Praja aims at enabling accountable governance

PRAJA.ORG
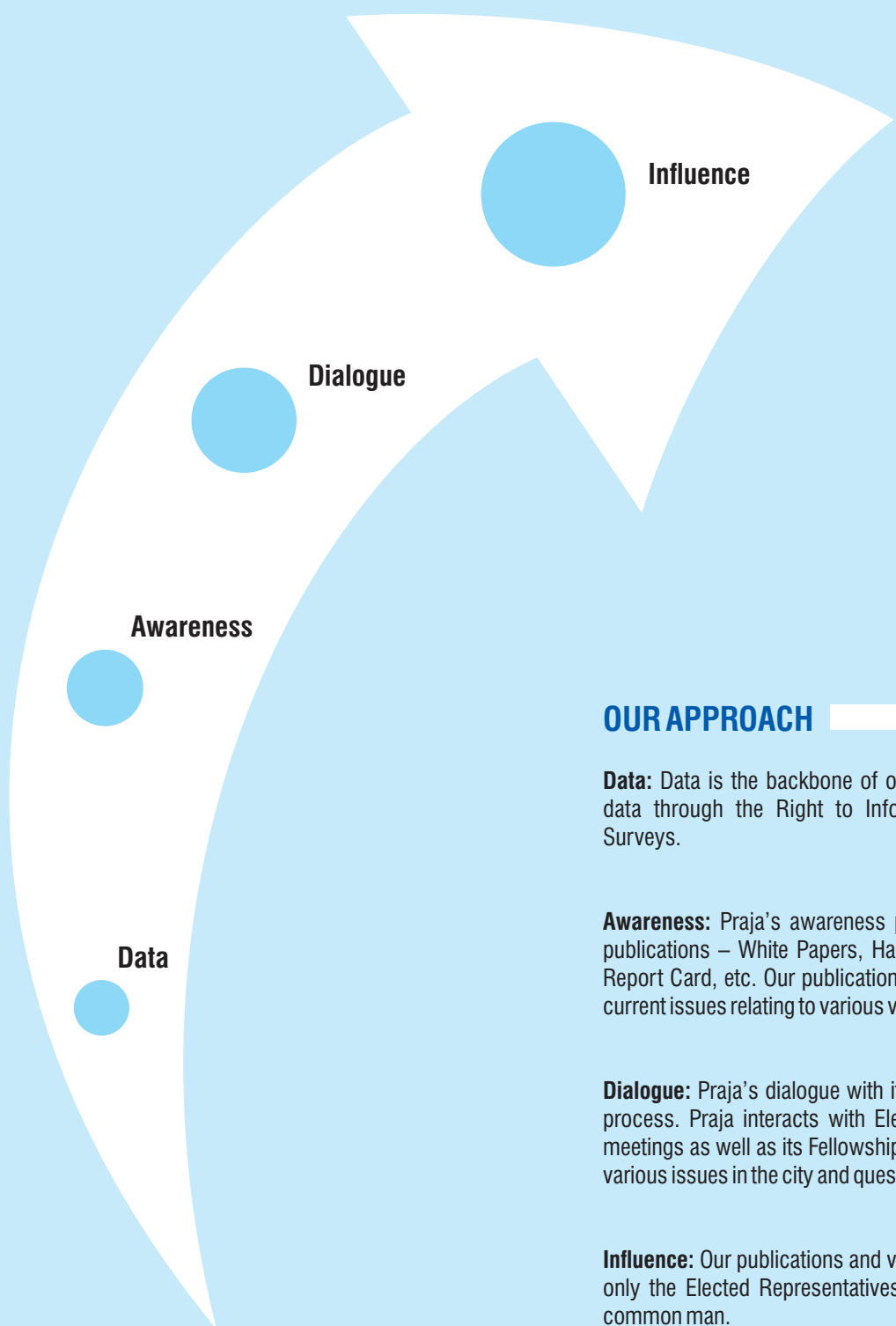
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

ABOUT PRAJA

Founded in 1998, Praja Foundation is a non-partisan voluntary organisation working towards enabling accountable governance.

Praja empowers the citizen to participate in governance by providing knowledge and perspective. We aim to provide ways in which the citizen can get politically active and involved beyond the ballot box, thus promoting transparency and accountability. Praja strives to revive the waning spirit of Mumbai City, and increase the interaction between the citizens and the government. To facilitate this, we have created www.praja.org, a website where the citizen can equip themselves with pertinent information on the ER such as: the issues faced by the ward, the responses received and a discussion board.

We believe that accountable governance follows, if you have:
- Well informed and Intentioned Elected Representatives (Municipal Councillors, Members of Legislative Assembly and Members of Parliament)
- Well informed Media, and
- Well informed Citizens

PRAJA**.ORG**
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

Influence

Dialogue

Awareness

Data

OUR APPROACH

Data: Data is the backbone of our organisation. Praja collects data through the Right to Information Act and Household Surveys.

Awareness: Praja's awareness projects are mainly its annual publications – White Papers, Handbooks, Councillor and MLA Report Card, etc. Our publications contain pertinent data about current issues relating to various verticals

Dialogue: Praja's dialogue with its stakeholders is an on-going process. Praja interacts with Elected Representatives through meetings as well as its Fellowship program and informs them of various issues in the city and questions they can raise.

Influence: Our publications and various programs influence, not only the Elected Representatives, but also the media and the common man.

Stakeholder's Speak

"For the Past 15 years, the Praja Foundation has worked to increase accountability and transparency in government. Focusing on Mumbai the Foundation has tried to open up the dialogue between public servants and the electorate and to ensure that the communication continues beyond elections. Their systematic evaluation of elected officials allows citizens to be informed voters and also recognizes and lauds honest and hardworking government officials."

Rotary Club of Bombay

"Praja's Workshops for Councillors helped me understand the workings of the Municipal Corporation. How to study the health, education, budget aspects? How and where to use funds? Such lessons were taught."

Snehal Ambekar, Mayor of Mumbai

"The variations in the number of deaths due to Tuberculosis in Praja Foundation's Health White Paper and those from BMC's TB Control Unit, has become a topic of debate. As a result, BMC is undertaking a study of death certificates that mention TB as a cause of death, to see how many of these deaths were actually due to TB."

Loksatta

"Working in an environment where everyone was always talking about issues like crime, education, health and elected representatives, my interest in governance and administration and governance has increased. Only when one has knowledge of their rights can they demand them. Armed with the knowledge of how badly elected representatives and the executive body perform their duties, I will now be capable of demanding a change for the better and hence become an active citizen."

Meghana Choukkar, Intern from SIMC

VITAL STATISTICS 2014

Press Coverage: **406**

Number of RTI applications filed: **1,031**

Media attendance at Events: **495**

Meeting with Elected Representatives: **153**

Workshops for Elected Representatives: **3**

Interns &Volunteers: **120**

Youth Workshops: **34**

Youth reached through Workshops: **1,468**

www.praja.org users: **45,268**

Downloads from www.praja.org: **28,300**

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014… the year of Governance:

The term "Governance" has now become a catchphrase uttered by every politician, political aspirant and the common man. The popularity of this concept, in conjunction with the elections in Mumbai, as well as a new government in Centre and State, has highlighted the relevance and importance of Praja's quest for accountable and transparent governance. Praja strives to collect and present information on the reality of governance in Mumbai, in the hope of improving it. All the projects undertaken in the very busy year 2014 have been for this purpose. In 2014, we have widened our range to include research in the new arena of affordable housing, as well as a whole new chapter in Delhi.

