

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

A Note from the CEO

Our Approach

Culture Codes

Programme Updates

Financial Highlights

Donors and Supporters

Partners
and Stakeholders



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A Note from the CEO

Dear stakeholders, partners, and supporters,

I am pleased to present Janaagraha's Annual Report for the year 2023-24, highlighting our journey and milestones in our mission to transform the quality of life in India's cities and towns.

At Janaagraha, we recognise that the visible issues in India's cities — such as flooding, traffic and congestion, landfills, inadequate housing, etc. — are symptoms of deeper governance challenges. Our work focuses on the fundamental 'city-systems' that shape governance in cities: urban planning and design, state capacities (municipal finance and staffing), empowered mayors and councils, and transparency and citizen participation. This systemic approach has gained significant traction with both union and state governments, validating our strategy and accelerating our impact.

Over the last year, we have turned our attention to state-level holistic urban transformation programmes. This sharpened focus recognises several key factors: cities lack direct control over funds, functions, and staffing; states are better positioned to execute tailored urban transformation agendas; and there is growing interest and budgetary commitment from state governments. We are currently deeply engaged in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam, catalysing urban reform at scale.

Our work in Odisha since 2019 exemplifies the potential of state-level partnerships. In urban finance and capacities, we have implemented a grants dashboard tracking real-time fund flow of

INR 3,000 crores from the state to its cities. Our KRA, KPI, and competency mapping initiatives have covered over 2,000 officials resulting in some much-needed reforms in municipal staffing and capacities. 1,600 slums have benefited from in-situ infrastructure and service upgrades through Janaagraha's project management support to the state's Jaga Mission. We have trained 9,000 executive committee members of Slum Dweller Associations (SDAs), the fourth tier of governance at a sub-ward level, and have facilitated amendments to Odisha Municipal Acts to institutionalise SDAs. Additionally, we drafted Odisha's Rural-Urban Transition Policy, now notified as India's first such policy. We now hope to build on this work and partner with Odisha on an ambitious state urban transformation agenda.

Even as we expand our work in states, we continue to maintain strong partnerships at the national level. Our collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on the national municipal finance portal (www.cityfinance.in) has resulted in close to 4,560 Urban Local Governments (ULGs) (95% of India's total) publishing their annual accounts for the first time in India. Through CityFinance's grants dashboard, we have facilitated the disbursement of INR 38,000 crore in XV Finance Commission grants, representing 94% of the total allocation. Furthermore, we have facilitated a grant scheme of INR 5,000 crore to improve city creditworthiness through property tax and user charge reforms. Our analysis of property tax collections using data from CityFinance.in this year revealed noteworthy progress. Additionally, our study of about 3,900 ULGs over the last few years highlighted a remarkable 45% increase in

property taxes from 2018 to 2023. This growth is a direct result of targeted schemes, missions, and Janaagraha's ongoing support as a project management unit. Moreover, we estimate that the total property tax collection of over 4,700 ULGs has risen from INR 26,428 crore in 2018-19 to INR 38,341.21 crore in 2022-23. These figures underscore the tangible impact of our work in improving financial sustainability of ULGs across India.

A noteworthy milestone for us this year was the 6th edition of the Annual Conclave on Shaping India's Urban Agenda, which we co-hosted with Rainmatter Foundation in Delhi on 17 and 18 October 2023. This event underscored our commitment to create salience for city-systems, drive national dialogue on urban issues, and foster collaborative solutions to the challenges faced by our cities. During the Conclave, Hardeep Singh Puri, former Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, released the Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) 2023 Report. The comprehensive survey evaluates the quality of urban laws (municipal acts and town and country planning acts) of all 35 states/Union Territories (UTs) in India, through 52 questions using the city-systems framework. It recommends 10 instruments of change to strengthen and improve city-systems and thereby transform urban quality of life in India. In his address, former Minister Puri recognised Janaagraha's work and thought leadership and fully endorsed our 10 instruments of change. The launch was followed by a panel discussion featuring key figures such as BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, and other esteemed leaders from the development and philanthropic sectors.

In our ongoing efforts to champion participatory governance, we launched 'My City My Responsibility: A Handbook on Active Citizenship' in January, with a foreword by former Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. This handbook synthesises over 20 years of our learnings and approach towards citizen participation. It provides a comprehensive guide to the organisation and functioning of city governments and ward committees, along with a detailed set of actions citizens can take to ensure ward committees achieve their full potential. Through this initiative, we aim to empower citizens with the knowledge and tools they need to actively engage in local governance and drive positive change in their communities.

Building on our progress, we are now looking to expand our community of partners who share our vision for transformative urban change. Our achievements thus far have been possible only through the steadfast commitment of our collaborators, and we are deeply grateful to each of you. Your support continues to be instrumental in reshaping our cities into more vibrant, livable spaces for everyone. As we move forward, let us work together to drive lasting systemic improvements in our urban environments.

Thank you once again for your support and encouragement.

Srikanth Viswanathan
Chief Executive Officer



Our Approach

"India's cities do not have a hundred thousand problems; they have the same hundred problems repeated a thousand times." This aphorism by our co-founder, Ramesh Ramanathan, has been a guiding principle at Janaagraha for several years. It recognises that urban challenges like pollution, poor infrastructure, or inefficient waste management are symptoms of a much larger issue: poorly-designed city-systems. This holistic way of thinking about cities defines our approach to work. We call it City-Systems Thinking.

The City-Systems Framework.

City-systems refer to the laws, policies, institutions, processes, capacities, and frameworks that enable government machinery to deliver services and infrastructure. They determine the health of a city and the quality of life it can offer its citizens.

Over the years, we have sharpened our focus to four interrelated components of city-systems:

Urban planning and design

(Spatial planning, land, and design of public spaces)

Urban capacities and resources

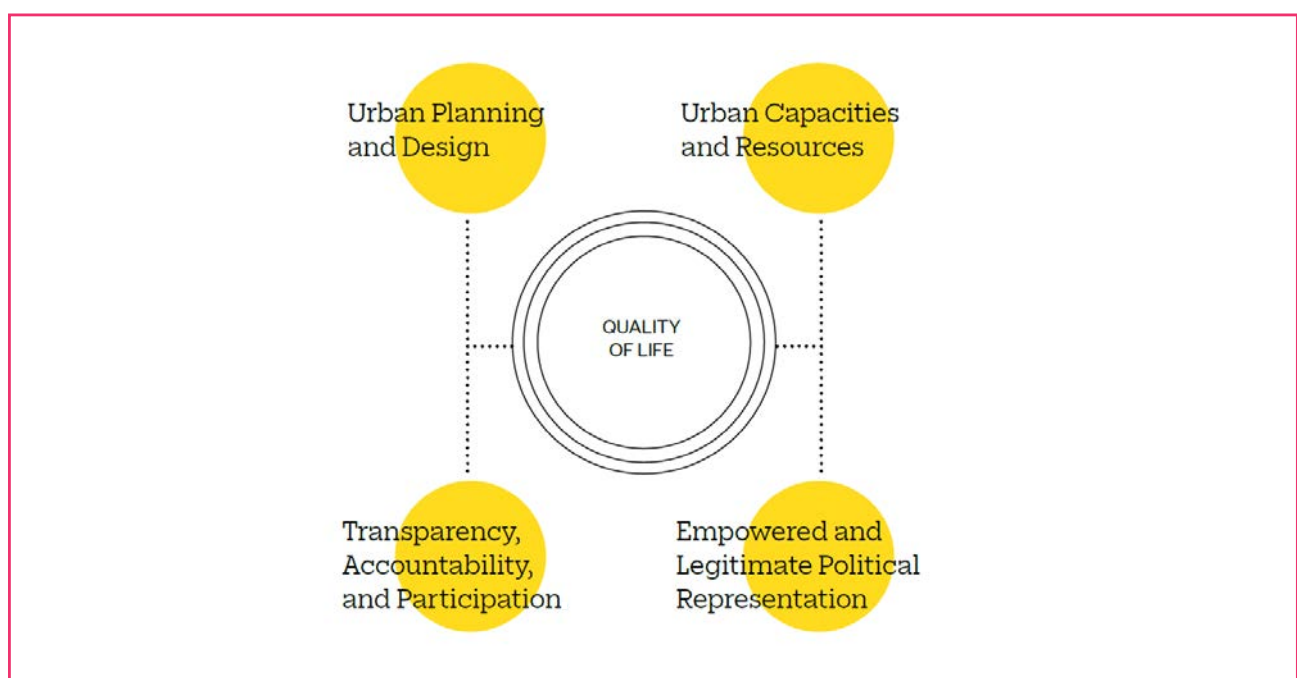
(Finance, staffing, performance management, and digitalisation in government)

Empowered and legitimate political representation

(Empowered and accountable mayors and councillors)

Transparency, accountability, and participation

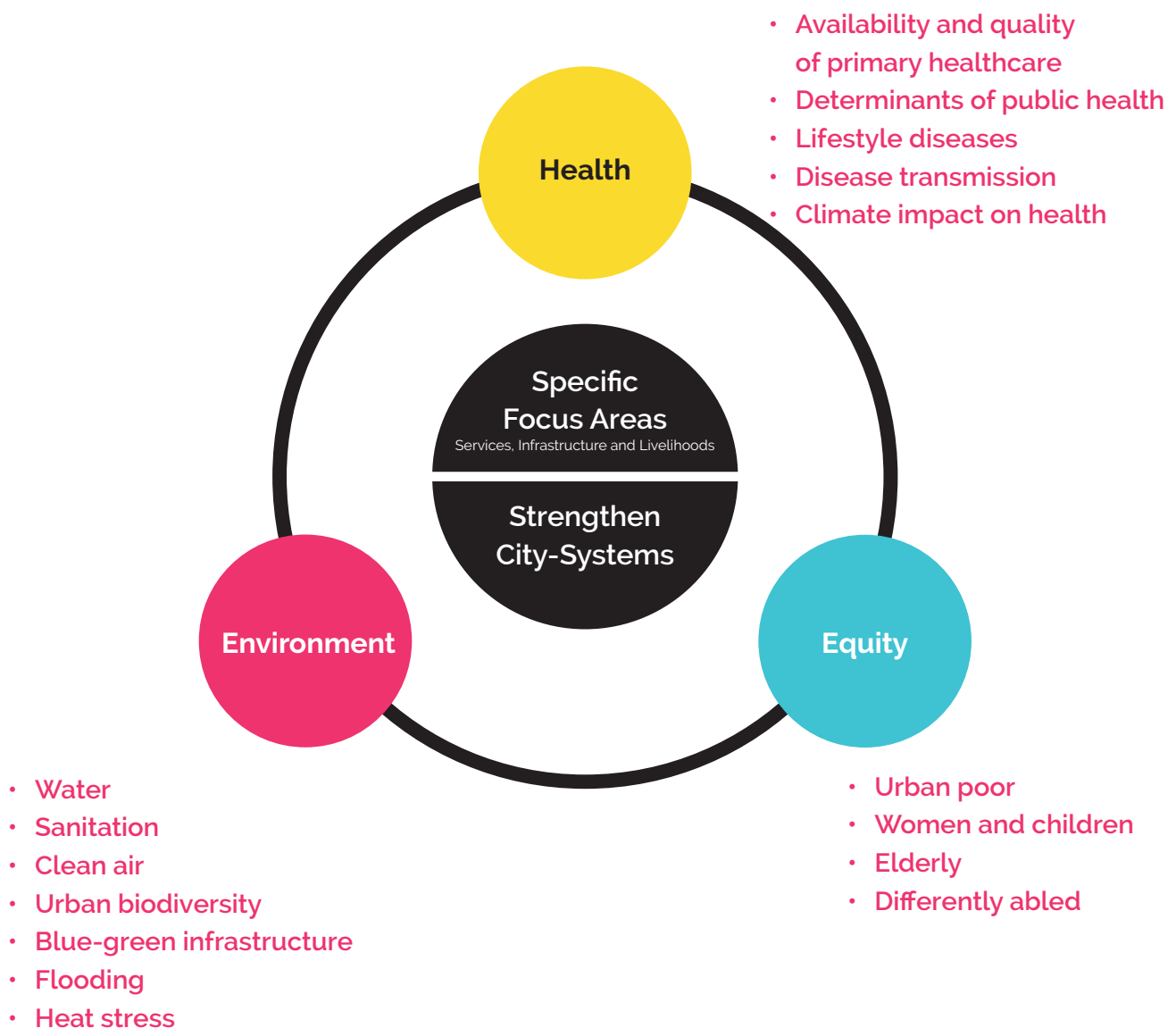
(Citizen-participation in neighbourhood-level governance).



In 2021, we entered into an engagement with the Bridgespan Group with the goal of defining our strategic focus for the next decade. This exercise led to the creation of a strategy that contextualised our work against contemporary, global challenges and locally impacted demographic groups. It also called for a more intentional intersectional approach. Climate and public health were determined to be our priority thematic areas, and women and the urban poor were identified as the priority stakeholders we

could most positively impact.

Over the last couple of years, we have explored the intersection of city-systems with urban health systems, environment systems, and equity. The graphic below illustrates how systemic change with respect to places (cities) and people (citizens of cities) intersects with systemic change in sectors (for example, public health and the environment).



We have already made notable strides in this direction with our work on the empowerment of Slum Dwellers' Associations, the Women's Fellowship in Public Finance for Cities, and our research on public health and just transitions to clean energy. Our environment city-systems and

public health city-systems programmes have evolved into state programmes in Assam, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. These initiatives will illustrate how systematic transformation at the state level can create meaningful impact for citizens and city governments alike.

Culture Codes: An Exercise in Institution Building

As Janaagraha approached its twentieth year, our team grew in number and geographic reach. This expansion emphasised the need to clearly define the values and principles that guide our work every day. The result was our Culture Codes, a representation of our lived values and practices.

The Culture Codes emerged from a comprehensive exercise undertaken with an external stakeholder, Bullzi Inc, and involved a detailed analysis of organisational documents, stakeholder perspectives, and collaborative discussions. A group of eight team members, designated as Culture Ambassadors, played a pivotal role in co-creating these codes and ensuring that they authentically reflect our organisational ethos.

The seven Culture Codes are:

- Take Ownership
- Apply Systems Thinking
- Practice Urgent Patience
- Choose Depth
- Engage Constructively
- Strive to Excel
- Care

Each code is supported by a framework of specific behaviours to embody and behaviours to avoid, providing clear guidance for practical application

The codes are integrated through policies, practices, and organisational processes, ensuring their presence across all aspects of our operations. This systematic approach to embedding our values helps maintain consistency in our work while fostering a shared understanding of the Janaagraha Way.

