Governance and citizens in Urban India: Evidence from Kolkata
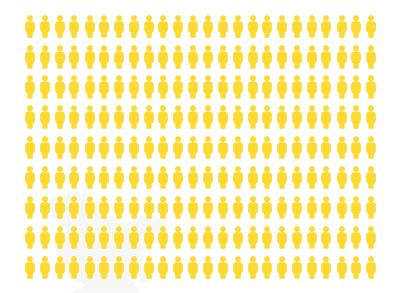
March 2025

Content

01
INTRODUCTION

Urban India

One of the greatest challenges that India faces in the 21st century is the governance of its cities. Cities are centers of innovation, opportunity, and growth, and are home to a steady flow of migrants. In 2011, Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata were the only three cities with more than ten million people each, and 53 cities had populations of more than one million each.[1]

As of 2022,

India stands at almost 400 cities with populations between 0.1 to 1 million.

[1] chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.janaagraha.org/files/publications/Citizen-Index-Book-Dec-2014.pdf

A UN report has estimated that urban population in India, will stand at

675 million people by 2035

and the percentage of India's urban population will be 43.2 percent.[2] However, the physical growth of cities has paced much ahead of our ability to govern them, which has put huge pressure on the existing development infrastructure, resources, and governance systems.

With recent studies suggesting a stabilization of population growth in the top-tier cities, it is believed that the future expansion of India's urban population is likely to be primarily driven by the smaller statutory towns (those with less than 0.1 million population) and Census Towns. These segments together accounted for a significant 50% of India's urban population in 2011. The narrative of India's urbanization is, therefore, becoming less top-heavy. Instead, there is a strong indication of more balanced urbanization, with small and medium cities poised to play a significant role. Understanding and addressing the specific needs and opportunities of these areas is fundamental for achieving inclusive urban development.

2   https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indias-urban-population-to-stand-at-675-million-in-2035-behind-chinas-1-billion-un/article65584707.ece

City-Systems

Our work collects and presents data on the state of basic services and infrastructure in Indian cities to highlight the extent of these challenges. At the same time, relating the delivery of such services to mechanisms of governance. The ability of a city to deliver good quality of life (e.g.at a minimum, good quality of basic services and infrastructure) depends to a large extent on the complex, mostly-invisible factors (such as laws, policies, institutions, institutional processes) that underpin urban governance. To conceptualize these factors, diagnose urban problems and - more importantly - solve them, we need to view them in a systems framework. The "City-Systems" framework is a framework created by Janaagraha that helps us identify the root causes of our urban challenges. This City-Systems framework comprises four components:

1. Urban Planning & Design	2. Urban Capacities & Resources	3. Empowered & Legitimate Political Representation	4. Transparency, Accountability & Participation

Janaagraha undertakes regular reviews of the laws, policies, institutions and institutional processes that lie within each of these four components. Entitled 'Annual Survey of India's City-Systems',[3] this work has identified significant challenges with urban India's City-Systems.

The work in this project focuses particularly on the fourth component. With such large populations living in smaller geographical areas, it is crucial to deepen citizen participation in all governance systems, in order to improve quality of life. Citizens should not only be aware, but empowered to have a say in how their cities and neighbourhoods are planned and managed. In any democracy, the quality of governance is inextricably tied to the quality of citizenship. Our work ,therefore, also collects data on the current status quo of citizen participation and considers its relationship to service delivery in urban India.

3   Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (2017): Annual Survey of India's City-Systems – Shaping India's Urban Agenda. Available: https://www.janaagraha.org/asics/report/ASICS-report-2017-fin.pdf [accessed 15-05-2023].
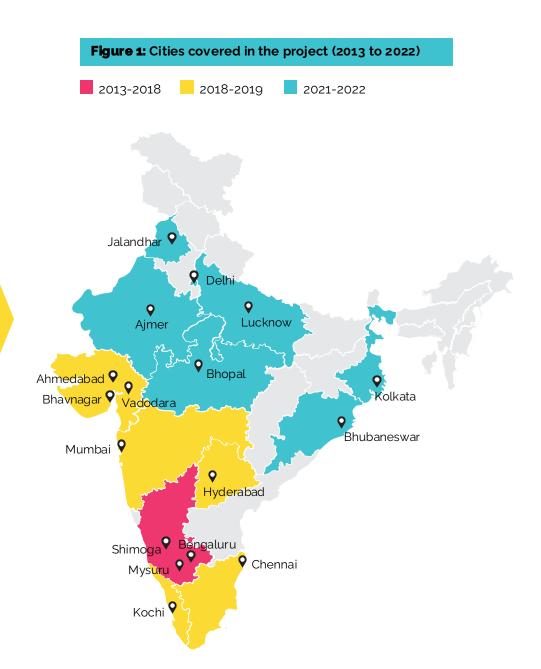
The Urban Governance Project

The Urban Governance project aims to gather systematic and robust data on the relationship between citizenship, basic services, and infrastructure delivery in cities across India. We argue that effective citizenship means essentially being able to use one's rights, that is to effectively participate in public life and engage in public activities across social boundaries. Second, effective citizenship means being able to claim and obtain public goods, basic services, and infrastructure from the local state.

Till date we have collected data from over

38,000 citizens

in 17 cities across India.

Figure 1: Cities covered in the project (2013 to 2022)

- 2013-2018
- 2018-2019
- 2021-2022

Jalandhar
Delhi
Ajmer
Lucknow
Bhopal
Ahmedabad
Bhavnagar
Vadodara
Kolkata
Mumbai
Bhubaneswar
Hyderabad
Shimoga
Bengaluru
Mysuru
Chennai
Kochi

Research design

01 Key respondent interviews

City commissioners, police commissioners, corporators, heads of departments, prominent academics in the city/ state, and civil society activists were interviewed in each city to understand local context on service provision, issues, reference terms and inform the nuance for each city's survey instrument.

02 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- 2 FGDs per city.
- Male and female citizens participated who were from marginalised communities, typically from very low-income neighbourhoods, especially in shack settlements and informal slums.
- Goals:
  a. To collect qualitative data on how citizens access services, how they engage with politicians and the state, how communities are organized and how maginalised communities understand their rights
  b. To use responses to adapt and fine tune our survey instrument to actual conditions and practices in these communities.

03 Large, quantitative, representative household surveys

☐ Systematic random sampling that stratified polling parts to generate a representative sample of polling parts across each city taking care to ensure citizens from marginalised communities were included.

☐ Manual counting, listing, and classification, of all residential buildings within the sampled polling parts in each city. Classification into one of five housing type categories: HT-1 (informal shacks), HT-2 (informal slums), HT-3 (lower middle class), HT-4 (middle class) and HT-5 (upper class housing).

☐ Manual counting of number of households within each listed residential building.

☐ Systematic sampling of households across polling parts.

☐ Quantitative household surveys with 1,000-3,000[4] citizens per city.

☐ Top-up sampling to ensure sample match to listings (by housing type) and to account (and increase in the sample) for low numbers of certain housing types to allow for adequate 'within housing type' analysis.

04 Weighting

Rake weighting (or iterative proportional fitting) was used to create weights that are unique to each city. For the seven cities, each response was assigned a weight according to housing type of each housing structure, which is unique for each city according to the difference between the sample margins and the population distributions of the five housing types in the city (as determined by the listing data).

For more details on the methodology, please refer to Appendix 1.

CITY IN FOCUS: KOLKATA

In this report, we provide a comprehensive overview of our quantitative findings from Kolkata. Where appropriate, we compare our findings to six other cities from the most recent phase, for which our data analysis is completed.

About the city
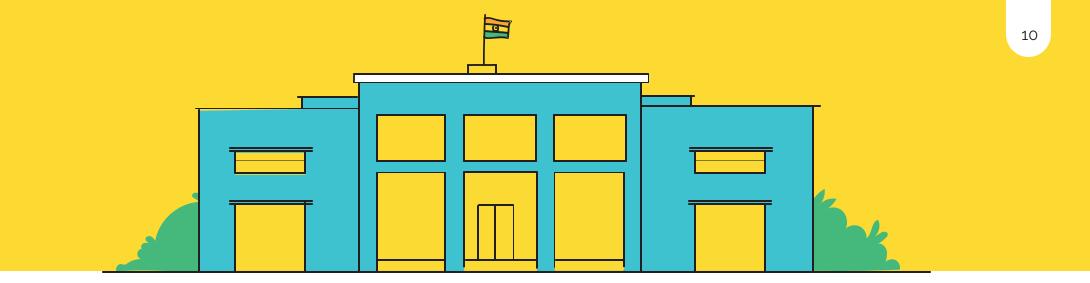
- Current population estimate

2023 − 1,53,33,000 people,[5] about

52% male   **48% female**[6]

- Area of 205 sq.km,[7] Kolkata is the 7th biggest city in India , in area and population.[8]

Kolkata

- The city is one of the biggest economic contributors to the state, with industries such as textiles, jute, leather, information technology, and tourism to name a few.[9]

- Micro and small enterprises make up most of the businesses in the city.[10]

- Kolkata is also a warehousing and logistics hub due to a major port, and an international airport located in the city. There have been increasing investments from multinational companies in Kolkata towards establishing technology labs etc.[11]

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5   Population projection 2021: https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/

6   https://www.census2011.co.in/census/city/215-kolkata.html

7   https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/KolkataStatistics.jsp. Area mentioned is city corporation area.