Praja has spread its wings to Delhi and in 2014 we successfully laid the foundation for our Delhi Chapter. A feasibility study conducted by us in 2013 pointed towards the need for replicating the 'Praja Dialogue' model in Delhi. To begin with, we are planning to conduct research in the areas of Crime, Education, Health and Working of Elected Representatives (ER). We entered into a partnership with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) for research on Crime. Praja will be looking after the health and Elected Representative verticals on its own, while collaborating with Centre for Civil Society (CCS) for the education vertical.

Another highlight of the year for Praja was the setting up of a whole new vertical, "Affordable Housing". We have been conducting series of consultations with experts in urban planning since 2013, to create a knowledge bank for our Elected Representatives, citizens and media, replete with data on Housing, issues with current approaches, demystify concepts such as Floor Space Index and popular myths surrounding these issues. There is little information on how the current housing policies of the State and Central Governments measure up to the issue. Thus, 'Affordable Housing' was included as one of our verticals, and we published our first Housing White Paper and Handbook on the subject in November 2014.

Praja's information on its various verticals is thoroughly researched and authentic. The information gathered is frequently passed on to Elected Representatives in formats adapted according to the specific needs of each Representative. Through the Fellowship program, a small group of volunteer fellows interact and communicate with the Elected Representatives providing them with the researched documents.

2014 saw us expanding the reach of our projects, which meant growth and change within the Praja team as well. With the inclusion of the Housing vertical as well as expansion into Delhi, new members arrived and made their mark in the Praja team. New faces also meant the inclusion of induction and training programs, as well as team building activities to create a strong, united group

The main focus areas of Praja's research are Health, Crime, Education, Working of Elected Representatives, Housing and Civic issues. We are a non-partisan organisation and thus objectivity is one of our core values. Our research and outreach activities are purely guided by the data we collect and analyse. We make extensive use of The Right to Information Act, 2005 (RTI) to collect data. However, as the data collected through RTI only pertains to government sources and does not include people's perception about government services, we have also started relying on data from the non-government sector through household surveys. Our surveys are conducted by a professional market research agency, whom we have commissioned for the purpose. We also engage citizens, (particularly students), to collect such information in a participative project/programme on understanding 'Governance'.

Data thus collected is categorised, checked and is entered into a Data Management System or into different templates. Also, where required, the data is translated (questions asked by elected representatives are translated from Marathi to English) and coded. After thorough verification the data is published in our white papers and online on the website- www.praja.org.

- 2014 was a challenging year for us on the Data Collection front, as Mumbai saw two elections (General elections and State Assembly elections).Decentralisation of various government departments also posed a challenge in covering the entire city. It was a learning experience for our team as we coped with exigencies and delays and still forged ahead to meet publication deadlines.

- With the launch of our Delhi chapter in 2014, the scope of our Data Management operations expanded considerably. In the first phase, we have begun collecting data on Health, Education, Working of Elected Representatives and Crime. Data collection and collation through RTI applications is taking place in Delhi, and is being carried out by our partner organisations (CHRI, CCS) and representatives. The subsequent operations such as entry, translation and analysis are being carried out by the Mumbai team. Our team members have been making regular visits to Delhi to boost coordination with our partners, and monitor operations in Delhi.

PRAJA'S BACKBONE- DATA
OTHER KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- *Collaborated with Times of India for their 'Mumbai Patrol' Campaign*
- *Rotary Club of Bombay felicitated Praja with the Pravinchandra Gandhi award for 'Excellence in Public Life'*
- *Collaborated with the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI) for Handbook on 'PLANNING FOR MUMBAI: THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR GREATER MUMBAI 2014-2034'*
- *Published first Volume of Handbook on 'Housing, FSI, Crowding & Densities'*
- *50th Issue of our 'Praja Dialogue' newsletter*

The Right to Information Act is an important tool for Praja and used extensively by us. The Act serves as a medium for us to push for reforms in Government accountability and transparency. For instance, some of our Right to Information applications came up for appeals with the State Information Commission of Maharashtra in 2014. The details are as follows:

IMPACT

1) State Appeal for RTI on Health data, 5th May 2014: In December 2013, Praja filed an RTI application to the Public Health Department, MCGM, for the medical certification of deaths due to Malaria in various municipal wards in Mumbai. The Public Health Department, in its reply, stated that the above information was restricted under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. Unsatisfied with the Department's reply, we filed an appeal with the 1st Appellate Authority. The matter, however, remained unresolved as the Appellate Authority sought legal opinion on the matter. This led us to filing an appeal with the State Information Commission.

The appeal transpired in May 2014; the State Information Commissioner ruled in our favour and ordered the Public Health Department to issue this data in public interest. The State Information Commissioner ruled that publishing this information in the public domain would warrant accountability in the functioning of government departments. Moreover, diseases such as Malaria and TB are still responsible for a significant number of deaths in our country and the Department must proactively disclose this information and make it available to the public.

2) State Appeal for RTI on Health data, 6th June 2014: Praja has always campaigned for improvement of transparency in civic governance. Our campaign saw a significant victory when the State Information Commission imposed a fine on officials of MCGM's Public Health Department for delay in providing us information under the RTI Act, 2005.

In August 2012, we filed an RTI application with the Public Health Department, for ward-wise information about numbers and causes of deaths in Greater Mumbai. The complete information was withheld from us despite repeated follow up with the Department. Ultimately, we were left with no choice but to pursue the matter with the State Information Commission (SIC) of Maharashtra and are happy to share that the SIC has ruled in our favour and, consequently, in favour of the citizens of Mumbai. Due to the excessive delay in handing over this information, and a complete disregard of the provisions under the RTI act, the Chief Information Commissioner has imposed a penalty on officials of the Health Department.

By taking a strong stand on the issue and imposing a penalty for denial of timely information, the State Information Commission has vindicated our stand on the need for greater transparency and accountability in the workings of the local government.

3) Appeal for RTI on Crime data, 10th March 2014: Praja, in its many endeavours, has discovered a certain laxity in the way pending and disposed cases are reported by Additional Public Prosecutors appointed in Sessions Court of Mumbai. Our team brought this to the notice of Maharashtra's Law and Judiciary Department.

Additional Public Prosecutors have a mandate of maintaining the records of their work in terms of pending and disposed cases. The Chief Public Prosecutor must submit these reports on a quarterly basis to the Law and Judiciary Department, who recruits Additional Public Prosecutors. However, an RTI filed by the Praja Team revealed that no such mandatory reporting has been done since April 2012. Moreover, our Application got no timely response from the Chief Public Prosecutor. At the time of appeal in March, the Joint Secretary, Law and Judiciary Department ordered the Chief Public Prosecutor to comply by providing the data within seven days of the appeal.

