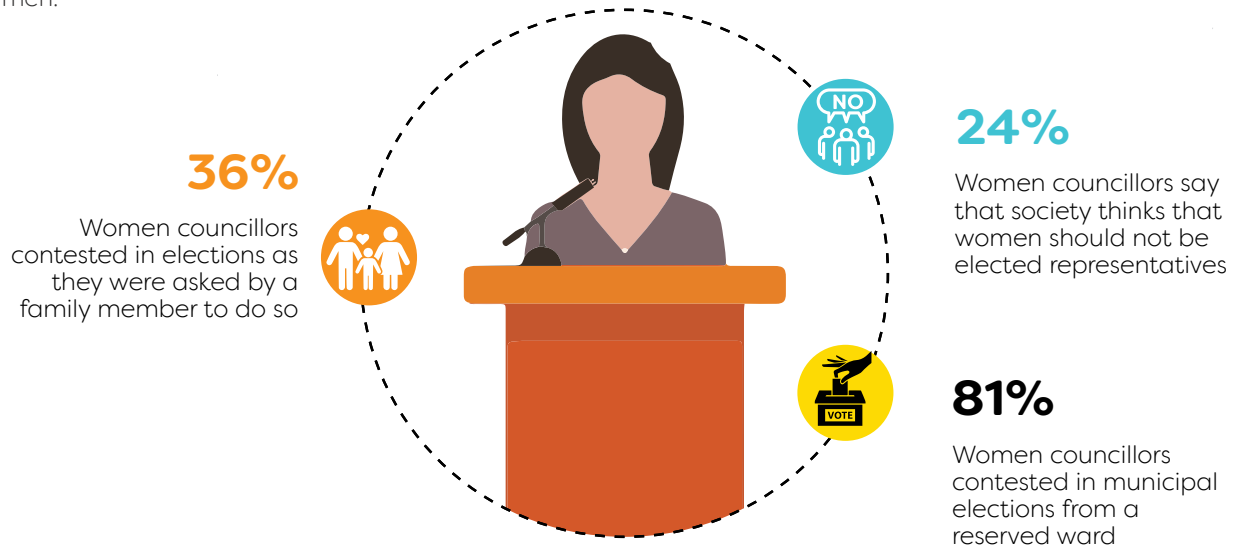
43%
Councillors do not have adequate information to make an effective case to a concerned authority

Women councillors navigate unique experiences and challenges

Women councillors have different starting points compared to men.

» **45%** (N=42) women councillors interviewed are graduates

» **45%** women interviewed (N=42) did not have an additional/previous profession apart from being a councillor

» Only **40%** (N=42) women interviewed have spent more than ten years in politics before becoming a councillor

» **65%** (N=23) men councillors interviewed are graduates

» **100%** men interviewed (N=23) have an additional/previous profession apart from being a councillor

» **78%** (N=23) men interviewed have spent more than ten years in politics before becoming a councillor

Women councillors are more likely to rely on support such as family and legislation for their political career than men.

36%
Women councillors contested in elections as they were asked by a family member to do so

24%
Women councillors say that society thinks that women should not be elected representatives

81%
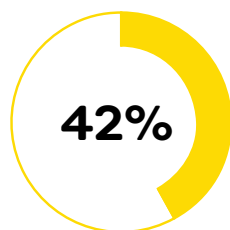Women councillors contested in municipal elections from a reserved ward

## Councillors know how to win elections but they do not know how to govern the city

98% of the councillors interviewed believe that sound knowledge and understanding about city government is important for them to be able to perform well.
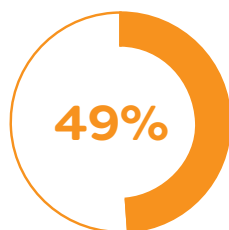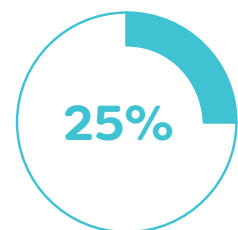
49%
Councillors do not feel that they have adequate say in the funds allocated to their ward

42%
Councillors do not know how to access additional funds to their ward

33%
Councillors do not understand the structure and working of their city government
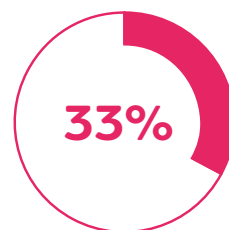
25%
Councillors do not understand key city governance legislations

Councillors across India echo *'we want a systematic leadership programme'*

First-time councillors, especially those with no prior political background value training more. Only 45% of the councillors interviewed have received an induction training.

100%
Councillors believe that a systematic leadership programme is important
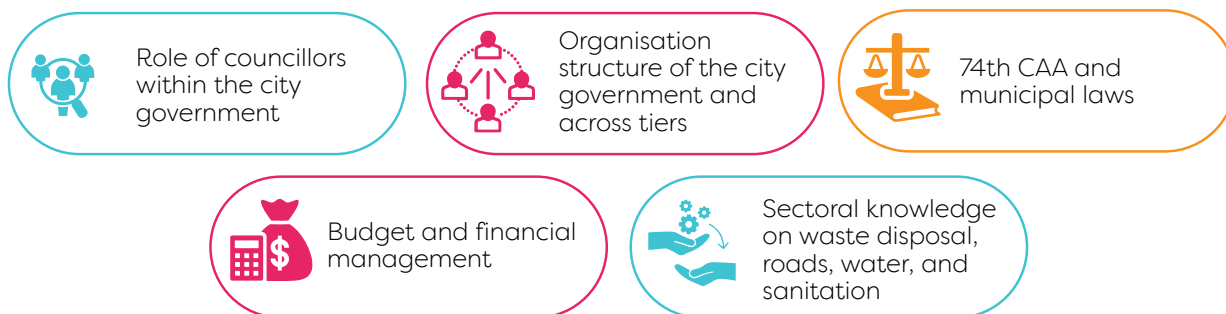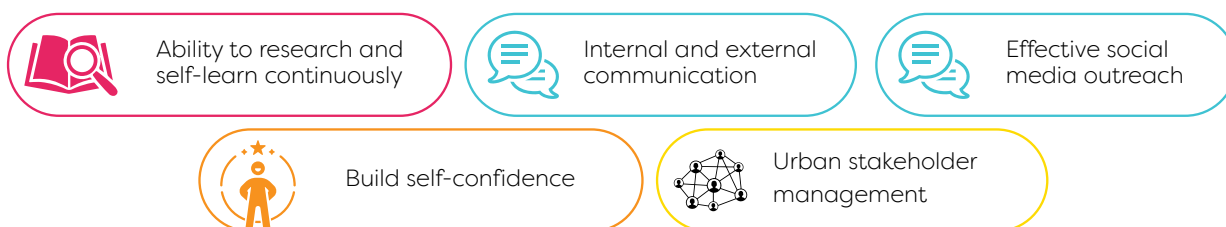
89%
Councillors agree that training should be undertaken periodically on contemporary topics

Councillors have identified ten key training areas across hard and soft skills

Hard skills

Role of councillors within the city government

Organisation structure of the city government and across tiers

74th CAA and municipal laws

Budget and financial management

Sectoral knowledge on waste disposal, roads, water, and sanitation

Soft skills

Ability to research and self-learn continuously

Internal and external communication

Effective social media outreach

Build self-confidence

Urban stakeholder management

82% councillors interviewed say that, to be truly empowered and effective, along with leadership building, greater decentralisation is also key

Chart categories (y-axis):
- Devolution of all functions as per the 74th constitution amendment act
- Greater power over functions
- Greater power over funds
- Greater powers over staff
- Better salary/honorarium

X-axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%

Legend:
- It will not help at all
- It will not help much
- Neutral
- It will help a little bit
- It will help a lot
- Don't know
- Refused to answer

Journey of Councillors with City Leaders Programme

We aim to create a systematic leadership program to empower the elected leaders in the city council, particularly women, for a sustainable urban future

1 Wins city election

2 Enrolls in 'City Leaders Programme'

3 Receives training in hard and soft skills

Councillor

5 Articulates effectively in the city council

4 Joins 'City Leaders Network'

CITY LEADERS NETWORK

6 Avails funds for their ward

7 Convenes ward committee meeting

9 Gets recognised for good governance

8 Creates model ward

02. METHODOLOGY

What is 'City Leaders'?

This study, 'City Leaders' enquires into the needs and opportunities in a systematic leadership programme for councillors, with a focus on women.

Why 'City Leaders'?

India has 87,000+ councillors across its 4,700+ cities, catering to an average of over 4,300+[1] citizens in each ward.[2] The councillor is the bridge between citizens and the government at the "first mile" and in that capacity closest to the citizen, geographically and substantively. Of these 87,000+ councillors, at least 46% are women.

However, the elected leaders of our cities are highly disempowered, and often not taken seriously. Multiple research studies conducted across the globe indicate the strategic role of capacity building of elected officials responsible for local governance as crucial to sustainable urbanisation and resilient cities.[3] **In our experience and interactions with the city governments over years, we have often heard that while councillors know how to win elections, typically, there are no systematic mechanisms to induct and equip them to govern their city. This study seeks to establish evidence on this gap, and thereby the needs and opportunities in the systematic leadership building of councillors.**

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1) This number would be significantly higher in larger cities; this is an average across types of city governments
2) Figures are approximates collated based on Local Government Directory, GoI based on Census 2011
3) Bhagavathula, S., Brundiers, K., Stauffacher, M., & Kay, B. (2021). Fostering collaboration in city governments' sustainability, emergency management and resilience work through competency-based capacitybuilding. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction,* 63, 102408. https:/bit.ly/3vJnIqO

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How did we conduct the study?

Overall approach
This study employed a twin track approach of policy research and primary research.

City Leaders

Policy research

Assessment of laws and policies pertaining to:
» Decentralisation and empowerment of city governments
» Functions and powers of councillors
» Reservation for women in city councils
» Landscape of councillor training in India and across the globe
» Best practices

Data curated as on 31st December, 2021

Analysis of relevant studies and literature

Primary research

Structured and in-depth interviews with **councillors** across India, with a focus on **women**

In-depth interviews with urban thought leaders encompassing-
» Parliamentarians and legislators (including those with experience in city politics)
» Officials with urban experience (senior and mid-level officers)
» Experts who train councillors
» Technical experts on gender, sanitation, public heath, environment/climate

10 sample cities for both primary and policy research:

Bengaluru | Cuttack | Faridabad | Guwahati | Indore | Jaipur | Kochi | Mumbai | Panaji | Patna

Selection criteria:
☑ Size of the cities (in terms of population)
☑ Type of city government
☑ Geographic distribution
☑ Urbanisation levels of the states that the cities belong to

How did we conduct policy research?

Reviewed
74 municipal legislations across **36** states/UTs
(Broad strokes on city governments and their empowerment)

Reviewed
19 municipal legislations and **8** rules across **10** sample cities/states
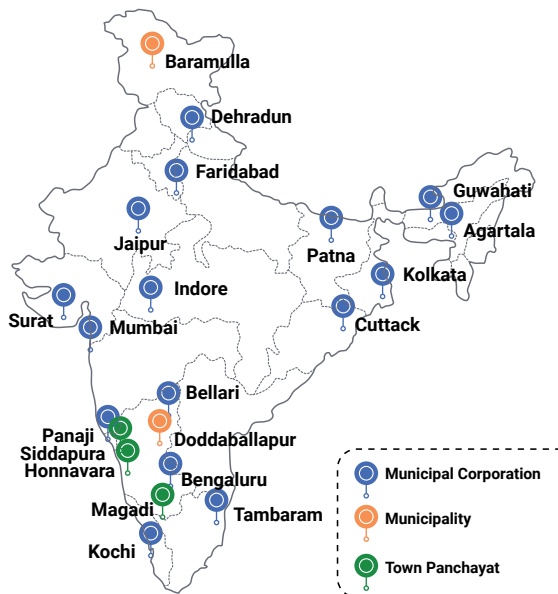(Deep dive)

How did we conduct primary research?

Voice of councillors

The objective was to dig deep and capture the qualitative nuances of the experiences, opinions/perceptions and training needs from the councillors

» Semi-structured interviews

» 50 interviews from 10 sample cities

» **Additional 15 interviews to capture diverse voices, including councillors from transgender community, recently upgraded city governments, small city governments, Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast**

» Period: November 2021 - February 2022

Where did we go to capture the voice of councillors?

Baramulla
Dehradun
Faridabad
Guwahati
Jaipur
Agartala
Patna
Indore
Kolkata
Surat   Mumbai
Cuttack
Bellari
Panaji   Doddaballapur
Siddapura
Honnavara   Bengaluru
Magadi   Tambaram
Kochi

- Municipal Corporation
- Municipality
- Town Panchayat

Aimed to maximise the diversity of the voices of councillors across-

- ⊘ Gender
- ⊘ Educational qualification
- ⊘ Socio-economic background
- ⊘ Experience (first timers and senior councillors)

- ⊘ Won from reserved ward and general ward
- ⊘ Award winners
- ⊘ Experience of undergoing leadership trainings
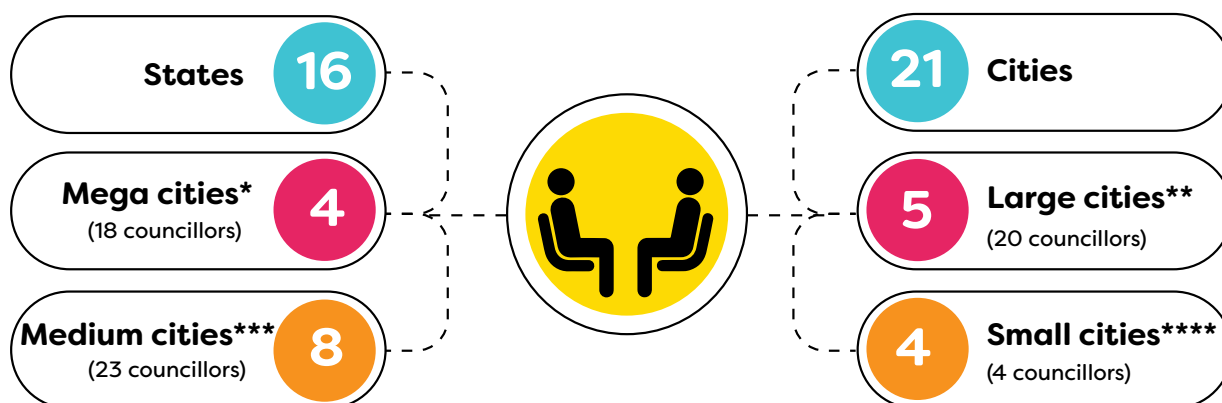
101 hours of interviews | **37 in-person interviews** | **28 remote interviews** | **10 cities visited in person**

We interviewed councillors from:

States 16

Mega cities* 4
(18 councillors)

Medium cities** 8
(23 councillors)

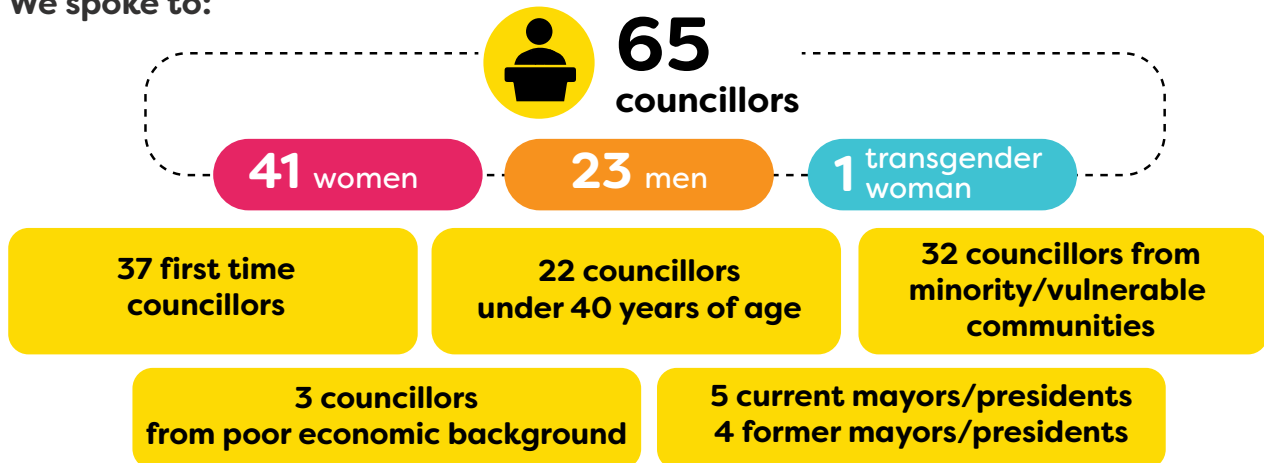21 **Cities**

5 **Large cities***
(20 councillors)

4 **Small cities****
(4 councillors)

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* Mega cities are cities with more than 40 lakh population | ** Large cities are cities with 10-40 lakh population

*** Medium cities are cities with 1-10 lakh population | **** Small cities are cities with less than 1 lakh population

JANAAGRAHA
Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship & Democracy

We spoke to:

65 councillors

- **41** women
- **23** men
- **1** transgender woman

37 first time councillors

22 councillors under 40 years of age

32 councillors from minority/vulnerable communities

3 councillors from poor economic background

5 current mayors/presidents
4 former mayors/presidents

Though the sample of councillors interviewed for this study may not necessarily be representative of all councillors of India, it is substantial in gathering information regarding their training needs as well as meticulously capturing a diverse set of voices.
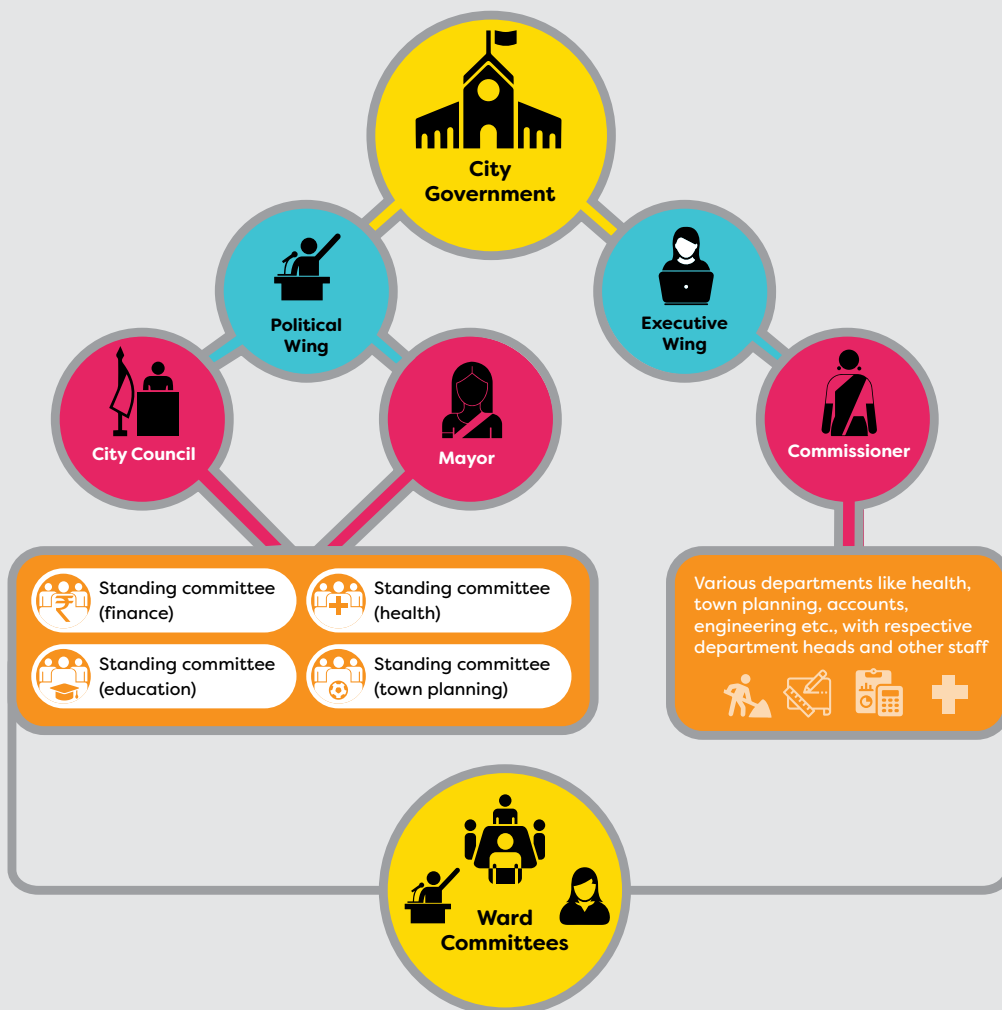
Voice of thought leaders

The objective was to corroborate the voice of councillors with that of the voice of thought leaders and understand :

- ⊘ Priority themes for systematic leadership programme for councillors
- ⊘ Gender mainstreaming and gender sensitisation
- ⊘ Mode of course delivery
- ⊘ Factors to be sensitive in programme design and delivery
- ⊘ Process for institutionalisation

In-depth free flowing interviews were conducted with fifteen thought leaders, from January to February 2022, encompassing urban MPs and MLAs (including those with experience in city politics), officials with urban experience (senior and mid-level officers) and experts who train councillors and technical experts on gender, sanitation, public health and environment/climate.

1. **Bhawna Prakash**
   Associate Partner, Ernst and Young
2. **Chirag Gajjar**
   Head - Subnational Climate Action, WRI India
3. **Hemakshi Meghani**
   Co-Founder, Indian School of Democracy
   Ishu Gupta
   Research Manager, Indian School of Democracy
4. **Dr Joy Elamon**
   Director General, Kerala Institute of Local Administration
5. **Manvita Baradi**
   Founder Director, Urban Management Centre
6. **PC Mohan**
   Member of Parliament, 17th Lok Sabha
7. **Dr Lalitha Kamath**
   Chairperson, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, TISS, Mumbai

8. **Dr Ranjani Gopinath**
   Public Health Expert
9. **Sangramjit Nayak IAS**
   Director of Municipal Administration, Government of Odisha
10. **Sarada Muraleedharan IAS**
    Additional Chief Secretary, Local Self-Government Department, Government of Kerala
11. **Sowmya Reddy**
    Member of Legislative Assembly, Karnataka
12. **Vandana Chavan**
    Member of Parliament, 17th Rajya Sabha
13. **City public health officer**
14. **City revenue inspector**
15. **City executive engineer**

Requested anonymity

03.
Demystifying roles, responsibilities and challenges for councillors

City Government

Political Wing

Executive Wing

City Council

Mayor

Commissioner

Standing committee (finance)

Standing committee (health)

Standing committee (education)

Standing committee (town planning)

Various departments like health, town planning, accounts, engineering etc., with respective department heads and other staff

Ward Committees

"Being the mayor is the most difficult job I have ever done. A lot of challenges are there, especially the political indifferences. But I am trying my best, and I ensure to keep a healthy relationship with everyone in the council."

M Anil Kumar
Mayor
Kochi, Kerala

"Councillors have no power at all. Unlike MPLADS funds, councilors have no funds. They have to apply to the chairperson. Even mukhiyas in panchayats have cheque issuing power but councillors have no financial powers."

Vinay Tiwari
Councillor
Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh

Councillors are our city leaders. Therefore, they are the government at the 'first mile'. They are primarily responsible for local action on global challenges such as climate change, economic growth and jobs, gender equality, water etc. While India has given Constitutional recognition to city governments, it is yet to recognise city governments as a unit of governance. This consequently disempowers our councillors. How are city governments and councillors disempowered in India? Why is it important to take the role of councillors seriously? What can we learn from global models?

Cities – the theatres for 21st century challenges

Cities will be crucial to India's socio-economic future across the 4 Es - Economic growth and job creation, Equitable access to services and opportunities, Environmental sustainability and democratic Engagement. While these challenges are global in their character and manifestations, it is collective action and partnerships in our cities and communities that will directly impact our lives, particularly those of socially and economically vulnerable citizens. **City governments will need to play a leadership role in catalysing such collective action in our cities and communities.**

Fig. 1 : Cities will be critical drivers to this target and are indeed crucial to India's socio-economic future

Over 70% of India's GDP and new jobs are expected to come from cities by 2030
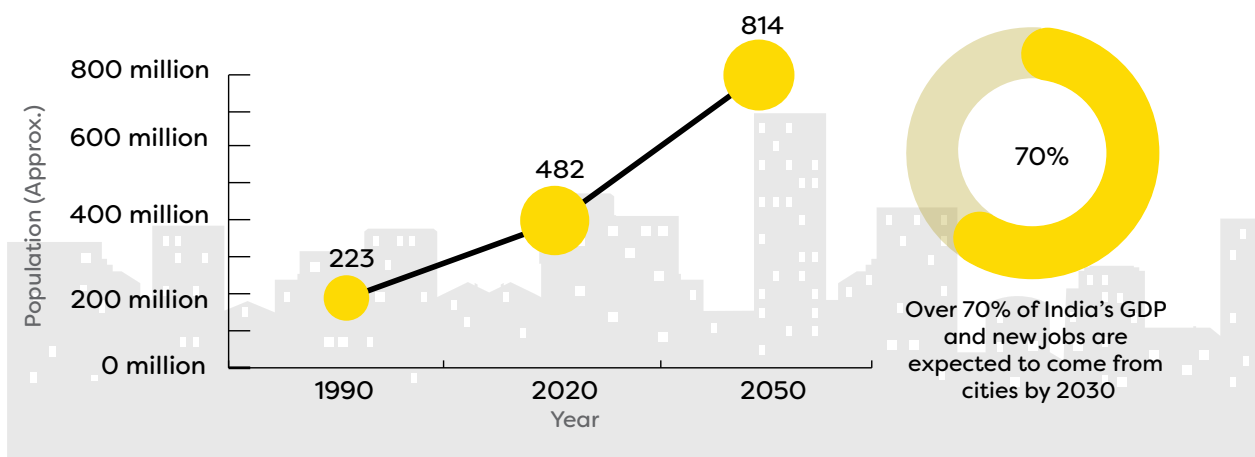
Source: The world's cities in 2018. United Nations, World Bank data bank, HPEC report 2011
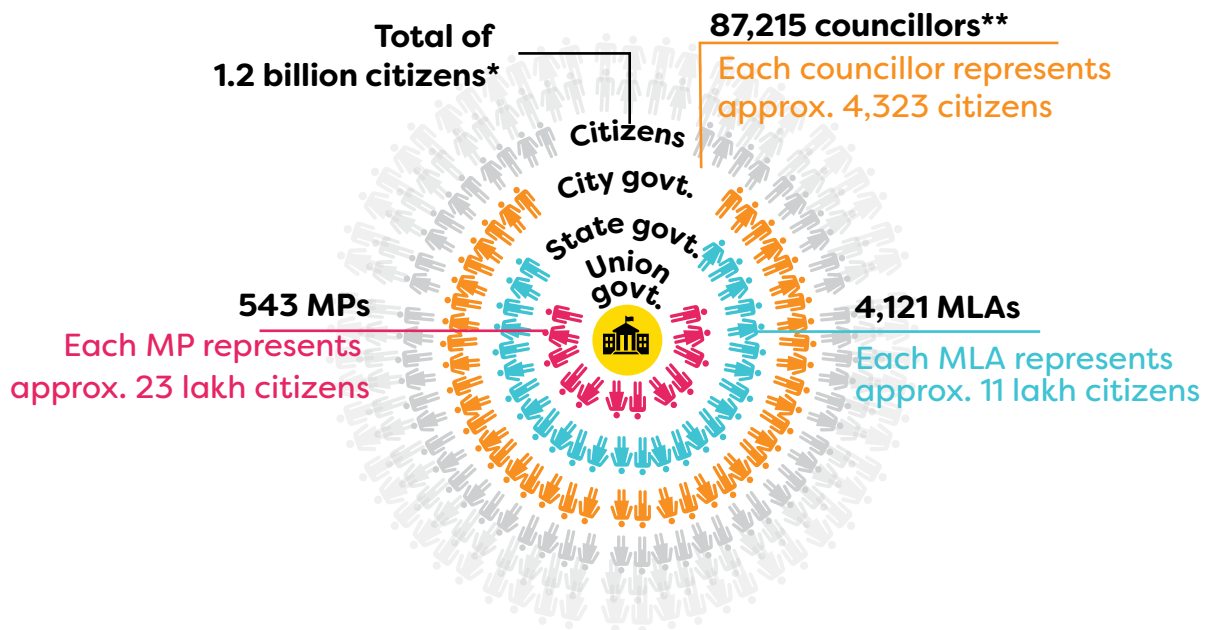

The Constitution of India ushered in democratic decentralisation in cities by giving Constitutional recognition to city governments through the 74th Constitution Amendment Act (CAA) on 1st June, 1993. The primary objective of the 74th CAA was to strengthen democracy at the grass-root level through city governments. It sought to accomplish this objective by empowering and enabling city governments i.e., elected city councils.

Councillors are our city leaders, and the bridge between citizen and the government at the "first mile"

In India's cities, there are three categories of elected representatives - MPs, MLAs and finally the councillor who is the voice of citizens in the city government. According to the principle of subsidiarity, the socio-economic and political problems must be solved by the government closest to the people. Thus, the **councillor is the bridge between citizens and the government at the "first mile", and in that capacity closest to the citizen, geographically and substantively.**

Fig. 2 : Elected representatives across tiers of government

87,215 councillors**
Each councillor represents approx. 4,323 citizens

Total of 1.2 billion citizens*

Citizens
City govt.
State govt.
Union govt.

543 MPs
Each MP represents approx. 23 lakh citizens

4,121 MLAs
Each MLA represents approx. 11 lakh citizens

Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the websites of Lok Sabha, respective state assemblies, and Local Government Directory

*Population as per Census 2011 | **Councillors represent only urban population

A report released by Azim Premji University in association with Lokniti in 2019, shows that in the urban localities, 19% of respondents say that they will approach their councillor to get their work done as opposed to 14% of respondents who said they will approach the MLA.[4] A closer look at the number shows that citizens with lower education (39%) as well as those who belong to underprivileged backgrounds are more likely to approach councillors than highly educated individuals (23%). **This shows the crucial role councillors play in ensuring access to facilities for vulnerable citizens. Councillors are also instrumental in formulating the city budget which has the most impact on our day-to-day lives.** While accurate data is unavailable, estimates suggest that taken together, 4,700+ city budgets aggregate to an amount of INR 1,50,000-1,80,000 crore annually.

However, councillors are highly disempowered, as city governments are yet to be recognised as a unit of governance in India

Despite being elected leaders of our cities, councillors in India are toothless as they are not in charge of several key functions in a city. This undermining of councillors stems from the reality that city governments in itself are disempowered. While the 74th CAA gave Constitutional recognition to city governments, it did not recognise city governments as a third tier of government. This is because, local governments (both for cities and villages) come under the ambit of state governments as per the seventh schedule of the Constitution.

4)   Centre for Regional Political Economy. (2019). *Politics And Society Between Elections*. Azim Premji University, Lokniti. https://bit.ly/3JMcOEC

Team Janaagraha with the elected representative of Hajipur, Bihar

1.   Cities are disempowered over the 3Fs – Funds, Functions and Functionaries

The city council, comprising of mayor and councillors, do not have complete autonomy in making decisions on critical functions such as planning, water, environment and fire and emergency services etc. Our analysis across 74 municipal legislations of 36 states/UTs, shows that, **on an average, only eight out of the eighteen functions under the twelfth schedule of the Constitution have been devolved to the city governments by law.**

City governments also have limited taxation powers. **Our analysis shows that, post the introduction of the Goods & Services Tax in 2017, which subsumed advertisement tax and entertainment tax, only three states- Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka (Bengaluru) have devolved these taxes to city governments.**

Mayors/councils also cannot hire and fire their own staff, severely constraining their ability to exact accountability for performance from city officials.

They also have limited say when it comes to investing or borrowing monies or finalising budgets. Only three states – Bihar, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan empower the city governments to invest and borrow monies without prior state approval, across all categories of city governments. **Only nine states/UTs empower the city governments, across categories, to adopt the city's budget without seeking the final approval of the respective state government. Mayors/councils also have limited sanction limits. In most cities, the financial powers rest with municipal commissioner, who is a state-appointed bureaucrat.**

Table 1 : Financial powers of mayors/councillors

City	Budget size (in lakhs)	Sanction limit of mayor (in lakhs)	Sanction limit of councillor (in lakhs)
Bengaluru	9,20,000	15,000 (1.63% of budget size)	New ward – 300 (0.03% of budget size) Old ward – 200 (0.02% of budget size)
Mumbai	39,00,000	750 (0.01% of budget size)	No such powers
Guwahati	34,600	50 (0.14% of budget size)	40 (subject to city budget) (0.11% of budget size)
Patna	1,50,000	No powers	No powers

Source: Councillors and officials from respective cities

Note: Budget 2021-22 has been used to arrive at the budget size of Bengaluru, Mumbai and Patna. Budget 2016-17 has been used for Guwahati.

It is interesting to note that globally well-run cities are far more empowered. As can be seen in table 2, unlike their Indian counterparts, the mayor/council of global cities are empowered to perform core functions such as planning, developing a vision for the city, transport, climate, law enforcement etc. They are also empowered over funds, functions and functionaries.

The disempowerment of mayor/council in India has resulted in our city governments becoming a glorified service provider far from a local self-government or a city government.

Table 2 : Powers of mayor/council in cities across the globe

#	Functions	New York	London	Joburg	Mumbai	Bengaluru	Faridabad
1	**Legislative Powers**	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
2	**Judicial Powers**	✔	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖
3	**Powers over finance**						
	1. Taxation*	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔	✔
	2. Budget	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	3. Investment	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔
	4. Borrowing	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
4	**Powers over functions**						
	1. City planning (incl. socio-economic planning)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	2. Transport	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	3. Climate	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
	4. Water supply	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖
	5. Solid waste management	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	6. Police (Law and order, Traffic)	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖
	7. Education	✔	✔	✖	✔	✔	✖
	8. Health	✔	✖	✔	✔	✔	✖
	9. Fire and emergency	✔	✔	✔	✔	✖	✔
5	**Powers over staff****	✔	✔	✔	✖	✖	✖

Source: Analysis based on respective municipal legislations and city government websites.