I Take Ownership

What I Do

I believe strongly in Janaagraha's mission

I take responsibility for my decisions and actions

I take initiative and actively pursue opportunities

What I Don't Do

I do not hesitate to speak up or take initiative

I do not renege on my commitments

I Practice Systems Thinking

What I Do

I align all my work to the City-Systems framework

I go beyond symptoms and pursue root-causes and connections

What I Don't Do

I do not deviate from our mission and theory of change

I Practice Urgent Patience

What I Do

I show urgency in my efforts and am patient with results

I recognise that our successes are only milestones in a longer journey
I proactively seek clarity from ambiguity
I am agile in responding to opportunities and challenges

What I Don't Do

I do not give up despite setbacks and delays
I do not only strive for short-term results

I Choose Depth

What I Do

I continuously listen, reflect, and learn
I am meticulous and detail-oriented
I think and work with facts and evidence

What I Don't Do

I am not superficial in my efforts
I do not take shortcuts

I Engage Constructively

What I Do

I collaborate actively and value teamwork
I give and receive constructive feedback
I proactively address conflict
I am responsive and timely in my communications

What I Don't Do

I am neither confrontational nor submissive

I Strive To Excel

What I Do

I set ambitious goals, and work hard to achieve them
I plan and execute with outstanding quality and within timelines
I explore new and innovative solutions
I strive to gain expertise

What I Don't Do

I am not complacent
I do not tolerate mediocrity

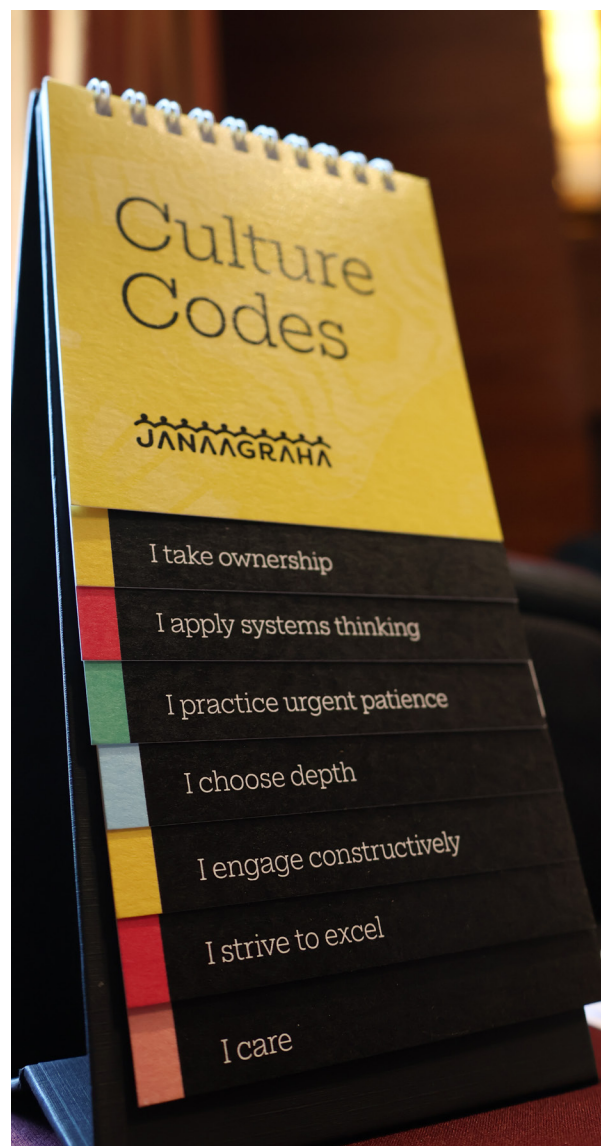
I Care

What I Do

I practise high levels of integrity
I am empathetic, and care for the well-being of all people and communities I work with
I care for the environment

What I Don't Do

I do not tolerate discrimination
I do not communicate disrespectfully



Civic Participation



Civic participation, especially at the local level, is the cornerstone of a thriving democracy. Our work in this area is driven by the belief that for cities to flourish, citizens must move beyond voting and actively engage with everyday democratic processes.

A key focus of our efforts is the institutionalisation and strengthening of ward committees. These committees serve as formal platforms for citizens to engage directly with local governance, enabling them to have a say in how their neighbourhoods are planned and managed, how funds are allocated, and which civic problems are prioritised.

Our goal is to improve urban quality of life by fostering a culture of active citizenship and responsive governance at the hyper-local level. By providing access to data, tools, and participatory platforms, we strive to create an informed and engaged citizenry capable of driving positive change in their communities.



The Past Year

Citizen Centricity Toolkit

In September 2023, the Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Government of India, entrusted us with designing and developing a toolkit to measure citizen centricity in government initiatives and programmes. The Citizen Centricity Toolkit (CCT) will provide a framework to foster a culture of citizen centricity and spirit of active involvement of citizens, while promoting transparency, accountability, and community-driven development (Jan Bhagidari) across government departments. The toolkit will prove crucial in the design and implementation of government programmes, enabling departments to measure, track, initiate, and improve citizen-centric services (Jan Seva).

We have successfully piloted the toolkit across select central and state government departments, receiving positive feedback that validates its practical utility. A detailed report on the toolkit's design is being finalised, and we have developed a roadmap for its adoption across government in consultation with the CBC.

Bolstering the Balagas

Balaga, meaning 'community' in Kannada, is a network of active citizens working collaboratively with local governments to advocate for the institutionalisation and strengthening of ward committees across Karnataka. The initiative was conceptualised by Janaagraha in 2002 and continues to be incubated by us.

Over the past year, Balaga chapters across Karnataka intensified their efforts to establish ward committees in their respective cities. They coordinated letter campaigns through elected representatives such as MPs, MLCs, and MLAs, urging corporations to form ward committees. Balaga members also submitted requisition letters directly to corporations and, in some

instances, organised hunger protests to emphasise the urgency of this issue.

To raise public awareness about ward committees, Balaga chapters organised running and cycling marathons. They also held regular meetings in their cities to strategise on the formation of ward committee and to mobilise citizens to apply for ward committee membership. This crucial work is ongoing and will continue until ward committees are formed across all 11 municipal corporations of Karnataka.

In addition to their focus on ward committees, Balaga chapters demonstrated impressive growth and impact in other areas. We facilitated 37 Balaga meetings across the state, engaging approximately 1,058 citizens. These meetings serve as a crucial platform to discuss local issues, share knowledge, and plan next steps.

The activities of Balagas extended beyond participatory governance issues, with 1,246 members participating in 30 environmental initiatives. These included clean-up drives, plantation drives, and 'Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle' campaigns, showcasing the Balagas' commitment to holistic urban improvement.

These achievements reflect the growing strength of citizen-led initiatives in Karnataka. By providing support and guidance to Balagas, we are nurturing a culture of active citizenship that is essential for effective participatory democracy at the local level.

My City My Responsibility: A Handbook for Active Citizenship

'My City My Responsibility' is a comprehensive guide designed to transform passive onlookers into active citizens. Drawing on over 20 years of collective experience and expertise from Janaagraha's work with volunteers and citizens, the handbook provides practical frameworks to address and resolve civic issues through formal and informal citizen collectives.

The handbook guides citizens through the process of resolution of civic issues, helps them understand the status and potential of ward committees in their cities, and details the organisation and functioning of city governments. It also provides practical strategies to address civic concerns, including the effective use of social media to draw attention to urban challenges.

The handbook was launched in February 2024 in Bengaluru at an event that brought together civic leaders, representatives of civil society organisations, and leaders from the Karnataka Ward Samiti Balaga representing various cities across the state. The launch was followed by a panel discussion on 'Building equitable and sustainable cities with community participation'. The discussion featured a diverse group of panellists including former corporators, civic leaders, and representatives from various organisations.



Manjunatha Hampapura L, Programme Manager, Janaagraha; Sapna Karim, Chief Operating Officer, Janaagraha; Dheeraj Honnavile, Former Chairperson of Public Health, Education and Social Justice Standing Committee, Shivamogga City Corporation; Abdul Wajid, former ruling party leader in BBMP; Srikanth Viswanathan, Chief Executive Officer, Janaagraha; and Santosh Nargund, Head – Participatory Governance, Janaagraha, launch the 'My City My Responsibility: A Handbook for Active Citizenship' in Bengaluru.



Panel discussion on 'Building equitable and sustainable cities with community participation' underway.

Media Coverage

Here is your handbook

Bangalore Mirror | 5 February 2024



Empowering civic engagement:
Karnataka launches 'My City My
Responsibility' handbook

The New Indian Express |
5 February 2024



Janaagraha releases handbook
for active citizenship

The Hindu | 5 February 2024



From spectators to problem
solvers: Janaagraha's new
handbook calls for active
citizenship

Deccan Herald | 5 February 2024



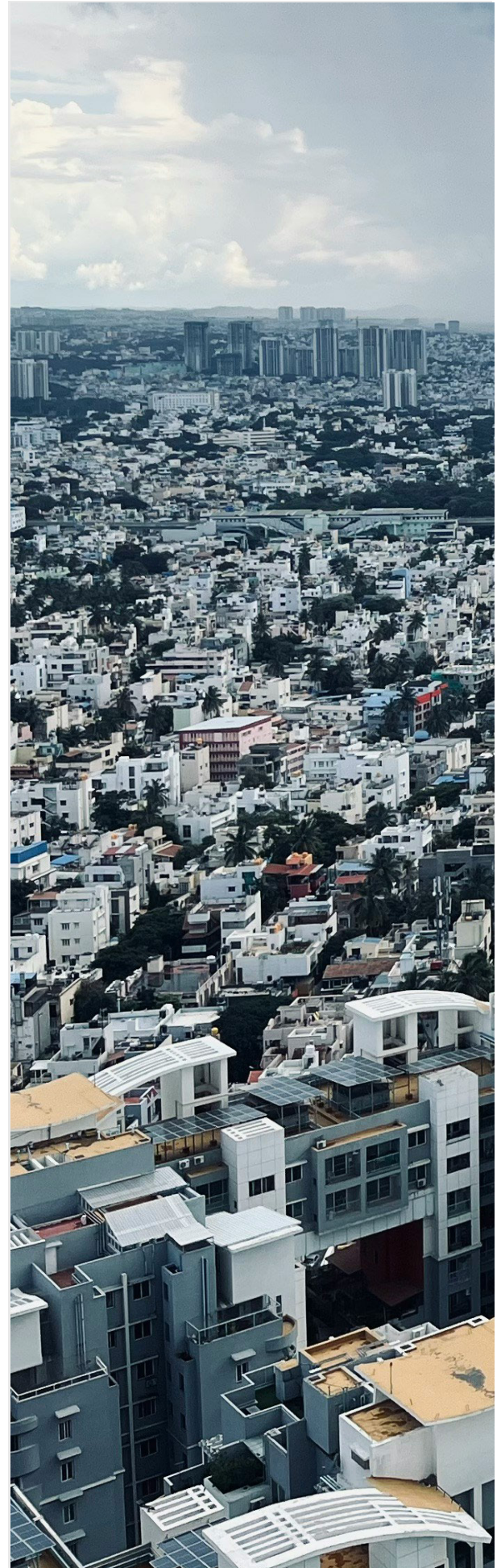
'ನನ್ನ ನಗರ, ನನ್ನ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರಿ' ಕೈಪಿಡಿ
ಬಿಡುಗಡೆ

Prajavani | 6 February 2024



Need better ward level
communication to solve civic
issues, say local leaders

News Trail | 7 February 2024



We have since distributed the handbook across 11 cities in Karnataka, complementing our ongoing work with Balagas and other citizen initiatives.

The 'My City My Responsibility' initiative represents a crucial step in our broader strategy to strengthen democratic participation in urban governance, providing citizens with the tools and knowledge needed to actively shape their communities.

Drafting of Ward Committee and Area Sabha Bye-laws for Mangaluru City Corporation

In response to a request from the Mangaluru City Corporation, we drafted Ward Committee and Area Sabha Bye-laws to improve the functioning of local governance bodies.

On 18 August 2022, the Commissioner of Mangaluru City Corporation requested us to draft the Ward Committee Bye-laws. Our team prepared and submitted the draft on 25 October 2022. Subsequently, the Corporation formed the Ward Samiti Bye-law Implementation Committee to oversee the process.

We are pleased to report that the draft Ward Committee Bye-laws are now ready for implementation and will be tabled at the upcoming General Body Meeting. This development marks an important milestone in our efforts to enhance local governance and citizen engagement in Mangaluru.

Advancing Ward-Level Data and Citizen Action

We pioneered several initiatives to generate robust ward-level data and enable informed citizen action. Our Ward Quality Score (WQS) Survey framework provides a systematic approach to assess infrastructure services and identify the gaps that impact quality of life at the

ward level. The WQS process involves five steps: identifying indicators, conducting surveys, analysing data, generating reports, and disseminating results.

In 2023-24, we conducted surveys in four wards of Bengaluru: Banasawadi, Gottigere, Dattatreya Temple, and Pulikeshinagara. These comprehensive assessments covered 14 parks, 22 public toilets, 689 road segments, and 39 bus stops across the wards, with 200 residents participating in the survey. The findings led to specific recommendations including improvements in intermediate transport facilities, park infrastructure, public toilet accessibility, bus stop amenities, and pedestrian mobility.

The WQS framework was also implemented in Mangaluru, where Ward No. 34 (Shivbagh) used it to assess solid waste management. A training session that engaged 11 ward committee members and citizens was conducted, with participants expressing enthusiasm and viewing the survey as a first step towards making their ward a model for others.

Building on the ward assessment methodology, our 'My Park My Responsibility' initiative demonstrates how citizen-led data collection can lay the groundwork for localised climate action. This community-driven survey engaged 116 active citizens who assessed 164 parks across 49 wards in 11 cities in Karnataka. The survey revealed these parks contain approximately 7,200 trees, producing around 20,00,000 pounds of oxygen – sufficient to support about 14,400 people. This data not only highlights the crucial role urban parks play in public health but also strengthens citizen ownership of local green spaces.