8   ibid

9   https://www.india-briefing.com/news/investor-guide-kolkata-7089.html/

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

About Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and local governance:

- The Calcutta Municipal Corporation Act of 1980, which came into effect in January 1984 made the corporation autonomous, and directly responsible to the electorate.

- The Act enlists some obligatory services such as water, health and welfare, public streets and lighting, sanitation, municipal markets etc. for the corporation. The discretionary services include education, survey of land and building, empowerment of poor and vulnerable populations, welfare of employees, upkeep of public places, provision of low-cost housing, amongst others.

- The Kolkata Municipal Corporation has 144 wards,[12] grouped into 16 boroughs.

- There is a committee in each borough which includes all elected councilors from the respective wards in the borough. Through these borough committees, the Corporation maintains aided-schools, municipal markets, and takes urban planning forward.[13]

12 https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/Borough16s.jsp

13 https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/MunicipalHistoryHome.jsp

- The Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA, earlier CMDA) was formed in 1970-71, as an umbrella organization to takeover 23 functions of improvement, water, sanitation, development, and the like, in the city. All the other erstwhile organizations undertaking these functions were slowly abolished and KMDA became the supreme authority for survey, planning and development work in Kolkata. The central purpose of the KMDA is to execute development projects involving capital outlay, and once completed, to hand them over to the KMC, or other appropriate urban local bodies for running and maintenance.[14]

- List of agencies providing basic services to citizens:

1. Water and Sewerage:
City local government i.e., Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC)[15]

2. Garbage and Waste Disposal Service:
City local government i.e., Kolkata Municipal corporation (KMC)[16]

3. Electricity:
State government through a company, i.e., West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL)[17]

4. Public transport:
State government through West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) including buses, trams, and ferries[18]

5. Road Repairs/Maintenance:
The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) are both responsible for road repair and maintenance in Kolkata [19]

14   District Census Handbook, Kolkata, 2001

15   https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/WaterSupply.jsp

16   https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/SolidWasteFAQs.jsp#1

17   https://www.wbsedcl.in/irj/go/km/docs/internet/new_website/Home.html

18   https://wbtc.co.in/

19   https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/AboutUsHome.jsp;
     https://kmda.wb.gov.in/page/cms/roads__bridges_sector_03218e

Achieved Sample for Bhopal Survey

Dates of survey - July to October 2022

Total achieved sample for Kolkata - 3013 citizens across 109 polling parts as shown in Figure 2.

The achieved raw sample is a broad reflection of population data (see Table 1). The literacy rate in the sample is slightly higher than in the population and likewise, the proportion of Hindus in the sample and SCs. The Housing Type (HT) distribution of the achieved sample also broadly reflects the HT distribution of the listing data in Kolkata. There is however, some deliberate over-representation of HT1s in the sample (at the detriment of fewer HT2s). This was done deliberately through top-up sampling throughout the survey period to ensure adequate coverage of these HTs for 'within HT comparisons' since the absolute number (as per the listing) of HT1s was low (see Table 2). While this was also tried for HT5s, limited of such households were found on the field. To adjust for these top-ups, weighted data (using Housing type listing proportions 1–5) is used throughout the report when not doing within HT type analysis. The listing data proportion of HT1 and HT2 (which in combination represents all slum-type housing in our work), at 32% is a very good reflection of the slum proportions from Census 2011 which stands at 31.3%.[20]

20 Census slum population data:
https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/6190.

Table 1: Census data and JBCI sample compared for Kolkata

	Total population			Literacy %	Religion %			Caste %	
	Total (n)	Male%	Female%		Hindu	Muslim	others	SC	ST
Census[21]	4496694	52	48	81[22]	77	21	2	5	<1
Raw Sample	3013	52	48	93	86	13	1	13	1
Weighted data	3013	52	48	94	85	14	1	11	1

Table 2: Housing Type structure listing and Achieved Sample data for Kolkata

Data	HT1	HT1	HT1	HT1	HT1	HT1
Housing type listing (structures)	5.1	26.9	54.2	11.0	3.7	10987
Achieved (raw) sample (%)	9.8	18.8	54.5	13.6	3.3	3013

[21] Actual population 2011: https://censusindia.gov.in/nada/index.php/catalog/44369, pp 36. For religion: https://www.census2011.co.in/census/city/215-kolkata.html

[22] https://www.kmcgov.in/KMCPortal/jsp/KolkataStatistics.jsp

GOVERNANCE

Key findings

In Kolkata, citizens believe the local government's top priority should be the provision of water.

Most Kolkata citizens believe the corporator is most important in ensuring that the neighbourhood receives public services from the provider (not the provider themselves).

Since COVID-19, citizens of Kolkata indicate their opinion of their corporator is considerably more positive than before the pandemic.

Citizens' opinions about delivery of basic services

The awareness, involvement, and opinions of citizens on what the municipal governments should be doing and how are they doing it is integral to understanding urban governance.
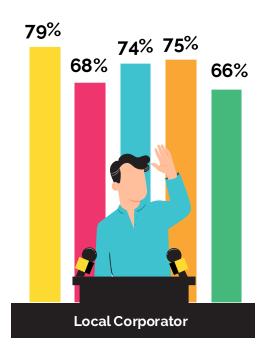
Table 3: Urban citizens' opinion about the most important service that the local government should provide (data in percentage)
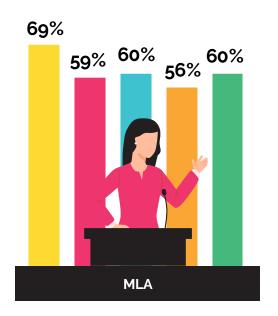
	Water	Sanitation	Health Service	Education	Electricity	Others[23]	Don't know/ no answer
Ajmer	35	36	6	19	3	1	0
Bhopal	14	25	10	31	9	6	6
Bhubaneswar	19	8	37	32	0	2	1
Delhi	35	20	13	15	5	11	1
Jalandhar	23	9	21	27	5	11	4
Kolkata	32	3	29	21	4	11	0
Lucknow	33	16	9	29	3	9	2
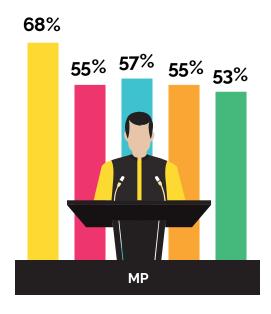
- Citizens of Kolkata feel that water is the most important service that the local government should provide. This is closely followed by provision of health services.

- While provision of water is considered as one of the most important across cities, it is considered the most important service by citizens in only two other cities, namely Delhi and Lucknow.

- In Kolkata, sanitation services are not considered a priority area of provision by the local government, as per the city residents.

[23] Others include - safety and personal security, clean air, public transportation, and housing.

Figure 4: Percentage of Kolkata citizens who feel each elected representative cares about the well-being of all the people of their constituency

■ HT1　■ HT2　■ HT3　■ HT4　■ HT5

Local Corporator: 79%, 68%, 74%, 75%, 66%

MLA: 69%, 59%, 60%, 56%, 60%

MP: 68%, 55%, 57%, 55%, 53%

Citizens' perceptions of key stakeholders in society

- Corporators, and elected representatives in general enjoy very high regard in all cities including Kolkata, as a majority of the citizens feel that the elected representatives care for their constituents.

- In Kolkata however, there is some differentiation between elected representatives with the most positive response being for the local corporator. This is also highest in HT1s where almost 80 percent of residents feel that the local corporator cares for all the people in their constituency.

- The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is especially relevant here, since close to 60 percent of citizens have had a positive shift in opinion regarding the local corporators since the pandemic.

