

Report

Mayors' Conference

**Urban Governance
in Rajasthan *Challenges
and Opportunities***

Rajasthan City Mayors' Learning Platform (RCMLP)

26 November 2021
Jaipur, India



Background

During 2012-16, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS), International in partnership with The Asia Foundation (TAF) implemented an urban governance intervention named ‘MyCity’ in Jaipur city with a specific objective to ‘Improve the Service Delivery by Urban Local Government through Enhanced Civic Engagement’ using social accountability approaches.

This initiative remained quite effective in reaching its outcomes as it was visible in its recognition among various stakeholders, including citizens, officials and public representatives of the targeted wards of the city. Citizens were benefited from the platform provided to them to resolve ward-level issues through elected representatives and concerned officials. It was aimed to make cities more convenient and livable for its citizen through their active engagement.

Several other more significant issues need to be addressed at a higher level of decision-makers. It is known that the lack of resources available with urban local bodies (ULBs) and delegation of powers from state to ULBs are significant challenges for city development. Also, policy-related issues need to be taken forward through a collaborative effort of all the stakeholders, including Heads of ULBs, mainly the mayors. In this sequence, it has been realised that there is no formal platform where Mayors of Rajasthan can discuss the urban governance-related issues and come out with some strategies.

Mayors’ Conference

Considering the situation, CUTS created a ‘Rajasthan City Mayors’ Learning Platform (RCMLP)’ in 2015 with a specific objective to improve the urban governance in the state through enhanced sharing of experiences and learning from each other. Since then, a series of Mayors’ Conferences have been successfully organised in different cities of Rajasthan where City Mayors and Deputy Mayors participate to discuss the challenges and opportunities of their respective cities. Similarly, knowledge enhancement workshops were organised for the



officials of ULBs in all divisions of Rajasthan. Resource persons from prominent organisations and institutes of Urban Governance share best practices and innovative approaches in these conferences and workshops all over Rajasthan.

With this background, CUTS organised a Mayors' Conference at Jaipur on November 26, 2021, at Jaipur, Rajasthan, in collaboration with NITI Aayog, Government of India, with the support of The Asia Foundation. The conference was attended by the Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Chairpersons of selected ULBs and working committees of ULBs.

Proceedings

Inaugural Session



The conference commenced with the warm welcome of distinguished guests and speakers by **Amar Deep Singh**, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS. The welcome address was followed by the presentation on the CUTS study on “Urban Governance in Rajasthan: Challenges and Opportunities”. He presented the objective of Mayors' conference and its need to strengthen the ULBs. While highlighting the challenges and opportunities, he mentioned that the lack of devolution of funds, functions and autonomy to ULBs in Rajasthan is a major challenge for city development and the reason behind poor performance under various schemes such as Swachh Bharat.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International, delivered the opening remarks. He said India is one of the rapidly urbanising countries in the world. Such a rise in urban population implies increased demand for goods and services and efficient urban planning, management, and governance systems. Therefore, addressing urban development and transformation, urban inequalities and bringing in suitable reformation within the urban governance system to address these changes is undoubtedly India's most important political and intellectual challenge.



74th Constitutional Amendment, 1992, was promulgated to enable the ULBs to perform effectively as vibrant democratic units of self-government. However, even after 28 years, it has not achieved the objective, like the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Lack of resources and delegation of powers from state to ULBs are significant challenges for city development. The pandemic exposes the poor planning and management of the cities and their impacts. The recently released SDG Urban Index points out the poor plight of affairs of ULBs within the state.

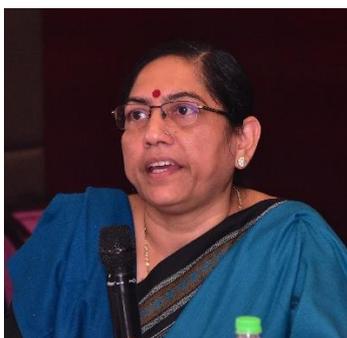
He further said that several other more significant issues need to be addressed at a higher level of decision-makers. CUTS created a ‘Rajasthan City Mayors’ Learning Platform (RCMLP)’ in 2015 in partnership with The Asia Foundation with a specific objective to improve the urban governance in the state through enhanced sharing of experiences and learning from each other. Since then, a series of Mayors’ Conferences have been successfully organised in different cities of Rajasthan where City Mayors and Deputy Mayors took part to discuss the challenges and opportunities of their respective cities.



Sanjeev Kumar Pandey, Additional Director, Department of Local Self Government (LSG), Government of Rajasthan, highlighted various government schemes and initiatives related to urban governance. He also shared best practices happening in Rajasthan on various aspects. He also urged to document and share good practices. Documentation of worst practices also should be done to learn from them.