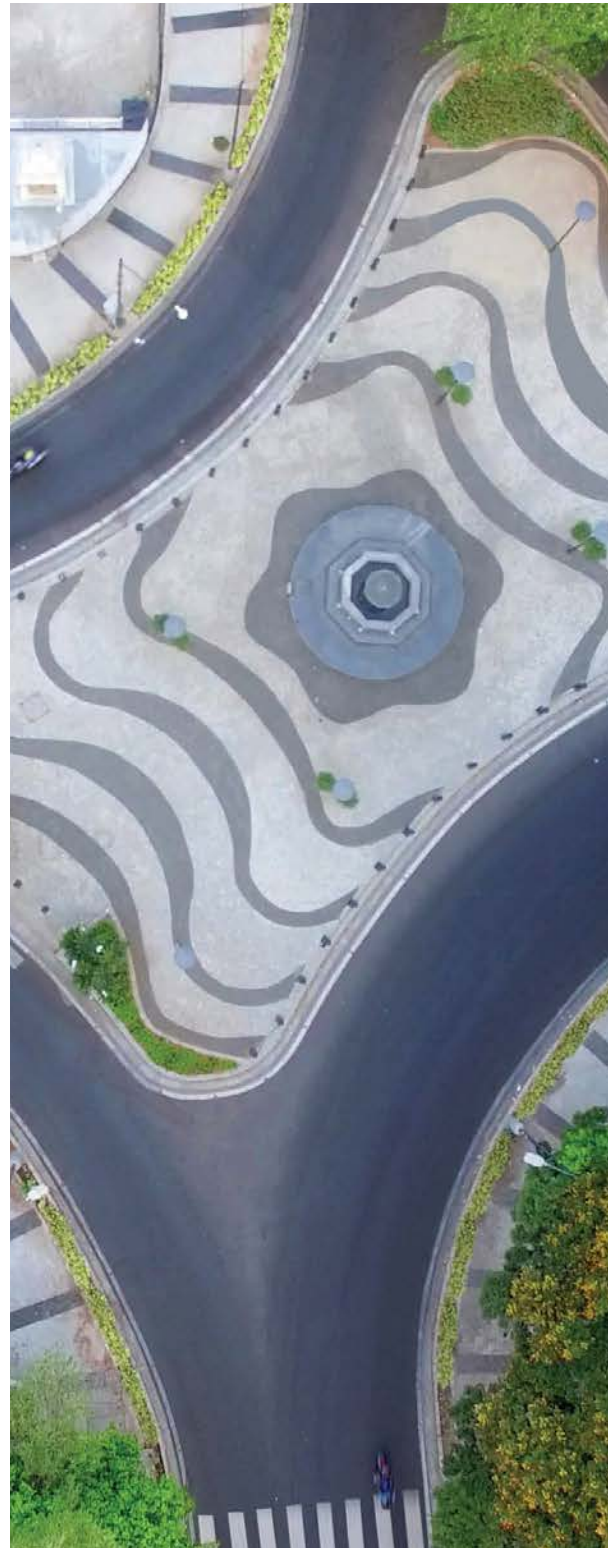
In a parallel initiative to enhance ward-level transparency, we developed Ward Budget Briefs for all 243 wards of Bengaluru by analysing the BBMP Budget 2023-24. These briefs compile ward-specific budget allocations, delimited lists, new boundary maps, and important locations

within each ward. In the absence of an elected council and ward committee meetings, these briefs became a vital resource for citizens to monitor local development projects and engage with ward engineers about priority works requiring immediate attention.

To read about our civic participation work in Odisha, turn to pages 50 and 51.

Impact Highlights

- Drafted Ward Committee and Area Sabha Bye-laws for Mangaluru City Corporation, ready for implementation at General Body Meeting.
- Facilitated 37 Balaga meetings across Karnataka, engaging 1,058 citizens.
- Created comprehensive briefs for all 243 wards of Bengaluru, enabling citizen engagement with ward engineers on priority works.
- Conducted Ward Quality Score (WQS) Survey in 4 Bengaluru wards covering 14 parks, 22 public toilets, 689 road segments, and 39 bus stops, assessing key infrastructure and gathering resident feedback.
- Extended support to residents of Gottigere ward in developing an infrastructure assessment toolkit and resultant report, along with discussions in the Jana Samparka Sabha event and ward committee meetings, to successfully advocate for three new bus stops.



Publications and Presentations

My City My Responsibility:
A Handbook for Active
Citizenship



Events

Jana Samparka Sabhe

On 30 October 2023, we organised the Jana Samparka Sabhe, an event that served as a platform for citizens to discuss and deliberate on the Ward Quality Score (WQS) Survey reports. It also served as an opportunity for citizens to collaborate with the BBMP and various parastatals such as BMTC and BMRCL on matters related to mobility infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure, and civic amenities.

The event brought together citizens, students, and volunteers from four wards: Banasawadi, Gottigere, Dattatreya Temple, and Pulikeshinagara. Government officials, including

BBMP Ward Engineers, BMTC and BMRCL representatives, and Major Road Department officers, also participated in the event.

During the Jana Samparka Sabhe, citizens from the four wards discussed the WQS survey reports, which detailed the gaps between available and required amenities, and presented recommendations to bridge these gaps. The reports were then handed over to the officials present at the event.

The Ward Quality Score Survey developed by Janaagraha helps citizens assess overall infrastructure services by measuring effectiveness and identifying gaps that impact the quality of life at the ward level.



Citizens, volunteers, and members of team Janaagraha interact with representatives from BBMP and various parastatals during the Jana Samparka Sabhe

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we are set to launch several key initiatives and publications to further our goal of enhancing civic participation and improving urban local governance.

We are preparing a comprehensive Participatory Governance Report that will critically evaluate participatory governance in Karnataka. This report will detail key recommendations from constitutional and statutory authorities, highlight activities undertaken by different cities to implement ward committees, and propose strategies to strengthen participatory governance in the state. To discuss the report's findings and recommendations, we plan to conduct a roundtable conference, bringing together key stakeholders in urban governance.

We are also working on a comprehensive Councillors' Climate Action Handbook that aims to empower 90,000 councillors with the practical information they need to address climate change at the local level. The handbook intends to provide actionable steps, case studies, and planning tools to help councillors implement climate initiatives in their wards. By enabling councillors to address issues like waste management, water conservation, and urban greening, the handbook has the potential to drive significant environmental improvements.

To empower citizens in assessing their local infrastructure, we are developing the Ward Quality Score Survey Toolkit. This comprehensive resource will include training materials, survey questionnaires, and forms for different categories of urban infrastructure. We also plan to conduct a robust Training of Trainers (ToT) programme for citizen champions, who will then pass this knowledge to other citizens, enabling widespread participation in urban assessment and improvement.

By the end of the year, we will prepare an annual Ward Committee Meeting Report, covering 11 municipal corporation cities in Karnataka. This report will offer a comprehensive overview of the functioning and effectiveness of ward committees, supporting our ongoing efforts to strengthen local governance.

Having completed the 'My Park My Responsibility' survey, we are now working on releasing a report in the upcoming year that will provide valuable insights for park improvement and management. We will continue to engage with Balaga chapters through regular awareness campaigns and activities. These will include clean-up drives, plantation drives, and waste collection drives, all aimed at fostering community involvement in urban improvement.

Through these initiatives, we hope to reaffirm our ongoing commitment to empower citizens and urban local governments, with the goal of improving quality of life in India's cities and towns.



Civic Learning



Our Civic Learning programme addresses the critical need for high-quality civic education in India, focusing on children and youth as the catalysts for long-term social change. Launched in 2002, the programme has evolved into a scalable and sustainable model that aims to transform the youth of urban India into informed, responsible, and active citizens.

We recognise that low levels of civic participation often stem from insufficient civic awareness and education at an early age. By addressing this gap, we aim to foster a generation of citizens who can take ownership of their neighbourhoods and work constructively with governments to solve civic, social, and environmental issues.

Our approach combines classroom learning on contemporary themes such as climate change, water conservation, and waste management with experiential learning through live action projects. This hybrid model not only imparts knowledge but also develops crucial 21st-century skills like systems thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.

In 2023-24, we focused our efforts on two key initiatives:

1. The Civic and Social Action Programme (CSAP), targeting children aged 11-18 in Mangaluru and Kurukshetra.
2. The Youth as Changemakers initiative, focusing on youth aged 15-24, in partnership with the Capacity Building Commission, Government of India.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to nurture civic consciousness and active citizenship among India's youth, leveraging their potential to address development challenges and emerge as future leaders.

The Past Year

CSAP in Kurukshetra, Haryana

Janaagraha signed a three-year MOU with the District Administration of Kurukshetra in 2022 to introduce systematic civic learning in select government schools of the district. This collaboration, established under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), the District Education Office, and the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), aims to leverage civic learning as a pathway to build citizenship values and 21st-century skills in children and youth.

In 2023-24, CSAP completed its second successful year in Kurukshetra, Haryana, significantly expanding its reach. We engaged 50 government schools and 15,226 students from Grades 6 to 10. The programme focused on enhancing civic education and fostering community support through teacher training and live action projects.



Snapshots from the orientation session conducted for district-level government officials, block-level government officials, heads of schools, and block-level nodal officers across the five educational blocks and the district, between July and August 2023.

We conducted capacity building workshops for 101 teachers using the Train-the-Trainer model, empowering them to deliver the CSAP curriculum effectively in classrooms. These

trained teachers then mentored students in their live action projects, providing guidance to them with local community members.

11,449 students participated in 138 live action projects over a period of four months in the 2023-24 academic year. These projects focused on the critical themes of water conservation and waste management. In villages like Thol, Kasithal, and Mangoli Jattan, students surveyed over 3,500 households, gathering local-level solutions to improve water management and conservation. Students then compiled comprehensive reports which were submitted by sarpanches to the deputy commissioner and resulted in the formation of a district-level committee to address water issues.

With support from key government officials and community leaders, the programme has laid a strong foundation for long-term civic engagement, fostering a more informed and responsible citizenry.



Capacity building workshop for government school teachers underway at Thanesar, Kurukshetra.



One of the ten community engagement sessions organised across 3 blocks and 33 villages of Kurukshetra to involve community members and foster a supportive ecosystem.

CSAP in Mangaluru, Karnataka

In Mangaluru, the CSAP initiative focused on enhancing civic education in government schools. The programme engaged 50 schools, 51 teachers, and 5,109 students in the 2023-2024 academic year. Our efforts received crucial support from key government officials including the district educational officer, block development officers, and block education officers, for implementation at the district and block levels.



Principals and block-level nodal officers participating in one of the three orientation sessions organised in Mangaluru, 12 July 2023.

The programme facilitated 38 live action projects, with 1,854 students participating over a two-month period from October to December 2023. These projects centred on water conservation and waste management, encouraging students to apply civic concepts in their neighbourhoods and schools. 10 projects raised awareness about water conservation and sought practical solutions to local water-related challenges, while 28 projects focused on waste management initiatives.

We also conducted capacity-building workshops for teachers to ensure effective programme implementation.

The CSAP initiative has significantly impacted participating students and teachers involved in the programme. By integrating practical,

hands-on projects with civic education, students have developed an understanding of — and commitment to — addressing environmental and social issues. As we conclude our efforts in Mangaluru this year, we remain committed to the principles of civic education and community engagement and look forward to applying the lessons learned to future projects in other regions.



Government school teachers participating in capacity building workshops in Mangaluru.

Youth as Changemakers

In September 2023, we launched the 'Youth as Changemakers' programme, a digital active citizenship course, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), Government of India, and the Capacity Building Commission (CBC). The programme aims to empower youth to become active citizens by addressing civic, social, and 21st-century challenges through 16 digital self-learning modules.

The initiative was launched by Shri Anurag Thakur, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports on 26 September 2023 in New Delhi, in the presence of Smt Meeta Rajivlochan, Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), Dr R Balasubramanian, Member, Capacity Building Commission of India, and Shri Pankaj Singh, Director of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS).

Through this scalable digital platform, we aim to nurture a new generation of informed and engaged citizens who can effectively participate in local governance and drive positive change in their communities.



Launch of the 'Youth as Changemakers' programme by Shri Anurag Thakur, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, 26 September 2023, New Delhi.



Impact Highlights

- 100 schools engaged (50 each in Mangaluru and Kurukshetra)
- 152 government teachers trained using the Train-the-Trainer (TOT) model
- 222 community leaders identified and engaged
- 18,292 students engaged in Mangaluru and Kurukshetra, leading to:
 - Increased awareness and proactiveness about water conservation and waste management
 - Enhanced understanding of gender equity and local governance
 - Development of innovative problem-solving skills through design thinking.
- Several projects, including water wastage surveys in Thol, Kasithal, and Mangoli Jatan, led to community and government action on water conservation.

Events

Culmination Events of CSAP, Kurukshetra

October-November 2023

We organised a series of culmination events for CSAP in Kurukshetra. Five separate events were held, one in each of Kurukshetra's five blocks, to encourage students to share their learnings and best practices from their CSAP engagement. These events, spread over a month, were attended by key district officials including Shri Naseeb Kumar, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Ladwa; Shri Rohtas Verma, District Education Officer (DEO); Shri Sonu Ram, SDM, Pehowa; and Shri Pulkit Malhotra, SDM, Shahabad



At a culmination event, Shri Naseeb Kumar, SDM, Ladwa, emphasised the importance of engaging with local civic and social issues.

Awards and Recognition

On 16 December 2023, Janaagraha was awarded the Marichi Educators Award by the Indirapuram Group of Institutions for our work in civic learning.

'Marichi' is the goddess of dawn and light in Tibetan Buddhism and translates to 'ray of light'. All the awardees were celebrated as Marichis

who have left an indelible mark on the landscape of education.

The award is a recognition of our efforts to instil active citizenship values and 21st-century skills in more than 5 lakh children and youth across 28 cities and towns in India. Shivkumar Menon, Head, Civic Learning received the award, which was presented by Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal, Former Minister of Education.



Shivkumar Menon, Head, Civic Learning, Janaagraha receiving the award from Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal, Former Minister of Education.

Looking Ahead

While the CSAP pilot engaged 799 students in 20 schools in 2022-23, in 2023-24 the programme expanded to 50 schools and 15,226 students. The focus too expanded from climate change to include water conservation and waste management, focussing on governance, community engagement and conducting Bal Sabhas.

In the coming year, our focus will be to build on this momentum and equip the district administration at Kurukshetra to independently implement CSAP in all government schools of the district. The handover of ownership of the programme to the district administration is expected to be complete by the academic year 2025-26.

We also intend to use the district CSAP model of Kurukshetra as an exemplar to explore partnerships with states and conduct pilot programmes with state education departments and the State Council of Educational Research and Training.