Figure 3: Percentage of citizens who feel each elected representative cares about the well-being of the people of their constituency

Legend: Local Corporator, MLA, MP

City	Local Corporator	MLA	MP
Ajmer	96	98	98
Bhopal	77	77	76
Bhubaneshwar	92	89	88
Delhi	38	39	35
Jalandhar	65	66	56
Kolkata	72	59	56
Lucknow	55	50	48
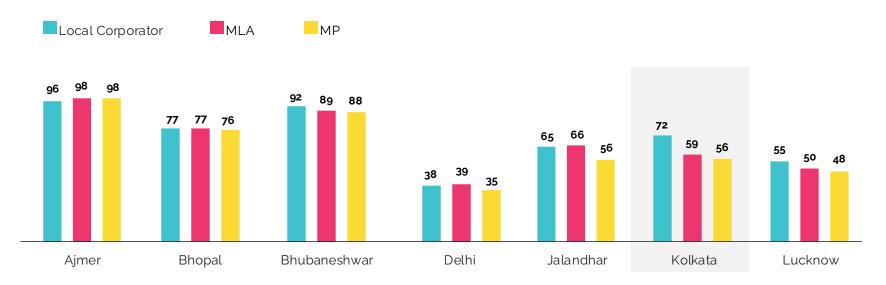
Table 4: Percentage of citizens who feel more positive about specific stakeholders since the COVID-19 pandemic (data in percentage)

	Police	Local Corporator	MLA	Local leader (unelected)	Govt. agencies	NGOs	Neighbours
Ajmer	47	38	33	35	34	35	38
Bhopal	50	43	38	39	41	45	41
Bhubaneswar	57	50	52	50	47	51	49
Delhi	61	36	33	35	43	50	55
Kolkata	50	57	45	43	37	37	56
Jalandhar	62	51	45	42	42	51	49
Lucknow	58	45	35	40	35	43	42

Citizens' opinions about the role of key governance stakeholders in service delivery

Urban Kolkata citizens' opinions about local and elected representatives

Across all cities, the local corporator is felt to be the most important person to ensure basic services for the citizens and not the actual service provider.

In Kolkata, those in self-built informal shacks (HT1) are most likely to say that the corporator is most important to ensure delivery of basic services. Even in all other housing types, more than 70 percent of citizens are likely to say that the corporator is the most important to ensure delivery of services but the MLA also becomes an important ally in these housing types.

Just 1 percent of all housing types in Kolkata feel that the government department which gives services, is the most important in ensuring service delivery in the neighbourhood.

Figure 5: Urban citizens' opinion about the most important resource in ensuring basic services are delivered to the neighbourhood (data in percentage)

Legend:
- MLA (yellow)
- MP (black)
- Corporator (pink)
- The Government office responsible for the service (teal)
- Other persons of influence[25] (orange)
- Don't Know/ No answer (green)

City	MLA	MP	Corporator	The Government office responsible for the service	Other persons of influence	Don't Know/No answer
Ajmer	4	2	91	1	1	2
Bhopal	10	1	65	3	4	16
Bhubaneswar	5	<1	77	2	3	12
Delhi	16	1	25	3	14	41
Jalandhar	23	7	31	5	18	17
Kolkata [24]	16	1	73	1	6	2
Lucknow	5	2	57	12	10	15

24 Total is greater than 100 due to rounding.

25 Other persons of influence include local political leader (unelected), middlemen/ intermediary, and other persons of influence.

Figure 6: Kolkata citizens' opinion about the most important resource in ensuring basic services are delivered to the neighbourhood by housing type (data in percentage)

Legend:
- 🟨 MLA
- ⬛ MP
- 🟥 Corporator
- 🟦 The Government office responsible for the service
- 🟧 Other persons of influence[26]
- 🟩 Don't Know/ No answer

Housing Type	MLA	MP	Corporator	Govt office	Other persons	Don't Know/No answer
HT-1 (Self Built Housing/ Shack)	8	2	81	1	6	3
HT-2 (Notified Slum)	16	1	73	1	6	4
HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	17	1	72	1	7	2
HT-4 (Upper Middle Class)	17	1	76	1	5	
HT-5 (Upper Class)	16	2	75	1	6	

26 Other persons of influence include local political leader (unelected), middlemen/ intermediary, and other persons of influence.

CITIZENSHIP

04

Key findings

Kolkata citizens consider voting as their top responsibility in a democracy.

3rd **highest**

self-reported voter registration among all sampled cities.

VOTE

Citizens' opinions about their responsibilities in a democracy

- All urban residents in our sample have more vertical citizenship than horizontal. By vertical citizenship, we mean how citizens view their rights and obligations vis-a-vis the state, and by horizontal citizenship we mean how citizens view their obligations and rights vis-a-vis fellow citizens.

- Kolkata is no exception, where citizens consider voting as their most important responsibility and self-reported voter registration stands at 78 percent. This responsibility is followed by respecting the law, while treating others as rights-bearing and engaging in civic activities is less embedded in their consciousness.

- In Kolkata, those residing in notified slums (HT2) are most likely to believe voting is the most important responsibility, followed closely by those residing in informal shacks (HT1).

Table 5: Urban citizens' opinions about the most important responsibility of citizens in a democracy (data in percentages)

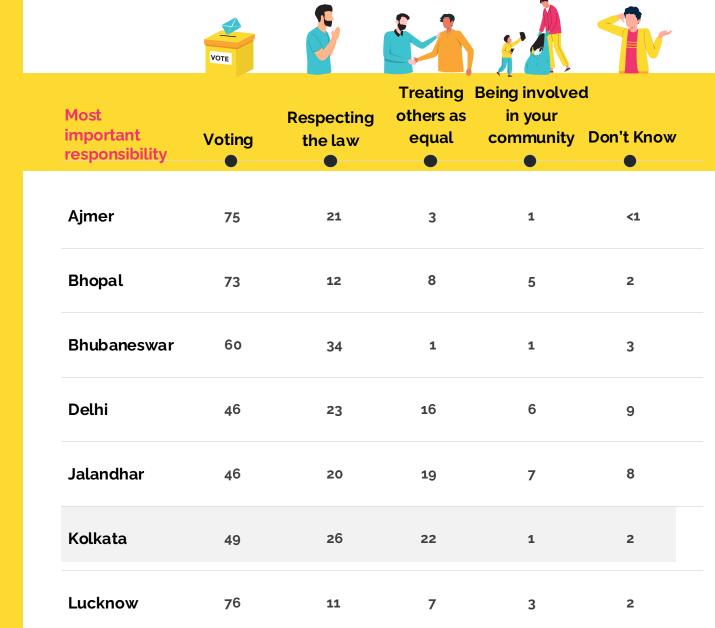| Most important responsibility	Voting	Respecting the law	Treating others as equal	Being involved in your community	Don't Know
Ajmer	75	21	3	1	<1
Bhopal	73	12	8	5	2
Bhubaneswar	60	34	1	1	3
Delhi	46	23	16	6	9
Jalandhar	46	20	19	7	8
Kolkata	49	26	22	1	2
Lucknow	76	11	7	3	2

Table 6: Urban Kolkata's citizens' opinions about the most important responsibility of citizens in a democracy by housing type (data in percentages)

Most important responsibility	Voting	Respecting the law	Treating others as equal	Being involved in your community	Don't Know
HT-1 (Self Built Housing/ Shack)	54	31	11	1	3
HT-2 (Notified Slum)	58	19	18	1	4
HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	47	28	23	1	1
HT-4 (Upper Middle Class)	36	34	29	0	1
HT-5 (Upper Class)	35	30	33	0	1

Citizens' self-reporting about being registered to vote

Figure 7: Urban citizens' self-reporting about being registered to vote in municipal/state/union elections (data in percentage)

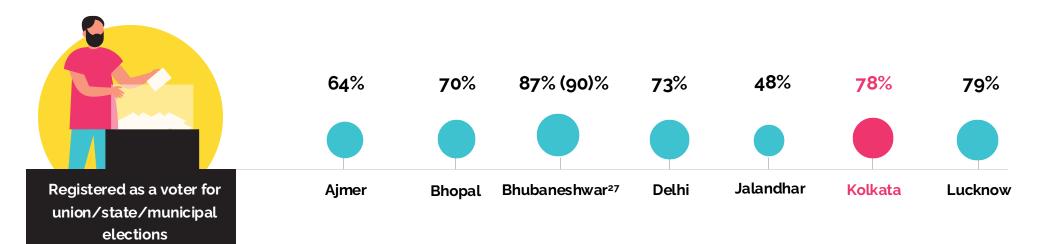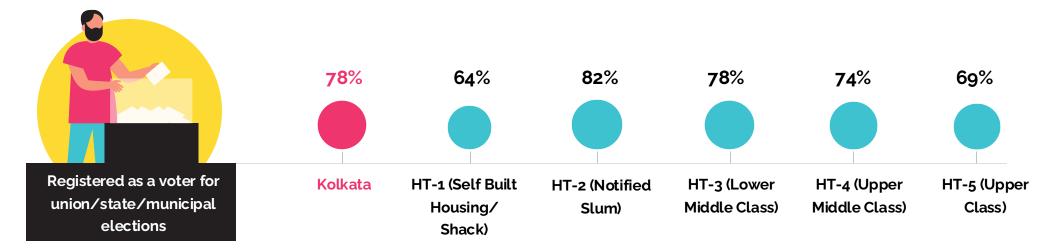| Registered as a voter for union/state/municipal elections	Ajmer	Bhopal	Bhubaneshwar[27]	Delhi	Jalandhar	Kolkata	Lucknow
	64%	70%	87% (90)%	73%	48%	78%	79%

Figure 8: Bhopal urban citizens' self-reporting about being registered to vote in municipal/state/union elections by housing type (data in percentage)

Registered as a voter for union/state/municipal elections	Kolkata	HT-1 (Self Built Housing/ Shack)	HT-2 (Notified Slum)	HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	HT-4 (Upper Middle Class)	HT-5 (Upper Class)
	78%	64%	82%	78%	74%	69%

27 In an unstarred question (no.1516) asked in Lok Sabha on 10th February, 2021, the Minister of Law and Justice clarified that all states and union territories are sharing the voter list. Hence, the same electoral rolls are used for national, state, municipal, and panchayat elections. However, in Bhubaneswar local knowledge suggested the separate electoral lists may still be in use, so separate questions were asked about municipal elections. Self-reported voter registration for municipal elections is given in brackets.