BETTER QUALITY OF CIVIC LIFE ●

As the name suggests, Praja's Civic vertical is a space for discussing civic issues faced by citizens of Mumbai, from garbage disposal to potholes, from drainage to working of ward committees, and so on. Provision of these services to the citizens is a duty of the Municipal Corporation, which directly affects the quality of life of Mumbai's 1.2 million inhabitants.

ACTIVITIES

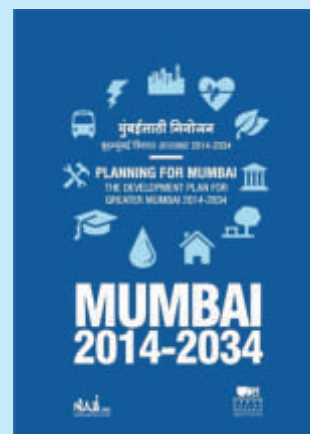### 1.1 White Paper on Working of Ward Committees and Civic issues in Mumbai:

Praja's first publication in 2014 was the 'Report on Working of Ward Committees in the City of Mumbai and Civic Problems Registered by Citizens'. The white paper presented a rich analysis of citizen's issues in the 24 wards of Mumbai, and deliberation by the councillors of the MCGM in their respective Ward Committees.

Highlights:
- During the year 2013, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM received a total of 42,287 complaints on roads, followed by 12,708 on drainage and 5519 on solid waste management. These were the top three complaints made by the citizens to the civic body.

- During the 10 month period between March 2013 and December 2013, the total number of question asked in the ward committee meetings by the councillors increased by a hefty 26% compared to the same period the year before. A total number of 852 questions during the 10 month period in 2013 against 678 asked during the same 10 months in 2012. Of these 852 questions, only 15% questions related to renaming of roads in 2013. In the 10 month period during 2012, 19% questions related to renaming of roads.

1.2. Handbook 'Planning for Mumbai: The Development Plan for Mumbai 2014-34'

The Development Plan (DP) for Mumbai 2014-34 is currently being formulated by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai. Since the DP and its provisions will affect the lives of Mumbai's citizens over the next two decades, we at Praja believe that both elected representatives and citizens must participate in the formulation of the plan. Thus, we have collaborated with the Urban Design Research Institute (UDRI) to design a Handbook 'PLANNING FOR MUMBAI: THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR GREATER MUMBAI 2014-2034' and workshops for elected representatives are in the pipeline. The Handbook has been published in two languages English and Marathi, so as to reach out to a wider audience. Moreover, it has been written in layman's language, without compromising on the depth of the subject matter.

1.3

In April 2014, Praja, along with a group of individuals founded a citizens' movement 'Lok Adhikar', to create awareness about the little-known 'Government Servants Regulation of Transfers and Prevention of Delay in Discharge of Official Duties Act, 2005'. The Act covers two broad areas: Transfers of Public Officials and Delivery of Services within prescribed time limits. While the first section has been used by civil servants to question arbitrary transfers, the second part, regarding delivery of services, has remained largely unknown and unused.

The Lok Adhikar Team comprises of experts and activists such as Mr. Sanjay Ubale, Mr. Gerson D'Cunha, Mr. Shailesh Gandhi, and Ms. Shyama Kulkarni.

IMPACT

- **Complaint Redressal Systems:** MCGM Administration will mention details of councillor constituencies against all civic complaints registered with it, so that Councillors can push for redressal in their respective areas. Praja Team has been following up this issue with senior officials of the Administration as well as Councillors for more than two years. Through our individual meetings with councillors we have been emphasizing the importance of underpinning responsibility of civic complaints and this data.

- **Strengthening Ward Committees:** We have been able to contribute towards the strengthening of the institution of 'ward committees' which are a very important part of local governance in Mumbai. Ward committee chairpersons and heads of political parties in the Municipal Corporation, who were not participating in the meetings proactively, have begun attending these meetings as well as deliberating. During the 10 month period between March 2013 and December 2013, the total number of question asked in the ward committee meetings by the councillors increased by a hefty 26% compared to the same period the year before. A total number of 852 questions during the 10 month period in 2013 against 678 asked during the same 10 months in 2012.

- **Press Coverage of White paper:** 34 (print, electronic and web)

STATE OF HEALTH OF MUMBAI

What we want for our citizens is a healthy city and an efficient and affordable public healthcare. To this end, Praja's studies in the Health vertical have always revolved around the workings of the public healthcare system. We study the state of health in the city and the state of the healthcare system, to understand the issues that the citizen of Mumbai faces related to these topics. Public healthcare is a basic necessity, which ought to be affordable to bring medical aid to people from all strata of society.

ACTIVITIES

We have been collecting data for our Health White Paper, since 2009-10 from the BMC's Public Health Department. In these reports, we have been tracking important indicators with respect to occurrence of diseases, death causes, state of Municipal dispensaries, health personnel etc.

Highlights:

- 7650 unnecessary deaths due to Tuberculosis, Malaria, Dengue, Diarrhoea, Cholera and Typhoid in Mumbai.
- 46,606 TB deaths in last 6 years
- 1 death out of every 94 Malaria cases
- 108 Dengue deaths in 2013-14
- 121 councillors asked zero questions on Health

IMPACT

- Tuberculosis deaths: After Praja released its annual white paper on the State of Health of Mumbai, and brought focus on the huge number of deaths due to Tuberculosis (TB), there was considerable debate on the subject in the media. We also brought attention to the fact that there was a large variation in the number of deaths reported by us and those the release of our report, for the first time, MCGM is undertaking a study of death certificates that mention Tuberculosis as a cause of death, to see how many of these deaths were actually due to TB. BMC's TB Control Unit Officers have been instructed to study all the death certificates, issued by private physicians and hospitals, which mention TB as a cause of death. A verbal autopsy of sorts will be carried out by visiting the patient's family. Such a study was initially being planned by Praja in collaboration with experts. However, we were pleased to know that the Government will be undertaking the study on its own.

- Elected Representatives: MLA from Mumbai, Mr. Amin Patel, raised the issue of Tuberculosis in Legislative Assembly, after Praja shared data findings from our health white paper with him.

- Press Coverage of Report: 49 (print, electronic, web and radio)

Making Democracy Work: WORKING OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Elected Representatives are at the centre of Praja's work on enabling accountable governance and making the government more responsive to citizen's needs. The end goal of our activities and programs is to encourage Elected Representatives to represent the issues of citizens in their forums, by deliberating on them.

ACTIVITIES

3.1 MLA report card 2014

We released our 4th Annual MLA report card in 2014. The Report Card is a performance appraisal of all MLAs elected from Mumbai (except ministers) based on a very detailed, objective ranking matrix developed by us. The appraisal has been done keeping in mind the Constitutional role and responsibility of the elected representatives and the opinions of their electorate. Since there were Assembly elections in Maharashtra this year, the five year performance of the MLAs in the 12th Assembly was under scrutiny and thus our Report Card was especially timely.

Highlights:

Our top three rankers of 2014 were Yogesh Sagar, Amin Patel and Madhukar Chavan, respectively. All of them have retained their respective ranks for the second consecutive year. In the 12th Assembly, 32 of Mumbai MLAs (excluding the four ministers) have attended 87% of the sessions and asked between them 40,520 questions.