Technical Session: Urban Governance - Challenges and Opportunities

Purushottam Biyani, Retired IAS and Former Director, Department of Local Self Government, Rajasthan, chaired the technical session ‘Urban Governance - Challenges and Opportunities’. He highlighted the elected representatives have several responsibilities to deliver and they are more accountable towards the citizens as they select them. Several issues emerged in cities day to day life and elected representatives need to deal with those issues every day. Regular capacity building is required for elected representatives of ULBs to deliver services effectively.



Debolina Kundu, Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), New Delhi, presented urban governance challenges in Rajasthan. She mentioned that urbanisation in Rajasthan is slower than the national average. There is only limited metropolitanisation as only three metropolitan cities exist here. Sectoral diversification is also limited as the growth of Census towns and thereby low peripheral growth in the state. Rajasthan has included only five new Statutory Towns after 2011, indicating a slow rate of state recognition to urbanisation.

According to her, there is a need to empower city mayors. Cities need to revise taxes and bring about new taxes to generate revenue. There is a need to build the capacity of staff to deliver better service in cities. Also, municipal cadre needs to be introduced for better coordination and effective functions.

Milind Mhaske, Director, Praja Foundation, presented Urban Governance Index, 2021 and good practices on urban governance around India. He said the urban governance Index was conducted by Praja Foundation to look at the structural empowerment of the city governments by the State governments of India.



He said the Mayor should hold executive authority over the Commissioner. This essentially means the Mayor should have an independent authority to write ACR and conduct appraisals of the Commissioner. He can also appoint and terminate the Commissioner subject to ratification in the Council. He quoted the example of Kerala, where the Mayor is the executive head and the Commissioner is designated as secretary to the Mayor. The Mayor has independent authority to suspend officials and file an ACR of the Commissioner. He also cited examples of empowered citizens of Bhubaneswar, where members of Basti, Colony and Senior Citizen Committee participate in ward committees. Rajasthan is lacking behind in such practices.



Himani Tiwari, Coordinator, City Managers' Association of Rajasthan, Department of LSG, spoke about the capacity-building programmes for elected representatives of ULBs organised by the LSG department. These training programmes are mainly to enhance the capacity of elected representatives and officials of ULBs, which further contribute to deliver municipal services efficiently. She also shared some of the best practices of small ULBs of Rajasthan and how they performed well under the Swachh Bharat ranking. Jhalawar city is one example she discussed.

Responses from Mayors

Abhijeet Kumar, Mayor, Bharatpur Municipal Corporation, highlighted various good practices in urban governance from developed countries. He also appreciated the effort of CUTS to organise Mayors' conference. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993 approved ULBs or city governments as the lowest level of government in cities and towns and the devolution of powers to them. However, the objective of the 74th Constitutional Amendment is not achieved. He also suggested municipal elections should be free from party politics. He added that the state should share the financial resources with ULBs to deliver civic services.





Manju Mehra, Mayor, Kota Municipal Corporation (North) said City Mayors' Learning Platform should be replicated in each municipal corporation. It will bridge the gap among elected representatives and concerned officials on the issue of urban governance. Further, she added that such platforms should be utilised for sharing experiences and learning with each other to improve the condition of our cities. She highlighted some of the emerging issues of Kota city, such as stray animals facing a lot of

problems to deal with it.

Punit Karnawat, Deputy Mayor, Jaipur Municipal Corporation Greater, discussed various key issues in ULBs. It is difficult to achieve any SDG goals or improve essential services without giving autonomy to elected representatives. Neeraj Jain, Deputy Mayor, Ajmer Municipal Corporation, said elected members need more training and capacity building on urban governance issues. Mayors' Learning Platform will help discuss and find solutions to urban governance challenges.



Manish Pareek, Former Deputy Mayor of Jaipur city, also addressed the conference and said that elected Mayors and Deputy Mayors should know their roles and responsibilities. They also should know how to exercise their rights as they are empowered due to political reasons. But still, they should demand their entitled rights and resources. He also suggested Mayors meet regularly with State Chief Minister. He further added that for better service delivery by sanitation contractors, utilisations certificates should be verified by the elected representatives of ULBs.

Virendra Singh Jadon, Chairperson, Rajakhhera Municipal Council, also spoke at the conference and highlighted the issues smaller ULBs like Rajakhhera face. According to him, ULBs have a scarcity of funds as they do not have a source of income and cannot generate through taxes. Due to their inability to raise the revenue for ULBs, they are unable to deliver civic services efficiently. He added that they even have a shortage of staff which can not be filled as there is shortage of funds to pay salaries.