- In Kolkata, 78 percent of citizens report they are registered to vote for all layers of government. We observe a variation among housing types, where the most self-reported registrations are from HT2s and HT3a respectively. At 64 percent, HT1s are the least likely to be registered as voters, in Kolkata. There is a huge increase in self-reported voter registrations from HT1s to HT2s, but which then steadily declines with each subsequent housing type.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Key findings

The citizen participation index scores for Kolkata are the third-highest compared to other cities.
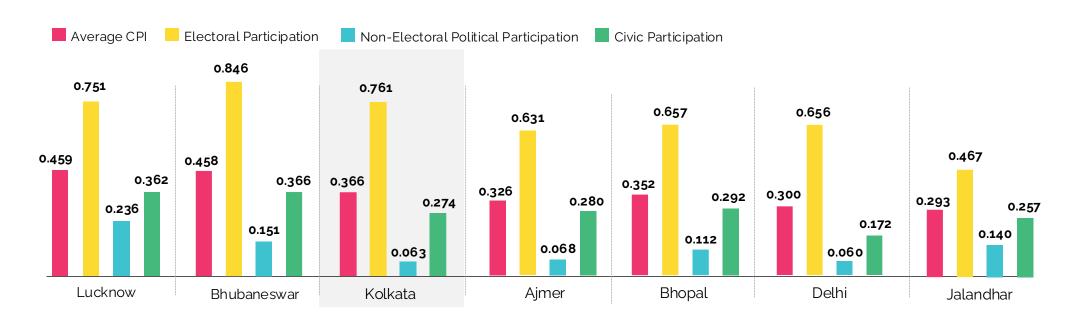
The participation scores for Kolkata urban citizens in HT2s i.e., notified slums, are the highest among all other housing types in the city. Kolkata's HT1s' participation scores are the second highest, among all HT1s of other surveyed cities.

Citizen participation

To create a holistic picture of citizen participation, we created a citizen participation index (CPI). The index comprises of three components including political participation (electoral), non-electoral political participation and civic participation. The index is created from the responses to multiple questions. The index calculates a score between 0 and 1, which means that a score closer to zero would signify low participation, and a score of one would mean that the citizen participated in all activities.[28]

Figure 9: Average citizen participation index and components' score by city

- ■ Average CPI
- ■ Electoral Participation
- ■ Non-Electoral Political Participation
- ■ Civic Participation

City	Average CPI	Electoral Participation	Non-Electoral Political Participation	Civic Participation
Lucknow	0.459	0.751	0.236	0.362
Bhubaneswar	0.458	0.846	0.151	0.366
Kolkata	0.366	0.761	0.063	0.274
Ajmer	0.326	0.631	0.068	0.280
Bhopal	0.352	0.657	0.112	0.292
Delhi	0.300	0.656	0.060	0.172
Jalandhar	0.293	0.467	0.140	0.257

Key findings

01
The CPI scores of all sampled cities is on the lower end of the range. Kolkata has a little above average CPI score as among the sampled cities.

02
As for most urban citizens, Kolkata citizens participate most by voting, in an average of 2 out of the last 3 elections of different tiers of government.

03
Urban citizens of Kolkata tend to participate more in civic or community activities, than in non-electoral, political activities.

[28] For more information on the CPI, please refer to Appendix 2.

Table 7: CPI scores by Housing Type

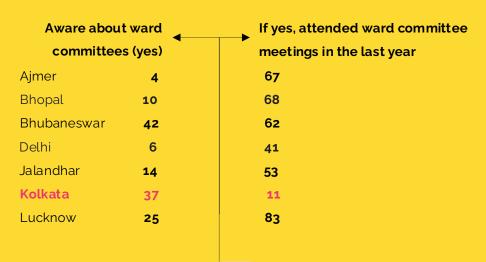|	HT-1 (Self-Built Housing/ Shack)	HT-2 (Notified Slum)	HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	HT-4 (Upper Middle Class)	HT-5 (Upper Class)
Lucknow	0.245	0.403	0.460	0.483	0.448
Bhubaneswar	0.267	0.443	0.476	0.461	0.438
Kolkata	0.353	0.387	0.363	0.343	0.326
Bhopal	0.362	0.368	0.347	0.343	0.425
Ajmer	0.195	0.323	0.325	0.325	0.369
Delhi	0.198	0.280	0.299	0.327	0.311
Jalandhar	0.102	0.187	0.309	0.238	0.260

Key findings

- In Kolkata, the citizens residing in HT2s, participate the most in civic and political activities, among all other housing types. There is a slight increase in participation from HT1s to HT2s, and a steady decline for respective housing types after that . The only other city where we see HT5s participating most is Ajmer.

- Overall, participation by HT1s is lowest across all cities and considerably lower than HT2s in most cities. However, in Bhopal, HT1s' participation is the highest among all other HT1s in other cities, followed by Kolkata.

Citizens' awareness of ward committees and engagement with corporators

Table 8: Urban citizen's awareness and attendance in ward committee meetings (data in percentages)

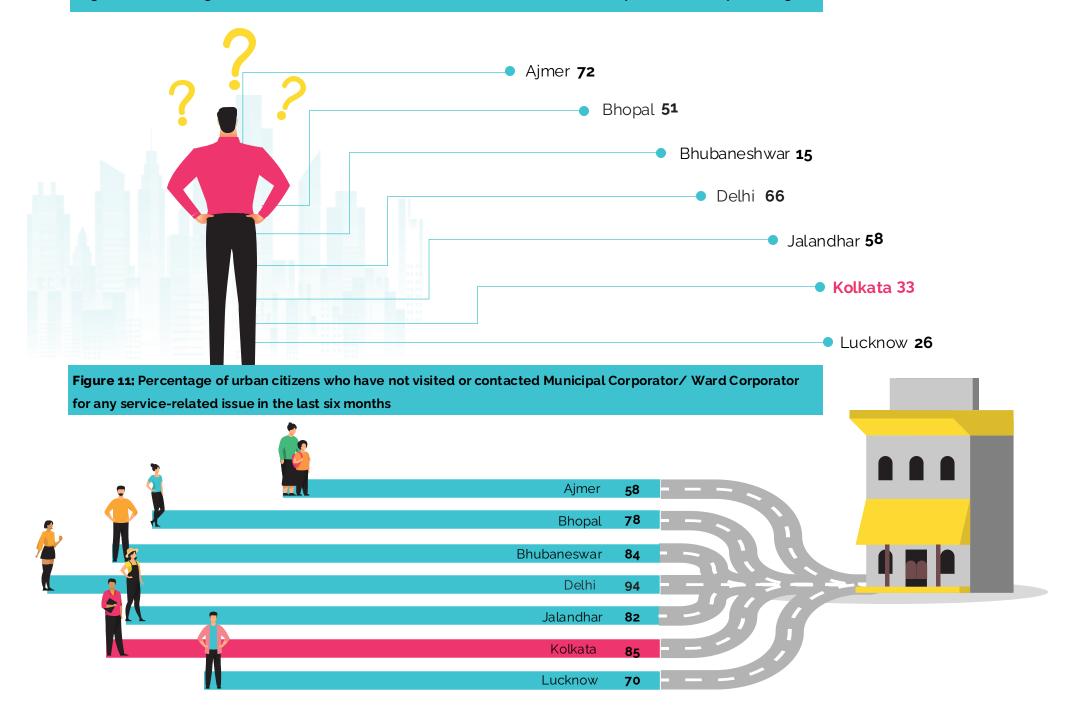|	Aware about ward committees (yes)	If yes, attended ward committee meetings in the last year
Ajmer	4	67
Bhopal	10	68
Bhubaneswar	42	62
Delhi	6	41
Jalandhar	14	53
Kolkata	37	11
Lucknow	25	83

- Among all other sampled cities, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata respectively report a much higher percentage of citizen awareness about ward committees.[29]

- About one-third of citizens in Kolkata do not know how to contact their local ward corporator, and the majority have not visited the municipal corporator/ward corporator even once in the last six months. This is especially interesting since over 70 percent of Kolkata residents suggest that the corporator is the most important resource in ensuring basic services to the neighbourhood.