*   Power over taxes include the city government's power to collect all four taxes - property, advertisement, entertainment and profession taxes

** Power over staff checks whether the city government can appoint, terminate service and initiate disciplinary action against municipal staff

2. Councillors in India do not receive adequate pay. A councillor on an average receives a monthly remuneration of INR 7,600 compared to an MLA who receives INR 1,20,794 and an MP who receives INR 2,30,000

In India, while the MPs and MLAs are Constitutionally empowered to determine their salaries and allowances[5], those of local elected representatives are subject to the approval of the respective state governments.[6]
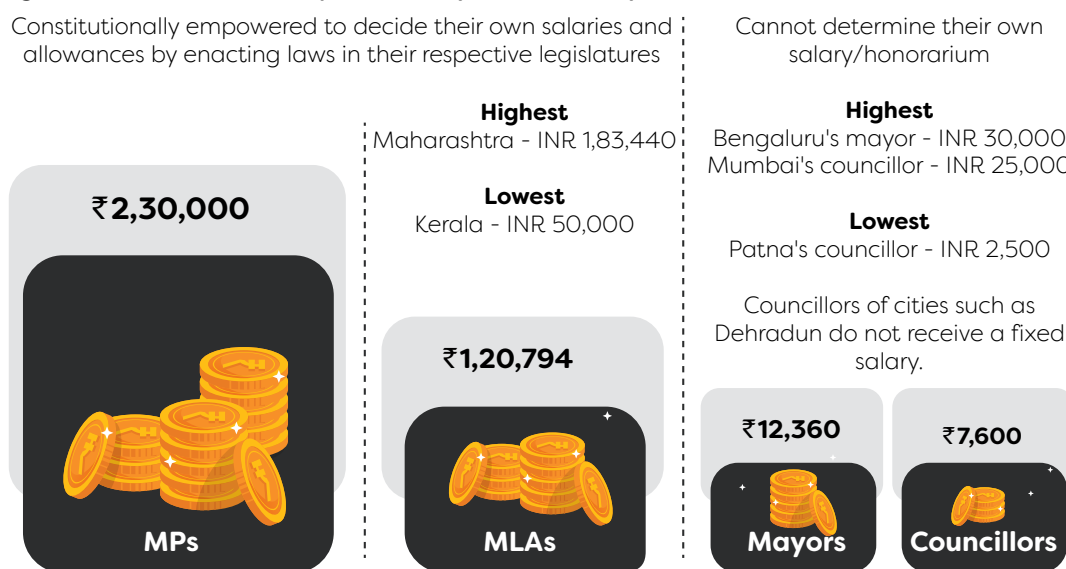
"In Dehradun, neither the councillor nor the mayor gets any salary. This is a very sad thing to even say. There must be some amount which the councillor should be paid as salary. Since the last decade, people have been raising this concern but nothing has been done yet."
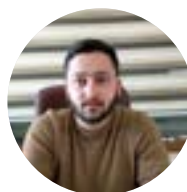
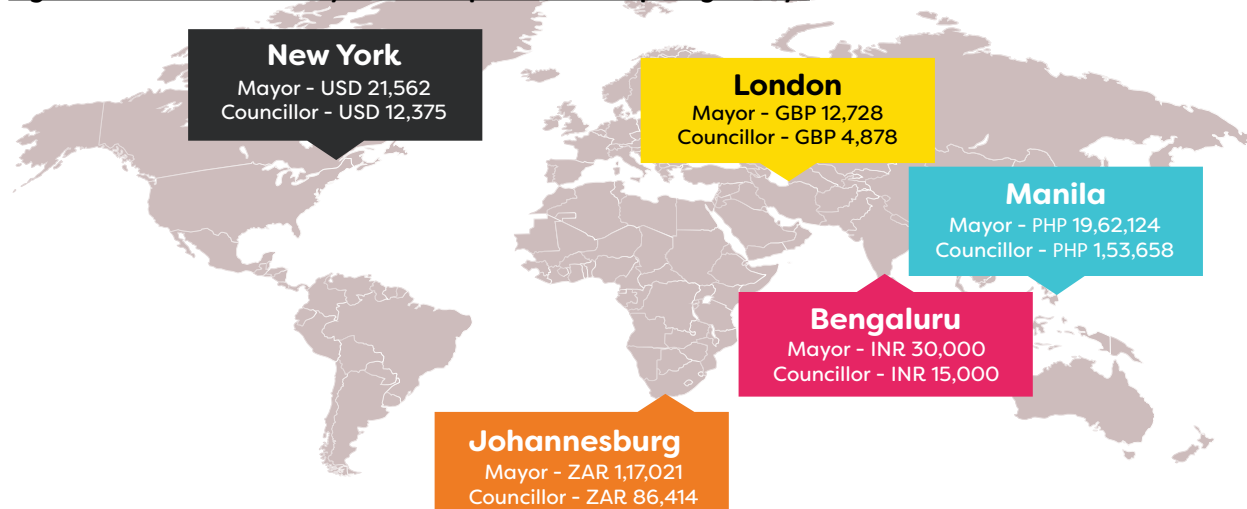**Rohan Chandel**
Councillor
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Figure 3 : How much are city elected representatives paid in India?

Constitutionally empowered to decide their own salaries and allowances by enacting laws in their respective legislatures

Cannot determine their own salary/honorarium

Highest
Maharashtra - INR 1,83,440

Lowest
Kerala - INR 50,000

Highest
Bengaluru's mayor - INR 30,000
Mumbai's councillor - INR 25,000

Lowest
Patna's councillor - INR 2,500

Councillors of cities such as Dehradun do not receive a fixed salary.

₹2,30,000

₹1,20,794

₹12,360

₹7,600

MPs

MLAs

Mayors

Councillors

*Average of sample states

Source: Analysis based on the data made available by the Lok Sabha website, respective state legislations on salaries and allowances for MLAs, and data shared by the respective city elected representatives and officials.

Note : Calculations are based on monthly figures and do not take into account salary reduction owing to COVID-19 pandemic

Figure 4 : How much are city elected representatives paid globally?

New York
Mayor - USD 21,562
Councillor - USD 12,375

London
Mayor - GBP 12,728
Councillor - GBP 4,878

Manila
Mayor - PHP 19,62,124
Councillor - PHP 1,53,658

Bengaluru
Mayor - INR 30,000
Councillor - INR 15,000

Johannesburg
Mayor - ZAR 1,17,021
Councillor - ZAR 86,414

Source: Council. (n.d.). American Legal Publishing Corporation. Retrieved 16 March 2022, from https://bit.ly/3q96cZD, GLA Elected Members Salary Determination.(2021). https://bit.ly/3tdh3mX, Writer, S. (2021, November 2). Here's how much mayors and other top municipal workers earn in South Africa. BUSINESS TECH. https://bit.ly/3MRqyQL, How Much do Politicians and Government Officials Earn? (n.d.). Announcement PH. https://bit.ly/3MW3ksA

Note - Figures show monthly salary

5)   PRS Legislative Research. (n.d.). *The Salary, Allowances, and Pension of Members of Parliament Act*, 1954.

6)   The salary, allowances and pension of members of parliament (amendment) ordinance, 2020. *PRS Legislative Research.* (2020, February). https://bit.ly/3sXINe1

Low salaries demotivate councillors to work hard. *"Since the councillors only receive INR 3,000 there is less motivation for good people to do this kind of work. Also, lesser pay encourages taking bribes wherever possible"*, says a senior councillor from Guwahati.

Municipal legislations don't clearly articulate the roles, and responsibilities of councillors

A significant hurdle in the case of empowering councillors has been the absence of clarity in the roles and functions of elected representatives at the national, state and city levels i.e., MPs, MLAs, and councillors. Their positions in practice often appear hierarchical instead of each having a distinct work profile, and being answerable for that specific role. This absence of clarity has a heavier impact on councillors. **68% of the councillors interviewed feel that their roles are not clearly defined.** Further details on these challenges are discussed in chapter five.

Councillors are in charge of eighteen municipal functions as per the twelfth schedule of the Constitution. As we have seen already, these functions are often not effectively devolved. Our analysis (ref. Fig. 5) spanning nineteen municipal acts across ten sample states also reveals that the **roles and responsibilities are not specifically and clearly laid down in municipal legislations**. Even though roles and responsibilities are listed in municipal legislations, they are often not comprehensive.

Fig. 5 : Common roles and responsibilities of mayors and councillors enlisted across the municipal legislations in India

Mayor

- ☑ Preside over and decide the ordinary and special meetings of the city government
- ☑ Undertake general inspection and issue directions for the implementation of resolutions passed by the council or standing committee
- ☑ Exercise supervision and control over the actions of municipal officers in matters of executive administration
- ☑ Supervise financial and executive administration of the council

Councillor

- ☑ Participate in council meetings, council committee meetings and meetings of other civic bodies
- ☑ Address civic issues such as roads, bridges, water, waste management and such other functions devolved to the city government by the municipal legislation
- ☑ Conduct ward committee meetings and address concerns of citizens
- ☑ Support the city government in identifying beneficiaries for various state and central schemes
- ☑ Identification of ward development priorities and effective utilisation of ward development fund
- ☑ Move resolutions and to interpellate the mayor on matters connected with the administration of the city government
- ☑ Call the attention of mayor/commissioner to any neglect in the execution of municipal work or suggest improvements

Unique powers of councillors across states

- In Panaji, the city engineer, health officer and municipal secretary can be removed for misconduct or neglect by five-eighth majority of councillors
- In Assam (municipalities), with the previous sanction of the mayor, the councillors can inspect any work/expense/belongings of the city government. Similarly, in Rajasthan, councillors are empowered to inspect, without payment of any fees, records of city government, after giving due notice to the commissioner
- In Maharashtra (municipalities), the council may from time to time appoint special committees on special subjects
- In Guwahati, two councillors are elected to be part of the municipal service commission. Additionally, 50% of the councillors must be present to determine different appointments and budget estimates
- Madhya Pradesh (municipal corporations) empowers councillors to control the usage of municipal funds

Given that the roles and responsibilities of councillors are not comprehensive and clearly defined, most often Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) take the effort to simplify and clarify the role of a councillor by interpreting the legislations. *"The job description of elected representatives across tiers are so vague. Each city should have a document to clarify the role and responsibilities of elected representatives, and CSOs should be able to simplify it for people of all genders",* says Hemakshi Meghani, Co-Founder, Indian School of Democracy.

Councillors play an important role in standing committees (Fig. 6). Standing committees deliberate on specific domains such as finance, public health, gender etc. The standing committee is typically headed by a councillor.

Fig.6 : Standing committees in city governments

What is a standing committee?

Standing committees are platforms to deliberate on specific domains such as finance, public health, gender etc. The standing committee is typically headed by a councillor.

Common standing committees in Indian states

» Committee for finance
» Committee for health
» Committee for education
» Committee for town planning

Role of councillors in standing committees

» Right to enquire, report and provide opinion on subjects as they may be referred by the city government
» Power to supervise the utilisation of the budget grants and watch carefully the timely collection of tax, fees or rent (Committee for finance)
» Right to inspect the accounts of city government
» Power to supervise work and ensure all work is done appropriately

Councillors have limited funds at their disposal to carry out their responsibilities. They also have limited information on leveraging funds for their wards

Funds are important for councillors as they allow the building of infrastructure and delivery of services in the ward. These funds are allocated from the city budget and depend on the size and revenue collection of the city government. Thus, the process of availing funds and the amount availed are not uniform across cities in India. As can be seen in Fig 7, there are primarily two types of funds available to the councillor in addition to the funds in the form of union and state finance commission grants, union and state government schemes, grants for minority areas, etc.

Fig. 7 : Key funds available to the councillor

Councillor's funds

These funds are allotted to every councillor in the city government to undertake small-scale development like construction of minor roads, repair of drainage, etc. These funds are allocated equally or differentiated based on needs of a ward.

Project related funds

These funds are allotted to city level projects which can span multiple wards or are reserved for certain communities. The councillor can request for funds based on how the city-level project aligns with their vision for the ward.

In Mumbai, each councillor gets INR 160 lakhs, which is 0.93% of the city budget, in the form of 'corporator's funds'. Further they can also avail project-specific grants. According to a woman councillor in Mumbai, understanding how funds can be availed from projects undertaken by the city government is key to increasing funding to the ward. She added that experience and thorough understanding of the budget is crucial to unlocking the above mentioned potential. According to a recent scheme in Dehradun, councillors are allotted INR 15 lakhs per year as part of 'councillor's funds'.[7] In Baramulla Municipal Council in Jammu & Kashmir, the funds generated by the council and those from different government schemes are divided equally among the councillors. The Deputy Mayor of Panaji pointed out that not all councillors are aware of these sources and have difficulty in procuring funds. In our interviews, councillors have reported lack of knowledge and training as hindrances in being able to access funds for their wards. These are further discussed in chapter six.

Globally, elected leaders of cities truly are 'leaders'. However, in India they are not seen as such

In 2013, American political theorist Benjamin Barber argued that cities are the political unit best suited for meeting the challenges of the 21st century, so much so, that mayors would soon "rule the world".[8] **According to a 2016 report of City Monitor, one in ten of the world's population is governed by a former mayor[9].** Around the world, former mayors have long been seen as obvious contenders for national office: Recep Erdoğan was mayor of Istanbul before he became Turkey's president; Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador governed Mexico City before he became the president of Mexico; Xavier Bettel was elected president of Luxembourg after leading Luxembourg city and Boris Johnson governed London before becoming the prime minister of the United Kingdom.

As City Lab's Kriston Capps writes, *"There's a lot that makes mayors unusually fit for higher office. They are on the front lines of dealing with issues like climate change, transportation, welfare programs, and the economy."*[10] Through networks such as the Compact of Mayors, Local Governments for Sustainability, C40 Cities, Climate Alliance, and Cities for Climate protection, mayors and councillors - city leaders are leading the effort in combating 21st century challenges such as sustainability, climate change, becoming a significant global leadership.

Balendranath Bharali, Former Councillor, Guwahati

7)   Fadnavis, D. (2020, June 16). *Devendra Gangadhar Fadnavis Biography - Age, Education, Family, Political Life.* Elections.in. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from https://bit.ly/3CJ7101

8)   Benjamin Barber: *Why mayors should rule the world.* (2013, September 20). [Video]. YouTube. https://bit.ly/3N2lvx0

9). (2016, June 22). Former mayors now rule countries containing 1 in 10 of the world's population. *City Monitor.* https://bit.ly/3H7rYCp

10) Capps, K. C. (2018, August 30). Mayors: Run for Office. You Just May Win. *Bloomberg City Lab.* https://bloom.bg/3h66kUE

However, as we have seen, the critical role of councillors is not recognised in India.

The Constitutional mandate for rotational reservation (Article 243 T) does not allow a seat to be reserved for the same category in consecutive elections. Therefore, a councillor often finds re-election from the same ward difficult and hence, is unable to nurse her ward and cultivate leadership. Interestingly, MPs and MLAs do not have such mandates which enable them to nurture and cultivate their leadership.

Further, the city representation in the Parliament and state assemblies are critical to the empowerment of India's cities and its elected leaders. This is because, as we have discussed earlier, union and state governments hold the power on matters of urban India. This highlights the importance of the delimitation exercise. The present delimitation of constituencies in India has been done on the basis of the 2001 census under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002 which has resulted in severe under-representation of urban constituencies in the Parliament and state assemblies. The re-examination of the way constituencies are re-drawn based on the population growth in the delimitation exercise, expected to take place in 2026, will have a critical impact on the political and empowerment of cities, and its elected representatives.

"Councillors have so much potential to drive change around climate change, women safety, disaster management, etc. However, we remain stuck in the daily delivery of water supply, road repair and electricity shortage."

Amita Singh
Councillor
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Fig. 8 : Indian political leaders who began their political journey from urban grassroots

M K Stalin

1996

First directly elected
Mayor of Chennai

2006

Minister for
Rural Development
And Local Administration

2021

Chief Minister of
Tamil Nadu

Devendra Fadnavis

1997

Youngest Mayor
of Nagpur

1999

Member of
Legislative Assembly,
Maharashtra

2014

Chief Minister of
Maharashtra

Charanjit Singh Channi

2003

President of Kharar
Municipal Council

2007

Member of
Legislative Assembly,
Punjab

2021

Chief Minister of Punjab

Sumitra Mahajan

1984

Deputy Mayor of Indore
Municipal Corporation

1989

Member of
Parliament

2014

Speaker of Lok Sabha

Source : Prasanna, P. (2021, May 2). DMK chief MK Stalin wins Kolathur comfortably. The News Minute. https://bit.ly/37Bddfn

Fadnavis, D. (2020, June 16). Devendra Gangadhar Fadnavis Biography - Age, Education, Family, Political Life. Elections.in. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from https://bit.ly/3CJ7101

Charanjit Singh Channi | 27th CM of Punjab. (n.d.). Business Standard. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from https://bit.ly/3wdH4EV

The Office of Speaker Lok Sabha. (n.d.). The Office of Speaker Lok Sabha. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from https://bit.ly/3q2Gk1i

Several noteworthy freedom fighters such as Jawaharlal Nehru, C Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhash Chandra Bose have held leadership positions in city governments prior to independent India. However, this legacy has had only limited continuity to the present, with few exceptions off late (fig 8).