3.2 Councillor Report Card 2014

Through the Municipal Councillor Report Card, Praja conducts an annual performance appraisal of how our 'Nagar Sevaks' have performed. The Report Card covers the working and performance of Mumbai's 227 Municipal Councillors on different parameters, both quantitative and qualitative. After getting elected in February 2012, our Municipal Councillors have completed two years in office in 2014. The second year (April 2013-March 2014) report card gives interesting insights into their performance.

Highlights:

As compared to only three Municipal Councillors in the earlier year (FY 2012-13), five Municipal Councillors (Deepak Bhutkar, Anil Trimbakkar, Anuradha Pednekar, Hemangi Worlikar, Noshir Mehta) have 100% attendance in their respective committee meetings. A total of 27% more questions/issues were asked/raised in the second year of their current term (2,232 questions in Financial Year 2012-13 which increased to 2,835 in FY 2013-14).

3.3 Knowledge Sharing: Councillor Fellowship Programme

Background:

The BMC provides services to the citizens of Mumbai, which cover a diverse range, right from birth and death certificates, to water connections, to roads and recreational spaces, to public health and schooling. Municipal Councillors are expected to handle many things including, clearing corporation budgets and creating and monitoring long term development plans for the city. These functions require thorough knowledge of the basic realities of Mumbai as well as all available provisions to improve citizens' quality of life.

ER Fellowship program sessions in full swing

ER Fellowship program sessions in full swing

Councillors need institutional support to improve their efficiency in delivering results during their tenures. Quality studies and surveys are necessary in conjunction with a ready knowledge of the city to understand the needs of citizens from various constituencies. Praja has superior and authentic domain knowledge in civic, health, education, housing and crime issues. Praja believes in sharing this knowledge with the councillors in tailor made packages, attuned to their specific needs. A group of volunteer fellows, dedicated to specific wards, interacting and communicating the needs of the councillors and sharing researched documents, can bridge the knowledge gap effectively.

Program Details

By providing extra assistance to the Councillors, Praja Foundation intends to help them discharge their responsibilities better, by focussing on relevant, constituency-related issues. Also, by involving young citizens in the process of governance, we can impart understanding of the governance of Mumbai in future decision makers, thereby increasing participation of the public in the process of governance.
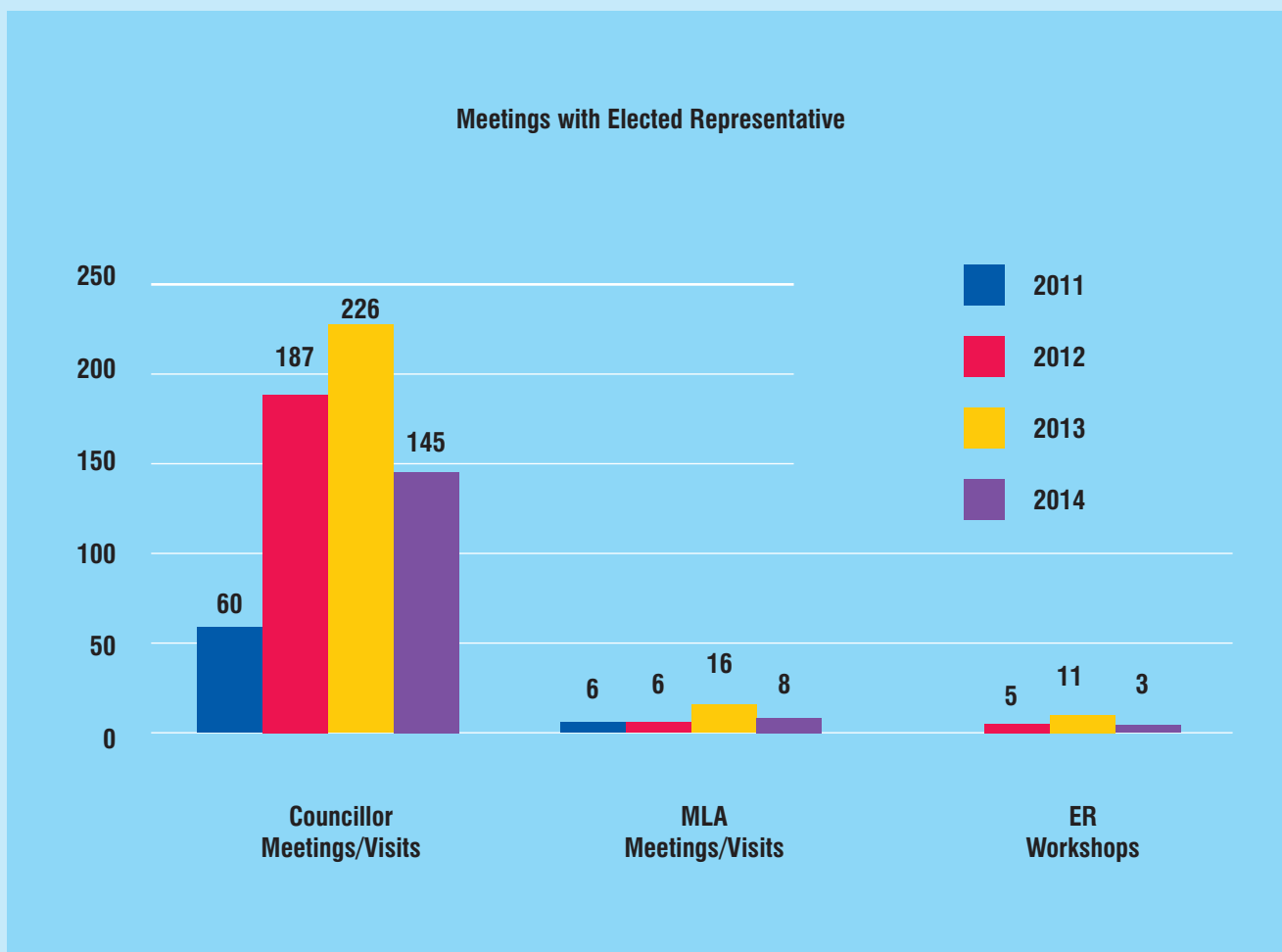
Expected Outcomes

- This program ultimately aims to create transparent and accountable governance in Mumbai. It is important to have an optimistic outlook towards the functioning of the city. Praja Fellows would enable access to many studies, researches, surveys, ground level reality, etc. that will help the Municipal Councillors discharge their functions responsibly. Hence more knowledge, a better understanding and finally improved governance.
- Fellowship will be an extremely interesting journey for a participant. From a student with almost no experience in governance to a well-rounded individual who would familiar with the ins and outs of law-making and policy-making functions. Interested Fellows will also be equipped to join the legislative or the executive arm of our Government agencies.

Being a relatively new concept, we decided to launch a pilot phase in 2014. We welcomed our first group of five fellows in October 2014.

DIALOGUE WITH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

As Elected Representatives are at the heart of our work, we need to engage with Councillors and MLAs on a regular basis. These meetings are a medium for us to share findings from our research, and encourage our representatives to raise these issues in their respective forums. In 2013, we started meeting ward committee chairpersons individually in order to improve the functioning of ward committees. We found these meetings to be effective and saw the impact in the deliberation in ward committee meetings. Thus, we continued with the same strategy this year as well. In addition, we started a Councillor Fellowship programme, through which students had a chance to meet Councillors and discuss citizen's issues.