29 In Bhubaneswar, though the ward committees (in the strictest sense of what ward committees are) are not that active, it is the slum development associations (SDAs), that are very active, and have been constituted through government intervention. In Kolkata as well, while the area sabhas or ward committees are not very active (in each ward), there are borough committees (constituted for a few wards together) that are much more active.

Figure 10: Percentage of urban citizens who don't know how to contact their ward corporator (data in percentages)

Ajmer **72**

Bhopal **51**

Bhubaneshwar **15**

Delhi **66**

Jalandhar **58**

Kolkata 33

Lucknow **26**

Figure 11: Percentage of urban citizens who have not visited or contacted Municipal Corporator/ Ward Corporator for any service-related issue in the last six months

City	Percentage
Ajmer	58
Bhopal	78
Bhubaneswar	84
Delhi	94
Jalandhar	82
Kolkata	85
Lucknow	70

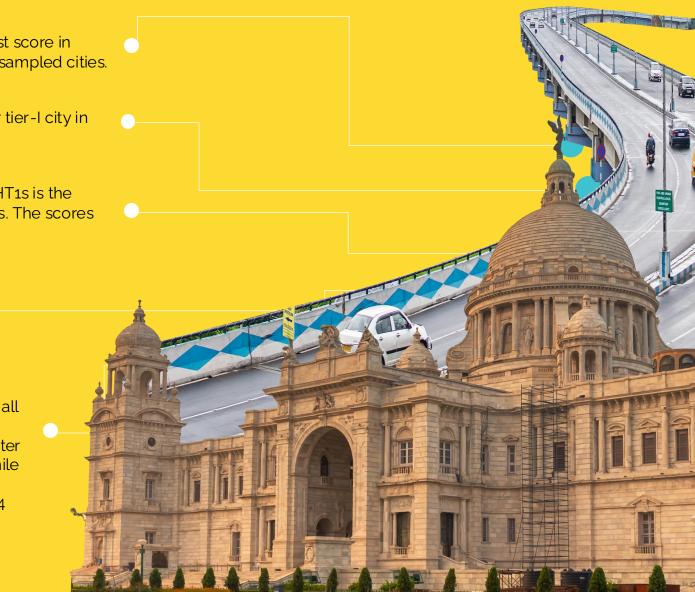# BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Key findings

Urban Kolkata residents have the second highest score in basic service delivery, as compared to all other sampled cities.

Kolkata is slightly better off than Delhi, the other tier-I city in the sample, in service delivery.

In urban Kolkata, the service delivery score for HT1s is the lowest, and has a marked improvement for HT2s. The scores increase for HT3 and HT4, and plateau for HT5s.

More than 40 percent of HT1s report having compromised sanitation. About 10 percent of HT2s also report the same.

Piped water connections are present for almost all the population. However, for HT1s, close to 90 percent of the residents do not have a piped water connection inside their household premises. While there is some water supply on all days of the week, most HT1s report a daily water supply of 4 to 7 hours.

Basic Service Delivery Index (BSDII)

To provide a composite picture of the quality of basic services, we created an index which was a comprehensive measure of access to services including drinking water, sanitation, electricity, condition of roads in front of the house, and the likelihood of the house getting flooded The index goes from 0 to 1, with :

0- meaning that a household gets no services and is often subject to flooding,

1- meaning continuous 24/7 delivery of water and electricity, a flush toilet that is connected to a sewer line (or septic tank) and does not get clogged, and good roads, and no flooding in the house or neighbourhood (see Appendix 3 for more details).

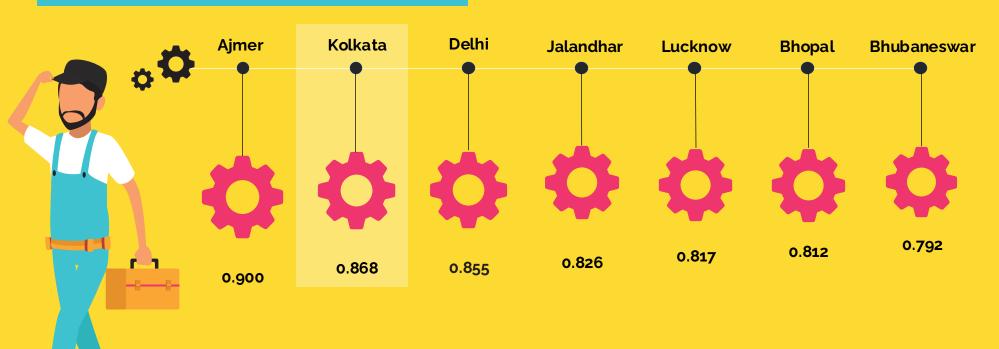**Figure 12:** Basic service delivery index scores for sampled cities

Ajmer	Kolkata	Delhi	Jalandhar	Lucknow	Bhopal	Bhubaneswar
0.900	0.868	0.855	0.826	0.817	0.812	0.792

Figure 13: BSDII score by city and household types

- **HT-1** (Self Built Housing/ Shack)
- **HT-2** (Notified Slum)
- **HT-3** (Lower Middle Class)
- **HT-4** (Upper Middle Class)
- **HT-5** (Upper Class)

Ajmer
- HT-1: 0.313
- HT-2: 0.894
- HT-3: 0.903
- HT-4: 0.900
- HT-5: 0.907

Bhopal
- HT-1: 0.605
- HT-2: 0.782
- HT-3: 0.823
- HT-4: 0.829
- HT-5: 0.820

Bhubaneswar
- HT-1: 0.456
- HT-2: 0.750
- HT-3: 0.816
- HT-4: 0.813
- HT-5: 0.848

Delhi
- HT-1: 0.599
- HT-2: 0.772
- HT-3: 0.856
- HT-4: 0.898
- HT-5: 0.918

Jalandhar
- HT-1: 0.354
- HT-2: 0.562
- HT-3: 0.826
- HT-4: 0.834
- HT-5: 0.853

Kolkata
- HT-1: 0.729
- HT-2: 0.835
- HT-3: 0.883
- HT-4: 0.888
- HT-5: 0.887

Lucknow
- HT-1: 0.340
- HT-2: 0.763
- HT-3: 0.818
- HT-4: 0.845
- HT-5: 0.845

Key Findings

01 Most cities overall report a relatively high BSDII score but these scores are highly differentiated by socio-economic class.
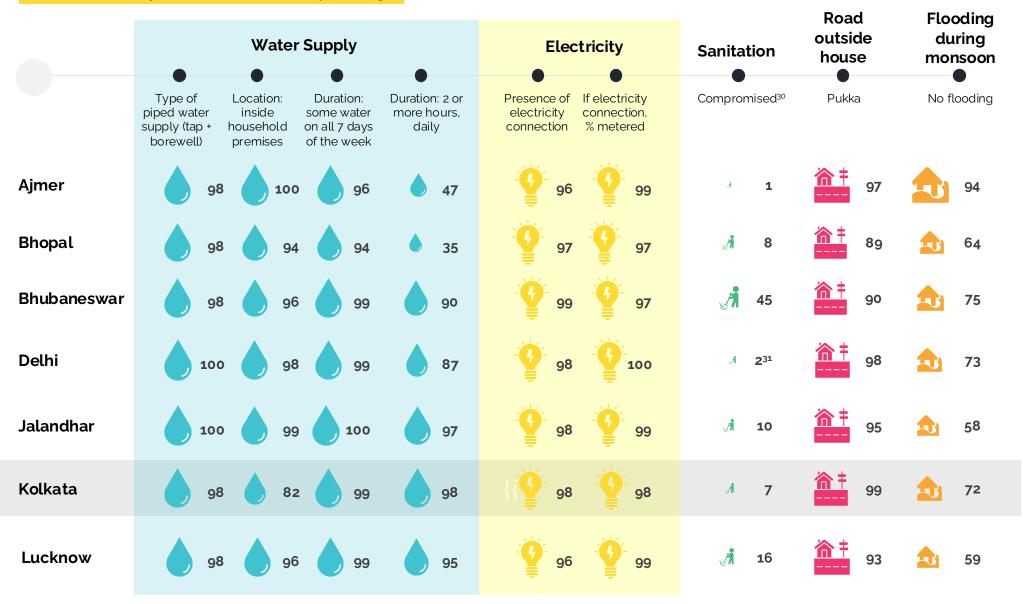
02 Service delivery drops off markedly from HT2 to HT1 settlement households in most cities and it is the latter who receive the lowest quality of basic services.