Ajay Singh, Chairperson, Working Committees of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) Greater, shared that JMC cannot deliver civic services like sanitation and street lights because the government is not allowing them to work. State government orders dismiss these working committees. Tussles are going on between the state government and JMC, affecting civic work and suffering citizens.

Conclusion and Vote of thanks

Amar Deep Singh delivered the vote of thanks. He thanked all the Mayors, Deputy Mayors, chairpersons of selected ULBs, Department of Local Self Government representatives, and speakers for attending the conference. He also thanked Apoorva Singh, Assistant Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation, for her participation support and NITI Aayog, Government of India, for the collaboration. He said that CUTS would continue to organise such Mayors Conferences in the future.



Key Challenges

Participants discussed several challenges of urban governance in the context of Rajasthan. The key issues that came out from the discussion are following:

- All participants expressed concern about the lack of powers to city Mayors, chairpersons, and councillors of municipal bodies.
- The financial status of ULBs is severe and poor in Rajasthan. ULBs cannot generate revenue due to the interference of the state government. Also, funds are not allocated to ULBs according to the need of cities.
- Parastatal agencies such as development authorities, housing boards, waterworks are given more resources and powers, not accountable to the citizen.
- It is felt that municipal commissioners ignore the Mayors' decisions and call for meetings on city-related issues. Such tussles happen many times and affect the city's services and development works.
- Department of Local Self Government cannot support ULBs for their empowerment, instead of dealing with many issues directly.

- Participation of citizens is missing in the local urban governance of the state. Ward Committees and Ward Sabhas are nowhere existing.
- Due to all of these reasons, the cities of Rajasthan cannot perform better in waste management and sanitation services, as it is visible through the Swachh Bharat ranking.

Recommendations

Apart from challenges, possible ways were also discussed to overcome them. Through the discussion following recommendations were made:

- The election of Mayors should be direct instead of indirect and give more accountability and ownership to Mayors' positions.
- Development authorities, boards, and other parastatals agencies that deal with the majority of city development and infrastructure works should come under municipal bodies and be accountable to ULBs. At present, these agencies are accountable to the state government.
- Municipal corporations and other ULBs have several responsibilities but do not have the power to deliver them. Responsibilities without power are not useful and reduce the performance city government. Power should be given to ULBs.
- The municipal cadre of officials is required for efficient service delivery of ULBs. Transfer within the municipal bodies should be allowed.
- Mayor should be the executive head of the municipal corporation and the Commissioner as secretary to the Mayor.
- Capacity building and orientation should be mandatory for Mayors, Chairpersons, and Elected Councillors. At present no such training is provided.
- Minimum qualification should be the criteria for the candidates of ULBs election similar to the *Panchayat* election.



Mayors' Conference
“Urban Governance in Rajasthan: Challenges and Opportunities”
Rajasthan City Mayors' Learning Platform (RCMLP)

Hotel Radisson Jaipur City Center, Khasa Kothi, Jaipur
Friday, November 26, 2021

Programme Schedule

10:00 am	Registration & Welcome Tea
	Inaugural Session
11:00-12 noon	Welcome & Presentation on CUTS Study- Urban Governance in Rajasthan: Amar Deep Singh , Senior Programme Officer, CUTS Opening Remarks: George Cheriyan , CUTS International Special Address: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sh. Sanjeev Kumar Pandey, Additional Director, Dept. of Local Self Government, Govt. of Rajasthan• Smt. Manju Mehra, Hon'ble Mayor, Kota Municipal Corporation (North)• Sh. Abhijeet Kumar, Hon'ble Mayor, Bharatpur Municipal Corporation Release of the CUTS Report: “Urban Local Governance in Rajasthan- Challenges and Opportunities-An Overview”
12:00- 1:30pm	Technical Session: Urban Governance - Challenges and Opportunities
	Chair: Sh. Purushottam Biyani , IAS (Retd.), Former Director, Dept. of LSG, Govt. of Rajasthan
10 minutes for each speaker, followed by 15 minutes discussion	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic: Urban Governance Scenario in India Dr. Debolina Kundu, Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), New Delhi• Topic: Improving Condition of Cities by Empowering ULBs Mr. Milind Mhaske, Director, Praja Foundation, Mumbai• Topic: Municipal Performance and Best Practices of ULBs Dr. Himani Tiwari, CMAR, Dept. of LSG, Govt. of Rajasthan Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hon'ble Mayors & Deputy Mayors Vote of Thanks: Amar Deep Singh, Sr. Programme Officer, CUTS
1:30 pm	Lunch & Departure