A systematic leadership building of the elected leaders of cities is inevitable for India to secure and realise its urban future. Even as councillors in general are key to India's urban future, women councillors in particular, can play a significant role in realising sustainable urban development. How are women councillors represented in India's cities? Are they a significant force? What are the challenges they face being a woman? Do cities in India provide political leadership opportunities beyond gender binaries? Let us find out in the next chapter.

04.
Women councillors – a formidable force to shape better cities

Gangambike Mallikarjun, Former Mayor, Bengaluru interacting with citizens

"People do not think that women can be a boss or a figure of authority, even party workers and people at a senior level. If a male tells or suggests something, it's fine. But if a female does the same thing, it is not fine. There is lack of acceptance because it is a male dominating society. It does not sit with them well that women are ordering them"

Female Councillor*
Mumbai
Maharashtra

"I used to carry my three-year-old kid when I used to go to meetings along with my mother. My mother would wait in the car while I attended meetings."

Kalpana Shivanna
Former Councillor
Magadi, Karnataka

*Requested Anonymity

Historically, cities have always been built for men, by men and hence are inherently not inclusive. Women see and experience cities differently primarily owing to socially prescribed gender roles and consequently, are likely to have different priorities compared to men. Therefore, can women councillors build better cities? How are women represented in city leadership? Do women councillors face unique challenges? How does India's cities mainstream gender to also nurture transgender councillors?

Women constitute half the population and yet remain the "largest excluded category"[11]. However, women leaders are critical pathways to influencing the implementation of system changes and actualising them in reality

Women around the world constitute half the population and yet remain as the "largest excluded category", disproportionately accounting for a significant share of the world's poor. This exclusion also aids in the denial of their political participation and engagement and further pushes them to the peripheries of society. **The global gender gap report 2021 published by the World Economic Forum estimates that it will take another 145.5 years to attain gender parity in politics.[12]** However, the untapped talents and leadership capabilities of women in global politics is slowly gaining recognition. **According to UN Women, as of January 2020, data from 133 countries showed that women account for 2.18 million (36%) of elected members in city councils. In Central and South Asian countries, the figure stands at 41%.[13]**

Women's leadership is increasing in India's city politics. At least 46% of the councillors in India are women. While the Constitution mandates for 33% reservation for women in the city council, 18 states have increased this to 50%. 81% of the women councillors interviewed contested from reserved wards compared to 17% men. Reservation plays a key role in bringing women to city politics

Local politics in India has the highest political participation by women. Our analysis shows that, while India has a mere 14% of elected women MPs and 8% women MLAs, women councillors make up at least 46% of the total councillors. Therefore , even though the participation of women in politics has been abysmally poor in India, reservations at the city level have ensured entry of women at the lowest rung of governance.

Fig. 9 : Political Representation of women in India
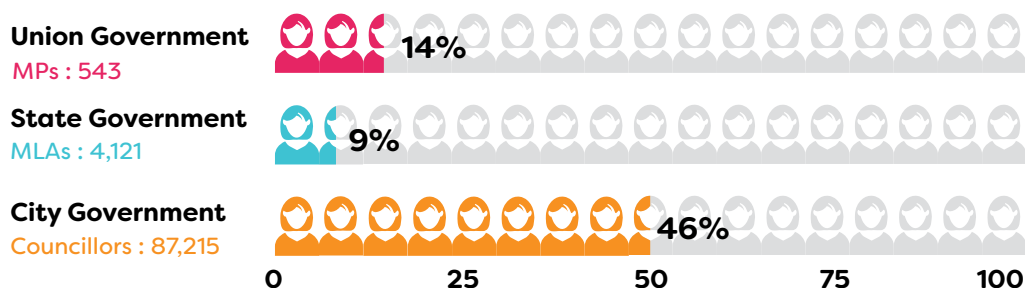
Source: 17th Lok Sabha, Gender-wise representation of members. (2019). Lok Sabha House of the People. https://bit.ly/3MQtyg3
Analysis based on the data made available by the websites of respective state assemblies and city governments, and respective state mandates on women's reservation.

11) UNDP (2014). *Human Development Report – "Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience"*, New York: United Nations Development Programme

12) *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*. (2021). World Economic Forum.

13) *Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation | What we do*. (2020). UN Women

India provides a Constitutional mandate for women's reservation at the local tier. Article 234T of 74th CAA mandates rotational reservation of not less than 33% of the seats for women including scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, other backward and general categories. This affirmative action has played a critical role in bringing women to the forefront of city politics. For example, Mumbai saw a tenfold increase in women councillors, and cities of Andhra Pradesh saw an increase by 25% compared to pre 74th CAA.[14] Further, 50% of India's states have gone beyond the Constitutional mandate to provide 50% reservation for women in the council. **Cities like Mumbai, Patna and Panaji have women councillors in the city council beyond the reservation mandates of the respective states.**

Fig. 10 : Women's reservation : law v/s practice

* --- Indicates the percentage of reservation for women in the city council as mandated by the respective states
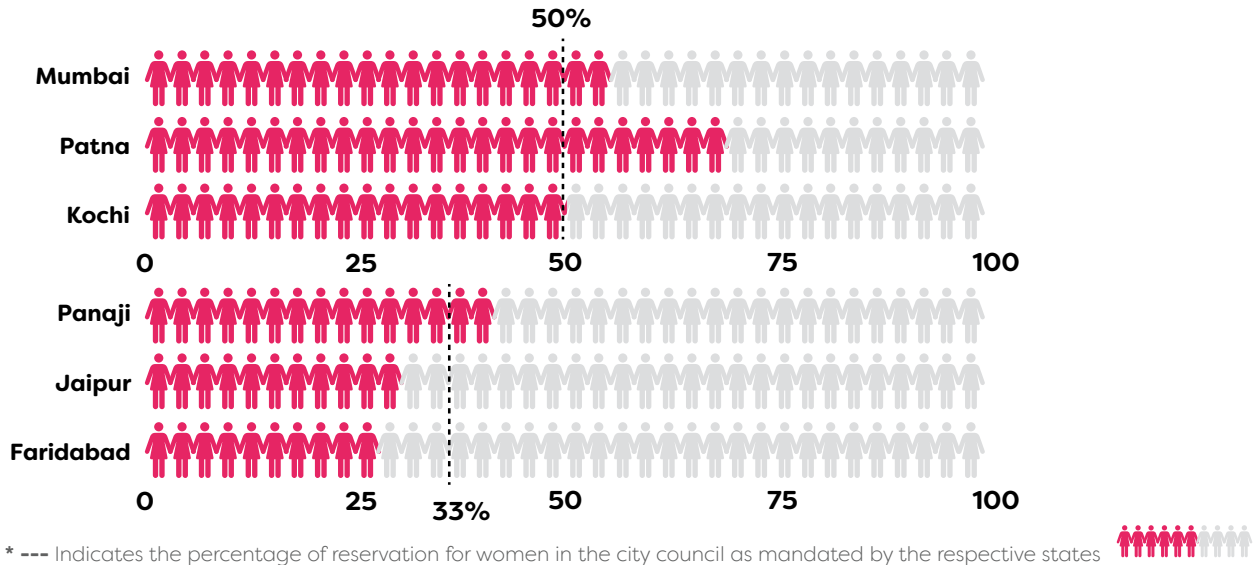
Source: Analysis of respective state municipal legislations and data available on the respective city government websites

In the absence of reservation, women would have been reluctant to contest in elections due to the constraints of gender inequality.[15] A study finds that women's reservation has fuelled the rise of women councillors, who see politics as a full-time profession.[16] **Women are now a significant leadership force in India's cities with 44% of cities being lead by women mayors** (ref Fig. 11)

Fig. 11 : Women mayors across India's cities
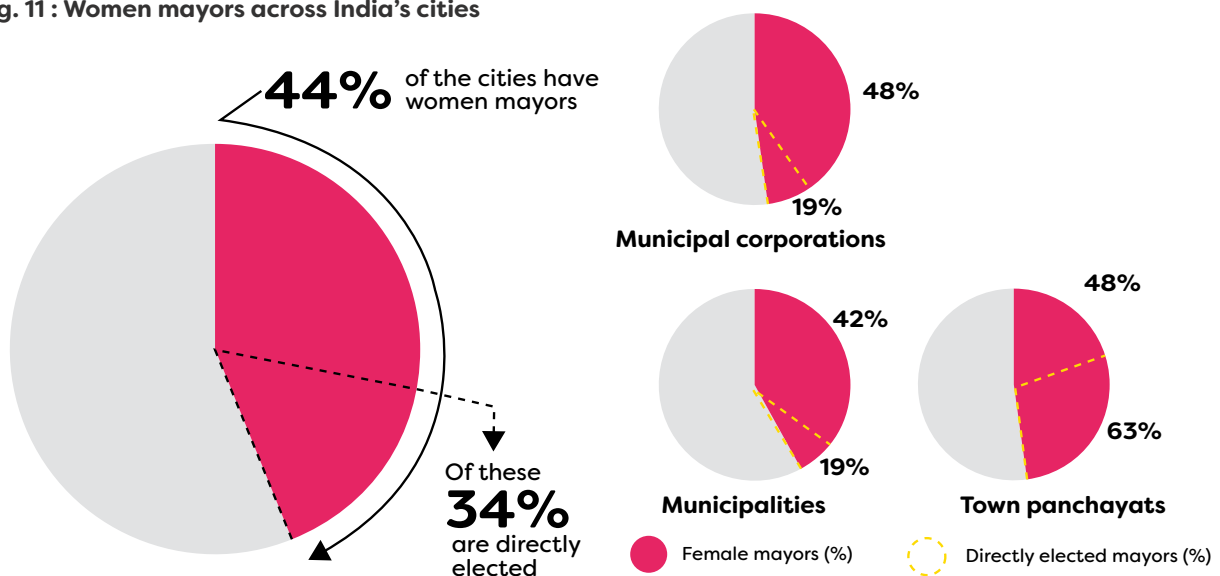
Source: Analysis based on the data available on the respective city government websites and respective state municipal legislations

14) D. Ravindra Prasad and V.Gnaneswar, "74th Constitution Amendment Act: Conformity Legislation in Andhra Pradesh", *Urban India, Vol.XV, No.I,* January-June, pp.79-100, 1995

15) Prasad, D. R. (2014). Women Empowerment in Urban Governance in India. *Indian Journal of Public Administration, 60(3)*, 426–442.

16) *Women Who Only Serve Chai: Gender Reservations and Autonomy in India.* (2018). https://bit.ly/3hhbvBj

Article 243 T of the Constitution mandates rotational reservation. In all states, except Tamil Nadu, seats cannot be reserved consecutively for a specific community two elections in a row.[17] We have already discussed how rotational reservation does not allow councillors to nurse their ward and cultivate leadership. Interestingly, however, Meena Dhanda argues that because of rotational reservation *"every constituency will have to be alert to the possibility of it being the next reserved one so that no one who seeks election from a constituency can afford to neglect women's interests."*

Even as reservation has brought women to city politics, one cannot disregard the issue of gender reservation quotas resulting in women being proxies. A study in Jaipur shows that most of the women candidates in Jaipur Municipal Corporation were proxies for their male partners or offsprings, as the man is unable to contest owing to the gender quota. **Even as we met strong women councillors in our survey, some women councillors are still dependent on the male members of their families to communicate with city officials and citizens, so much so that their phones are also handled by their respective partners.** This is pointing towards the need to look closely at the challenges in the journey of women councillors, to take women empowerment beyond reservation.

"In the society, nobody listens to women. The society thinks that only men can take important decisions. That's why I raise my volume and ensure that people listen to me."
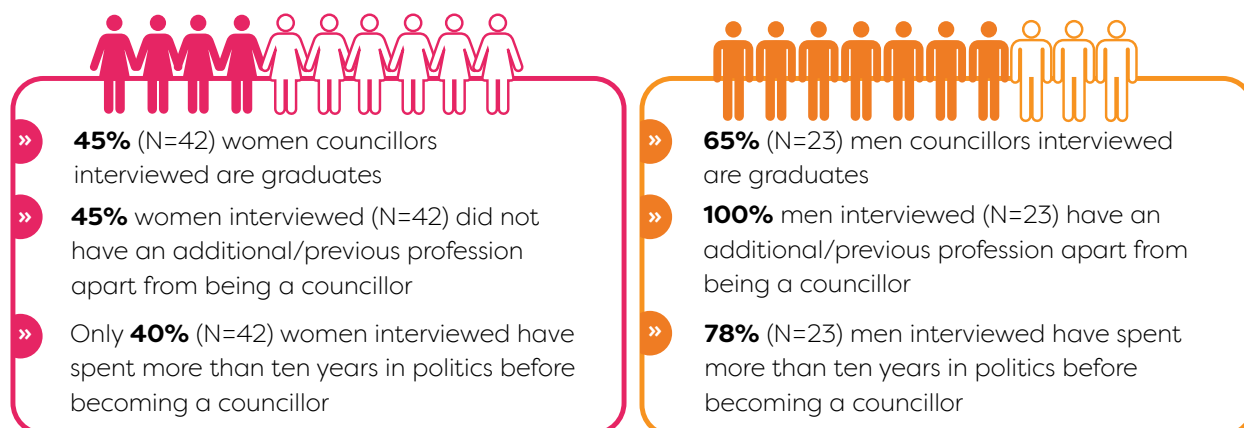
Pinky Kumari
Councillor
Patna, Bihar

The journey of a woman councillor is not easy in India. Our survey shows that men and women councillors have different starting points in terms of education, workplace experience and expectations of society

Our survey reveals that women councillors fall behind men on critical social parameters. Women councillors are much less educated than their male counterparts., and often do not have prior professional experience (ref Fig. 12).

Fig. 12 : Different starting points for men and women councillors in their city politics journey

» **45%** (N=42) women councillors interviewed are graduates

» **45%** women interviewed (N=42) did not have an additional/previous profession apart from being a councillor

» Only **40%** (N=42) women interviewed have spent more than ten years in politics before becoming a councillor

» **65%** (N=23) men councillors interviewed are graduates

» **100%** men interviewed (N=23) have an additional/previous profession apart from being a councillor

» **78%** (N=23) men interviewed have spent more than ten years in politics before becoming a councillor

17) Meena Dhanda. (2000). Representation for Women: Should Feminists Support Quotas? *Economic and Political Weekly, 35(33),* 2969–2976. https://bit.ly/3M1g8xi

Low levels of education and a late professional start place women councillors at a disadvantage as compared to men in terms of knowledge and critical skills such as confidence, multi stakeholder engagement, leadership, voicing own opinion at a public forum, etc. **24% of the women councillors say that society doesn't think women should be elected representatives.**

Table 3 : Challenges faced by women councillors in their political journey

Challenges	Percentage of women who identified with the challenge (N=41)
It is challenging for me to cope with councillor work and household chores/other work	24%
Society doesn't think women should be elected representatives	24%
Women councillors are not considered to be assertive, knowledgeable, able to lead well	22%
Politics/local government not perceived to be a choice of career where women are safe	17%
Politics/local government not perceived to be a choice of career where women can flourish	17%
Women councillors are seen as figure-heads of male family members, not real leaders	10%
There is not enough political party support for women councillors	10%
Other	27%

Note: This was a multiple choice question. Some councillors interviewed selected more than one answer so the total adds upto more than 100%. This question was not asked to the transgender councillor

Many women councillors have to overcome strong judgments and preconceived notions of society regarding their ability to become, deliver and grow as a councillor due to their gender.

However, there are women councillors who have not faced major challenges throughout their journey. These women councillors have referred to the importance of having strong mental strength and a supportive family. *"I have not faced any challenges of that sort. As long as you are strong no one can stop you from working. We have to be strong to handle situations. We should know what to react at what time"* says a female councillor from Bengaluru with over ten years of experience in city politics.

"There are times when even though I am there at my office, people come and ask where my husband is. They think he is more knowledgeable and I don't know anything. This is how the society thinks about female leaders."

Savita Tanwar
Councillor
Faridabad, Haryana

Women councillors are more likely to rely on support from family and legislation for their political career than men

As we can see in Fig. 13, women rely on family (e.g., husband, in-laws) for moral support to enter politics, balance household chores with their profession, gain knowledge, guidance and workforce to campaign, understand the structure and workings of the city government, and prepare for council meetings. *"Since I have to take care of the household work, most of the times my husband has to be at my office and listen to people's grievances. Checking WhatsApp groups and emails are also predominantly taken care by my husband,"* says a female second time councillor from Faridabad who was asked by a family member to join politics.