Fewer meetings took place this year, in comparison with 2013, as the Councillors had their plates full with election campaigns for the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections throughout the year.

Meetings with Elected Representative

	Councillor Meetings/Visits	MLA Meetings/Visits	ER Workshops
2011	60	6	
2012	187	6	5
2013	226	16	11
2014	145	8	3

CAPACITY BUILDING: WORKSHOPS FOR COUNCILLORS

MCGM has multiple departments and committees, each having their own set of rules and regulations enough to confuse an Elected Representative. As a result, most councillors are silent observers of proceedings or seek guidance from their colleagues and administration executives. They have little understanding of their responsibilities and are unaware of how to effectively use their powers. For this reason, Praja has been organising workshops for Municipal Councillors on various related topics such as General Issues on Budget, Corporation Procedure Rules and Regulation (CPR), '66A' and 'Point of Order'.

In 2014, we organised three workshops, two on 'Demystifying the Municipal Budget' and one Workshop on our Health White Paper.

Fewer workshops were conducted this year, in comparison with 2013 (11), due to various reasons. Two elections in Mumbai meant that Councillors had their plates full with campaigns. Moreover, now that they are in the third year of their term, most councillors have grasped the workings of the Municipal Corporation and its intricacies.

Councillor Workshop session

IMPACT

- **Report Cards:** Every year The Rotary Club of Bombay presents the 'Ramkrishna Bajaj Good Governance Awards' to individuals with outstanding contributions in the field of governance. This year, the Awards Committee of the Rotary Club of Bombay worked closely with Praja Foundation, and conducted exhaustive research to select two candidates from a large pool of the city's MLAs and councillors. Based on the findings, the Committee recognised the contributions of Municipal Councillor Hemangi Harish Worlikar and Member of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Yogesh Amrutlal Sagar, and selected them for the prestigious award.

- **Workshops:** Councillor Snehal Ambekar, the 1st ranker in Praja's 2014 Councillor Report Card, was elected as Mayor of Mumbai in September 2014. On being elected as Mayor, Ms. Ambekar gave credit to Praja's capacity building workshops which helped her understand the workings of the Municipal Corporation better. In an interview with Loksatta, Ms. Ambekar said, "Praja's Workshops for Councillors helped me understand the workings of the Municipal Corporation. How to study the health, education, budget aspects? How and where to use funds? Such lessons were taught. "

- **Press Coverage of MLA report card 2014: 97** features. With the Maharashtra Assembly elections in 2014, MLAs were in focus throughout the year. A positive outcome of this was that our MLA report card was widely covered by all publications throughout the year.

- Press Coverage of Councillor report card 2014: 21 features.

STATE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MUMBAI

The statistics concerning Housing in Mumbai are quite disturbing. Given that a secure home is one of our basic necessities, it is surprising that there is little serious dialogue about the issue of Housing. Moreover, one finds that the focus has shifted from the issue of deplorable living conditions in the city and lack of affordable housing options to Floor Space Index. There is hardly any information on how the current housing policies of the State and Central Governments measure up to the issue. Taking this into consideration, Praja entered into a series of consultations with domain experts in 2013, to create a knowledge bank for our Elected Representatives (MPs, MLAs, and Councillors), citizens and media, which would be replete with data on Housing, review of current approaches, and would demystify concepts such as Floor Space Index.

ACTIVITIES

White Paper

Praja's 1st White Paper on the 'State of Affordable Housing in Mumbai' along with our handbook on 'Housing, FSI, Crowding and Densities' Volume I was published in 2014.
Highlights of Report
• 11.36 lakh households stay in slums in Mumbai, out of a total of 28 lakh households
• 57% households live in one room
• Only 203,624 units of public housing created between 1995-2014
• Average cost of a 269 sq. ft. house (at minimum ready reckoner rate) is 12 times the median annual income of Mumbaikars, whereas the norm is that it should be less than four times the annual income

4.2 Handbook Vol. I- 'Housing, FSI, Crowding & Densities'

Praja forayed into the issue of housing in 2013, starting with consultations with experts working on the issue. Mr. Shirish Patel, an urban planner par excellence, mentored and guided us through the preparation of this Handbook. The handbook provides facts about the housing situation in Mumbai, frame the basic issues concerning housing, explain the basic rules and tools that are used, and also point to possible pitfalls in our current approaches to the issue of housing in Mumbai. Praja hopes most of all that this handbook will enable Mumbai's citizens, civil servants and corporators to engage in a more informed discussion that will set our democratic wheels in motion, and finally provide humane living conditions for all. The Handbook has been published in two languages English and Marathi, so as to reach out to a wider audience.

To study the problem of Affordable Housing in Mumbai and come up with solutions Praja has brought together a team of experts:
1) Led by Mr. Shirish B Patel, a vastly experienced civil engineer and urban planner, one of the three authors who originally suggested the idea of Navi Mumbai;
2) Mr. K.G. Krishnamurthy, Managing Director & CEO of HDFC Property Fund;
3) Mr. Aditya Somani, Chairman of Everest Industries; and
4) Mr. Ashok Datar, Chairman of Mumbai Environmental Social Network.

Along with this team of experts, Praja will be putting forward a series of Booklets, Papers, Notes and possible solutions to this problem. Press Coverage: 32 features. Being a new vertical for Praja, it was encouraging to see good coverage of the white paper and the concepts discussed in the handbook.

STATE OF MUNICIPAL EDUCATION IN MUMBAI

Every person in Mumbai is entitled to quality, affordable education. Praja studies Municipal education in Mumbai to determine the current pitfalls that the system faces and the ways in which these can be overcome. Praja's work in the field of education focuses on ensuring that the Municipal schools in Mumbai provide quality education to everyone, so that more people avail of public education and fewer children drop out. Our Education White Paper is a comprehensive report on various input and outcome indicators of the working of the public education system in Mumbai.

ACTIVITIES

White Paper

Praja's Annual Education White Paper 'State of Municipal Education in Mumbai' was launched at a Press Conference in December 2014. In this year's report, we also analysed trends in enrolments and dropouts in Mumbai's Municipal Schools in the last five years. This year, our analysis also focused on the accountability, monitoring and evaluation systems of schools and teachers.

Highlights of Report:

Nearly five years since the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), quality education remains a distant dream for over four lakhs children studying in Mumbai's Municipal Schools.

- Over the years, fewer parents are opting to send their children to Municipal Schools, as reflected by the consistent decline in Class I enrolments as well as overall enrolments, year on year.

- In the last five years (2009-10 to 2013-14), 51,649 children have dropped out of the Municipal School system, and in the corresponding five years the Municipal Budget allocation to the Education department has more than doubled from Rs.1,255 crores to Rs.2,534 crores.