03 In most cities, including Kolkata, there is little difference in basic service delivery between those in HT3s, HT4s and HT5s.

04 Kolkata comes second for the overall BSDII score. A lack of electricity connections in HT1s, along with a high number of them reporting compromised sanitation, and flooding during monsoon, pull down the overall score.

Breakdown of basic service provision

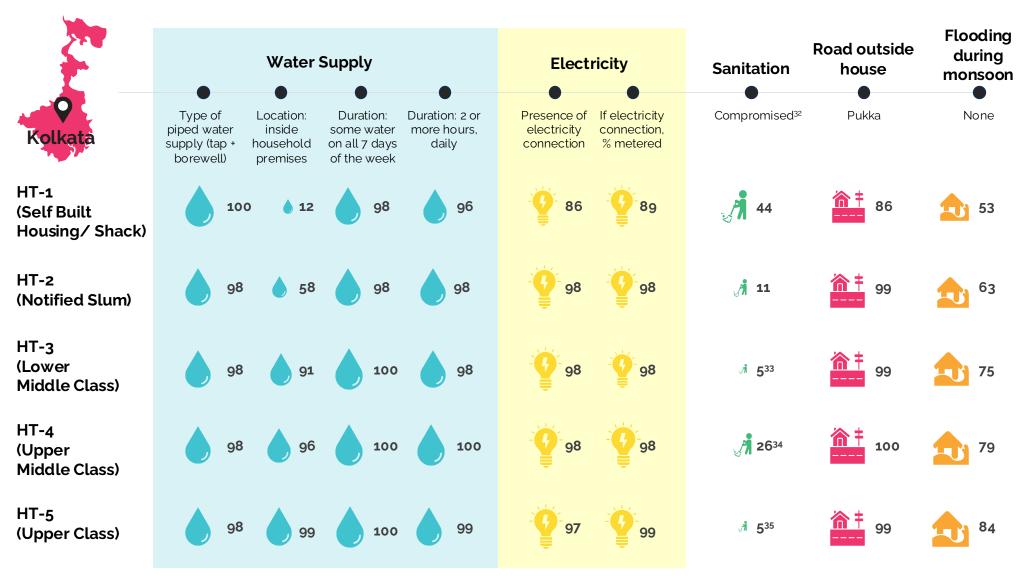**Table 9:** Availability of basic services (data in percentage)

	Water Supply				Electricity		Sanitation	Road outside house	Flooding during monsoon
	Type of piped water supply (tap + borewell)	Location: inside household premises	Duration: some water on all 7 days of the week	Duration: 2 or more hours, daily	Presence of electricity connection	If electricity connection, % metered	Compromised[30]	Pukka	No flooding
Ajmer	98	100	96	47	96	99	1	97	94
Bhopal	98	94	94	35	97	97	8	89	64
Bhubaneswar	98	96	99	90	99	97	45	90	75
Delhi	100	98	99	87	98	100	2[31]	98	73
Jalandhar	100	99	100	97	98	99	10	95	58
Kolkata	98	82	99	98	98	98	7	99	72
Lucknow	98	96	99	95	96	99	16	93	59

30 Compromised Sanitation: (1) No Latrine within Premises: (1) Open Defecation (2) Public Latrine (3) Pit Latrine (Open) (4) not connected to any Other System (not connected to a sewer line): Open drainage into the ground or into water body through a covered drain or uncovered drain.

31 This figure is counter-intuitive from our understanding of the ground realities. There may have been some mis-interpretation of the question when translated into Hindi and this is being explored.

- As in all cities, Kolkata faces class differences in the availability of basic services.

- There is a clear class division when it comes to electricity and sanitation in Kolkata. While 86 percent of citizens in HT1s have metered electricity, a little over 10 percent of those are not metered. This number is about 98 percent for all other housing types.

- More than 40 percent of HT1s and more than 10 percent of HT2s report having compromised sanitation.

- A high percentage of middle- and upper-class Kolkata residents report availability of a piped water connection in the household, but about 2 to 3 percent of HT3, HT4 and HT5s report dependence on borewells as well. HT1s and HT2s suffer with only 12 percent and 58 percent respectively having a connection inside the household premises.

- Close to 50 percent of HT1s, and about 40 percent of HT2s report flooding near their household premises during monsoon.

08. Basic service delivery

Table 10: Availability of basic services in / around the houses of Kolkata citizens by housing type (data in percentage)

Kolkata

	Water Supply				Electricity		Sanitation	Road outside house	Flooding during monsoon
	Type of piped water supply (tap + borewell)	Location: inside household premises	Duration: some water on all 7 days of the week	Duration: 2 or more hours, daily	Presence of electricity connection	If electricity connection, % metered	Compromised[32]	Pukka	None
HT-1 (Self Built Housing/ Shack)	100	12	98	96	86	89	44	86	53
HT-2 (Notified Slum)	98	58	98	98	98	98	11	99	63
HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	98	91	100	98	98	98	5[33]	99	75
HT-4 (Upper Middle Class)	98	96	100	100	98	98	26[34]	100	79
HT-5 (Upper Class)	98	99	100	99	97	99	5[35]	99	84

[32] Compromised Sanitation: (1) No Latrine within Premises: (1) Open Defecation (2) Public Latrine (3) Pit Latrine (Open) (4) not connected to any Other System (not connected to a sewer line): Open drainage into the ground or into water body through a covered drain or uncovered drain

[33] Use of compromised sanitation is counter-intuitive for these housing type groupings. There may have been some mis-interpretation of the question when translated into Hindi and this is being explored

[34] Use of compromised sanitation is counter-intuitive for these housing type groupings. There may have been some mis-interpretation of the question when translated into Hindi and this is being explored

[35] Use of compromised sanitation is counter-intuitive for these housing type groupings. There may have been some mis-interpretation of the question when translated into Hindi and this is being explored

Relationship between citizen participation and service delivery

For assessing the potential impact of participation on service delivery we begin by comparing the citizen participation index scores with the basic service delivery and infrastructure index scores for all cities.
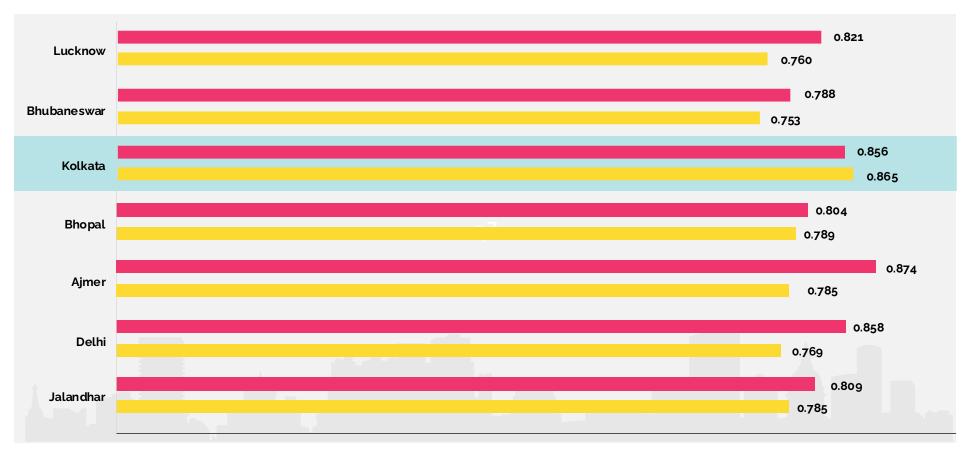
Table 11: Comparison of CPI and BSDII scores by city

	Lucknow	Bhubaneswar	Kolkata	Bhopal	Ajmer	Delhi	Jalandhar
CPI	0.459	0.458	0.366	0.352	0.326	0.300	0.293
BSDII	0.817	0.792	0.868	0.812	0.900	0.855	0.826

Kolkata has the third highest CPI score in comparison to other sampled cities, and the second highest BSDII score. We also notice that Lucknow tops the list for CPI scores but is third from last of the BSDII score. However, when we look specifically within cities, we see a much more nuanced and clearer picture emerge. As can be seen in Figure 14, in all cities, except Kolkata, those citizens who have above average participation scores, also have higher BSDII scores. In Kolkata, the BSDII score remains high, even in the face of below average citizen participation.