Fig. 13 : Women entry in city politics

36% (N=42) of the women councillors interviewed say that they became a councillor because they were asked by a family member to do so, as opposed to 9% (N=23) of men

36% (N=42) of the women councillors interviewed say that they benefited from the political reputation and connections of their family in winning the elections, as opposed to 13% (N=23) men

81% (N=42) of the women councillors interviewed contested the last elections for ward councillor from a reserved ward as compared to 17% (N=23) of men

Women strive to deliver their best despite the systemic challenges. **90% (N=42) of the women councillors we interviewed say that they became councillors for the welfare of society.**

Evidence suggests that women councillors are key to building better cities

Cities historically have been designed by men for men, often impacting vulnerable sections of society. Women's participation in city politics lies at the heart of implementing sustainable development goals such as good health and well-being, gender equality and sustainable cities and communities.[18] **Women experience cities, and view priorities differently because of their disproportionate burden on caretaking primarily owing to the gender norms in our society.**

A study measuring the effect of women leaders on citizens' health in Canadian provinces from 1976-2009 shows that **there is a positive correlation between increasing women representation in government and declining mortality rates.**[19] This is because women leaders spend more on medical care, preventive care, post-secondary education, and social services. The research also highlights that women leaders tend to pay closer attention to non-verbal cues, interrupt less, and indulge in a more democratic and bipartisan approach in their work. **A study by the United Nations Economic And Social Commission for Asia and Pacific on women councillors across thirteen countries observes that they practice transformative leadership - "responsiveness and accountability towards the community".[20] The study shows that women and men have different priorities, and women councillors tend to focus more on people's needs such as clean water supply, community facilities, environmental issues, childcare and education. It also observes that women are more likely to adopt a democratic and inclusive style of governance.**

18) THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. (2018). *United Nations.* https://bit.ly/3Ii7XL5

19) Kathlene, L. (1994). Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates. *American Political Science Review, 88(3),* 560-576

20) Drage, J. D. (2001). Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific A comparative analysis of thirteen countries. *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.* https://bit.ly/35kmW8y

In India, a study conducted on women councillors in Kolkata shows that women are active and robust in programme implementation, with a high fund utilisation rate ranging from 60-90%.[21] This happens because of two reasons – one, women representatives are more open to change and two, they take up issues which benefit the community as a whole. Similarly, D Ravindra Prasad, in his work titled "Women Empowerment in Urban Governance" notes how women councillors bring change by actively participating in their ward and therefore making the community more inclusive and well-heard.[21] *"I am very approachable to people. People feel comfortable around me. As a woman, people, and especially women feel comfortable around me. I am available 24/7, they know I will pick up phone. They feel good"* says a female councillor from Mumbai with more than ten years of experience in city politics.

Women leadership in cities has resulted in transformative impact across sectors in India. (ref Fig. 14) These women will always be remembered for their terrific contributions to the city.

"I think women are more aware as they experience the problems of climate change more. Many people do not even know that there are two types of pollution - indoor as well as outdoor. Women experience indoor pollution because they stay at the house more and do cooking. It negatively impacts their health. Thus, it is easier to convince women and they in turn can convince their family about the ill-effects of climate change"

Chirag Gajjar
Head - Subnational Climate Action
WRI - India

Fig. 14 : Woman mayors of India

1957

Tara Cherian
» **First woman Mayor** of India
» Initiated funding for **mid-day meals in Chennai corporation schools** which benefitted **25,000 students** at that time

2004

Mercy Williams
» **Former Mayor of Kochi**
» Enacted byelaws to initiate **decentralised segregation** of waste at the **household level**

2018

Gangambike Mallikarjun
» **Former Mayor of Bengaluru**
» Activated ward committee meetings in 2019 as a significant step to participatory **governance**

Source : Maria, A. (2019, February 5). How 7 Women Mayors Transformed Their Cities. Feminism In India. https://bit.ly/3MhRxVa
Sawant, E. (2020, November 22). What Bengaluru's new Mayor can build on: A summary of Gangambike Mallikarjun's work. Citizen Matters, Bengaluru. https://bit.ly/3C4gBul

Cities are leading the way in gender mainstreaming

Globally, there is a growing recognition of gender inclusion in politics. Transgenders are highly discriminated against and therefore vulnerable. However, cities have been germinating transgender leadership. Georgina Beyer who served as the Mayor of Carterton (New Zealand) in 1995 is the world's first openly transgender Mayor.[22] The world thereafter has seen several such examples including the recent leaders such as Anwen Muston, Councillor, Wolverhampton (UK) in 2016[23], Tomoyo Hosoda, Councillor, Iruma (Japan) in 2017[24], Marie Cue, Mayor Tilloy-lez-Marchiennes (France) in 2020[25]

21) Role of Women Elected Representatives in Local Area Development: A Case Study of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. (2015). *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies, 53–62.*

22) Brown, L. (n.d.). Beyer, Georgina. *New Zealand Parliament.* https://bit.ly/3t31XPP

23) Meet the transgender ex-soldier who is now a Wolverhampton councillor. (2016, June 1). *Express & Star.* https://bit.ly/36EsiMA

24) Today, J. (2018, January 27). Educate and encourage: Tomoya Hosoda, Japan's first male transgender politician, lays down a marker. *Japan Today.* https://bit.ly/3t5D4mz

25) Marie Cau: First transgender mayor elected in France. (2020, May 25). *BBC.* https://bbc.in/3BQeDNL

According to Census 2011, there are 4,87,803 transgenders in India. In India however, the discussion on the political representation of transgenders is still quite nascent. Our research show that there is also significant gap in literature on transgender and politics in general, and city politics in particular. **The Supreme Court of India gave a huge impetus to the upward mobility of transgenders by declaring transgenders as the 'third' gender in 2014. The Supreme Court also affirmed that fundamental rights under the Constitution of India will be equally applicable to them.[26] This was followed by the enactment of the Transgender Persons (Protection Of Rights) Act, 2019. These, albeit slow, have played a significant role in mainstreaming gender inclusivity, including in politics.**

Parveen Bhanu, Former Councillor, Ballari interacting with the citizens

With the 2014 Supreme Court verdict, more transgenders, particularly those who identify as women, were able to contest in elections without being challenged later for contesting from a seat reserved for women. For example, two transgenders, Kamla Jaan of Katni elected in 1999 and Kamala Kinnar of Sagar elected in 2009, had to step down after two years of their term as mayors. Their candidature was declared "null and void" by local courts for contesting from the wards reserved for women.[27] Today, a transgender who identifies herself as a woman can contest as a woman from Gen/SC/ST/OBC wards). Off late, political parties are also taking initiative in fielding candidates from the community.[28] Mallu Kumbar of Karnataka Sexual Minorities Forum (KSMF)also points out the **importance of sensitising the society on transgenders who identify themselves as men, to provide an enabling environment for their political participation as well.** [29]

Madhu Kinnar, the first transgender Mayor of India

Madhu Kinnar began each day with a walk through her wards

Before assuming office as Mayor of Raigarh, Madhu Kinnar used to sing and dance on the streets of the city to earn a living. One of the things she observed then was the clogged pipes and the poor state of sanitation. Hence, one of the first projects she undertook was to address the issue of sanitation in the city. After becoming the Mayor of Raigarh, she took rounds with a small team at 7 a.m every morning to understand the problems of her city and follow up with the city workers to clean unhygienic gutters and fix clogged pipes. She also took up the task to clean local vegetable market and reduced traffic woes.

Madhu Kinnar's passion to solve Raigarh's issues was evident throughout her tenure. Her inspiring journey to becoming the first citizen of Raigarh will always be a milestone in India's political history.

Source :Reporter, G. S. (2015, February 3). India's transgender mayor – is the country finally overcoming prejudice? *The Guardian*. https://bit.ly/33O6CfP

26) Venkatesan, J. (2016, June 24). *Supreme Court recognises transgenders as third gender*. https://bit.ly/3shsvxz

27) *Patkar, E. (2015, March 3). India's transgender mayor – is the country finally overcoming prejudice? The Guardian*. https://bit.ly/33O6CfP

28) Telephonic conversation on 24th November 2021, 1.00 PM

29) Madhavan, D. (2022, February 3). Parties put up transgender persons to fight urban local bodies elections. *The Hindu*. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/parties-put-up-transgender-persons-to-fight-urban-local-bodies-elections/article38367276.ece

Transgender councillors drive development but are keen to not give importance to their identity. Madhu Kinnar who created history by becoming the first elected transgender mayor of India in 2015 (Mayor of Raigarh, Chhatisgarh), was keen to not give importance to her gender or caste identity and was focused on solving the civic issues that plagued the city of Raigarh.

Similarly, in our conversations with Parveen Bhanu, Former Councillor of Ballari (Karnataka), we recognise that she was particular to not focus on her gender identity and preferred her work to be under the spotlight instead. She also indicated that people tend to have sympathy for transgenders as they often come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Further, Mallu Kumbar added that **it is also interesting to note that there is a general sentiment among voters who believe that transgenders are less corrupt as they have no family ties and tend to serve people better.**

"I do not look at each community differently. When people approach me with a grievance, I work towards resolving them"

Parveen Bhanu
Former Councillor
Ballari, Karnataka

Our conversation with a transgender councillor however did not reveal any distinct challenges different from that of women councillors. Mallu Kumbar from KSMF, observes that transgenders are increasingly contesting in elections to represent and improve the visibility of the community. He also said that most of the time, political parties use transgenders to bring a liberal face or draw sympathy. There are also instances of fielding transgender women if parties are unable to get another 'woman' candidate, especially in the case of women SC/ST reserved wards. **He affirmed that while political entry is key for the emancipation of transgenders, their political empowerment needs far more work.** *"Since they have no voice and exposure, they often do not know what to do after winning, or how to further political agency",* says Mallu. Grace Banu, founder-director of Trans Rights Now Collective, believes that **the inclusion of transgenders in politics is important to ensure protection of transgender rights and urges to an introduction of reservation for transgenders.**

Women and transgender councillors navigate through unique challenges as compared to men. Our discussion so far suggests that it is not enough to just give them a seat at a table but it is also imperative to give them voice and agency, to ensure an inclusive and sustainable urban future. Councillors in general irrespective of their gender, navigate several challenges. What are those specific challenges that hinder their ability to be an 'effective' councillor? Let us discuss this in the next chapter.

05.
Nurturing 'effective' councillors for city leadership

"I am a young lady and this is my first time in politics. I contested election so that I can help people. But there is no such degree/ course which trains/teaches councillors about what are the responsibilities of a councillor."

Kajal Bhinwal,
Councillor
Jaipur, Rajasthan

"We don't have an urban capacity development institute in the country. Every state has an institute for rural development. There are existing training centers and we have the National Institute For Rural Development. Actually, we don't have an urban capacity center in any of the states. We only have a National Institute Of Urban Affairs, they have their limitations as they were not meant for capacitating the city governments. India hasn't undertaken a major capacity needs assessment or training needs assessment, except for some projects such as AMRUT. There again, it is not about urban governance, it is about urban programmes."

Dr Joy Elamon
Director General
Kerala Institute of Local Administration

Councillors need specialised knowledge and leadership skills to be 'effective' in their role, and thereby drive quality of life in our cities. However, are they well informed? What are the challenges? What do global and national models teach us about training the elected leaders of cities to equip them for their role?

'Effective' councillors are at the heart of driving quality of life in our cities

The responsibilities of councillors are becoming complicated and demanding with the increasing complexities of urban challenges and new-age urban citizenry who demand adequate infrastructure and swift services. For councillors to govern, and be 'effective' in their role, apart from commitment to their role, they should also be well informed with specialised knowledge and leadership skills. **An impact study by Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES), Mumbai found that absence of well-informed local leadership is the key hurdle towards performance of city governments.[31]** It is imperative that councillors remain well-informed in order to effectively improve the quality of life in our cities. Are our councillors adequately informed and equipped? If not, why? What are the challenges they face? What do global and national models teach us about training councillors to equip them for their role and become true 'city leaders'?

Meher Haider, Councillor, Mumbai interacting with citizens

68% of the councillors interviewed feel that their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and that they work on an ad-hoc basis. They also expressed their concerns regarding the overlap of their role and resulting confusion in ensuring accountability

The absence of clarity in the role of councillors' basis law, (ref Fig. 15) has been discussed in chapter three. The councillors in our survey also point out the challenges posed by the overlap of councillor's responsibilities with that of the MLAs. *"Many times the roles of councillors and MLA get overlapped. There should be proper training on these lines so that elected representatives can have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.",* says a women councillor from Guwahati who has been in city politics for over ten years. The overlap in the role of councillors and MLA is confusing to citizens who approach their respective elected representatives for grievance redressal, and even to the councillors themselves. *"Sometimes I get*

"I get confused with which work is for me (as a councillor) and which work is for the MLA. People come with the same issues to me as well as go to the MLA. If there is a clear guideline which can give councillors a clear understanding of work that come under our purview and those under MLA, it will be great."
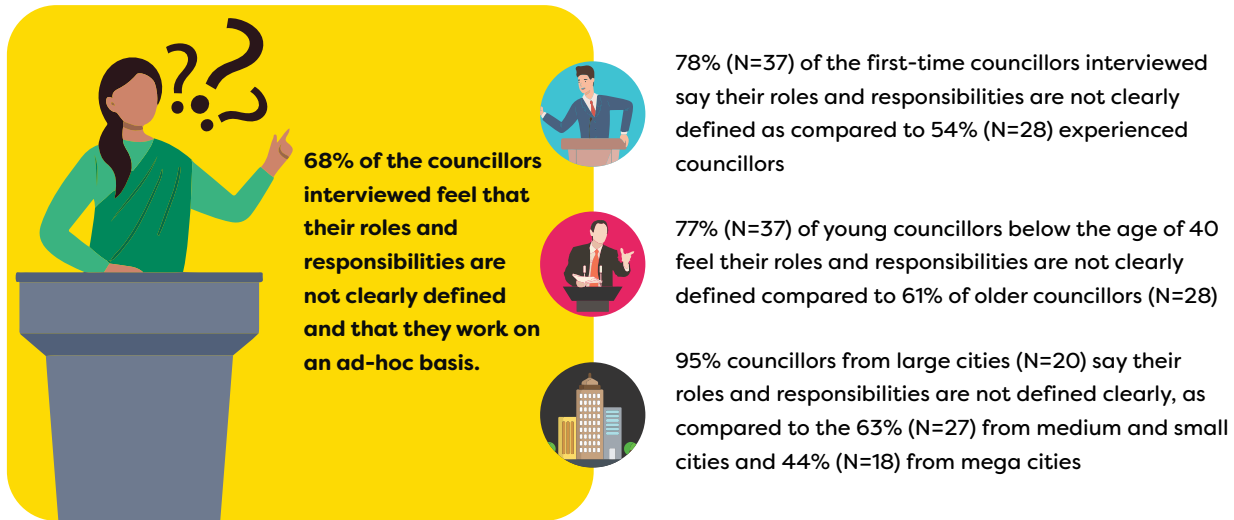
Kajal Bhinwal
Councillor,
Jaipur, Rajasthan

31) National Institute of Urban Affairs. (2011, September). *Urban Development Management for the formulation of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012 – 2017),* Report of the Working Group on Capacity Building. https://bit.ly/3vcy0zr

confused if the particular work should be done by me or the MLA. Sometimes when people come to me with certain issue and I know that it's not my job, I can't understand whom should I forward the person to - MLA or MP" says first time female councillor from Patna.
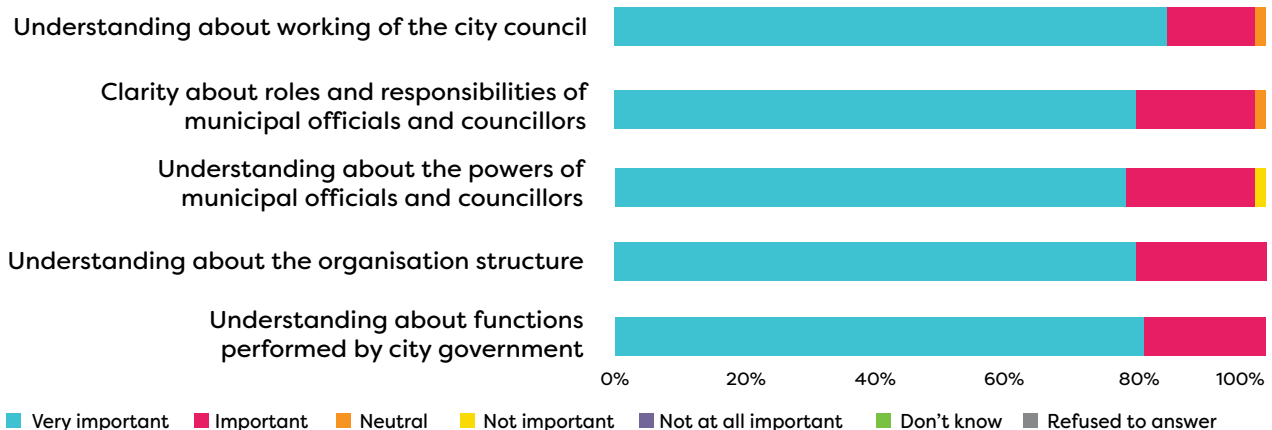
Fig.15 : Perception of councillors on clarity in roles and responsibilities

68% of the councillors interviewed feel that their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and that they work on an ad-hoc basis.