Additionally, we will be advocating for civic education by disseminating impact reports and

case studies at the district and state levels. Our partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS) and Capacity Building Commission of India (CBC) will enable us to broaden our reach and will provide an opportunity to promote youth leadership. To achieve the goal of empowering youth and advancing India's developmental objectives, it is essential to focus on activating youth leadership and nurturing 21st-century skills. This will be accomplished through a structured approach that includes real-world experiences, civic engagement, and continuous learning.

We envisage the 'Youth as Changemakers Programme' to become a national programme that reaches youth across the country and empowers them to take up leadership roles in governance and civic engagement. The partnerships with MOYAS and CBC provide the technical and governance support necessary to achieve both immediate and long-term goals. Through these and other initiatives planned for the coming year, we remain committed to nurturing informed and responsible citizens through high-quality civic education and to creating a culture of active citizenship among India's youth.





Municipal Finance



The efficient management of municipal finances is critical, especially given India's rapid urbanisation. A city's finances determine its ability to provide infrastructure and services to its citizens, which in turn determines quality of life. However, many Urban Local Governments (ULGs) face significant challenges: resource constraints, inefficient fund allocation, and outdated systems that struggle to meet the increasing and urgent demands of their cities. Janaagraha's work on Municipal Finance addresses these challenges.

With the aim of strengthening municipal finance, our work is centred on three dimensions: fiscal sustainability (availability of adequate financial resources to ULGs through own revenue augmentation and predictable grant transfers), fiscal efficiency (optimal utilisation of resources through better expenditure management and budget reforms) and fiscal accountability (uniform accounting and information transparency). We achieve this through programme design and implementation support to union and state governments, and through thought leadership and advocacy aimed at ushering in systemic governance reforms.

We work with — and support — government institutions at all three levels: union, state, and local. We undertake policy advocacy at the national level (creating an enabling environment for reforms), provide reform implementation support to state and city governments (creating proofs-of-concept), and disseminate playbooks to other state and city governments (to help achieve scale).

In the past year, we have channelled our efforts to key areas including property tax and user charges reforms, catalysing municipal borrowings, and public financial management reforms. Through these, we strive to pave the way for financially robust and sustainable urban development in India.

The Past Year

Policy Design and Administration Support to MoHUA for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24 Scheme

Janaagraha played a crucial role in supporting the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) for the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24' scheme. This initiative incentivised states by providing 50-year interest-free loans to them, conditional on them achieving specific reforms in urban finance. Our involvement spanned from co-drafting the guidelines of the scheme to providing scheme-related administrative support to MoHUA, and advisory support to states to meet the scheme guidelines and requirements.

The scheme led to four milestones related to property tax and user charges reforms and also resulted in significant steps towards pooled municipal bond issuance. Through our efforts, 16 states implemented reforms, leading to the release of INR 3,293 crore as interest-free loans.

A key focus was on property tax governance reforms. With Janaagraha's technical guidance and support, 27 cities in 6 states (Assam, Gujarat, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana) took concrete steps to create a dynamic, digitised property tax register.



Additionally, 26 cities in 5 states (Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana) either completed or are currently integrating property tax data with other municipal department databases. These reforms aim to plug revenue leakages and ensure the maintenance of accurate records.

Furthermore, 4 states (Assam, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana) have taken material steps towards pooled municipal bond issuances. Collectively, these reforms enhance fiscal autonomy and sustainability for ULGs.

XV Finance Commission PMU: Advancing Municipal Finance Reform

As the Project Management Unit (PMU) for the XV Finance Commission (XV FC), Janaagraha supported Urban Local Governments (ULGs) in enhancing fiscal management and service delivery through capacity-building efforts, strategic policy engagement, and data-driven fiscal oversight. Through this work, a total of INR 11,915 crore was allocated to Non-Million Plus Cities (NMPCs) and INR 8,492 crore to Million Plus Cities (MPCs), enabling critical improvements in urban infrastructure, particularly in drinking water, sanitation, and

solid waste management. Our efforts helped ULGs meet reform-linked conditions, ensuring efficient fund utilisation and achievement of key service level benchmarks.

The PMU provided continuous support to over 5,200 ULG and state officials through targeted training, technical assistance, and financial management guidance. To enhance fiscal transparency, we facilitated the online publication of audited accounts for 4,560 ULGs and Service Level Benchmark data for 4,018 ULGs, significantly improving performance tracking and governance. A notable achievement was the growth in property tax collections across 3,326 ULGs, with performance surpassing their respective state's average Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth rate — an indication of improved financial health and governance.

We fostered strategic engagements with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, State Finance Commissions, National Institute of Urban Affairs, and international financial institutions. These collaborations have been instrumental in shaping the policy agenda for sustainable municipal finance, revenue enhancement, and long-term financial sustainability.



Developing and Strengthening Digital Infrastructure for Municipal Finance

To complement our work as the Project Management Unit of the XV FC, we strengthened and streamlined the XV FC grant compliance module on CityFinance.in. A significant enhancement was the introduction of a comprehensive Property Tax data collection form with over 200 data points, enabling precise tracking of property tax collection growth. More than 94% of Urban Local Governments (ULGs) accessed CityFinance.in to claim their XV FC grants.

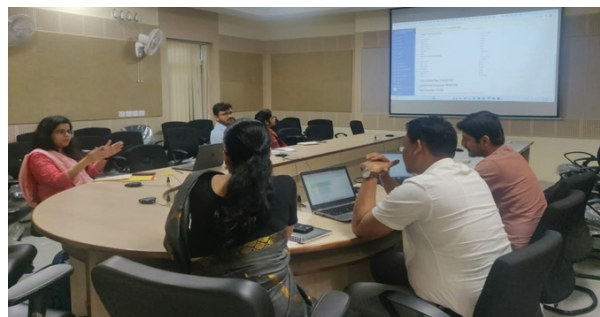
We extended our support to the City Finance Rankings initiative by building data verification and workflows to ensure data accuracy and reliability. The significance of these transparency efforts received notable recognition when the Reserve Bank of India utilised data from CityFinance.in for its maiden Report on Municipal Finances in November 2022.

Policy Advisory Support to the States of Assam, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh

Janaagraha provided policy advisory support to the states of Assam, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh under an Asian Development Bank-funded project from January to September 2023. The objective of our work was to lay out state and ULG-level reform roadmaps for own source revenue augmentation (property tax and user charges) basis on-ground assessment in 15 ULGs across the three states.

We conducted over 150 interviews with government officials in state urban development departments, parastatals, and 15 ULGs to map existing policies, processes, and systems. We also identified systemic gaps and challenges in the levying, billing, and collection of property tax and user charges.

Based on insights from field visits and a review of the legal landscape, we developed reform revenue augmentation roadmaps for each state. These roadmaps, along with revenue enhancement plans for the 15 ULGs studied, offer targeted policy advice and actionable strategies.



Meeting with officials of the Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of Assam regarding Assam's property tax system on 25 April 2023.



Meeting with Executive Officer and Nodal Officer at Godda Nagar Parishad, Jharkhand



The Janaagraha team with Mr Kumar Ashim Ranjan, Chief Tax Assessment Officer, Gorakhpur Nagar Nigam, Uttar Pradesh, 20 June 2023.

Technical Assistance to Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC)

From March to July 2023, Janaagraha worked with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) on property tax reforms for own revenue augmentation. The engagement encompassed three main areas of work:

1. Policy design support for rationalisation of basic street rates

GCC's property tax valuation method is based on Annual Rental Value (ARV), where the expected rental yield is defined by Basic Street Rates (BSRs). These BSRs, originally assigned in 1993, are assumed rental rates imputed for each of Chennai's streets. GCC sought Janaagraha's technical support to ensure that BSRs reflect current rental yields and the market values of properties, and that the property tax valuation system is based on sound principles.

We conducted a modelling exercise to assess the existing BSRs vis-a-vis land guideline values set by the state registration department. This analysis aimed to identify anomalies in BSRs — streets with abnormally higher or lower rates compared to guideline values. Based on this assessment, we recommended changes and potential options, considering their impact on property tax revenue. This work was crucial in ensuring that BSRs align with current market conditions, forming a sound basis for a fair and efficient property tax valuation system.

2. Facilitating database integration across state and municipal departments to widen the tax net

Database integration or regular digital data sharing of property records across state

departments — such as electricity, land registration, water — and municipal departments, such as Town Planning Department, can potentially widen the property tax net for ULGs through identification of unassessed and under-assessed properties. With this objective, Janaagraha provided process and design support to integrate GCC's property tax records with the property records maintained by state and municipal departments. We studied the process of property record creation and maintenance across five state departments and one municipal department. Based on this analysis, we developed department-wise process design notes and implementation roadmaps. The policy note submitted to GCC outlined a process for timely identification and updation of property records, aimed at plugging revenue leakages and expanding the tax net.

3. Designing a Self-Assessment System (SAS) for property tax

A fair and transparent system of self-assessment for property tax has the potential to reduce administrative burden on tax officials and enhance procedural ease for tax assesses. However, without effective administrative design, self-assessment can also adversely impact a city's tax revenues. Our team evaluated the existing assessment system in GCC, examined the feasibility of shifting to SAS, and submitted an implementation roadmap for an end-to-end system.

Women's Fellowship in Public Finance for Cities

In January 2024, we launched the Women's Fellowship in Public Finance for Cities, an innovative two-year programme designed to encourage and pave the way for ambitious women professionals to build careers in public finance management. This initiative aligns with our objectives to catalyse reforms in Public Financial Management (PFM), introduce gender parity in the PFM domain, and nurture women professionals to become leaders who can drive better gender outcomes in the future.

The Fellowship received an overwhelming response, with almost 200 applications during a 1.5-month window. Through a rigorous four-step selection process, we identified eleven highly motivated and passionate women Fellows, exceeding our initial target of 8-10 participants.

We inaugurated the Fellowship with a comprehensive five-day induction workshop from 15-19 January 2024 in New Delhi. The workshop featured 16 in-depth sessions covering crucial topics in PFM and personal leadership development, along with a thought-provoking panel discussion. Distinguished speakers, including Shobhini Mukerji, Executive Director, Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), South Asia Regional Center; Yamini Atmavilas, Director, Dasra; and Bharati Das, Former Controller General of Accounts, shared their expertise with the participants. The workshop also included activities designed to foster cohort camaraderie, setting a strong foundation for the programme.

Our Fellows are now engaged in field immersion projects across six states, working on-site with Urban Development Departments in Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Punjab, and Finance Departments in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. This hands-on experience is

complemented by a comprehensive support structure including monthly webinars, leadership training in partnership with Harappa Education (now UpGrad), and mentorship from six experienced professionals. We have also planned quarterly masterclasses with eminent women professionals in public finance and allied fields to inspire our Fellows. Plans to launch the second cohort of the Fellowship are currently underway.

Catalysing India's Municipal Bond Market with SEBI

We continued our work to catalyse the municipal borrowings market in India as knowledge partner to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). This engagement, which began in November 2022, focuses on helping Urban Local Governments (ULGs) leverage municipal debt securities to address the investment gap in urban infrastructure.

Between October 2023 and March 2024, we partnered with SEBI to conduct regional outreach conferences on municipal debt securities in Jaipur, Chandigarh, and Guwahati. These sessions drew participation from over 110 government officials representing more than 80 cities across 13 states and one union territory. The diverse group of participants included principal secretaries, directors from state departments, municipal and deputy municipal commissioners, and chief accounts officers. The workshops also brought together key players from the municipal debt market, including investors, merchant bankers, listing agencies, credit rating agencies, and debenture trustees.

A significant milestone was the closed-door roundtable discussion in Chandigarh, which we co-hosted with SEBI. This forum facilitated

crucial conversations between principal secretaries, market intermediaries, and SEBI officials on various aspects of municipal bonds, feasibility of fundraising, and stakeholder challenges.

We further expanded our efforts to strengthen the municipal borrowings market through two high-level events in partnership with SEBI and the Urban Development Department of Uttar Pradesh. These events, held in December 2023 and February 2024, focused on catalysing municipal bond issuances in Uttar Pradesh and

establishing an Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (UIDFC) to accelerate commercial borrowings for infrastructure development.

These initiatives have helped bridge knowledge gaps for state and ULG officials regarding the municipal debt market while connecting them to investors and market intermediaries, fostering an environment conducive to increased municipal borrowings – contributing to a 16% increase in municipal bond issuances over 2022-24.



मunicipal Bonds Outreach Programme

दिसंबर १८ - १९, २०२३
December 18 - 19, 2023



At the Roundtable on SEBI Municipal Bonds Outreach Programme, Chandigarh, 18 December 2023; L to R: S Ramamoorthy Iyer, Head - Institutional Coverage, SBI Capital Markets Ltd; Esha Sar, Operations Officer, IFC - International Finance Corporation; Vikramaditya Singh Malik, Commissioner, Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (Uttar Pradesh); Rahul Yadav, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation; Prashant Goyal, Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir; Pramod Rao, Executive Director, SEBI; Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha; and Ashish Sharma, Commissioner, Palampur Municipal Corporation (Himachal Pradesh).

Media Coverage

Outreach programme.
SEBI launches information
database on municipal bonds

The Hindu Business Line |

22 January 2023



Sebi urges civic bodies to
fund infra via bonds

The Economic Times |

6 October 2023



Roundtable on SEBI Municipal Bonds Outreach Programme, Chandigarh, 18 December 2023.

Study on Potential Property Tax Revenue

Janaagraha conducted a comprehensive study for the World Bank to evaluate the gap between property tax levied under existing valuation methodologies and potential revenue based on circle rates/guideline values and estimated market values. This study covered 15 cities across India and provided insights into the effectiveness of current property tax systems. For selected areas within each city, we calculated property values using existing valuation methods and compared these values to current circle rates and market values of properties. The study's findings provided valuable insights into revenue enhancement opportunities for urban local bodies and informed strategies for more efficient and equitable property tax systems.

Building on this research, we conducted the Regional Property Tax Workshop in July 2023 in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the World Bank. The workshop, which was held in Ahmedabad, facilitated discussions on property tax reforms for revenue augmentation in India's cities. The event brought together senior officials from union and state governments, Additional Secretaries from State Urban Development Departments, Municipal Commissioners, and Deputy Commissioners from over 30 ULGs, alongside private sector experts. This diverse representation enabled meaningful peer-to-peer learning and exchange of experiences in property tax reform, while also providing participants with insights into international best practices.