Press Coverage: 32 (print, electronic media and web)

IMPACT

- **Right to Information:** The State Information Commission ordered MCGM's education department to provide us data on its School Excellence Program. Praja also faced several problems while filing the RTI, as there was confusion regarding who actually handles the information sought. As a result, the RTI kept getting shuffled from one department to another, without any clear result. The State Information Commission, therefore, also requested MCGM to demarcate the functions of the various PIOs (Public Information Officers) and specify who is responsible for particular information. This helped in making the process clearer and more streamlined.
- **Accountability:** Following the release of Praja's white paper on the State of Municipal Education in Mumbai, the Urban Development Department of Maharashtra wrote to MCGM's Education Department seeking clarifications on our White Paper.

TOWARDS A SAFER MUMBAI

STATE OF LAW AND ORDER AND POLICING IN MUMBAIES

Increased occurrence of crime in the city has made it a less safe place to live in. Praja's aim is create awareness about the current state of security in Mumbai by delving into the details of crimes that occur in various parts of the city and the condition of the Mumbai Police Force. The information on the state of law and order in the city will make the citizens more aware and the authorities more likely to take appropriate action to rectify the current situation.

All the data being gathered is to supplement our case for a holistic understanding of the criminal justice system. Thus, we collect data that indicates the number of cases investigated by the police, the number of cases processed by the court, crimes in railway and aiding it with a household survey of people's perception and experience with various crimes in the city.

ACTIVITIES

White Paper

Praja's White Paper on "The State of Law and Order and Policing in Mumbai", was released on the 25th of November 2014.

Highlights:

In 2013,
- 8% conviction rate in Class II serious offences
- 66% rise in chain snatching cases
- 17% increase in cases of housebreaking
- 47% increase in Rape cases and 52% increase in molestation
- 1, 854 accidental railway deaths in Mumbai
- North Central Mumbai has highest rate of registered crime
- 32% people feel unsafe in Mumbai, according to Praja's 2014 survey

IMPACT

Monitoring the shortage in police personnel:

- Since 2010, Praja has been constantly monitoring the gap in sanctioned and working personnel in the police force, especially the investigative department to bring this to the notice of the government, media and public at large
- The shortage in the police force has reduced from 19% in 2011 to 11% in 2014.

- **Complaint Redressal:** In the run up to the Lok Sabha elections in 2014, Praja was invited to participate in a round table conference on improving quality of life in Mumbai organised by the Times of India. Participants in the conference included high level bureaucrats, elected representatives, and experts from various fields. At the Conference, Praja shared its experience of designing the Online Complaint Management System for the MCGM in 2003. Following the presentation, Praja has been invited by the Mumbai's Commissioner of Police Mr. Rakesh Maria to explore the possibility of such a system for them, and collaborate for the same.

- **Right to Information:** Praja, in its many endeavours, has discovered a certain laxity in the way pending and disposed cases are reported by Additional Public Prosecutors appointed in Sessions Court of Mumbai. Our team brought this to the notice of Maharashtra's Law and Judiciary Department. Additional Public Prosecutors have a mandate of maintaining the records of their work in terms of pending and disposed cases. The Chief Public Prosecutor must submit these reports on a quarterly basis to the Law and Judiciary Department, who recruits Additional Public Prosecutors. However, an RTI filed by the Praja Team revealed that no such mandatory reporting has been done since April 2012. Moreover, our Application got no timely response from the Chief Public Prosecutor. At the time of appeal in March, the Joint Secretary, Law and Judiciary Department ordered the Chief Public Prosecutor to comply by providing the data within 7 days of the appeal.

- **Press Coverage:** Given the sharp rise in crimes in the city in the last couple of years, and the increased focus on reporting of crimes across the country, our crime white paper received widespread coverage in the media. It was featured in the print, electronic and web media on 52 occasions.
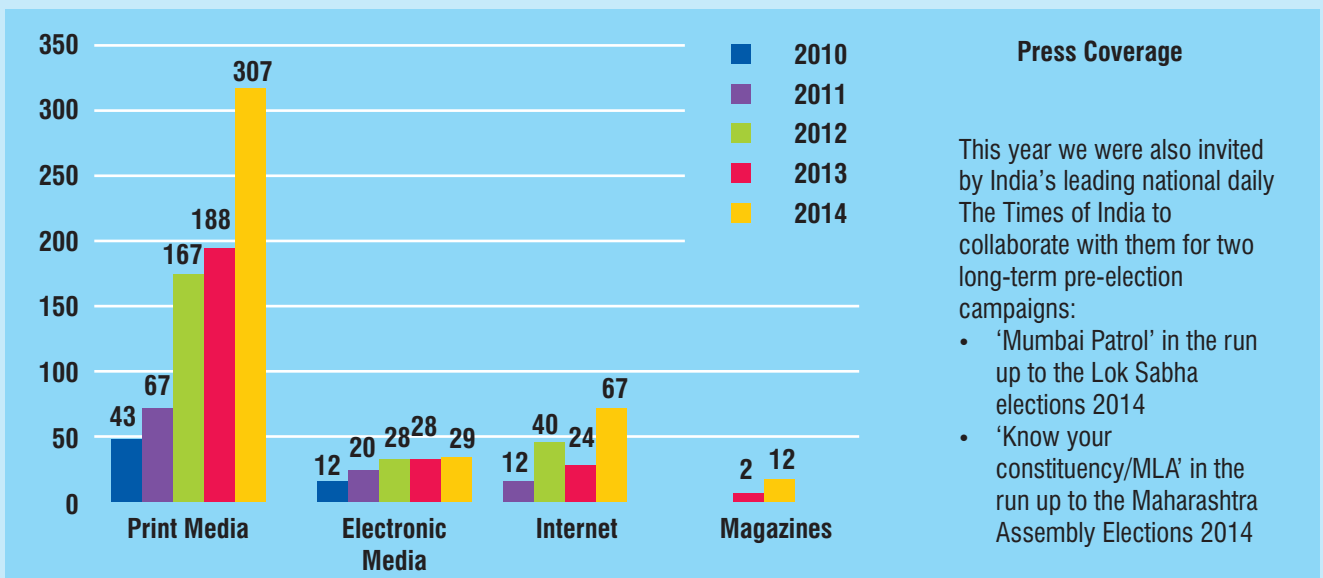
STAYING CONNECTED: MEDIA

For the media, Praja has now become a one point source for authentic, non-partisan information on Civic, Crime, Education and Health issues in the city and information on elected representatives role in solving those issues. During the year there have been number of instances when not only did the media source information from Praja directly but also frequently quoted our research in various media reports. Journalists routinely call us to check authenticity of statements made by the administration on various issues, and to understand the opinion of Praja on that particular issue. Praja, therefore, tracks the information that it disseminates, through the media, as well as publishing it through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Throughout 2014, Praja communicated with the media for various projects. For the launch of our White papers and Report Cards, we use the media as a tool to reach out to the citizens. During our launches, media covers our report findings widely.

IMPACT

Praja was widely featured in the press this year, with coverage of 406 items overall, encompassing print, electronic, internet and other media. This includes coverage right after the publication of White Papers, as well as continuous coverage over the course of the year. The most popular publication was our MLA report card 2014, which was well-timed with the state assembly elections and received regular coverage. This year, our crime white paper received extensive coverage with 52 citations in all.

This year Praja was featured on the front page of leading publications 52 times.