78% (N=37) of the first-time councillors interviewed say their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined as compared to 54% (N=28) experienced councillors

77% (N=37) of young councillors below the age of 40 feel their roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined compared to 61% of older councillors (N=28)

95% councillors from large cities (N=20) say their roles and responsibilities are not defined clearly, as compared to the 63% (N=27) from medium and small cities and 44% (N=18) from mega cities

98% of the councillors interviewed believe that sound knowledge and understanding about city governments is important for them to be able to perform well

Women, first-timers, young councillors and councillors from large cities followed by those from medium and small cities self-report a lower level of knowledge and understanding about the city government. **Councillors interviewed are unclear about the reporting structure in the city government, work responsibilities, power of municipal officials and elected representatives. The manner of proceedings and sign offs in council meetings is also unclear to a few councillors.** To a great extent, the learning process of a councillor is largely left to self motovation. There is no formal systematic process to prepare them for their role. More details are discussed in chapter six.

Fig. 16 : Councillors' perception of knowledge on city government

Understanding about working of the city council

Clarity about roles and responsibilities of municipal officials and councillors

Understanding about the powers of municipal officials and councillors

Understanding about the organisation structure

Understanding about functions performed by city government

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Very important ■ Important ■ Neutral ■ Not important ■ Not at all important ■ Don't know ■ Refused to answer

India lacks systematic leadership programmes focused on councillors in general, and women councillors in particular

According to Mettl's State of Workplace Learning and Development Report 2018, 80% of the companies in India have some kind of learning and development programme in place, spending on average between INR 7,000 – INR 30,000 annually per employee.[32] However, such training opportunities are not available to public officials. **As observed by a 2015 report by NITI Aayog and 2011 report by the Working Group on Capacity Building, in India, capacity building of local elected representatives has been of low priority.[33] It also observes that the focus on women councillors and gender mainstreaming in local governance has been weak.** While school education prepares one to a certain degree, women with little to no formal education and public exposure find this sudden shift to political life jarring and challenging.[34] **The report also observes that limited number of specialised institutions undertake such capacity building for councillors.**

This is to not say that there haven't been any efforts by governments on this front. The **Government of India** set up pioneer institutes such as RCUES in Lucknow, Hyderabad, Mumbai and the Centre for Urban Studies under Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in New Delhi, both established in 1968 and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in 1976. MoHUA now has ten centres of excellence such as ASCI, CSE, IIM-B, LBSNAA, TERI etc. These institutions specialise across various domains such as sanitation, sustainable water management, urban administration etc., to strengthen capacity building measures, promote awareness, research & training in priority areas in cities.[35] The union budget of 2022 has further committed to designate five academic institutions across regions as centre for excellence with INR 250 crores each to deliver training in planning and design. **However, the focus of these institutes have largely remained on municipal officials and not councillors.** There has also not been much focus on women councillors, barring an exception of a training programme undertaken by CEPT university in Wai Municipal Corporation in Maharashtra on faecal sludge and septage management.

States have to play a larger role in capacity building measures given that cities are 'state' subject. While states like Kerala, Karnataka, Haryana etc have established state training institutes for local governments post the enactment of 74th CAA, capacity building measures received prominence across the country only under the erstwhile JNNURM reforms, which now live on through key flagship urban missions such as AMRUT, Smart Cities etc. With the emphasis laid on capacity building in these flagship urban missions, nearly all states / UTs in India have established training institutes. **However, not all such institutes cater to the city elected representatives. These are largely sector focussed, mostly targeting municipal officials. Our analysis also shows that, with the exception of Telangana, none of the municipal acts in India mandate for a systematic training programme for councillors, neither induction nor refresher training. Induction training becomes particularly significant, as on an average, 60-70% of the councillors are often newcomers.** Of these, a significant part could be women who are likely to have lesser exposure to learning avenues owing to the gender inequality present in our society.

Only KILA provides induction and refresher training for all councillors across the state of Kerala. The institute also has a gender school to mainstream gender in local governance which goes beyond the gender binaries. Given the COVID-19 challenges, the institute has now migrated to online classes.

32)   Mettl. (2018). *State of Workplace Learning and Development - 2018 Changing Priorities, Emerging Trends.* https://bit.ly/33LecI6

33)   A Study to Qualitatively assess the Capacity Building Needs of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), *NITI Aayog,* 2015

34)   Holzner, B.M. & de Wit, Joop. (2003). *Supporting decentralised urban governance: training women municipal councillors in Mumbai, India.*

35)   *List of Centres of Urban Development.* (2019). Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. https://bit.ly/3w3dFwR

Fig. 17 : Leadership programmes for city elected representatives are far more streamlined globally.

Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)

KILA is an autonomous institution under the Department of Local Administration, Government of Kerala. KILA was established in 1990 for the purpose of training, research, and capacity building of local governments in Kerala. One of KILA's primary objectives include induction programmes and training across varied subjects for elected representatives, such as integrated waste management, local governance, child friendly governance etc. Recently, courses related to gender, environment and climate change have also been added to help local representatives gain awareness on contemporary issues. KILA has a systematic approach to training, which begins with a training needs assessment, followed by a module session, module development groups and workshops to finalise the training material. The process ends with feedback from the trainees. KILA is also the nodal agency for Kerala's decentralisation initiatives.

Source : About us. (2022). Kerala Institute of Local Administration. https:/bit.ly/3i3C0KY

The Local Government Association of the United Kingdom conducts targeted programmes for newly elected, young, and upcoming councillors through the **'Next Generation Programme'** and the **'Young City Leaders Programme'.**
Each of these programmes include an e-learning platform, regularly scheduled webinars, and workshops aimed at improving leadership skills and providing strategic direction to the elected officials.

Australia's **'Emerging Leaders Programme'** is based on an experimental learning model that builds on existing foundations and provides extensive interaction amongst participants.
The topics covered under the programme focus on personal development through self-awareness, communication, and leadership development.

Canada has **provincial municipal training** for city leaders to strengthen and improve the leadership, administrative, operational and other job-related skills.

Source : Highlighting Political Leadership. (2022). Local Government Association. https:/bit.ly/3p8acsE
Municipal Training. (2022, February 4). Municipal and Provincial Affairs. https:/bit.ly/3Hhq7eD
Programs and events. (2022). LGPro. https:/bit.ly/3t3RF1N

CSOs also play an important role in organising training programmes. For example, Praja provides induction and refresher training for councillors in Mumbai since 2019. IIM-Ahmedabad in association with UNICEF trains councillors in Ahmedabad on creating child friendly cities. The National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM) alliance, a national working group, comprising 30+ organisations and individuals across India, has a mandate to build consensus and drive forward the discourse on faecal sludge and septage management by working in collaboration with the MoHUA and the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. NFSSM alliance curates training programmes including those for councillors focused on sustainable sanitation. **While CSOs play an important role in bridging the current gap of training councillors, these often tend to be sector focused, and not comprehensive covering all requirements to perform as an 'effective' councillor. Further, it is observed that typically, mega cities and large cities tend to have better access to these CSOs compared to the medium and small cities.**

Councillors also sometimes receive orientation training rendered by their respective political parties. As one can imagine, it is not necessary that all political parties across all cities organise such trainings. Further, beyond comprehensive coverage, there is an issue of access to such trainings for every councillors within a city. *"I did not receive any induction training apart from the debriefing by a senior member of the political party I belonged to. Some NGOs did provide some training but it was not especially beneficial as it was divorced from reality",* says a four-time female councillor from Dehradun. Similarly a first-time female councillor from Surat says that *"There is nobody to teach us about councillor's role. We have to approach senior councillors to know about everything. Learning this way takes time and the development of the ward/people gets delayed."*

Training of councillors has been recognised as a key ingredient for sustainable urbanisation and resilient cities

Programmes that aim to train councillors are well recognised across the globe. **There is a positive relationship between training of local elected officials and increase in their productivity,[36] and effectiveness**.[37] The United Nations has acknowledged the importance of capacity building of public servants at all levels of government, so that countries can successfully achieve the targets of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.[38]

In India, even though training of councillors has largely not been systematic, such interventions have proved to generate positive impact. An impact evaluation of training councillors on Kerala Local Government Service Delivery (KLSGD) project by training institutes including KILA shows that 86.8% of the experienced councillors and 63.8% of newly elected councillors self-reported an overall increase in efficiency.[39] **Furthermore, this training was instrumental in ensuring that more than 70% of the city governments qualified for performance grants between 2010-2015.** An impact assessment by NIUA on training delivered by various training institutes for women councillors states that the attendees self-reported proficiency and a better understanding of problems in their wards after the training.[40] **It also finds that the training gave women councillors the confidence to contribute meaningfully in the decision-making process, and take initiatives in municipal meetings to get resolutions passed for the development of their wards.**

M Anil Kumar, Mayor, Kochi

36) Slack, J. D. (1990) - Local Government Training and Education Needs for the Twenty-First Century - *Public Productivity & Management Review*

37) Grenier, F. (2016) - *Training local elected officials: Professionalization amid tensions between democracy and expertise (2016)*

38) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021, September). *World Public Sector Report* 2021.

39) A Government of Kerala programme to enhance and strengthen the institutional capacity of the local government system to deliver services and undertake basic administrative and governance functions more effectively

40) National Institute of Urban Affairs. (2006, December). *Impact assessment of training of women elected representatives.* https://bit.ly/3t6AKLY

Rohan Chandel, Councillor, Dehradun with the city sanitation workers

Even globally, training of councillors shows positive impact. The impact assessment of Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative which offers leadership and management training to forty mayors from around the world shows promising results - 89% of city governments improved leadership capabilities and 86% improved organisational capabilities.[41]

A common thread that emerges from the stories of women councillors around the globe, is their challenge in formulating budgets and understanding finance. The United Nations Capital Development Fund launched a training programme in municipal finance across five countries that included Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and South Africa. **After the training, participation of women councillors increased in the municipal budgeting process. Women councillors also confidently presented their needs and challenges, and ensured an increase in allocation of resources for socio-economic transformation.**[42]

As we have seen, despite the promising results, India's councillors often have no access to a systematic leadership programme. What do our councillors themselves think about the need for systematic training programmes? Do they demand it? Does gender and experience influence such demands? What do urban thought leaders think about it? Let us read about it in the next chapter.

"When I became the mayor of Pune, I had organised a workshop in Mahabaleshwar and the media hit out at me that Mahabaleshwar is a hill station, why we can't organise such workshops in the city, and that the councillors will not attend these. However, not a single councillor left the session. There was a councillor who was a two termer who later became the deputy mayor of the city. In his feedback he mentioned that he learned something in that session he has not learned in the last ten years. So, these workshops are very useful."

Vandana Chavan
Member of Parliament,
17th Rajya Sabha

41) *Program - Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative.* (2021). Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative.
   https://bit.ly/3pcTFDU

42) *International Training Programme on Municipal Finance and Local Democracy - UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).*
   (2020). United Nations Capital Development Fund. https://bit.ly/3ve5P3k

JANAAGRAHA
JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

06.

Urban voices on nurturing councillor leadership to create true 'City Leaders'

"Councillors do not have any particular programme or a course where they are taught about the various roles & responsibilities, functions, organisational structure of city government."

Sita Sahu
Mayor
Patna, Bihar

"We recently did a training in Leh and Ladakh for councillors. We did very detailed training needs assessment before conducting the training. So, what came out was that, apart from numbers, councillors are not also given priority to travel and see. In this training, we found out that female councillors do not get a chance to travel, see and learn. They should be allowed to travel and see the different practices around the country."

Manvita Baradi
Founder Director
Urban Management Center

We have seen the significance of leadership building in equipping councillors to deliver their role, and thereby drive better quality of life in our cities.

However, what do councillors themselves think about a systematic leadership programme? What do they want to learn about?

What do urban thought leaders think about it?

Voice of councillors

Hailing from Guwahati is Sunita Bhilwaria, a former councillor who has been active in politics since 2007. She has worked with NGOs in Assam and became a councillor to better serve the people. She says that during her stint as a councillor there was nobody to teach her about the roles. She came with an open mind to help people but lacked an understanding of how things work in the city government. She believes that training is critical so that councillors have the knowledge to help citizens of the ward solve their issues. Similarly, Kajal Salim, an independent woman councillor from Kochi believes that systematic leadership building is a necessity, especially for a new councillor like her. Kajal says, *"A special training needs to be given once you are elected as a councillor. Like training is given to professionals, even councillor should be trained well."*

"Anyone and everyone who becomes a councillor may or may not have the understanding or enough resources to learn about their job role of being a councillor. Therefore, training is a must. It will enhance the service delivery and will lead to better cities."
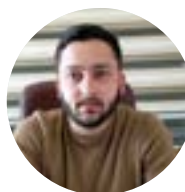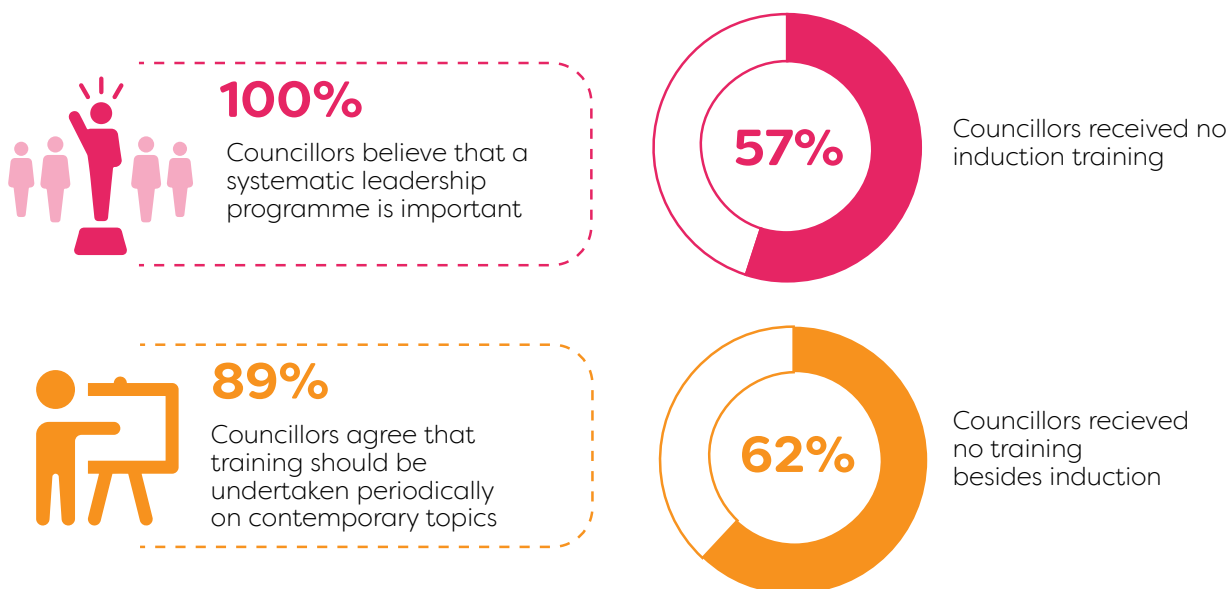
Rohan Chandel
Councillor
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Councillors across India echo 'we want a systematic leadership programme'. First-time councillors, especially those with no prior political background value training even more.

Fig 18. : Councillors' perception and experience of a systematic leadership programme

100%
Councillors believe that a systematic leadership programme is important

57%
Councillors received no induction training

89%
Councillors agree that training should be undertaken periodically on contemporary topics

62%
Councillors recieved no training besides induction

After interviewing 65 councillors across gender, political parties, experience, and socio-economic background across 21 cities in India, 100% of them, believe that a systematic leadership programme is important.

"Personally, I feel it is very important. He or she should understand the roles very well. Definitely, a clear understanding might lead to better delivery of the outcomes," says a female first-time councillor, from Panaji whose family has political background. A female councillor from Jaipur with over ten years' experience in city politics says *"Even though most of the councillors in my council are well aware of their roles and functions, I feel that some training will help us understand things better. We have many first-time councillors who are now learning from other councillors and officials. If these councillors get some formal training then I am sure that they will be able to perform way better than what they are doing right now."*

"Training and capacity building for the councillors are very important. I believe the training should be an intensive one, throughout the five years, and not just for a short period. There should be a platform where we get to discuss with other mayors within the state as well as outside."

M Anil Kumar
Mayor
Kochi, Kerala

What do councillors want to learn about?

Sanjay Ghadi is a councillor from Mumbai who holds a bachelor's degree in commerce and has been active in politics for forty years prior to winning elections. He says that his dream is to work for the welfare of the people around him, he sees politics as the only way to do that. **When asked about training, he says that the knowledge of councillors should be upgraded and they should receive training till they die.** He says that the leadership programme is important to understand the complex institution of Brihanmumbai Corporation. **He is also very keen to leverage technology and social media. However, in the absence of any training, he is unable to make use of its full potential.** *"Not many are equipped with adequate knowledge about the structure, roles, and responsibilities; also, many still stay silent and don't voice their opinion, due to myriad reasons. They also need a confidence boost to interact with citizens and resolve their issue. Hence, I feel leadership programme for councillors or any elected representative for that matter is pertinent,"* says a former woman councillor from Bengaluru.