The SEBI Municipal Bonds Outreach Programme in Guwahati, Assam, March 2024. The session was moderated by Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha with panellists Pramod Rao, Executive Director, SEBI; Kesavan Srinivasan, Former Deputy C&AG of India and Senior Advisor, Janaagraha; and Anurag Arun, Principal Consultant, AKS Consultancy & Services.



The SEBI Municipal Bonds Outreach Programme in Guwahati, Assam, March 2024. L to R: Preeti Chheda, CFO, Mindspace Business Parks, REIT; Piyush Birmiwal, CA, Birmiwal & Associates; and Namita Aggarwal, Head – Municipal Revenues, Janaagraha.



D Thara, IAS, Additional Secretary, MoHUA addresses the gathering at the workshop.



Namita Aggarwal, Head – Municipal Revenues, Janaagraha at the event.



D Thara, IAS, Additional Secretary, MoHUA (centre) and Debashish Banerjee, Assessor & Tax Collector (right, centre), at the event with the Janaagraha team.

Analysis of State Finance Commissions (SFCs) in India

We conducted a comprehensive analysis of State Finance Commissions (SFCs) in India, recognising their crucial role in the country's fiscal decentralisation and devolution framework. This in-depth study examined their entire lifecycle, covering formation, operation, recommendations, and state responses to these recommendations. We also studied examples from multiple Indian states, allowing us to gain a broader perspective on the barriers SFCs face. We identified nine broad challenges and

proposed targeted solutions. These solutions aim to enhance the SFC formation processes, improve operational efficiency, strengthen the quality and relevance of recommendations, and promote better state responses to SFC guidance.

We also developed an action-oriented framework for implementation. The framework is designed to involve relevant stakeholders across government, academia, civil society, and other sectors, ensuring a collaborative approach to improving SFC efficacy.

This work has the potential to strengthen the functioning of SFCs, contributing to improved fiscal decentralisation and more effective allocation of resources to local bodies. partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and the World Bank.



Comparative City Budget Analysis

We conducted a comparative analysis of city budgets across 20 ULGs in three states: Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Kerala. This comprehensive study examined various financial indicators, including revenue surplus/deficit, fiscal deficit, per-capita expenditure/receipts, capital investment ratio, self-financing ratio, and the percentage of property tax to own source revenue.

Our analysis provided a detailed overview of the financial health and performance of ULGs across different states, highlighting areas of strength and potential improvement. We categorised the ULGs based on population size and geographical area, offering insights and recommendations specific to each state's urban local bodies.

This project serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, urban planners, and local government officials. It offers a deep understanding of the financial dynamics of ULGs, which can inform decision-making related to resource allocation, revenue generation, and expenditure management.

To read about our public finance management work in Odisha, turn to page 52. For information on our municipal budget reform initiative in Uttar Pradesh, turn to page 60. You can read about our work in designing and supporting reforms on public finance management in Assam on page 58.

- Developed a digital grant management system on CityFinance.in for the administration of 15th Finance Commission Grants related to SWM, water, sanitation; grants valued at INR 1.08 lakh crore are being dispersed to 4,800+ ULGs across 28 states between 2021-26.
- Total 15th FC grants unlocked by CityFinance.in in first two years of award period (2021-22 and 2022-23) is more than INR 39,000 crore, i.e. >98% of allocated
- 50+ training workshops conducted for state/ULG officials across 25+ states
- YoY increase at 21% for FY22-23 over FY21-22 with collections of INR 28,050 crore in FY21-22 to INR 33,890 crore in FY 22-23 (23 states covering 4023 ULGs - 87%)
- Supported implementation of urban finance reforms in 16 states through the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment 2023-24 scheme, facilitating the release of INR 3,293 crore as interest-free loans
- Launched the Women's Fellowship in Public Finance for Cities, selecting 11 highly qualified women professionals from nearly 200 applicants, advancing gender inclusivity in public financial management

Impact Highlights

- CityFinance.in currently hosts 10,800+ financial statements of 3,500 ULGs, in a standardised and comparable format, 148 cities' credit rating information, and information on 41 bond issuances

Looking Ahead

Janaagraha is set to embark on several significant projects in the coming year, further strengthening our commitment to improving municipal finance across India. We are developing an introductory e-learning course on municipal finance to address the technical capacity gaps faced by ULGs. The course will provide officers with a comprehensive overview of the fundamentals of municipal finance and innovative funding options.

Our engagement with the 16th Finance Commission, commencing April 2024, will involve supporting the Commission through policy research, data analysis, and reform roadmap design. This collaboration will focus on strengthening urban governance, enhancing

ULGs' financial sustainability, and promoting effective budgeting practices. Key areas of work include conducting studies to inform devolution principles, drafting a Municipal Finance Reform Blueprint, fostering ecosystem engagement, and providing actionable recommendations to address challenges in state public finances.

Additionally, from June 2024, Janaagraha will provide technical assistance and advisory support to Karnataka's 5th State Finance Commission (SFC). Our work will involve determining principles for horizontal fund devolution, recommending optimal resource utilisation strategies, and developing a reform roadmap to augment own source revenue (OSR) for various classes of ULGs in the state.





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ಕನ್ನಡವೇ ಉಸಿರು ಕನ್ನಡವೇ ಹೆಸರು

Policy and Insights



Janaagraha's Policy and Insights (P&I) vertical forms the thought leadership backbone of the organisation, guiding our approach to urban governance reform. At its core, P&I is dedicated to examining and understanding city-systems as the crucial first step towards improving it. P&I's work in urban governance reforms manifests as reports, convenings and other products. Several efforts take the next step into policy reforms through advocacy efforts, while some strands further evolve into programmatic offerings.

The initiatives typically start with addressing existing knowledge gaps by building comprehensive research on municipal, state, and national laws, policies, and missions. This includes in-depth research studies and surveys on urban governance, finances, infrastructure delivery, and citizenship. It is these bodies of knowledge which then ably inform advocacy for policy reforms and promote active citizenship.

Currently, the P&I team holds strengths in the following work strands:

- Municipal Law and Policy
- Research and Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
- Organisational Development and Staffing Reforms

Two strands have matured into reforms and implementation work in state programmes:

- Environment City-Systems
- Public Health City-Systems

Through these efforts, P&I ensures that Janaagraha's work remains rooted in research, informed by a holistic understanding of urban challenges, and refined through practical experience.



Municipal Law and Policy

The Municipal Law and Policy (MLP) team at Janaagraha spearheads policy research and thought leadership on city-systems, with a particular emphasis on decentralised urban governance. The MLP function plays a crucial role in analysing and shaping urban legislations and policies, providing high-touch policy support across various tiers of government.

At Janaagraha, we believe that data-driven and evidence-based decision-making is key to transforming urban governance in India. This conviction drives our work on the Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS), our flagship study and a cornerstone of MLP's work.

ASICS is a health diagnosis of our cities and offers a comprehensive assessment of the state of urban governance in India. It evaluates the quality of laws, policies, institutions, and institutional processes (i.e., 'city-systems' or urban governance) that determine the quality of life in our cities. It also serves as a bellwether of systemic reforms in the urban context and offers a common frame of reference for diverse stakeholders, from political leaders to civil society.

The Past Year

Release of Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) 2023

The ASICS 2023 Report was released in October 2024. Research and analysis for the study began in 2019 and included the evaluation of 82 municipal acts, 44 town and country planning acts, 176 allied acts, rules, and notifications, and 32 policies, schemes, and other documents. This edition focuses on states as the unit of analysis and covers 4,800+ cities in all 35 states and union territories in India through 52 questions, designed using the city-systems framework.

ASICS 2023 reveals that:

- Only 42% of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act has been implemented by states.
- 1,400+ cities, including Bengaluru and Mumbai, did not have elected mayors and councils, some for as long as nine years.
- 53 million-plus cities are haphazardly governed by 200+ municipalities, civic agencies, state departments, and panchayats.
- Only 3 of 35 states/UTs have mandated public consultation on city budgets.
- Only about 20% of municipal expenditure is covered by property tax, the largest own source revenue for cities.
- 39% of state capitals, including Delhi and Bengaluru, do not have active master plans.
- None of the 35 states/UTs have mandated street design standards for their cities.

Based on these findings, the report identifies five systemic challenges that need to be urgently addressed to sustainably improve quality of life in our cities. It also details ten instruments of change necessary to usher in urban transformation in India. Each instrument of change underscores the nature of challenges India's cities face, outlines replicable models from India and around the world, and suggests short-term as well as medium-term actions for union, state, and city governments.

Media Coverage

India is urbanising faster than the cities can catch up:

Janaagraha ASICS report

Hindustan Times | 17 October 2023



39% capital cities in India have no active master plan

Deccan Herald | 17 October 2023



39 pc capital cities in India have no active master plan Report

The Week | 17 October 2023



शहरी सर्वे रपिर्ट में मेयरों के नश्चिति कार्यकाल की सफिरशि, केंद्रीय सहायता के भरोसे रहने के बजाय खुद आगे आएँ राज्य

Dainik Jagran | 17 October 2023



Lack Of Talent At City Government Level, Says Survey Of City Systems

NDTV | 20 October 2023



Poor governance burdens Indian cities, finds survey

Mongabay India | 26 October 2023



Staff shortage, financial dependency plague local governance in India

The Hindu | 4 November 2023



In charts: Why cities in India fail on quality of life

Live Mint | 2 December 2023



Engagement with Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India

Our collaboration with the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India continues to progress well, building on our engagement over the last few years.

In 2019, we worked closely with the CAG to develop an audit matrix for assessing the

implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) across all states. These audits — a landmark move by the supreme audit institution of the country — aimed to evaluate whether urban local self-governments function as empowered nodal authorities or merely as extensions of state governments. Our collaboration extended to working directly with the Principal Accountant General of Karnataka on the state's performance audit.

We are now working with the CAG to develop 'A Compendium of Performance Audits on the Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act: Landscape across India'. This document will synthesise findings from the CAG's performance audits, identifying trends and patterns. It will also outline much-needed reforms to empower urban local self-governments across the country. The report is slated to be released in November 2024.

Publications and Presentations

Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) Report 2023



Events

Annual Conclave on Shaping India's Urban Agenda 2023

October 2023

Janaagraha's Annual Conclave on Shaping India's Urban Agenda was a two-day event co-hosted with Rainmatter Foundation on 17 and 18 October 2023 in New Delhi. The Conclave brought together parliamentarians, legislators, senior bureaucrats, academic experts, and civil society organisations to foster dialogue on India's urban future.

A key highlight was the launch of the Annual Survey on India's City-Systems (ASICS) 2023 Report by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Former Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.



Release of ASICS 2023 at Janaagraha's Annual Conclave on Shaping India's Urban Agenda 2023. L to R: Anand Iyer, Chief, Policy and Insights, Janaagraha; Vidya Shah, Executive Chairperson, EdelGive Foundation; Swati Ramanathan, Co-Founder, Jana Group; BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog; Hardeep Singh Puri, Former Minister, Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India; Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha; Kailash Nadh, Founding Director, Rainmatter Foundation and CTO, Zerodha; Sameer Shisodia, CEO, Rainmatter Foundation; Ramesh Ramanathan, Co-Founder, Jana Group; and VR Vachana, Head - Municipal Law and Policy, Janaagraha.

“

ASICS 2023 is a meticulous and praise-worthy effort. I endorse the ten key recommendations made in the report. They can deepen the principles of decentralisation and devolution in urban governance and revitalise the spirit of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (1992).”



Hardeep Singh Puri
Former Minister, Housing and Urban Affairs,
Government of India.



Hardeep Singh Puri, Former Minister, Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India in conversation with Latha Venkatesh, Executive Editor, CNBC-TV18.

The launch was followed by an engaging panel discussion on 'The Future of India's City-Systems' with BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog; Vidya Shah, Executive Chairperson, EdelGive Foundation; Sameer Shisodia, CEO, Rainmatter Foundation; and Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha. The discussion was moderated by Latha Venkatesh, Executive Editor, CNBC TV 18



Panel discussion on 'The Future of India's City-Systems'. L to R: Latha Venkatesh, Executive Editor, CNBC-TV18; Vidya Shah, Executive Chairperson, EdelGive Foundation; BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO, NITI Aayog; Srikanth Viswanathan, CEO, Janaagraha; and Sameer Shisodia, CEO, Rainmatter Foundation.



Attendees listening to the panel discussion. L to R: Pramod Rao, Executive Director, Securities and Exchange Board of India; Arun Maira, Management Consultant and Former Member of Planning Commission of India; Dr Ashok Lahiri, MLA, West Bengal and Member, XIV Finance Commission; Anna Roy, Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog; and Prof Rajeev Gowda, Vice-Chairperson of the State Institute for the Transformation of Karnataka.

The Conclave featured three major sessions:

1. City-Systems: Reimagining the Architecture of City Institutions

This closed-door roundtable convened politicians, bureaucrats, and subject matter experts to address the institutional design of urban governance in India. Discussions highlighted the need to re-engineer the business process in government departments to enhance public service delivery across cities in the country. Panellists also underscored the importance of conducting regular municipal elections and strengthening participatory governance in urban India. The rarity of uniting politicians and bureaucrats for such a dialogue was acknowledged by participants, who expressed appreciation for the depth and nuance of the conversations.



Some attendees of the roundtable discussion on 'City-systems: Reimagining the Architecture of City Institutions': Prof Rajeev Gowda, Vice-Chairperson of the State Institute for the Transformation of Karnataka; Dr Amar Patnaik, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Odisha; Arvind Bellad, Member of Legislative Assembly, Karnataka; Babu Jacob, IAS (Retd.), ex-Chief Secretary Kerala; SM Vijayanand, Chairperson, 6th State Finance Commission and former Chief Secretary, Kerala; Dr Beena Philip, Mayor, Kozhikode Municipal Corporation; Prof Amita Bhide, Professor, Centre for Urban Policy and Governance, TISS- Mumbai and Chair Professor, National Jal Jeevan Mission; Jagan Shah, Resident Senior Fellow, IDFC Institute; Partha Mukhopadhyay, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research; Manvita Baradi, Founder & Director, Urban Management Centre.

2. City Finance: Catalysing Large-Scale Capital for India's Cities and Towns

This session brought together diverse perspectives from policymakers, finance experts,

and government officials with the aim of fostering dialogue on innovative approaches to catalyse large-scale capital for India's urban development. It featured two focused panel discussions. The first explored potential short-term and long-term policy interventions for catalysing the municipal borrowings market in India, and the second explored the critical role of fiscal decentralisation in enhancing municipal governance in the country.