Press Coverage

This year we were also invited by India's leading national daily The Times of India to collaborate with them for two long-term pre-election campaigns:
- 'Mumbai Patrol' in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections 2014
- 'Know your constituency/MLA' in the run up to the Maharashtra Assembly Elections 2014

Chart legend:
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

Category	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Print Media	43	67	167	188	307
Electronic Media	12	20	28	28	29
Internet	12		40	24	67
Magazines			2		12

MUMBAI PATROL

'Mumbai Patrol' was a new initiative by Times of India (TOI) that takes a hard look at the issues that need attention in Mumbai. As part of the initiative, TOI conducted an in depth survey across the 24 administrative wards of Mumbai on various parameters such as transport, infrastructure, safety, among others.
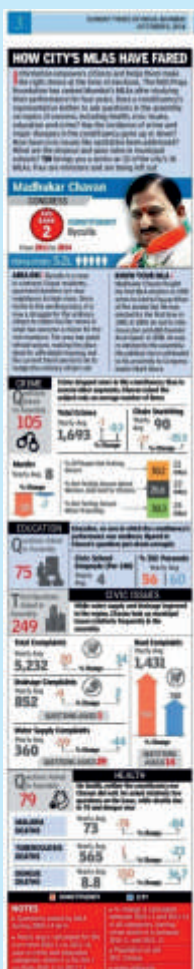
The findings of the survey were published in the TOI and subsequently ward-wise town hall meetings were organised, to provide a platform for all stakeholders to have a dialogue on the local issues. Praja was invited to join the campaign as the official Knowledge Partner and our team was actively involved in facilitating the town hall meetings. Through the platform, we were able to facilitate aDemocratic process of debate, discussion and consultation between citizens, Elected Representatives, Civic Administration and the media, and set the ball rolling for an informed dialogue between them.

Times of India and Praja's Mumbai Patrol Campaign

'KNOW YOUR CONSTITUENCY' & 'KNOW YOUR MLA' CAMPAIGNS WITH TIMES OF INDIA.

Following the success of Times of India and Praja's Mumbai Patrol Campaign earlier in 2014, the newspaper approached Praja to collaborate for its Assembly Elections 'Know your Constituency' and 'Know your MLA' Campaigns 2014.

REACHING OUT- WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Praja's website contains comprehensive data on issues related to Civic, Health, Crime and Education. We also have data related to the Elected Representatives of Mumbai. The data base is updated at regular intervals. All our publications and media coverage's are also accessible on our website.

Ward level details are uploaded on our website regularly which can be used as a resource for anyone needing information on the administrative wards of Mumbai. It also has an independent report creating system, the "City Scan", where the media, researchers, social activists and citizens in general can obtain reports on various wards of Mumbai, the performance of elected representatives, compare details, etc.

2014 has seen increased activity on the Praja website, with almost 190,000 people visiting the page, 78% of whom were first-time visitors.

Visits to our website and activity on it saw a marked increase this year.
- Total page views: 188,711
- Users: 45,517
- New Visitors: 78.4%
- Website registered members: 2,567.
- Website Downloads: 29,242
- Our monthly Newsletter, followed by MLA and Councillor report cards were the most downloaded reports of the year.

PRAJA DIALOGUE- MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

This year, Praja's monthly newsletters covered a wide range of topics including special features on: incumbent Members of Parliament from Mumbai and their 5-year performance; the Development Plan for Mumbai 2014-34 and our recommendations; in addition to features on our regular reports and publications. We reach out to over 13,000+ people through our bilingual (English and Marathi) Newsletters. We are pleased to share that the November 2014 issue of the Newsletter was our 50th Edition.
The primary target audience of our Newsletters are:

- Government (Municipal and State)
- Elected Representatives – Mumbai's 227 Councillors, 36 MLAs and six MPs
- Administration – includes MCGM officials, Mumbai Police and senior bureaucrats officials in the Maharashtra State Administration
- Praja Members (registered on our website)
- Volunteers and Interns
- Partner organisations, NGOs, civil society activists and researchers

PROMOTING ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: PRAJA KATTA

Our citizen engagement programme 'Praja Katta' was launched in 2013 with the aim to promote active citizenship and thought leadership among the citizens of this city, especially the youth. Under the project, workshops and discussions are facilitated by Praja to help young adults understand the Right to Information Act, functioning of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai and roles of different elected representatives.

The reach of the program expanded considerably this year. We built relationships with many new educational institutions which helped us reach young and old citizens through our training sessions as well as projects. Through these sessions and projects, we were able to foster greater awareness about governance in citizens and elicit their participation in the process of governance.

Highlights of 2014

- Reached 1,500 young citizens through 34 workshops conducted on RTI, MCGM Departments, three-tier governance system in India, MCGM's Complaint management system, roles of elected representatives and so on. Our Interns conducted 7 sessions in slum communities.

- 120 individuals interned and volunteered with us in 2014. These included students from India as well as abroad and working professionals.

- Projects with Blue Ribbon Movement: We have successfully completed projects with 50 fellows from BRM on MCGM's 'Complaint management system'. The fellows filed around 1500 citizens' complaints in the centralised complaint management system, in order to address the civic issues in their respective areas.

Praja Katta - sessions in colleges

INTERN'S SPEAK:

"It was a great opportunity to be a part of this NGO as an intern from Pravin Gandhi College of Law. Working here for the month of June I have received a great exposure to the governance which includes visiting and communicating with government officials."

Naureen Charolia, Summer Intern

"The field work which was given to me by the Praja foundation has helped me to gain confidence and has helped me to increase my knowledge about the work process of the judiciary. It has made me realize that it is not only the duty of the government but also the duty of all the citizens to help themselves in making democracy more effective and transparent"

Suhani Merchant, Summer Intern

"A visit to Mankhurd Govandi was another good experience in which I accompanied Eknath Sir to teach Young girls about the governance of Mumbai and to spread awareness of the rights of the citizens. It taught me to help other citizens instead of being selfish and staying in the comfortable house we make for ourselves."

Umang Shirodariya, Summer Intern

PARTNERS FOR CHANGE: COLLABORATION AND ASSOCIATIONS

In 2014, we touched base with various NGOs and CSO's from all over India and abroad, to collaborate on research and exchanges ideas on governance. 2014 has been an exciting year for new partnerships and collaborations with a diverse set of organizations. Some of our significant partnerships include:

- In our health vertical, we partnered with the Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health for research our white paper on the State of Health of Mumbai. We interacted with the Centre for Global Health Research and the Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health to exchange ideas on addressing the issue of the significantly high number of deaths due to Tuberculosis and Malaria in Mumbai.
- For our Civic vertical, we collaborated with the Blue Ribbon Movement and students from the Pravin Gandhi College of Law to conduct an audit of MCGM's complaint management system. We also collaborated with the Urban Design Research Institute(UDRI) to publish a handbook for Elected Representatives and citizen on the 'Development Plan of Mumbai 2014-34'.
- For research on Crime and Policing in Delhi, we entered into a formal partnership with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI).
- For our education vertical, we have been interacting with organisations such as Teach for India, Central Square Foundation, India School leadership Institute (ISLI), Akanksha and Observer Research Foundation. For research on public education in Delhi, we entered into a partnership with the Centre for Civil society (CCS).
- Sahyog Chehak Trust for workshops on Democracy, governance and so on, for girls from economically weaker and disadvantaged backgrounds
- Lok Adhikar: Praja facilitated the website launch (http://lokadhikar.org/) for this action group, provided volunteers, and was involved with discussing and implementing strategy for awareness on Right to Service Act, along with other members of the Lok Adhikar Team.