In our interviews, councillors self-reported significant knowledge gaps (ref Fig. 19, 20). **Lack of formal training and guidance from seniors on the budget process in particular (budget set up, approval, allocation of funds, etc.) as well as knowledge on finances are key hindrances highlighted, especially by first timers.** A former woman councillor from Guwahati says, *"I don't understand things like who prepares the budget and how can I seek more funds to be allocated to my ward. Who should I approach to raise this issue?"*
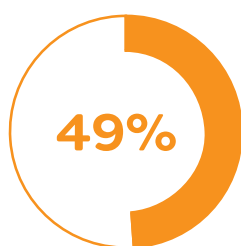
"There are procedures from the government for each and every action to be taken. We need to go by the law all the time. It took me around six months to understand the various functions. I also took the help of the previous presidents and the officials of the local body."
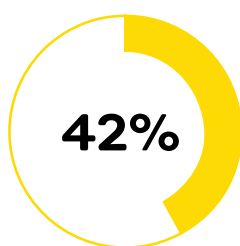
Shivaraj Mesta
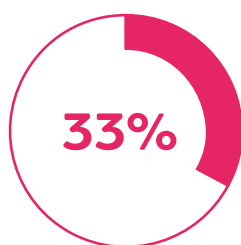President
Honnavara, Karnataka

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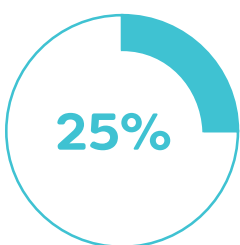**Fig. 19 : Knowledge gaps self-reported by councillors**

49%

Councillors do not feel that they have adequate say in the funds allocated to their ward

42%

Councillors do not know how to access additional funds to their ward

33%

Councillors do not understand the structure and working of their city government

25%

Councillors do not understand key city governance legislations

"If there is shortage of funds in the nagar nigam, where to avail money from for a particular project is something I want to know about. Because without enough funds, no work can be done."

Pooja Patidar
Former Councillor
Indore, Madhya Pradesh

Fig 20. : Knowledge gaps self-reported by councillors on finance

46% (N=65) of councillors do not know how to even access the funds allocated to their ward

52% (N=42) women councillors know how to access funds for their ward

50% (N=22) of the younger councillors know how to access funds for their ward

80% (N=20) councillors from large cities know how to access funds for their ward

It is interesting to note that 63% of the councillors interviewed perceive good working relationships with MLAs/other councillors / mayor/ commissioner and city officials. **However, we observe an inferior quality of interaction between first timers, young councillors, councillors from large cities and key urban stakeholders.**

Representing the needs of their ward in the city council is a key responsibility of councillors. **However, 24% (N=42) of the women councillors and 5% (N=22) of men councillors interviewed agree that they do not feel confident to speak in council meetings. We observe a positive relationship between having confidence to speak in meetings and having their voice heard.** Out of the 67% (N=64) of councillors who agree that their voices are heard at council meetings, 98% agree that they feel confident to speak in meetings

"I am well aware of what is happening in my ward as I gather information from the people. My staff also goes around the ward and see if there are any issues to be resolved. So I know what I am talking about."

Abdul Wajid
Former Councillor
Bengaluru, Karnataka

(N=43). Councillors who feel confident to speak in council meetings say that they do so because of natural oratory skills and having good knowledge about the subject matter being discussed. **Several councillors highlight that data and evidence and clarity on their ward and its issues boost their confidence to speak in the council. Other success factors that came to light are years of experience in the field and belonging to the ruling party.**

Citizen engagement is an integral part of a councillor's life. **Our interviews show that most councillors engage with citizens at least four to five times a day informally, through physical interaction (ex. in their office, at home) and through social media – WhatsApp (64%, N=55) and Facebook (58%, N=55).** 60% of the councillors interviewed agree that they use social media to the best of their ability. 89% of councillors from mega cities (N=18) say that they leverage social media to connect with their citizens compared to 52% from medium and small cities (N=27). Councillors interviewed use social media to redress citizen grievances, publicise their work, and communicate key government schemes.

The survey also reveal that training is required to guide councillors on how to voice their opinions and to build relationships with different stakeholders. Training in communication, engagement with citizens, and new-age social media tools have also been identified as important for further capacity building. Councillors also say that training on sectoral areas such as roads, waste disposal, water supply, and raising funds will help them perform better as a councillor in the serving term. *"Yes, subject knowledge about broken roads, water supply, sewage pipelines, and budget & finance management will surely help me speak about them confidently to the people of my ward,"* says a one-time former woman councillor from Guwahati who was an activist prior to becoming a councillor. A woman councillor from Patna who entered into city politics owing to the demand from her family says, *"My priorities would be three - oratory skills, how to raise funds for my ward, and how to publicise the work done by me in a better way"*

Team Janaagraha with Padmanabha Reddy, Former Councillor, Bengaluru

Our survey with the councillors identifies ten key training areas across hard and soft skills (ref Fig. 21). The training areas remain similar across gender, experience, age and councillors belonging to different categories of cities.

Fig. 21 : Priority hard and soft skills as identified by councillors for self-development

Councillors - hard skills

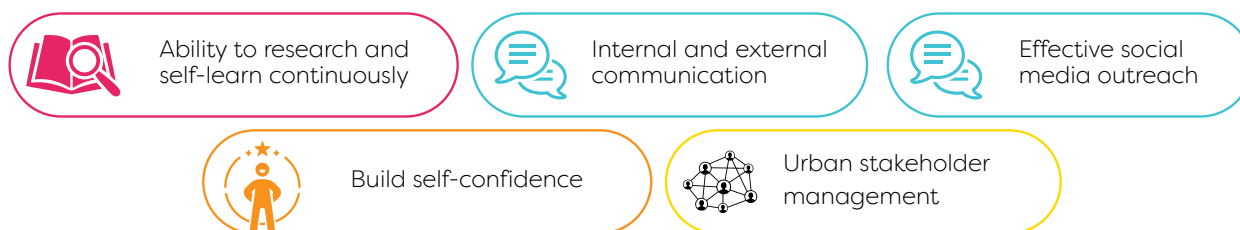Role of councillors within the city government

Organisation structure of the city government and across tiers

74th CAA and municipal laws

Budget and financial management

Sectoral knowledge on waste disposal, roads, water, and sanitation

Councillors - soft skills

Ability to research and self-learn continuously

Internal and external communication

Effective social media outreach

Build self-confidence

Urban stakeholder management

Fig. 22. Hardest sectoral areas to develop as identified by councillors

Councillors perceive waste disposal, roads, water supply and sanitation as the hardest areas to develop. Many women councillors, first-time councillorss, young councillors and councillors from large cities perceive grievance redressal to be difficult.

Lack of training in the form of a structured programme, documented literature/manuals and mentorship from seniors are key issues highlighted by the councillors (especially for first-time councillors) in building a good understanding about the structure and workings of their city government. *"Initially, I did not understand but I learnt from the clerical staff and I took help from the officers, mayors and even the zonal officers and senior colleagues. I used to look through files and make notes on them. My husband was also in politics, so there was some exposure. It, however, took about three to four months to understand how things work."* says a former Mayor of Agartala who has been in politics for about ten years.

Several councillors who have gained knowledge regarding city governance through experience or their own research report higher efficiency in service delivery. However, those who are unable to overcome this challenge struggle to deliver

"Since I was aware of all these processes, I was able to hold the relevant officials accountable and ensure that my ward benefited from it. Therefore, I feel the need for all councillors to have a good understanding of the council and its stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities, powers etc. to serve the people better." says a former councillor from Ballari who has been an activist before entering city politics. A former councillor of Indore who has been in politics for over ten years says *"Half knowledge regarding city government in my first tenure made everything difficult and time-consuming. Whereas, in this tenure (second term) I have learnt a lot about these and now I can perform my duties seamlessly. I know whom and how to approach for any work."*

On the other hand, councillors who lack knowledge are unable to access resources and realise their potential in order to solve civic issues in their cities. *"Due to lack of knowledge, I feel I am failing to perform. I understand people's issues but then how to take them forward to solve them is a major challenge for me."* says a first-time woman councillor from Patna.

**Team Janaagraha with
Sanjay Ghadi, Councillor, Mumbai**

**Team Janaagraha with
Parveen Bhanu, Former Councillor, Ballari**

**Team Janaagraha with
Sheeba Lal, Councillor, Kochi**

**Team Janaagraha with
Vasant Agshikar, Deputy Mayor, Panaji**

82% of councillors interviewed say that, to be truly empowered and effective, along with leadership training, greater decentralisation is also important

82% (N=65) of the councillors think that in addition to the devolution of all functions as per 74th CAA, greater powers over funds, functions, functionaries, and a better salary/honorarium are key to being empowered and effective in their role.

Fig 23: Extent to which councillors interviewed think that decentralisation and empowerment will help them to effectively deliver as a councillor
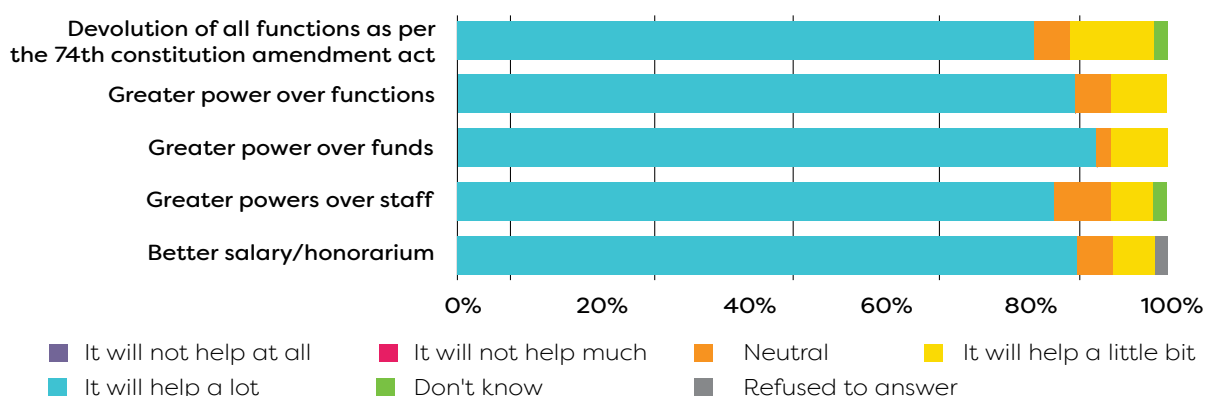
The voice of councillors clearly indicates that there is a strong demand for a systematic leadership programme, to strengthen their capabilities and be truly leaders of their cities. Let us now hear the voice of thought leaders. Like councillors, do they also believe in a systematic leadership programme for councillors?

Voice of thought leaders

Vandana Chavan, Member of Parliament and former Mayor of Pune, emphasise the potential of councillors in driving change at the grassroots level and therefore the need for their systematic capacity building. Ms Chavan reiterate that *"Issues such as climate change are not taken up at the municipal corporation level as they are not considered as issues that affect the poor. But I used to say that is exactly why there is a need to take it up as it affects the poor the most. It is not enough to fix these SDGs etc. at the international and national level to monitor them, ultimately the action happens at the grassroots level."*

"Councillors have a good understanding of the grassroots reality and should leverage this knowledge to solve local issues"

P C Mohan
Member of Parliament
17th Lok Sabha of India

Our interviews with fifteen thought leaders show a significant overlap with the voice of councillors. Thought leaders encompass urban MPs and MLAs (including those with experience in city politics), officials with urban experience (senior and mid-level officers), experts who train councillors, technical experts on gender, sanitation, public health and climate. Through these interviews we also identify priority themes for a leadership programme, approaches for gender mainstreaming and gender sensitisation, modes of course delivery, and institutionalisation of the 'city leaders programme' etc.

All 15 thought leaders we interviewed emphatically agree on the pertinence of a systematic leadership programme for councillors. Their perception of the knowledge gap councillors have, are largely similar to those expressed by councillors themselves

Primarily, thought leaders perceive councillors to have limited understanding on urban laws, budgeting and finances, similar to what councillors themselves have expressed. They also emphasise the knowledge gaps councillors have in technology for administrative work, communication, social media outreach and stakeholder management.

The interviews also show that **sector-specific knowledge gaps** of councillors ranges from understanding the nuances and needs of the sector to technical understanding of the issues at hand and possible resolutions. There is a significant lack in councillors being able to communicate the issues to the local administration from a resolution as well as funding point of view. Furthermore, there are gaps in the ability to **interpret data for decision making.** *"One of the biggest knowledge gaps is lack of understanding regarding civil engineering. How are roads made? How are they repaired? No one asks. I remember one councillor who asked me how much time the repair will take and when I told him the timeline, he was shocked to know that repair takes a lot of time if the structure is weak. If training is given to them so that they are more in line with what engineers want and understand, it would be great."* says an executive engineer who requested anonymity. Bhawna Prakash, Associate Partner at Ernst & Young says *"If we see from a sanitation sector perspective, there is little understanding of what the sector needs and the communication related to that. In Odisha, there are ward sanitation committees to govern the sanitation issues in the ward. All the ground level issues have to come through these committees, through the councillors to the city and addressed by the city commissioner. The understanding of the councillors regarding the issues is very basic and lack a policy perspective. They demand for what the locality needs but don't think about bringing in sustainable solutions."*

"Some understanding of both sides of the account book, expenditure and revenue have to be inculcated. More attention is on spending but less on revenue, measures have to be taken to generate revenue and hence financial training is essential. Most of the councillors have learnt this on experience and it takes years to develop this kind of knowledge base. Some of the basics can be laid out in the training."

Dr Lalitha Kamath
Chairperson
Centre for Urban Policy & Governance
TISS - Mumbai

"The knowledge gaps exist in the form of understanding the issue, data availability and how to use this data, technical capacities in forming questions related to climate change, communicating the problem and asking for funds in the form of state or national level fund allocations."

Chirag Gajjar
Head – Subnational Climate Action
WRI India

Some of the thought leaders, particularly the mid-level officials interviewed also highlight that councillors are not familiar with **sector-specific legislations** such as environmental laws, laws on manual scavenging etc. Moreover, they are not **adequately updated on urban schemes.** *"Often, councillors are not aware of the different schemes/ developments that have happened across the different departments of the corporation. Hence it is important that they are made aware of it and are given training to have an in-depth understanding of it in order to disseminate it further to the people of their ward."* says a municipal revenue inspector who requested anonymity. Sangramjit Nayak IAS, Director Of Municipal Administration, Government of Odisha emphasise that councillors should understand and be sensitive about the softer aspects of urbanisation. *"It is not just hard-core institutional, material, infrastructural development. Councillors are not oriented to understand the plight of the softer side of society like beggars, persons suffering from diseases, the homeless, night shelters etc. They have to understand this also, because they are part of the urban areas. These cannot be side tracked in the management of urban spaces."*

The inability of councillors to look **at the city challenges holistically,** beyond the boundaries of their ward is highlighted by Sarada Muraleedharan IAS, Additional Chief Secretary of Local Self-Government Department, Government of Kerala. *"Because of the fact that councillors represent wards and there are funds that are received, they tend to think of only wards and not in terms of local government. It is extremely critical to have a perspective bigger than the ward. It's been about my ward against yours, I need to get as much as you do, my quota of votes, water, beneficiaries, etc. This fragments it, and makes it difficult for local governments to think holistically and strategically. This is one area of concern."*

Women councillors are more sensitive to issues such as climate change and sanitation but they need more support to build confidence, skills in effective communication, technology, budgeting, and finances

"Women as caregivers understand the importance of sanitation and hence take well-meaning efforts" says Manvita Baradi, Founder Director, Urban Management Centre. Chirag Gajjar who heads Subnational Climate Action at WRI India also points out that since women experience the impact of climate change more, they understand the significance of the same better. We have already seen in chapter three, how women experience cities differently, and therefore, women councillors often prioritise development outcomes such as health, education etc.

"The male councillors and ward members are very articulate, they know their interests, they present things in a better manner, they are vocal, and also know how to get their work done. So, that is their USP. The females, with honing of their skills in the economic and political front, I hope they will also be more vocal."

Sangramjit Nayak IAS
Director of Municipal Administration,
Government of Odisha

However, thought leaders perceive specific skill gaps for women councillors such as being able to articulate well and speak up in meetings. The conversations indicate that this is a result of limitations in communication skills as well as a lack of knowledge related to understanding the budget and duties of a councillor. *"... numbers can also be intimidating to a lot of women councillors and that is why they end up outsourcing such work. So being able to read the budget, knowing the budget heads etc. will be a practical skill to give them,"* says Hemakshi Meghani, Co-Founder, Indian School of Democracy. A crucial reason for this difference could be attributed to the fact that the systems are designed by men, which by default exclude the participation of women. Ishu Gupta, who has ten years of experience in training councillors points out that councillors often dismiss their female counterparts by claiming that they might not be available at all times.

The thought leaders also points out that the **gendered allocation of responsibilities** results in women often getting assigned non-technical roles. *"Engineering, roads and all of these is seen as a man's issue. But women councillors also need training on the same,"* says an executive engineer who requested anonymity. *"When you talk about technology, women take a back seat, even though they might be qualified, even if she had exposure to it. That is a gendered angle,"* points out Ms Baradi. She also points out that they are **often not given the opportunity to travel,** see best practices, and interact with peers from other cities compared to a male councillor.