L to R: Arnab Choudhury, Executive Vice President and Group Head, Debt Capital Market (DCM), SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAP); Dr TK Sreedevi, Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Telangana; Jayant Sinha, MP, Lok Sabha and Chairperson, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance; Vikas Gupta, Commissioner and Secretary, Department of Urban Local Bodies, Government of Haryana and Member Secretary, 6th State Finance Commission of Haryana; and Pramod Rao, Executive Director, Securities and Exchange Board of India.



Panel discussion on 'City Finance: Catalysing Large-Scale Capital for India's Cities and Towns – Fiscal Decentralisation.' L to R: Kesavan Srinivasan, Former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General, Government of India and Distinguished Fellow, Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management; Dr TK Sreedevi, Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Telangana; SM Vijayanand, IAS (Retd.), Chairperson, 6th State Finance Commission of Kerala; Dr Ashok Lahiri, MLA, West Bengal and Member, 15th Central Finance Commission; S Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India and Chairperson, 6th State Finance Commission of Tamil Nadu; and Vikas Gupta, Commissioner and Secretary, Department of Urban Local Bodies, Government of Haryana and Member Secretary, 6th State Finance Commission of Haryana.

3. Roundtable on Localising Climate Action in India's Cities and Towns

This moderated roundtable convened 58 participants from different sectors and civil society organisations to discuss localising climate action in India's cities and towns. Anna Roy, Senior Adviser, Data Management and Frontier Technology, NITI Aayog, and Kailash Nadh, Founding Director, Rainmatter Foundation delivered keynote addresses.

After an invigorating discussion, participants arrived at the consensus that environmental governance issues are currently being addressed in silos rather than through a holistic lens. Systems thinking, therefore, emerged as the need of the hour. There was unanimous agreement on the need to adopt a bottom-up approach and strengthen local climate action, recognising that progress on climate change requires sustained dialogue, collaboration, and consistent and sustainable action.



Participants of the roundtable reflect on the potential outcomes and implementation of localised climate action strategies.



Participants dive into discussions on how to localise climate action.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we will be releasing the 'Compendium of Performance Audits on the Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act: Landscape across India'. This will be accompanied by two pivotal policy briefs: one proposing amendments to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and the other addressing the critical issue of timely municipal elections.

In addition to these publications, we are planning key activities to drive policy discourse and engagement. The highlight will be Janaagraha's Annual Conclave on Shaping India's Urban Agenda 2024, which will bring together a select group of senior policymakers across union and state governments, researchers, practitioners, and philanthropists to build salience for a systems approach to cities. We will also intensify our policy engagements, focusing on empowered mayors and councils, as well as participatory governance.

Research and Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning (R&MEL)

The Research, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (R&MEL) team at Janaagraha spearheads critical initiatives that provide valuable data, insights, and thought leadership to further the organisation's mission. The team's work can be broadly categorised into two areas:

1. **Research:** Conducting studies across areas impacting cities such as urban governance, municipal finance, civic participation, service delivery mechanisms, and active citizenship. Over the last decade, the team has undertaken research projects across 61 cities in 22 states in India.
2. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL):** Developing and administering frameworks for Janaagraha's programmes to ensure accountability and track progress towards deliverables and objectives.

Through these efforts, R&MEL has generated rigorous evidence and insights to inform urban policies, interventions, and decision-making.

The Past Year

City Data Analytics Platform (CDAP)

Over the last year, we began work on a City Data Analytics Platform (CDAP), an initiative with NITI Aayog, supporting its National Data Analytics Platform, that aims to address the alarming lack of comprehensive, interoperable city data in India.

CDAP will integrate information from various public and official government data sources, currently not available in a synthesised and comparable format at the city level. It will also implement advanced analytics to synthesise data across diverse sectors and geographical units,

with spatial representation that enables evidence-based decision making at the local level. This comprehensive approach will enable cross-sectoral and cross-location comparisons, leading to deeper insights into urban challenges and opportunities across India.

For instance, CDAP could help identify potential heat islands by cross-referencing spatial data with temperature records, demographic information, and building density records. This will enable mitigation measures to be designed and implemented before temperatures peak.

Ultimately, CDAP will empower local governments, urban planners, and citizens with crucial data that could lead to improved urban governance, more efficient service delivery, better environmental management, and more collaborative decision-making across cities and states.

Just Transitions to Clean Energy

Janaagraha has made significant strides in addressing the critical need for clean energy adoption among urban poor households with our study, 'Just Transitions to Clean Energy: Bottom-up Creation of Pathways for Low-income Urban Settlements in Odisha'. Funded by the MacArthur Foundation, the project aims to identify cleaner cooking and electricity alternatives that are both sustainable and accessible. Our research includes in-depth life-cycle analysis, current fuel usage patterns, and assessment of the barriers and enablers for adopting cleaner energy options among low-income households.

We are currently conducting surveys across 30 settlements in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Koraput, targeting a sample of 5,000 households. The survey phase, which began on 12 July 2023, will continue until 21 March 2024.

Upon completion, we will provide policy recommendations to stakeholders on facilitating just transitions to cleaner household energy for low-income urban settlements.



Co-creation session underway in Koraput, Odisha as part of the research into creation of pathways for clean energy transitions.



Debriefing session with survey assessors in Cuttack, Odisha

Role of Infrastructure in Declining Participation of Women in the Workforce

We are collaborating with Jana Urban Space Foundation on a crucial study examining the impact of urban infrastructure and the built environment on women's participation in the workforce in Indian cities. This research aims to provide nuanced insights into how the mobility, safety, and inclusivity aspects of urban spaces influence women's workforce engagement. Our findings and evidence-based recommendations aim to inform policymakers and urban planners on infrastructure interventions that can promote greater participation of women in the workforce.

Jana-Brown Citizenship Index (JBCI)

Our work on a Citizenship Index on urban governance with service delivery, which began in 2012, continues to progress well. The initiative, conducted in collaboration with Brown University, aims to systematically study the relationship between citizen participation and the delivery of essential services in cities across the country.

The study highlights the importance of citizen participation and the effective implementation of participatory platforms like ward committees to ensure good service delivery. As we enter the dissemination phase of the project, these findings could be instrumental in shaping urban governance policies and in ensuring good service delivery for underserved segments of the population.

'Building 15-Minute Neighbourhoods' with Jana Urban Space

We also extended research implementation support to Jana Urban Space Foundation on their 'Building 15-Minute Neighbourhoods' project. The initiative aims to promote people-centric, low-carbon cities by integrating sustainable mobility, public transit networks, and a network of open/recreational spaces within neighbourhoods.

The project insights were used to frame design guidelines and an implementation toolkit that can guide the development of 15-minute neighbourhoods across India. A pilot project, based on the research findings, will also be implemented in Nallurahalli, Bengaluru.

Upon completion, we will provide policy recommendations to stakeholders on facilitating just transitions to cleaner household energy for low-income urban settlements.

Publications and Presentations

- Katie Pyle and Reetika Syal presented findings from their paper, 'Citizen Participation and Service Delivery: Evidence from Indian Cities' at the Policy Conflux Conference on Cities and Citizens', hosted by ISEC and Christ University in Bengaluru, 17-18 April 2023.
- Katie Pyle and Neha Malhotra Singh presented findings from their paper, 'Just Transitions to Clean Energy: Bottom-up Creation of Pathways for Low-income Urban Settlements in Odisha' at the Global Conclave 2024: Advancing Human Development in the Global South, organised by the Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi, in partnership with NITI Aayog, Government of India, and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), in New Delhi, 11-13 January 2024.
- Katie Pyle and Namita Aggarwal presented findings from their paper 'Gender-Based Discounts on Taxes Related to Property: Role in Encouraging Female Ownership — a Case Study of Indian States and Cities' (co-authored by Rajul Awasthi and Parvina Rakhimova) at the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Innovation Forum, organised by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on 26 February 2024.



Glimpses from the Policy Conflux Conference on Cities and Citizens 2023.

Looking Ahead

Our upcoming initiatives aim to translate our research into actionable insights and tools for urban transformation. The launch of the City Data Analytics Platform (CDAP) V 1.0 in the coming year will mark a significant step towards data-driven urban governance. Our findings on clean energy transitions in Odisha's low-income urban settlements will provide valuable recommendations for inclusive energy policies. The release of design guidelines and an implementation toolkit for '15-Minute Neighbourhoods' will offer practical frameworks for creating sustainable, people-centric urban spaces. Through these efforts, we continue to foster evidence-based decision-making in India's urban development landscape.

Environment City-Systems

Janaagraha has been working on city-systems at the intersection of environment, health, gender, and equity. We believe that city-systems need to be vertically integrated with environmental considerations. The key to achieving success in urban climate action lies in its integration across all sectors and its recognition as a horizontal priority — a system of systems approach that is place and people-based, considering the diversity and inclusivity of neighbourhoods, and their interlinkages with the built and natural environment.

The Past Year

City Data Analytics Platform (CDAP)

In 2023-24, the Environment City-Systems team moved out of the incubation phase, which was characterised by in-depth research and policy analysis, into active programmatic work. In order to make such a transition possible, we continued to develop and build on our past work to create an advocacy tool to engage with government stakeholders and a dissemination tool for discussion and gauging consensus among sectoral peers.

Towards this end, we worked on developing the discussion paper on 'Localising Climate Action in India's Cities and Towns: Catalysing Place-based Environmental Governance.' We also organised a roundtable on the subject to gather insights and feedback from sectoral experts for the paper.

We are currently in the process of putting together a report on 'Environmental Governance in Karnataka's Cities and Towns.' While the discussion paper focused on local climate action, the report aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of urban environmental governance of a state, namely Karnataka.

Further, the Environment City-Systems team unlocked a significant opportunity in Assam, where it is the anchor partner for the Doh Shaher Ek Rupayan programme. The programme looks at holistic sustainable transformation of 10 cities in the state.

To read about our work in Assam, please turn to page 57.

Events

The Urban Convening

June 2023

In June 2023, in partnership with Rainmatter Foundation, Janaagraha co-hosted the Urban Convening in Bengaluru. The event brought together eight organisations working in the environment space: Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Council on Energy, Environment, and Water (CEEW), Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Dasra, Saahas, Socratus, and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

The convening was driven by the recognition that organisations with expertise in critical environmental domains often work independently. By bringing these entities together, we aimed to harness their collective potential and develop a unified approach to addressing governance gaps related to urban environmental challenges.

The event focused on two key areas of discussion:

- Work areas and strengths of individual organisations, along with identifying potential synergies
- Discussing overarching goals and exploring

- potential engagement with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and other relevant ministries in the urban environment space.



Prarthana Ramesh, Head – Environment City-Systems, during her presentation at the Urban Convening.



Swati M, Manager – Environment City-Systems, addressing the gathering at the event.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we have two pivotal publications planned for release: a discussion paper on 'Localising Climate Action in India's Cities and Towns: Catalysing Place-based Environmental Governance' and a report on 'Environmental Governance in Karnataka's Cities and Towns.'

Further, the Environment City-Systems team will accelerate its efforts in Assam, as anchor partner for the Doh Shaheer Ek Rupayan programme. The programme is aimed at the sustainable and holistic transformation of 10 select cities, with a focus on seven infrastructural and service delivery components and three enablers. As anchor partner, we envision the creation of a City Action Plan for each city that brings together goals across sectors and schemes in a coherent manner.

The City-Systems Strategy and the principles of place-based governance will act as the guiding framework and be intrinsically woven into the action plan for the cities. Participatory planning is a crucial component of the programme, and we will be working closely with communities and SHGs to co-create our city action plans. Lastly, we will develop a wide network of sectoral partners who can support this work and create the desired impact. The objective is to develop an operational frame for partnerships at a programmatic level, over and above the sectoral implementation required for the city action plans.

A critical learning for not just the team but the organisation has been that our work at the intersection of urban and environment are best placed as efforts at a state level, as a state programme. As a result, the work of the Environment City-Systems team will now be subsumed under the 'State Programmes' offering of the organisation, specifically the Assam State Programme.

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To read more about this work, turn to page 57.

State Programme



The challenges facing India's cities and towns are multidimensional, interconnected, and a manifestation of regional and global development challenges. To address them, we need to view cities as more than just geographic locations or an aggregate of sectors. Instead, we need to acknowledge cities as the stage on which several developmental and sectoral challenges unfold simultaneously, with multiple stakeholders attempting to address these challenges, often simultaneously and sometimes at cross purposes. This complexity underscores the critical need for a place-based approach to urban development.

Cities, like states and countries, need to be the overarching governance and economic unit into which all sectoral and developmental challenges dovetail. Initiatives and policies must be tailored to the specific needs and attributes of cities, to ensure inclusive, sustainable urban development.

However, cities are not empowered over funds, functions, and functionaries, hindering their ability to undertake place-based governance. While the union government can set the agenda and provide fiscal support, it

cannot directly execute the programmes. States, therefore, emerge as the natural stage for catalytic urban transformation agendas. Each state is complex, large, and operates under different contexts and constraints, making them better suited to chart their own agendas. Moreover, there has been growing interest from state governments, backed by significant budgetary allocations, to articulate and implement their urban reform agendas.

These factors have driven our interest in undertaking urban transformation agendas at the state level. We are currently working in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam.

Our state programmes are a reflection of our thinking, our extensive experience, and learnings from over two decades in this field. They build on our existing body of work to create innovative, replicable models that can be adapted to strengthen resources, bolster state capacities and capabilities, enhance participation, and promote transparency and accountability. They also serve as a useful proof of concept to demonstrate how systems change, orchestrated at the state-level, can produce tangible outputs and outcomes for citizens and city governments.



Odisha State Programme

Janaagraha has been working extensively in the state of Odisha since 2019, at the invitation of the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD), Government of Odisha. Our focus is on transforming urban governance across the state's 115 cities.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen participatory governance and community leadership in urban slums by empowering Slum Dwellers Associations (SDAs) as the fourth tier of governance. These associations are transforming how communities participate in their development, creating more responsive and accountable governance systems at the local level.

Our work on organisational development tackles capacity challenges in city governments through streamlined workflows and innovative service delivery models. We are helping enhance efficiency while reducing administrative burdens on urban local bodies through systematic reforms and process improvements.

We have also been working to improve expenditure efficiencies and financial transparency in municipal finance, laying the groundwork for more autonomous and empowered local governance structures. Additionally, we have undertaken a range of strategic initiatives aimed at ensuring long-term, sustainable urban development.