Figure 14: Above and Below average CPI scores, and corresponding BSDII scores

■ BSDII for above average CPI   ■ BSDII for below average CPI

City	BSDII for above average CPI	BSDII for below average CPI
Lucknow	0.821	0.760
Bhubaneswar	0.788	0.753
Kolkata	0.856	0.865
Bhopal	0.804	0.789
Ajmer	0.874	0.785
Delhi	0.858	0.769
Jalandhar	0.809	0.785
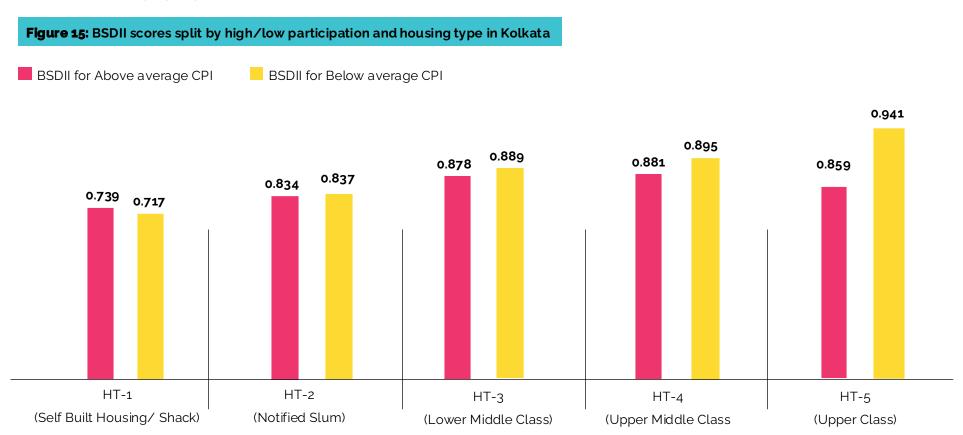
0   1.0

In Kolkata, there is little difference between service and infrastructure scores for those who participate an above average amount and those who participate a below average amount. In fact, the service delivery score for those who participate less, is higher than for those who participate more. Additionally, when we look at the same distinction of high/low participation within different housing types in Kolkata, we see some particular differentiation of service and infrastructure delivery, notably by those residing in HT3-5s inclusive. Those with above-average participation in HT3-5 households have a lower BSDII score than those with below-average participation. This trend in Kolkata is different to the other cities.

Generally speaking, across cities, we have seen that BSDII scores improve as we go up the housing ladder. In all cities, the largest jump in improved services is from HT1 to HT2. What is particularly interesting however, is that in HT1s in all cities, except Bhopal, those who participate more, have better services. This differentiation that participation makes is seen most strongly in HT1s as compared with other HTs, regardless of city. It is important to note that the findings in this section describe the overall relationships found within the data. These need further exploration and context on a city-by-city basis.

Figure 15: BSDII scores split by high/low participation and housing type in Kolkata

Legend:
- BSDII for Above average CPI
- BSDII for Below average CPI

	HT-1 (Self Built Housing/ Shack)	HT-2 (Notified Slum)	HT-3 (Lower Middle Class)	HT-4 (Upper Middle Class	HT-5 (Upper Class)
Above average CPI	0.739	0.834	0.878	0.881	0.859
Below average CPI	0.717	0.837	0.889	0.895	0.941

WAY FORWARD

Urban Kolkata residents have the second highest score in basic service delivery, as compared to all other sampled cities. Service delivery is lowest for those residing in shacks (HT1s), as is the case across cities, with a marked improvement even as you move to those residing in slums (HT2s). At the same time, citizen participation is also high in Kolkata (third highest) compared with other cities and characterized mostly by voting and civic and community activities, rather than non-electoral, political activities. Whereas participation is greatest in Kolkata among those in HT2s, we find a counter-intuitive trend for the relationship between participation and service delivery. Those with lesser than average participation have better services in HT3-5s. This is contrary to what we find in our other cities. However, this relationship needs further exploration.

Improve transparency, accountability and participation

To enhance citizen participation in Kolkata, there are a series of innovations that can be brought in from the policy perspective as well as implementation of already existing regulations. These include:

- **Notifying rules** for the constitution of **ward committees and area sabhas.**
- Amending the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 to mandate:

    i.   **Participatory budgeting/public consultation** as part of municipal budgeting and notify corresponding rules to institutionalize the same and ensure continuity.

    ii. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) to conduct an **annual internal audit** of processes and internal controls and mandate the **publication of the internal report in the public domain.**

    iii. The KMC to adopt **open data standards and publish key financial and operational data in open data format on the city government websites at regular intervals.**

    iv. **Formulate a citizen charter** providing for target **levels of services**, with time-bound service delivery and penal consequences and compensation for non-adherence along with other such relevant information,

    v.   The KMC to have a **digital governance policy/roadmap,** as a tool of accountability and grievance redressal.

- Amending the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 to provide for a **Municipal Ombudsman,** to redress citizen grievances related to service delivery and failure of civic agencies and empower the Ombudsman to **investigate corruption suo motu and resolve inter-agency disputes.**

- Notifying rules for public disclosure to be **compliant with the model public disclosure law,** that mandates disclosure of audited financial statements on a periodic basis, information on service level benchmarks, major works done, plan and budget details etc.

Fix other City-Systems

As described in the introduction of this report, the ability of a city to delivery good quality of life depends on the laws, policies, institutions and institutional processes that underpin urban governance. To conceptualize these factors, diagnose urban problems and - more importantly - solve them, we need to view them in a systems framework. The "City-Systems" framework is a framework created by Janaagraha that helps us identify the root causes of our urban challenges and its components are regularly reviewed through the Annual Survey of India's City Systems (ASICS).[36] 'Transparency, Accountability and Participation' is a key component of the City-Systems framework. However, there are three other key areas under which reforms and amends need to be considered which would help to strengthen the governance system to deliver good quality of life to citizens in Kolkata. These include urban planning and design, urban capacities and resources – finance and human resources and empowered and legitimate political representation.

[36] Latest report is: Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (2017): Annual Survey of India's City-Systems – Shaping India's Urban Agenda. Available: https://www.janaagraha.org/asics/report/ASICS-report-2017-fin.pdf [accessed 15-05-2023].

Urban planning and design

As mentioned in ASICS (2017, p. 8),[37] 'well-made and well-executed Spatial Development Plans (SDP) lie at the heart of economically vibrant, equitable, environmentally sustainable and democratically engaged cities. India's cities suffer from acute lack of planning.'

Relevant to Kolkata therefore, the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act, 1979 can be amended to mandate decentralized planning at all three levels of region, municipal and ward. In addition, it can include the participation of parastatals, civic agencies and the public in the planning process through formal platforms like ward committees and area sabhas. Furthermore, to ensure plan enforcement, the Act can be amended to include provisions of plan approvals, design standards, ensuring effective monitoring systems for ongoing projects etc. Moreover, it could also mandate self-assessment of progress, periodic ground surveys, and online disclosure of information for improved transparency of ongoing constructions/projects. All of this can be brought together by the planning authority over a shared, common digital spatial development and planning map, which can be updated through periodic GIS mapping. The KMC should have a single window clearance for projects conforming to SDPs. There is also a need to enact a land titling policy for the city to secure land titles.

[37] Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (2017): Annual Survey of India's City-Systems – Shaping India's Urban Agenda. Available: https://www.janaagraha.org/asics/report/ASICS-report-2017-fin.pdf [accessed 15-05-2023].

Urban Capacities and Resources – Finance and Human Resources

ASICS (2017) also highlights the need for large amounts of capital to be available for cities to invest. These investments need to be in bridging the gaps in current infrastructure as well as new developments. Additionally, it's needed for revenue expenditure such as operations and maintenance (including HR) and hiring of talent to deliver the same.

Pertinent to Kolkata, amendments can be made to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 to empower the KMC to levy and collect profession and advertisement tax, raise borrowings without prior approval from the state/ union government and mandate creation of medium-term fiscal plans to ensure fiscal prudence. In addition, ensuring the timely constitution of the State Finance Commission is imperative to positively impact the financial position of Urban Local Bodies and West Bengal recently constituted the 6th State Finance Commission[38].

Furthermore, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 should mandate medium-term and annual workforce plans that align with these fiscal plans and are underpinned by a Performance Management System (PMS) with quantitative performance metrics at the staff and department levels.

Empowered and Legitimate Political Representation

Mayors and Councilors in Indian cities don't have full decision-making authority over critical functions and services such as planning, housing, water, environment, fire and emergency services etc.'(ASICS, 2017, p. 14).[39] As per Janaagraha's ASICS, 2017, the city government was **solely responsible** for providing only **10 out of 18 functions to be devolved as per the twelfth schedule of the Constitution**. This signals the challenge of fragmentation in governance, having no single authority being responsible for the city. Therefore, it is recommended to amend the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980 to **devolve all 18 functions as obligatory/mandatory as per the 12th schedule.** It is further recommended to amend the Act to mandate for a **directly elected mayor with a term of 5-years**, along with empowering the mayor/council to appoint the Municipal Commissioner. Amendments can also be made to the Act to empower city governments to assess their own staff requirement and in particular mandate **induction and periodic training** for elected representatives.