However, Ms Sowmya Reddy, MLA-Karnataka, points out that **experience over the years build confidence in women councillors, and that some of these challenges pertaining to communication are also applicable to male councillors.**

**Team Janaagraha with
Sowmya Reddy, MLA, Karnataka**

"Women are not usually assigned any portfolios which are more technical. They would be given secondary roles, they will not be given water and sanitation but women and child portfolio/ responsibilities."

Manvita Baradi
Founder Director
Urban Management Centre

"Some councillors might not be able to speak in English, but if they are working independently, you can see the difference in the way they work from the start of their tenure and after a year. If councillors are more aware and confident of their work, they will automatically be able to assert themselves in the council meetings and communicate better with different stakeholders. They have gotten elected by the people so they have the ability to accomplish something. We often think these leadership programmes are only needed for women but that is not true. There are a lot of male elected representatives too who cannot communicate properly or they are not proactive."

Sowmya Reddy
Member of Legislative
Assembly, Karnataka

Gender mainstreaming and gender sensitisation are also seen as key areas for training interventions

Thought leaders perceive a significant influence of male family members on women councillors, and therefore voice their support for gender mainstreaming and gender sensitisation. While some thought leaders say that gender sensitisation programs should be uniform across all genders, some suggest that male councillors should receive targeted training to enhance their understanding of the systemic issues faced by their female counterparts. *"There should definitely be more and separate training for male councillors on how to work with their female counterparts. Simple things like more women's stories and images of women. We need to push them to sort of think of how this became the popular narrative. That sort of reflection exercise with them will help them a lot to at least start listening to women"*, says Mr Gupta. Such training is expected to enable women councillors to feel safe in their workplace and encourage them to be more active and engaging in professional settings.

"When we are conducting mixed trainings, ensure that the facilitator gives space to a woman who is finding it difficult to get space, and does not allow whatever it is she says to be demolished or sniggered away. We have five years to work with elected representatives. So, it is important to keep on working with them."

Sarada Muraleedharan IAS
Local Self Government
Department
Government of Kerala

Ms Baradi further highlight how important it is to **mainstream gender beyond the gender binaries**. *"Another thing is about transgender councillors – there is a stigma around that. They are coming up and the third gender is being represented but they are a minority. There needs to be a sensitisation for their role."*

However, when it comes to technical subjects such as public health, climate change etc, experts are of the opinion that a gendered differentiation might not be necessary.

It is important to note that the perception of thought leaders on the influence of male family members in the work of a woman councillor appear to be much stronger than what was self-reported by women councillors themselves report in our survey. Women councillors self-report that, although they take help from male family members, they have autonomy in undertaking their work. Only 10% (N=41) of the women councillors interviewed say that 'women councillors not being seen as real leaders' is a challenge in their journey to become a councillor.

The top ten training areas identified by the thought leaders are largely similar to those identified by the councillors
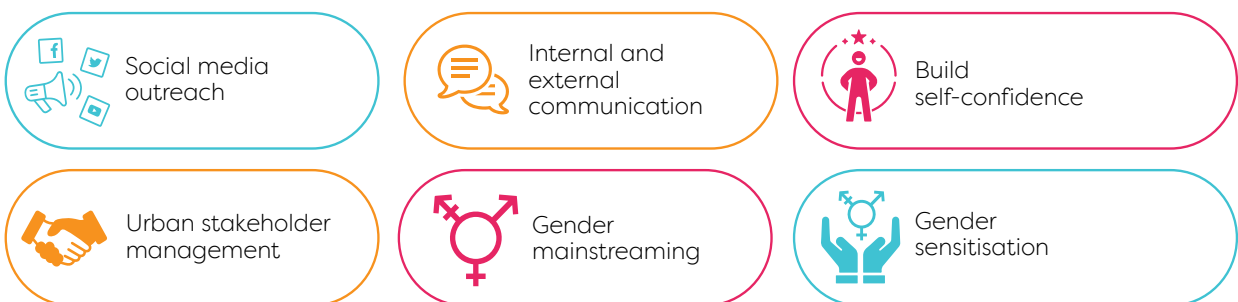
The exceptions to the training areas in comparison with that of the voice of councillors are, creating a vision and action plan for their ward as well as sector-specific knowledge in climate change and technology.

Fig. 24 : Priority hard skills and soft skills to be developed for councillors as identified by thought leaders

Thought leaders : Hard skills

Role of councillors within the city government	Organisation structure of the city government	Creating a vision and action plan for the ward
74th CAA and municipal laws	Budget and financial management	Sectoral knowledge on waste disposal, roads, water, sanitation, climate change and technology

Thought leaders : Soft skills

Social media outreach	Internal and external communication	Build self-confidence
Urban stakeholder management	Gender mainstreaming	Gender sensitisation

Leadership programmes should include both induction and refresher sessions. The programme should instil pride in being a 'city leader'. It should be held away from the home city and mainly involve story telling, case studies, interaction, and peer learning. Thought leaders also emphasise on regional contextualisation, vernacular language, and leveraging digital course delivery

All thought leaders state that the councillor leadership programme should involve an induction as well as refresher trainings on contemporary subjects. Ms Muraleedharan says *"So, the key is repeated training. Not just restricting it to when they get elected as a councillor and do an orientation but do it again and again at regular intervals".* It is interesting to note that 89% councillors surveyed also express the need for induction and refresher training. **The thought leaders also emphasise the need to clearly communicate the role of a councillor and instil in them a sense of pride in their role.**

"In the induction, make them feel proud of their roles by validating and instilling confidence and making them understand that their roles are very important. It is an underestimated part of the training – how people feel about themselves and their choices makes a real difference."

Hemakshi Meghani
Co-Founder
Indian School of Democracy

The conversations with the thought leaders were insightful and highlighted new nuances on the delivery of leadership programmes. All of them emphasise that while it is vital to focus on the content of the training, it is also equally, if not more important, to give ample thought into the favourable mode of delivery.

It was interesting to hear several experts say that councillors have shown better learning outcomes when the trainings were held in a different location, away from the city and if it included a component of over-night stay. This can be alluded to the fact that while away from home, councillors can commit their undivided attention to the programme. This was especially relevant in the case of women councillors who did not have to return home after the training to take care of domestic chores. Ms Meghani says *"Residential training really works, because if the training ends at 6 PM then the women will start worrying about what next? I have conducted residential trainings for women in rural Bangladesh. If they don't have to think of their household for two or three days, that help them to be in a different mind space. So, if you can make it residential for them they can get to know each other as well in an informal space. In that case it is ok even if it is a little far away from the city, you have to just arrange pick up and drop."*

They also highlight that knowledge disseminated through unconventional mediums such as interactive games, group discussions, theatres, mock council discussions etc., lead to better learning outcomes. Such methods are key to breaking the monotony of training sessions with long-drawn lectures and power point presentations. Ms Meghani says, *"Having a nature filled training location always helps. You can do a lot of body movement training and not treat them like boring adults sitting in a classroom. It opens people up to use methods like theatre and games. And also, things like having them share their own story so that they feel connected to the trainer and the cohort."* Thought leaders with experience in training elected representatives also emphasise that, councillors would be appreciative and receptive of case studies which talked about real experiences, as they will be able to better relate to them.

All thought leaders also state that it is important to communicate with councillors and deliver training in the language that they understand *"It should be kept in mind that these are people who are not adept at understanding a foreign language like English or Hindi. So, you'll have to boil down to the vernaculars, make them understand in vernacular, make it interesting,"* says Mr Nayak.

"Every councillor wants to learn and perform well and if that has to happen, we have to enrich them through systematic training programmes."

Vandana Chavan
Member of Parliament,
17th Rajya Sabha

"The best way to train a councillor is to show them that it happens and it works. They would be very enthused to travel."

Manvita Baradi
Founder Director
Urban Management Centre

"For councillors to know what it takes to effectively deliver primary healthcare is an area for capacity building. It is important for them to have a say in how the money allocated towards health is spent in a way that is productive for the health systems. A module around public health leadership needs to be developed."

Dr Ranjani Gopinath
Public Health Expert

Create a leadership programme in a way that it gets embraced and demanded by the councillors. Create networks to help amplify the voice of 'city leaders'. Institutionalise the programme with state governments and state training institutes

Thought leaders are of the opinion that it is important to **institutionalise the 'City Leaders Programme'** through state governments and state training institutes. Most of them also suggest to work with the government to mandate induction and refresher programmes for councillors by law.

Thought leaders also suggest that leadership programmes should be championed by an influential figure. Further, they opine that it is effective to have training on certain specific themes delivered by stakeholders from within the city governments (for example, the session on budget may be taken by a current / former chief finance officer).

Dr Kamath and Ms Baradi highlight the idea of **open/ participatory training to have councillors embrace the programme themselves.** *"It would be great to have open training. It shouldn't be just a state mandate but it should be made as relevant and appropriate as possible. Councillors should be made aware of how important their role is and what role they can play for the development of their ward. The nature and approach of the training should be decided from inputs from the councillors,"* says Dr Kamath.

"Training in soft skills in KILA is participatory in nature. After the lecture sessions, councillors sit together in groups and they start talking. There is a space for them to interact and ask questions. I think that has actually benefitted more than a session on how to speak. They don't require or they don't expect sessions on how to speak. If you have few participatory sessions, they slowly start to speak. Especially women, when they start talking they won't have any inhibitions. But the men may take more time. We need to provide them with the space to evolve. This is adult learning so the pedagogy matters"

Dr Joy Elamon
Director General
KILA

Some of them also suggest that the 'City Leaders Programme' should be followed by **mentorship programmes** for councillors in general and women councillors in particular (for example, peer to peer mentorship for women councillors with senior women councillors / politicians), to **create a network for the councillors**. Dr Kamath highlight how such network could be a platform of voice and agency for councillors in India. *"Initial training should deal with the seeding of information and then there should be follow-ups through a mentorship program. Informal outreach mechanisms to their peers could also help. Peer to peer mentorship using senior women will really help them discuss and find solutions for issues and build a sense of solidarity."*

Councillors and thought leaders have undoubtedly voice the need for a systematic 'City Leaders Programme' for councillors of India in general, and women councillors in particular. The policy research also establishes the current gap present, and the significance of such leadership programme in driving effective leadership in cities, and thereby driving better quality of life. Therefore, what should be the way forward? How should we go about strengthening the hands of the councillors so that they can be true 'city leaders'? Let us find out in the next chapter.

07.

The way forward – 'City Leaders Programme' to achieve urban transformation at scale

"The future lies with those wise political leaders who realise that the great public is more interested in government than in politics."
– Franklin D Roosevelt

First mile - the obvious solution staring at us

Councillors are the elected leaders of our cities, but unfortunately their role is not taken seriously.

Councillors are the 'first mile' of democracy. They are truly grounded; they engage with citizens on a daily basis and experience the same quality of life. Citizens go to councillors for not just civic matters but many things beyond their job description. **Empowering councillors with the knowledge, and tools in a sustained manner is critical to fixing our cities, and to fight the toughest global challenges coming our way. A well-designed 'City Leaders Programme' can infuse new energy into our cities in many ways.**

India has 87,000+ councillors across 4,700+ cities. Of these, at least 46% are women. In the recent elections to Coimbatore Municipal Corporation in Tamil Nadu, 91 out of the 100 elected councillors are first timers. This phenomenon can be seen elsewhere as well, because unlike the Parliament or state assemblies, **city councils attract young people.** They may be new generation politicians, women who enter into city politics due to mandates of reservation, or women who contest and win from general seats. Many may come from political families as well.

For us, this means, a large number of young people across gender, who come in without conditioning, excited about doing a good job and winning over people. The 'City Leaders Programme' will have to be designed keeping all of the above in mind.

We are creating this programme for the councillors who are key to our sustainable urban future.

Our motto - scale and speed

Reaching 87,000+ councillors across the country is indeed a daunting task. There is a continuous churn of new councillors as and when cities go for elections. This implies that there are thousands of first-time councillors at any given time. No single organisation can deliver this program to such a large number of people while keeping the quality intact. **Partnership is an essential ingredient for the success of this programme and will be pursued with great vigour. These will be broadly two kinds – knowledge and delivery partners.**

Knowledge partners are vital to create a compelling programme that addresses the most important aspects of city governance. Janaagraha, which has over two decades of experience in building innovative platforms (online and on the ground) to bring citizens and governments closer, will drive the bulk of the content creation. However, we are keen to form strategic partnerships with organisations and experts.

We are already having conversations with governments across tiers, state training institutes, academic institutions, experts etc. Given that each state has thousands of councillors and different laws for city governance, it makes the most sense to build the 'City Leaders Programme' in close partnership with state governments. **In these conversations, we also realise that there is tremendous interest in bringing the 'City Leaders Programme' formally into various states and cities of India.**

Swachhata is arguably India's largest civic technology platform

20M+ citizens
across 3485 cities
since 2016 launch

24M+ complaints
with an average
resolution rate of 93%

**14,000+ municipal
sanitary engineers**
onboarded till date

6M+ garbage sites
cleared across
Indian cities

Janaagraha provides the technology backbone for the prestigious Swachh Bharat Mission that reaches 4,000+ cities and enables citizens to participate in local governance digitally. We are expanding this programme to enable councillors to participate in the Swachh Bharat Mission by creating specialised apps for councillors. Using the councillor app, councillors can get visibility into issues of their ward and interact with active citizens; understand long term needs of their ward and work towards holistic development. Leadership building of elected representatives in local governments is a big part of this vision.

In the post pandemic world, MOOCs and online learning have been elevated to new levels. With affordable broadband near universal, we foresee delivery of 'City Leaders Programme' using online platforms. We would like to leverage the enormous potential of social media platforms, particularly, WhatsApp to engage councillors beyond the classroom and deliver content to those in remote areas where physical trainings may not be feasible.

We aim to work with world-class online learning platforms instead of reinventing the wheel and to focus on our core competencies instead of building IT infrastructure.

'City Leaders Programme'

Journey of Councillors with City Leaders Programme

We aim to create a systematic leadership program to empower the elected leaders in the city council, particularly women, for a sustainable urban future

1 Wins city election

2 Enrolls in 'City Leaders Programme'

3 Receives training in hard and soft skills

Councillor

5 Articulates effectively in the city council

4 Joins 'City Leaders Network'

CITY LEADERS NETWORK

6 Avails funds for their ward

7 Convenes ward committee meeting

9 Gets recognised for good governance

8 Creates model ward

City Leaders Programme

Phase 1:
Study the needs
& opportunities
» Policy research
» Primary research

Phase 3:
Programme Delivery
» Partners
» States/cities
» Special sessions
» Swachhata
» Language versions
» Train the trainers
» M&E

Phase 2:
Programme Design
» Process templates
» Partners
» Module design
» New modules
» Pilots
» M&E

Advocacy

| Union Government | State Government | City Government | Councillors |

: Roadmap

Phase 5:
Tech. for councillors
» Digital City Leaders
   Programme
» Certification
» Councillor App

Phase 4 :
Networks
» Newsletters
» Events
» Videos
» Zonal / State
   /National networks
» Fellows for
   councillors

Phase 6:
Institutionalisation
» Strengthening of
   state training
   institutes
» Legislations
» Handover

For illustrative purpose only

| Urban MPs & MLAs | State Training Institutes | Academia | Experts | CSOs | Media |

Abbreviations

1. CAA – Constitution Amendment Act
2. AMRUT - Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation
3. ASCI – Administrative Staff College of India
4. CEPT – Centre for Environment Planning and Technology
5. CSE – Centre for Science and Environment
6. CSO – Civil Society Organisation
7. DWS - Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation
8. FSSM - Fecal Sludge and Septage Management
9. GEN – General
10. HPEC – High Powered Expert Committee
11. IIM-B – Indian Institute of Management – Bangalore
12. IIPA - Indian Institute of Public Administration
13. ISD - Indian School of Democracy
14. IT - Information Technology
15. JNNURM - Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
16. KILA – Kerala Institute of Local Administration
17. KLSGD - Kerala Local Government Service Delivery
18. KSMF - Karnataka Sexual Minorities Forum
19. LBSNNA – Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration
20. M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
21. MLA – Member of Legislative Assembly
22. MoHUA - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
23. MOOC - Massive Open Online Courses
24. MP -   Member of Parliament
25. MPLADS - Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme
26. NFSSM - National Fecal Sludge and Septage Management
27. NGO – Non- Governmental Organisation
28. NIUA – National Institute of Urban Affairs
29. OBC – Other Backward Class
30. RCUES - Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies
31. SC – Scheduled Caste
32. SDG - Sustainable Development Goals
33. ST – Scheduled Tribe
34. TERI – The Energy and Resources Institute
35. TISS - Tata Institute of Social Science
36. USP - Unique Selling Point
37. UT- Union Territory
38. WRI - World Resources Institute

JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy
3rd Floor, Sair Bagh, 19/4, Cunningham Road, Bangalore, Karnataka, India – 560052
Phone: 080 41200844, 41500844

srinivas.alavilli@janaagraha.org
vachana.vr@janaagraha.org   www.janaagraha.org

/janaagraha   @Janaagraha1   @Janaagraha

/janaagraha   /janaagraha-centre-for-citizenship-and-democracy