*TBC

महापौर सम्मेलन, शक्तियों के अभाव में शहरी निकायों की कार्य प्रणाली कमजोर

जयपुर। (सफल राजस्थान) कन्जूर यूनिटी एंड ट्रस्ट सोसायटी ('कट्स' इंटरनेशनल) द्वारा आज भारत सरकार के नीति आयोग और 'दि एशिया फाउंडेशन' के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में महापौर सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया। यह सम्मेलन 'राजस्थान सिटी मेयर्स लर्निंग प्लेटफॉर्म' परियोजना के तहत किया गया। सम्मेलन में राजस्थान के विभिन्न जिलों से महापौर एवं उप महापौर तथा स्थानीय निकायों के सभाध्यक्ष सम्मिलित हुए। चर्चा में यह बात निकलकर आई कि शक्तियों के अभाव में शहरी निकायों की कार्य प्रणाली कमजोर रही है, जिस कारण कई क्षेत्रों में अच्छे प्रदर्शन नहीं कर पा रही है। सम्मेलन में भरतपुर के महापौर अभिजीत कुमार ने अपने विचार प्रकट करते हुए कहा कि जिस तरह से शहरीकरण हो रहा है तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों से लोग शहरों की ओर पलायन कर रहे हैं, इससे शहरों में बहुत सारी समस्याएँ उत्पन्न हो रही हैं। समस्याओं से निपटने हेतु जन प्रतिनिधियों को अपने अधिकारों का उपयोग करते हुए कार्य करना चाहिए।

उन्होंने बताया कि जिस तरह से पंचायत राज में सरपंचों के चुनाव बिना किसी पार्टी के होते हैं, उसी तरह शहरी निकायों में भी चुनाव होने चाहिए। शहरी निकायों को



मजबूती प्रदान करने हेतु म्यूनिसिपल प्रतियोगिताओं को आपसी समन्वय के साथ शहरी निकायों को सशक्त करना चाहिए। डॉ. ऑथोरिटी बननी चाहिए। सम्मेलन में 'कट्स' के निदेशक जॉर्ज चेरियन ने बताया कि महापौर सम्मेलन के माध्यम से स्थानीय निकायों के अध्यक्षों, महापौरों, उप महापौरों को अपनी कार्य प्रणाली, विचार-विमर्श के लिए अवसर प्रदान किया है। सिटी मेयर्स लर्निंग प्लेटफॉर्म के माध्यम से 'कट्स' द्वारा एक उचित माध्यम से शहरी शासन प्रणाली में आ रही परेशानियों को सरकार तक पहुंचाया जाता है।

सम्मेलन में स्थानीय निकाय विभागाध्यक्ष अतिरिक्त निदेशक संजीव कुमार पाण्डेय ने कहा कि शहरी निकायों में सभी

महापौर सम्मेलन में कोटा की मेयर मंजू ने उठाई स्ट्रीट डॉग्स की समस्या



द्वारा कि स्थानीय निकायों के सामने सबसे बड़ी समस्या स्ट्रीट डॉग्स से जनता की सुरक्षा करना है। उन्हें पकड़ने पर लगी रोक के कारण कुछ हो नहीं पा रहा है। इसका कोई स्थायी समाधान निकाला जाना चाहिए। इससे कोटा सहित प्रदेश के सभी शहर परेशान हैं। सम्मेलन में अन्य महापौरों व उप महापौरों के साथ स्थानीय निकायों की आम चुनौतियों, मुद्दों एवं अवसरों के संबंध में अपने विचार सांझा किए तथा शहरी सुशासन के विकास के तरीकों पर विचार-विमर्श किया।

'शहरी निकायों को सशक्त करे सरकार'



जयपुर @ पत्रिका. कन्जूर यूनिटी एंड ट्रस्ट सोसायटी (कट्स इंटरनेशनल) की ओर से नीति आयोग व एशिया फाउंडेशन के तत्वावधान में महापौर सम्मेलन का आयोजन किया गया। राजस्थान सिटी मेयर्स लर्निंग प्लेटफॉर्म परियोजना के तहत आयोजित सम्मेलन में यह सामूहिक निष्कर्ष निकला कि शक्तियों के अभाव में शहरी निकायों की कार्य प्रणाली

कमजोर रही है। कट्स के निदेशक जॉर्ज चेरियन ने बताया कि सम्मेलन में जयपुर ग्रेटर के उप-महापौर पुनीत कर्णावट ने कहा कि राजस्थान के शहरी निकायों की स्वच्छता रैंकिंग में बहुत पीछे हैं। राज्य सरकार को शहरी निकायों को सशक्त करना चाहिए। सम्मेलन में कोटा व भरतपुर सहित कई अन्य शहरों के महापौर व उप-महापौर शामिल हुए।