NEW FRONTIERS: PRAJA DIALOGUE DELHI CHAPTER

In 2013, we began exploring the possibility of replicating Praja's Mumbai Model in Delhi. We decided to conduct a feasibility study to explore the idea and first develop an understanding of the workings of governance in Delhi. The study was supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (www.southasia.fnst.org) and the Initiative for Change – Centre for Governance (http://www.iofc.org/ic-centre-of-governance)

Unlike Mumbai, Delhi is a hybrid of a union territory and a regular Indian state, when it comes to division of powers between the Central, state and local government agencies. While the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai controls almost all government services offered to its citizens, the division of roles and responsibilities across governments is much more complex in Delhi. The first thing that stood out was the unique administrative and political position of Delhi, vis-à-vis all other regions of India. Because of multiple power centres, it is difficult to fix accountability for many of the civic services rendered in the region. The buck gets passed around and, ultimately, citizens suffer.

We felt that a Project like 'Praja Dialogue' could play an important role in improving governance in the National Capital, and so the Delhi Chapter was born in 2014! The Project is currently in its first phase and we are looking to expand its scope and make it fully operational by 2016.

Our vision for the Delhi Chapter is to replicate the verticals of Health, Education, Crime and Elected Representatives, on the lines of our 'Praja Dialogue' Project launched in Mumbai in 2008.
- For our research on Crime and Policing in Delhi, we have partnered with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). The first round of data collection is currently underway. Our plan for 2014 is to build an understanding of the existing situation with respect to Crime and Policing, the working of the police machinery, and understanding available data points and sources.
- Filing of RTI applications, data collection and collation for Education are being done in collaboration with the Centre for Civil Society (CCS)
- Research on Health and Working of Elected Representatives are being managed by Praja.
- In 2014, we continued to focus on streamlining our processes and laying the groundwork for our research in each of these areas.

STRENGTHENING OUR ROOTS- CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE TEAM

The strength of experience and training for the job means that the Praja team is a force to be reckoned with. Last year, the Praja team saw many of its family members participating in diverse training programs.

Our team members Balwant Kirar and Kaustubh Gharat, both, participated in workshops in Germany, organised by our partner FNF. Kaustubh visited Germany for a workshop on "NGOs – Winning Support for Ideas and their Political Implementation Programme", while Balwant participated in a workshop on "Coalition Building and Strategic Partnership".

Since 2011, Praja has been organizing an annual Management Training programme for all staff members, on different themes such as Governance, Human Resources and Skill-building. The idea of the Management Training is to keep the learning process going and bring the team together in a less formal environment, away from the workplace. This year's Program was held at the scenic Ranavli Farm House, at Rahatane, a short boat ride away from the coast of Mumbai.

Team members Eknath Pawar and Nilam Mirashi attended a residential training on "Gender and Democracy", organised by Vacha Resource Centre in July last year. The training gave them an opportunity to interact with other organisations working in the same field, and share Praja's story with them.

In December 2014, the entire Program Management Team participated in a Strategy Planning workshop in order to build team spirit and at the same time concretise their plans for the year ahead, as well as for the long term. The program was an exciting blend of intense strategizing and fun team building games, both of which led to a fully formed personal and team roadmap for the next few years.

In addition to these programs:
- Every third Saturday, members of the Praja team gather together for basic English language training classes, which are conducted internally.
- 5th Saturdays are reserved for training, debates and discussions on diverse topics, such as Sexuality, Violence etc, which are conducted by external resource persons.

Some images from the Capacity Building programs for Praja Staff

2015 – THE ROAD AHEAD…

In 2015, Praja plans to continue with a regular series of White Papers in Mumbai, with the exception of one on Housing; instead of which we plan to organise a symposium to discuss the issue with a panel of experts. We also plan to continue our outreach through interactions with Elected Representatives as well as our Citizen Engagement programme 'Praja Katta', for which we have planned a series of publications, including a calendar and a notepad, which will be distributed to various stakeholders. In Delhi, Praja aims to begin publication of White Papers on Ward Committees, Crime and Education.

Praja's successful expansion in Delhi in 2014 will continue into the coming year. Replication of our Praja Dialogue model in Delhi will involve research in the verticals of Crime, Education, Health and Elected Representatives. We will be partnering with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) for our studies in Crime. We plan to release White Papers on Health and the Workings of Elected Representatives, for which we will conduct research alone. We also plan on collaborating with Centre for Civil Society (CCS) for the education vertical.

In order to acknowledge and address the challenge of affordable housing, we are planning to organise a high-level Symposium on Affordable Housing to bring all stakeholders - Elected Representatives, Administration, Real Estate Industry, NGOs and so on, on a common platform to discuss solutions for the issue. We are planning to present papers from our Handbook at the Symposium. Various experts with their in depth knowledge of urban planning and urban affairs will be invited to speak on the issue of Housing in Mumbai; their expertise will ensure that the subject will be dealt with thoroughly and clearly. The basic rules and regulations regarding affordable housing along with the existing policies and laws will be explained to everyone and the issues will be further investigated and reviewed through panel discussions. Through the Symposium, we can ensure that bills, laws and schemes related to the issues of urban planning and affordable housing will be circulated to a wider audience, leading to a well-informed populace.

In the Education vertical, we are planning to expand our research to several new areas such as Compliances with the Right to Education Act (2009) in Municipal Schools. We are also planning to explore the role of alternate education paradigms and models, and the impact of public private partnerships, non-government organisations, civil society organisations and others in improving the delivery of public education in Mumbai. In the second half of 2015, we plan to publish our research in Delhi in a white paper on the lines of the 'State of Municipal Education in Mumbai'. The white paper will be disseminated through a Press Conference on the lines of our Mumbai Chapter. In the Health vertical, we have planned to start a Mystery Shopping component which focuses on doctors' diagnoses in Municipal Dispensaries; the staff's interaction with patients in these dispensaries; and, lastly, infrastructure and hygiene in Municipal Dispensaries. A trained male and female volunteer will visit dispensaries in Mumbai posing as a "patient" to observe the hygiene of the dispensary and the behaviour and competence of the staff. This will add further depth to the data already collected and help us formulate a multi-dimensional picture of the state of health and Municipal healthcare services in Mumbai.

In the Crime vertical, we will continue to publish our annual White Paper. We are also planning on studying the life cycle of court cases to understand how they operate and how the judicial process can be made much more efficient.

Along with our White Paper on the working of Ward Committees and Civic Issues, as well as MLA and Councillor Report Cards, we also plan to continue and expand our Fellowship project in order to cover more Elected Representatives from diverse wards. Our Praja Katta program will also continue in 2015, when we plan to engage with more citizens through our internship and volunteering program as well as through sessions conducted in colleges, where we will explain various aspects of governance. We also plan on distributing Praja table calendars and notepads to various stakeholders in order to spread more awareness regarding our organisation.

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19

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MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK
Praja aims at enabling accountable governance.