The Past Year

Slum Upgradation and Delisting Programme

In 2023-24, we made significant strides in the slum upgradation and delisting programme. Out of 2,919 slums, we successfully delisted 1,654 (57%), transforming them into liveable habitats. These areas now provide essential amenities including paver roads, stormwater drainage, streetlights, in-house electricity and piped water connections, individual household toilets, open spaces, micro activity centres, and children's play areas.

Janaagraha continues to monitor and drive the upgradation process for the remaining 1,265 slums. To support this process and ensure proper asset management, we are collecting and collating community asset details from all delisted slums.

Institutionalising and Capacitating SDAs

In March 2024, our team prepared five Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that detail the process of conducting monthly meetings, listing of assets, user fee collections from Adarsh Colonies, maintenance of Adarsh Colonies, and financial literacy for SDAs. These SOPs seek to highlight the roles and responsibilities of slum dwellers in the context of their community's growth, serving as a critical tool for institutionalising SDAs.

We designed and implemented a comprehensive capacity building programme for SDA office bearers. The programme began with two rounds of Training of Trainers (ToT). The first round, conducted from August to December 2023, covered 30 districts across seven clusters, training over 417 trainers with 52% women participation. The second round, held from late January to early March 2024, trained more than 375 trainers, with women's participation increasing to 60%.

This knowledge was then cascaded to SDA leadership, training close to 10,094 individuals. The first round was completed in 197 batches, achieving 85% participation from the 2,919 invited SDAs, with 52% women participants. As of the reporting date, 53% of the round two training has been completed, covering 64 training sessions with 82% attendance from 882 invited SDAs and 43% women participation.

We partnered with the Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) initiative to enhance our SDA training programme, strengthening its focus on gender-inclusive leadership development. This included piloting a Gender Indexing framework survey in Paradeep Municipality and collecting executive committee member details from 106 ULGs to assess gender representation within SDAs.

Institutionalising Community Participation: A Legislative Milestone

In 2023, our sustained efforts culminated in a significant amendment to the Odisha Municipal Laws, formally integrating Slum Dwellers Associations into ward committees and thus, institutionalising community participation in urban governance. We worked closely with the Housing and Urban Development Department on drafting this amendment, which establishes SDAs as the fourth tier of governance. The amendment addresses the historical marginalisation of slum communities in urban planning by creating a structured framework for their participation in decisions that impact their lives. It mandates that Ward Committees incorporate SDA recommendations in budget preparation and development planning. This legislative recognition strengthens the foundation for inclusive urban governance by enabling SDAs to work alongside Urban Local Bodies in project execution and oversight. It will ensure that community perspectives systematically inform municipal decision-making, setting a precedent for participatory governance across India.

Tech-enabled Interventions

Our tech-enabled interventions saw significant progress, with the handover of the Adarsh Colony portal to HUDD in October 2023. This portal, which tracks slum upgradation work, was enhanced with pilot training for 40 officials from 15 ULGs. The portal now includes a public interface for training programmes and Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. We launched the Jaga SDA training app on Google Play Store, serving as a comprehensive data repository for capacity building programmes. Master trainers and ULGs use the app to provide live updates, resulting in 100% data capture accessible on the capacity building dashboard. Additionally, we integrated a Services Monitoring System (SMS) dashboard into the SUJOG portal and developed the "SMS Jaga" mobile application for bottom-up reporting. Following successful pilot training in Jatni and Khordha municipalities, we are now planning to scale this initiative.

Process Optimisation for Urban Initiatives

In 2023-24, we continued our process optimisation work with the Government of Odisha, focusing on enhancing the efficiency of urban governance systems. By identifying areas of ambiguity in existing guidelines and introducing modifications, we aim to bring clarity and uniformity to implementation processes across cities. Our comprehensive "as is" studies for the Mukhya Mantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA) and Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) initiatives led to detailed process mapping. The MUKTA process map encompasses 5 process buckets, 24 processes, 11 sub-processes, and 142 activities, while the FSSM map includes 5 process buckets, 50 sub-processes, and 100 activities. We also drafted a high-level SWM process map with 5 process buckets, 22 sub-processes, and 62 activities.

To support MUKTA implementation, we created 9 job aids and a digital tracker, piloting them in five cities over three months. The results showed a significant increase in payments and project delivery. For FSSM, we led the standardisation of data reporting through the state's e-governance portal, SUJOG (Sustainable Urban Services in a Jiffy by Odisha Government). Our efforts across five cities have significantly improved the adoption of SUJOG FSSM, enhancing data reliability and reducing administrative work.

Strengthening Performance Management Systems

Our goal setting initiatives established clear targets across multiple programmes including MUKTA, FSSM, Solid Waste Management (SWM), and Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO). This systematic approach helps connect day-to-day work with larger organisational goals, fostering a culture of accountability in urban governance. We have completed Key Result Areas (KRA) and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) development for MUKTA and FSSM, with systematic implementation underway in five urban local bodies through monthly reviews with senior HUDD leaders. Implementation is set to scale up to the remaining 110 cities.

Our efforts have optimised approximately 80 roles across initiatives: 33 from MUKTA, 10 from FSSM, 14 from SWM, and 23 from WATCO. This optimisation has positively affected over 6,000 personnel, including 1,400 from MUKTA, 900 from FSSM, and the remainder from SWM and WATCO. This transformation is set to significantly enhance the efficiency of urban development initiatives, potentially leading to improved service delivery and better outcomes for Odisha's citizens.

Competency Development Framework

Our Position-wise, Role Wise and Accountability Wise Competency (PRACs) frameworks map key skill requirements across various levels of urban

governance. These frameworks ensure alignment between employee skills and departmental goals, enabling more effective problem-solving and service delivery. To date, we have covered approximately 50 government positions (32 from MUKTA and 18 from FSSM), which will standardise work allocation for around 2,300 personnel. The MUKTA PRACs await validation with the State Implementation and Review Committee (SIRC), after which they will be published as standardised work orders.

We have also made progress in Framework of Roles, Activities, and Competencies (FRAC) mapping for WATCO and SWM. The fieldwork for initial FRAC mapping in SWM is complete, with PRACs developed for 13 unique positions. Additionally, we are refining 52 competencies to develop an urban-focused competency dictionary.

Unified Revenue Collection Initiative

Our Unified Revenue Collection (URC) model, piloted successfully in Puri, has been scaled to three additional cities: Jatni, Khurdha, and Cuttack. This innovative approach leverages women Self-Help Group members (Jal Saathis) to streamline revenue collection while reducing administrative burden on urban local bodies. We introduced Pre-Paid Debit Cards for 103 Jal Saathis across the four cities, each pre-loaded with ₹1 lakh, enabling cashless payments and minimising risk.

The impact is evident in Puri's revenue growth figures. Between FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24, total revenue collection increased by 15.7%, with property tax collection rising by 1.3% and water and sewerage charges surging by 33%. Plans are underway to expand the project to remaining WATCO cities in 2024.

Urban Grants Monitoring System

In 2023-24, we collaborated with the Housing and Urban Development Department to implement the Urban Grants Monitoring System. This innovative system provides real-time expenditure tracking for grants and funds from union and state governments to urban local bodies and parastatals in Odisha. The system's dashboard offers crucial data for state-level decision-makers about fund releases and enables commissioners and executive officers to optimise expenditure from various sources. It has already been implemented across 115 ULGs in the state, representing a significant step towards transparent and efficient urban financial management.

Budget Reforms

We worked with the HUDD and ULGs to create credible and timely municipal budgets, through policy, formats, guidelines, and action plans. Our approach encompassed three key phases: diagnosis, design and implementation of reforms, and capacity building. After assessing budgeting provisions in municipal laws and identifying gaps through field visits, we streamlined the budget process by introducing a budget calendar and clarifying stakeholder roles. We supported adoption through extensive capacity building, including workshops for ULG accountants and weekly online meetings during budget preparation for 2024-25.

Fund Flow Mapping for Expenditure Efficiency

To improve expenditure efficiencies, we initiated comprehensive process and fund flow mapping for major schemes under HUDD. This exercise addressed the challenges posed by varied fund flow mechanisms across three tiers of governments, multiple spending agencies, and different financial management systems like SUJOG, PFMS, and IFIMS. Through in-depth

stakeholder interviews and document analysis, we mapped 14 major schemes, detailing administrative processes from budget allotment to expenditure. The mapping has informed other public financial management initiatives, with four documented schemes selected for presentation on the grants dashboard.

Rural Urban Transition Policy

In June 2023, Janaagraha collaborated with the Government of Odisha to develop India's first Rural Urban Transition Policy (RUTP). This pioneering policy addresses the challenges of unplanned expansion in peri-urban and rural areas by facilitating their systematic transition into well-planned urban centres.

The policy establishes a comprehensive framework for managing urban expansion. It creates special budgets for infrastructure and service delivery while ensuring the involvement of elected representatives, officials, and stakeholders in planning, execution, and monitoring throughout the transition process. By bridging the gap between urban and rural regions, RUTP aims to foster inclusive growth and create environments that match the development seen in established urban centres.

A key element of the policy is its systematic approach to preparing both residents and areas for transition. This involves significant infrastructural upgrades and proactive community engagement, ensuring minimal disruption to daily life. The policy strengthens governance mechanisms through streamlined administrative and financial processes, regulatory reforms, and improved approval systems. By engaging experts and key officials early in the process, RUTP aims to minimise financial and administrative burdens while ensuring all necessary infrastructure and governance measures are in place before transition begins.

The successful implementation of the RUTP will

ensure sustainable urban development and the planned growth of towns and cities, paving the way for improved quality of life in Odisha's urban areas.

Urban Land Records Management System

We extended support to HUDD in developing the conceptual plan for the Urban Land Records Management System (ULRMS), a comprehensive initiative to address land use inefficiencies in Odisha's urban centres. The system aims to revolutionise urban land management by preparing geo-referenced maps for urban areas and integrating them with textual databases.

The initiative encompasses computerisation of land records, digital transformation of registration processes, and creation of modern record rooms at tehsil, taluk, circle, and block levels. This systematic approach ensures clarity of land titles and ownership, while making records more accessible to both public and government authorities. By streamlining land management processes, ULRMS will help unlock capital, improve resource management, and promote sustainable urban development.

Impact Highlights

- Completed upgradation and delisting of 1,654 slums (57% of 2,919) across Odisha, transforming them into liveable habitats with essential amenities
- Executive committee members of 10,094 slums trained through 261 sessions, with women's participation ranging between 43-52% across training rounds

- 800 trainers, including 444 women (55%), from 30 districts were trained as part of our SDA capacity building efforts
 - Dashboard providing status of slum upgradation and SDA meetings across c. 3,000 slums launched and in use
 - Over 6,000 personnel across the Government of Odisha impacted through process optimisation of 80 roles in key initiatives, including MUKTA, FSSM, SWM, and WATCO
 - Development and launch of grants dashboard to track real-time fund flow of c. INR 3,000 crores from states to cities, marking a shift towards increased transparency and efficiency in urban governance
 - Slum Dweller Associations (SDAs) institutionalised as fourth tier of governance through amendments to Odisha Municipal Acts.
 - Developed India's first Rural Urban Transition Policy for Odisha, establishing a comprehensive framework for managing systematic urban expansion.
-



Publications and Presentations

- Comprehensive training modules and allied videos for two rounds of SDA Capacity Building workshops for trainers.
- FAQ Sheets on Unified Revenue Collection
- "One Door One Sathi" Knowledge Product
- Refined competency dictionary
- Unified Revenue Collection SOPs for Jal Sathis

Events

Goal Setting Workshop for MUKTA

May 2023

Janaagraha, in collaboration with IdInsight and the Centre for Effective Governance of Indian States (CEGIS), conducted a Goal Setting Workshop for MUKTA in Bhubaneswar in May 2023.

This workshop was a part of the Housing and Urban Development Department's initiative to implement a competency-based human resource management system. The event's primary objective was to discuss and provide feedback on key results and key performance indicators for MUKTA's success. This aligned with the broader goal of professionalising government services to match world-class corporate standards, and to thereby move from a "face-based" (i.e., a subjective approach) to a "fact-based" performance management system.

The event brought together stakeholders from all levels to engage in participative decision-making, including representatives from city governments such as executive officers/commissioners, engineers, MUKTA experts, and others. Key

participants included G Mathi Vathanan, the then-Additional Chief Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD); Sangramjit Nayak, Director, Municipal Administration; Sagarika Pattnaik and Durgesh Nandini, Special Secretaries, HUDD; Sarada Prasad Panda, Joint Secretary, Nodal Officer, MUKTA; Sanjay Pramanik, Finance Representative; and Municipal Commissioners Nikhil Pavan Kalyan (Cuttack) and Vijay Amruta Kulange (Bhubaneswar). The diverse group of participants fostered a collaborative spirit, enabling a free exchange of ideas and promoting a sense of ownership and collective responsibility. As a result, the outcomes of this workshop are not only more effective but also more sustainable, as they are grounded in the collective wisdom and expertise of the stakeholders involved.

Competency Workshop

June 2023

In collaboration with the Centre for Effective Governance of Indian States (CEGIS), we organised a two-day Competency Workshop in Bhubaneswar to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the critical activities and roles performed by position holders in urban local bodies.

The workshop brought together ULG accountants, implementation experts, assistant engineers, community organisers, and city mission managers. Through moderated discussions, attendees explored the behaviours, instances, and features that distinguish high-performing individuals in the workplace. The workshop also focused on identifying performance characteristics that contribute to the effective execution of roles and highlighted the broad challenges and expectations associated with different positions, both current and future. A key outcome was the identification of essential attitudes, skills, and knowledge elements crucial for accomplishing

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we will continue our partnership with the Housing and Urban Development Department to strengthen urban governance across Odisha, focusing on several key initiatives.

To strengthen citizen participation, we will develop an SDA Performance Tracker to monitor monthly meetings and community engagement, and design a mechanism to devolve 25% of ULG funds to SDAs. Our Services Monitoring System training programme will expand to 109 ULGs, strengthening local governance capabilities. Process optimisation efforts will focus on developing templates and SOPs for ULG procurement, initially targeting vehicle management within Solid Waste Management operations. We will support the HUDD in institutionalising the goal-setting frameworks established for MUKTA, FSSM, SWM, and WATCO programmes. The development of an Urban Competency Dictionary will help match individual competencies and identify targeted training interventions. We also propose integrated modules for goal setting, competencies, learning, and performance management on the SUJOG platform.

In municipal finance, we will support ULGs in implementing budget reforms and strengthening expenditure tracking through the Urban Grants Monitoring System, to enhance financial transparency and efficiency across urban local bodies.