38   https://www.millenniumpost.in/bengal/state-forms-6th-finance-commission-hk-dwivedi-appointed-chairman-591229#:~:text=Apart%20from%20Dwivedi%2C%20the%20other,as%20Member%2DSecretary.

39   Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (2017): Annual Survey of India's City-Systems – Shaping India's Urban Agenda. Available: https://www.janaagraha.org/asics/report/ASICS-report-2017-fin.pdf [accessed 15-05-2023].

08

APPENDIX 1

ADER45

Methodology

Key respondent interviews

Key respondents were interviewed in each city, before the start of the formal quantitative survey, to understand the local context on service provision, municipal and urban issues faced by the city, and also to get specific information on wards and neighbourhoods for sampling purposes.

For Kolkata, the key respondents' interviews were conducted in March 2022. As mentioned earlier, we spoke to Municipal Commissioners, Mayors of the city, Heads of Development Authorities, and in some instances local and state level elected representatives as well.

Focus group discussions

In Kolkata, the focus group discussions took place on 24th and 25th March 2021. The two discussions were held in neighbourhoods with marginalised communities. As part of the discussions, the respondents were asked questions on basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation, health and education etc., in their neighbourhood. A few points on their local corporator, as well as the access to BPL cards, Aadhaar cards etc. were also noted during the discussions. These FGDs took place after the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, hence, questions related to the pandemic were also asked. Questions related to the pandemic were also included in the quantitative survey later on.

Large, quantitative, representative household surveys

Sampling: We employed a multi-stage stratified systematic random sampling strategy that stratified polling parts to generate a representative sample of polling parts across each city taking care to ensure citizens from marginalised communities were included. After identifying the wards and assembly constituencies falling within the city municipal corporation area, and all polling parts within each of these political-administrative units, the polling parts were stratified.

Household listing and classification: Listing and categorization of all houses within a sampled polling part was done by a field team which literally walked through the entire area identified in the base maps and drew the buildings onto the base maps and assigned the housing type. The listed data thus provided a full inventory of all the households located in our geographically delineated sections of our randomly selected polling parts giving us a complete distribution of residential structures by housing type classification and formed the sampling frame from which we ultimately selected households.

Each sampled polling part in the city was mapped in a spatial manner, and each building was allocated a Housing Type (HT Category - HT1 are un-notified slums/ shacks, HT2 are informal settlements or slums, HT3 are the lower middle-class housing, apartments, mostly single floor, made of only concrete, HT4 include middle-class housing of independent houses or apartment buildings, and HT5 are upper class Housing, including apartment complexes/gated communities with amenities).
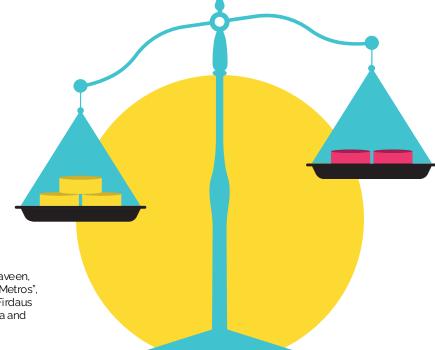
Survey: The quantitative survey in Kolkata was conducted after the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Bengali, and through CAPI method (computer-assisted personal interviews). Since Kolkata was a metropolitan city (tier-I), the targeted sample was 3000 respondents. However, we achieved a total sample of 3013 respondents at the end of the survey.

Weighting and index creation:

Rake weighting (or iterative proportional fitting) was used to create weights that are unique to each city. We have chosen to reweight the sample data according to the respondents' housing type. (at the structure level from our household listings).. From our previous work, we know that our housing type measure is the biggest predictor among all our socio-economic variables for levels of service delivery and citizenship. As a principle, weighting necessitates that there are reliable population margins for all categories of a variable upon which one seeks to adjust one's data.[40] Since we lack reliable population counts for OBCs and General/Forward Castes (the census only reports SC/ST), we cannot adjust our data using Census data. Given the relatively poor economic conditions of many individuals belonging to SC/ST groups, we expect that weighting along the housing type will reduce bias and make our sample more representative. Note that our household listing data, collected between 2021-2022 in 7 project cities, provides a comprehensive, census-like account of the distribution of dwelling types in each city at the structure and unit/household level.

We did not weight on gender because the focus of the survey is on the household, rather than individual level, and so should not greatly affect results. Empirically, religion and gender weights were shown not to significantly affect the reported results for a representative subset of the questionnaire. We have reason to believe that reweighting along housing type mitigates the effect of higher proportions of Dalits and Adivasis. From a theoretical perspective, housing type serves as a reasonable proxy for socioeconomic status. Given the relatively poor economic condition of many individuals belonging to SC/ST groups, we expect that weighting along housing type will reduce bias introduced through larger proportions of this subpopulation.[41]

40 Solon, Gary; Steven J. Haider, and Jeffrey M. Wooldridge. 2015. "What Are We Weighting For?," Journal of Human Resources, 50(2): 301-316.

41 There is evidence emerging in the literature on segregation and housing type. For more, read Bharathi, Naveen, Deepak Malghan and Andaleeb Rahman (2019), "Neighbourhood-scale Residential Segregation in Indian Metros", Economic and Political Weekly, 54(30):64-70. Thorat, Sukhadeo, Anuradha Banerjee, Vinod K Mishra and Firdaus Rizvi (2015), "Urban Rental Housing Market", Economic and Political Weekly, 27:47-53. and Vithayathil, Trina and Gayatri Singh (2012), "Spaces of Discrimination", Economic and Political Weekly, 47(37):60-66

APPENDIX 2

Construction of the Citizen Participation Index (CPI)

The CPI has three components:
(1) Electoral participation
(2) Non-electoral participation and
(3) Civic participation.

(1) Electoral participation – voting in national, state, and municipal elections is coded 1 if a respondent voted in an election and 0 otherwise;

(2) Non-voting participation includes whether a respondent is a party member, contributes time during election campaigns, attends political rallies and meetings between elections, and discusses specific candidates among family, friends, and others within the community. Each of these elements takes the form of a dummy variable and is coded 1 for "yes" and 0 if "no".

(3) Civic participation that includes whether a respondent attends ward committee meetings, holds membership in non-political, non-government organizations and associations, and perceptions of community participation in preventing harassment of women in the neighbourhood. Each of these is coded 1 if "yes" and 0 if "no". While the end-points of the index mark the two extremes of citizen participation - no participation to full participation, and are clear to understand, the values in-between represent different combinations of the three components of participation.

APPENDIX 3

Construction of Basic Service Delivery and Infrastructure Index (BSDII)

1. Water   **2. Sanitation**   **3. Electricity**   **4. Flooding /water-logging**   **5. Street Road**

The BSDII is based on 5 dimensions of household infrastructure:

1. *Water Infrastructure* component of BSDII comprises of:

    i. Access to water,

    ii. Convenience in accessing water,

    iii. The usability of the water a household receives,

    iv. The ability (and methods) of households to store water, and

    v. The frequency of water supply for a household.

2. The electricity infrastructure dimension is based on three elements of electricity supply.

    i. Does a household have power?,

    ii. How often are there power outages in a week?, and

    iii. How many hours does a household go without power during such outages?

3. In order to measure sanitation infrastructure in a household we consider the following elements,

    i. The type of toilet a household has and (among those with a modern sanitation system connected to a main sewer line),

    ii. Whether, and how often, the line connecting the household to the main sewer gets blocked.

4. In order to measure the vulnerability of households to flooding and water logging during monsoon we asked:

    i. Does the ground floor of the building you live in get flooded during monsoon?

5. We measure the type of road by classifying it into: paved (pucca) or unpaved (kuccha).

BSDII assigns equal weights to the three components that are directly connected to household infrastructure - water, power, and sanitation, and half-weights to flooding and roads. Implicit is the notion that the first three components "count" more for a household than the latter two. Our index equation is therefore:

BSDII = [(Water) + (Power) + (Sanitation) + 0.5*(Flooding) + 0.5*(Road)]/4

About Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy

Janaagraha is a non-profit trust working towards the mission of transforming the quality of life in India's cities and towns. It works with citizens to catalyze active citizenship in city neighbourhoods and with governments to institute reforms to city governance (what we call "City-Systems"). Civic Participation, City Finance, and Urban Policy & Research are Janaagraha's three major strands of work to accomplish its mission.

The interpretation of the survey and results as presented are entirely those of Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.

Kolkata