We look forward to advancing critical urban reforms in the state, with the Rural Urban Transition Policy and Urban Land Records Management System remaining strategic priorities. We will also conduct comprehensive audits of the Online Building Plan Approval System and supporting other emerging reform priorities in the urban sector.

Assam State Programme

2023-24 marked Janaagraha's entry into Assam's urban development landscape through a partnership with the state government.

Assam is India's most climate-vulnerable state, home to 15 of the country's 25 districts most susceptible to the effects of climate change. At the same time, the rate of urbanisation in the state is 14.10%, well below the national average of 31.6%. Towns and cities of Assam are in the nascent stage of developing public infrastructure and service delivery.

Our engagement with Assam, therefore, is a remarkable opportunity to implement a holistic state urban transformation programme; one that balances urbanisation and economic development with environmental sustainability, and that strives for equitable access to services and opportunities for all while enabling citizen engagement in local governance.

The programme will be guided and shaped by the principles of place-based governance, with solutions being developed for local contexts and in a bottom-up and participatory manner.

We will adopt a twin-track approach of promoting governance and policy reforms on one hand and implementing projects on the other. We will also prioritise environmental sustainability and climate resilience at every stage of the programme. For instance, we will enable environmental governance reforms at the state level, identify and build platforms of participatory climate action, and infuse a climate lens across infrastructure and service delivery components of solid waste management, drinking water supply, sanitation, public and blue-green infrastructure as well as indirect components of capacity building and financial strengthening among others.

The scale of the programme and the magnitude of the challenges we are attempting to solve necessitate a collaborative approach. We will work with a coalition of partners, specifically sectoral experts and implementation organisations, to achieve the aims of the programme.

The Past Year

Doh Shafer, Ek Rupayan

Janaagraha's work in Assam is centred on 'Doh Shafer, Ek Rupayan,' an ambitious initiative by the Government of Assam for the planned and sustainable urban development of 10 cities in the state.

At present, several flagship union and state-funded schemes are operational in each of the 104 Urban Local Governments (ULGs) of Assam. However, there is a lack of integration of efforts as the schemes operate mostly in silos, without a cohesive vision for the ULGs and the state.

The Doh Shafer Ek Rupayan programme aims to consolidate efforts towards comprehensive and planned development in 10 of the largest cities and towns in the state after Guwahati — Dhubri, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Nagaon, North Lakhimpur, Silchar, Sivasagar, Tezpur, and Tinsukia.

The programme will work on ten components to holistically address urban transformation in ULGs. Seven of these are core components, primarily focused on urban infrastructure and service delivery. These are solid waste management, drinking water supply and sanitation, public infrastructure, blue-green infrastructure, traffic management, streetlights, and urban planning. The remaining three components are enablers that have a horizontal role in urban governance — financial strengthening, human resource

rationalisation, and digital and online services. Janaagraha is an anchor partner of the programme, along with Jana Urban Space Foundation. Our role encompasses several critical functions, including programme design. We will work closely with experts and local partners to establish city-specific priorities, develop action plans with clear roles and responsibilities, and define indicators to measure progress effectively. Our team is conducting thorough gap analyses and baseline assessments to understand the current state of development in these cities. Additionally, based on the principles of place-based governance, we are co-creating action plans for each city with communities and relevant stakeholders, ensuring that local needs and contexts are fully considered. Our responsibilities also extend to monitoring and evaluating the implementation undertaken by the cities and any relevant partners.

Janaagraha is also extending support to the state government on the creation and adoption of relevant policies, toolkits and guidelines, state-level projects and reform implementation support, lighthouse projects in a few ULGs, support for public finance management reforms, and the modernisation of municipal accounting practices. These efforts aim to strengthen local governance, improve financial management, and ultimately enhance the quality of life in Assam's cities and towns.

Designing and Supporting Reforms on Public Finance Management

We are supporting the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (DoHUA) in Assam in designing and implementing Public Finance Management (PFM) reforms across the state.

The Department has undertaken various initiatives to enhance financial management systems and capacities within ULGs, focusing on efficiency, transparency, and accountability. This includes the initiation of a state-wide transition to

a digital accrual-based accounting system and the recruitment of new cadres of municipal executives, and financial and engineering officials for the first time under the Assam Urban Administrative System. We are supporting the Department in designing, phasing, monitoring, and implementing these reforms.

The PFM reforms identified for the project are strategic interventions along the public finance lifecycle and target all three pillars of financial management: sustainability, efficiency, and accountability. We have identified four key workstreams: accrual accounting, financial planning and budgeting, asset management and capital investment planning, and expenditure management through works management.

These reforms will be implemented in a phased manner in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for financial expertise and the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) for technology support. The process will begin with pilot programmes in selected cities before it is scaled across the state.

We are also working to supplement and update the Assam Municipal Accounting Manual (AMAM).

The original AMAM was published in 2011-12. Since then, there have been significant advancements in ULG practices and in digital systems. We aim to make the manual more relevant to the current context of ULG accounting and aim to provide comprehensive guidance for ULG staff as they transition to accrual accounting on UPYOG (Urban Platform for Delivery of Online Governance) in Assam. UPYOG, developed under the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM), enables the delivery of municipal services online. The platform's Finance and Accounts (F&A) module will support ULGs in adopting a Double Entry Accrual-Based Accounting System (DEABAS), with plans for gradual integration of other e-governance systems, such as the Unified Portal, FinAssam, and GIS database. In addition to

the F&A module, the budgeting module will also be hosted on the platform.

We are also introducing new sections on the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and Goods and Services Tax (GST) into the manual for the Mukhya Mantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA) and Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) initiatives led to detailed process mapping. The MUKTA process map encompasses 5 process buckets, 24 processes, 11 sub-processes, and 142 activities, while the FSSM map includes 5 process buckets, 50 sub-processes, and 100 activities. We also drafted a high-level SWM process map with 5 process buckets, 22 sub-processes, and 62 activities.

As part of the AMAM deliverables, we have provided the state with drafts of the following:

- Accounting Policies
- Chart of Accounts (CoA)
- Accounting Entry Matrix
- Financial Statements Formats
- Key Internal Controls
- Simplified Budget Formats
- MIS Reports Formats
- Note on Accounting for PFMS Grants
- Note on Compliance and Accounting for GST
- Two ULG budgets in the proposed format.

These draft documents are being incorporated into the Functional Requirements Specification (FRS) document for the UPYOG Finance and Accounts and Budget Modules.

To date, we have initiated PFM reforms in 15 ULGs, with plans to expand to the remaining 89 ULGs.

As part of broader capacity building efforts in municipal finance, we conducted comprehensive training for municipal executive officers from all 104 ULGs in March 2024. The three-week programme, delivered in partnership with MaGC,

combined classroom sessions with site visits to infrastructure development projects. The curriculum covered essential aspects of municipal finance, including the legal framework,



Training for municipal executive officers in Guwahati, Assam

revenue sources, and ULG-specific accounting and budgeting practices. This initiative strengthens the foundation for improved financial management practices across Assam's urban local bodies.

Support for the Conceptualisation of Institutions

We are working closely with the state to define a broader urban reform roadmap and are advising the state on an ADB project to build climate-resilient infrastructure. We are also helping the Government of Assam set up two pioneering institutions:

- Assam State Institute of Urban Development (ASIUD): Envisioned as a best-in-class institution which will anchor the sustainable urbanisation agenda for Assam and North-East India.
- Assam Urban Infrastructure Development

- and Finance Corporation Limited (AUIDFCL): A nodal agency to converge funding across government schemes and external aid, set up e-governance and other shared services for ULGs in Assam, and house all systemic reforms for urban Assam.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, as part of our work on Doh Shaheer Ek Rupayan, we will establish city-level platforms and processes that promote convergence and sustainable development. Our civic participation efforts will enhance the leadership and governance capabilities of councillors and mayors, focusing on championing innovative ideas, fostering collaborative decision-making with citizens, building trust, and improving quality of life in areas such as women's safety, climate resilience, and public health.

We will also operationalise a Human Resource Management System for 1,000 officials in the Urban Development Department and advocate for the adoption of a performance management system by the government.

Our public finance management efforts will focus on enhancing transparency and accountability through several key initiatives. This includes making audited accounts available through the UPYOG platform, introducing standardised budget formats, linking the Chart of Budgets (CoB) with the Chart of Accounts (CoA) for effective budgetary control, and ensuring better expenditure and revenue tracking. Additionally, we will support DoHUA in implementing budget guidelines to streamline the budget processes of the ULGs.

Furthermore, we are committed to boosting the capacities of city governments in delivering quality services through the implementation of three Municipal Shared Services models: Paura Sakhi for revenue collection, a Municipal

Operations Support Hub for enhancing operational efficiency, and a Water and Sanitation Operations Coordination Centre for centralised management of these critical services across Assam's cities.

Uttar Pradesh State Programme

In 2023-24, we expanded our reach to Uttar Pradesh, initiating a significant partnership with the state government to enhance urban governance. Our engagement currently focuses on improving Public Financial Management (PFM) practices across the state's urban local bodies.

The Past Year

Municipal Budget Reform Initiative

In 2023, we entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Department (UP UDD) to support public financial management reforms across the state's towns and cities. In the first year, our focus has been on assisting the UDD and Urban Local Governments (ULGs) on municipal budgets reforms.

Our work on municipal budget reforms aims to improve budget credibility at the local government level. This, in turn, is expected to create a virtuous cycle of improved spending quality and enhanced service delivery in cities.

Our approach comprises four key steps:

- **Diagnosis:** We analysed budgeting provisions in the state's municipal laws and manuals, identified gaps through field visits to ULGs, and conducted interviews with various stakeholders including accounts officers, revenue officers, and elected representatives.

- **Design and Implementation of Reforms:** We simplified the budget process by introducing a budget calendar and clarifying stakeholder roles. We also issued budget templates for realistic estimates of income, expenditure, capital works, and non-works expenses. The reform also included developing policies, formats, guidelines, and action plans to better inform ULG expenditure.
- **Capacity Building:** We organised 11 workshops for different municipal stakeholders to facilitate the adoption of budget reforms. Additionally, we provided hands-on support to six ULGs in preparing reliable budgets for FY 2024-25.
- **Review and Monitoring:** We introduced mechanisms for regular reviews at both ULG and state levels to track and support reform implementation.

Through these efforts, we aim to strengthen financial management practices across Uttar Pradesh's urban local bodies, ultimately contributing to improved urban governance and service delivery.

In addition to our work on municipal budget reforms, we also supported the UDD in revenue augmentation efforts and drafting plans for

accrual accounting reforms.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we look forward to building on our work in the state by driving two flagship programmes, in collaboration with the UDD: the Aspirational Cities Programme and the Chief Minister's – Green Roads Infrastructure Development (CM-GRID) Scheme.

The Aspirational Cities Programme (ACP) promotes sustainable development in 100 Urban Local Governments (ULGs) with populations between 20,000 and 1,00,000. It adopts a multi-sectoral framework to improve municipal services, expand economic opportunities, and enhance quality of life. As a knowledge partner, Janaagraha will support the department in improving urban governance in the ACP cities through interventions focussed on increasing own-source revenues, enhancing operational efficiency, and advancing planned urban development.

Janaagraha will also advise the UDD on public finance and organisational restructuring reforms covering policy and practice aspects.



Financial Highlights

We hold ourselves to high standards of transparency, accountability, and compliance in our operations. Our commitment to ethical practices and rigorous compliance is integral to our organisational ethos.

Janaagraha is registered under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 and is an FCRA-compliant organisation.

Our audited financial statements for the year 2023-2024 are provided below.

Financial records and statements of previous years are available on our website (www.janaagraha.org).

BALANCE SHEET AS AT	March 31, 2024 (In INR, crores)	March 31, 2023 (In INR, crores)	March 31, 2022 (In INR, crores)
Source of funds			
General fund	2.71	2.71	2.71
Corpus & Endowment Funds	9.00	9.00	9.00
Income and expenditure account	16.07	17.77	20.45
Current liabilities	0.44	0.25	2.05
TOTAL	28.22	29.73	34.21
Application of funds			
Non-current assets	14.78	19.83	17.81
Current assets	13.44	9.90	16.41
TOTAL	28.22	29.73	34.21
Income and Expenditure for the year ended	March 31, 2024	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022
Income			
Income from Donations	21.36	20.03	27.8
Interest & Other Income	2.98	2.10	1.71
TOTAL	24.34	22.13	29.51
Expenditure			
Salaries & Allowances - Personnel Cost	14.05	12.13	9.15
Direct Program Expenses	7.05	7.60	4.08
Admin & Others	4.70	4.85	2.74
Depreciation	0.25	0.24	0.18
TOTAL	26.05	24.82	16.15

*Book of accounts and financial statements are prepared based on cash basis of accounting.

*Income and expenditure account balance refers to carry forward donations for the future period.

Donors and Supporters

Our efforts to transform India's cities and towns are made possible by the generosity of our donors and supporters. Their contribution represents a shared commitment to a better, brighter tomorrow for all. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all who have invested in our work, recognising that their faith in Janaagraha's potential is a driving force behind our impact and progress.

- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Rainmatter Foundation
- MacArthur Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- L Catterton Foundation
- Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- Impact Foundation (Dasra)
- India Development and Relief Fund
- Sainsons Paper Industries
- TPG India Pvt Ltd
- UK Online Giving Foundation
- The World Bank
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Leading Purpose Campaigns (India) Pvt Ltd
- The International Research & Exchanges Board

Partners and Stakeholders

At Janaagraha, we believe in the power of a shared vision and collective action. Our partners and stakeholders are critical allies in our mission to bring about meaningful systemic change. Their diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise enrich our approach and amplify our impact. We are grateful to each of these collaborations that enable us to drive sustainable urban transformation and foster vibrant, participatory communities.

National-level Stakeholders

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- NITI Aayog
- Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India
- Capacity Building Commission (CBC) of India
- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

State Governments

- Government of Assam
- Government of Odisha
- Government of Uttar Pradesh

Civil Society Partners

- Centre for Effective Governance of Indian States (CEGIS)
- Collective Good Foundation
- eGov Foundation
- IDinsight
- Karnataka Ward Samiti Balaga

- Samyak

Networks and Alliances

- ClimateRISE
- NFSSM Alliance
- Urban Collective Action Network (U-CAN)
- Urban Health Initiative (UHI)





3rd Floor, Sair Bagh, 19/4, Cunningham Road Bengaluru, Karnataka, India – 560052
Ph: +91 80 41200844/41500844 | Email: info@janaagraha.org
www.janaagraha.org