



Knowledge. Voice. Democracy.

PRIA

Beyond Town Halls: Exploring New Avenues for Citizen Engagement in Urban Governance



Nikita Rakhyani

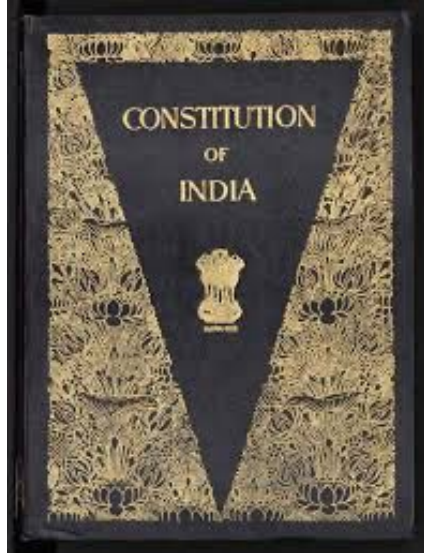
Lead- Youth Engagement, Participatory Research in India (PRIA), India

WHAT IS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION?

[Citizen] participation is an umbrella term that describes the activities by which people's concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into **decisions and actions on public matters and issues.**

Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015

THE CONSTITUTIONAL SPACES



- Article 243S of Part IX-A (74th CAA) – Constitution and Composition of Wards Committees

“There shall be constituted Wards Committees, consisting of **one or more Wards**, within the territorial area of a **Municipality having a population of 300,000 or more.**”

- *The granularity of participation is lost by covering a larger area (more than one Wards)*
 - *A large number of Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats are excluded because of the size restriction*
- Nothing in this article shall be deemed to prevent the Legislature of a State from making any provision for the Constitution of Committees in addition to the Wards Committees

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN RECENT TIMES:

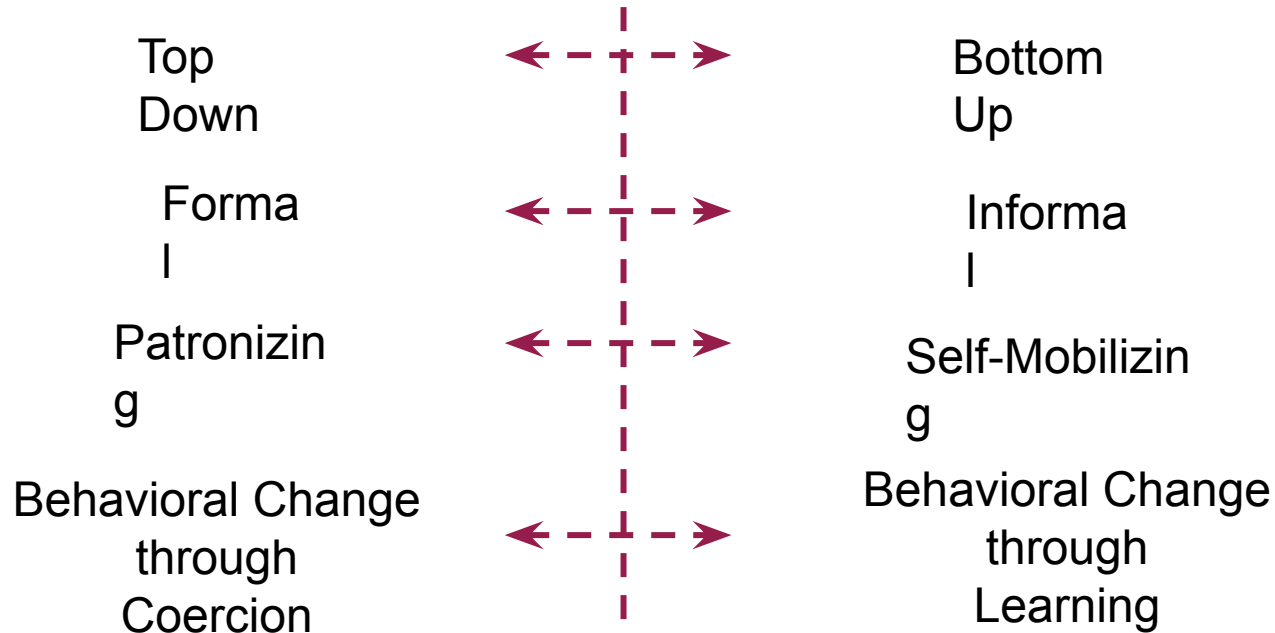
ENGAGEMENT WITHOUT SPACES



Participatory initiatives by the Civil Society Organisations

- RWAs, Housing Society Association, Apartment Associations
- Issue specific interest groups
- Organisations of urban poor and other marginalised groups
- Challenges of sustainability & ability to influence key decision making

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT $\neq$ CITIZEN PARTICIPATION



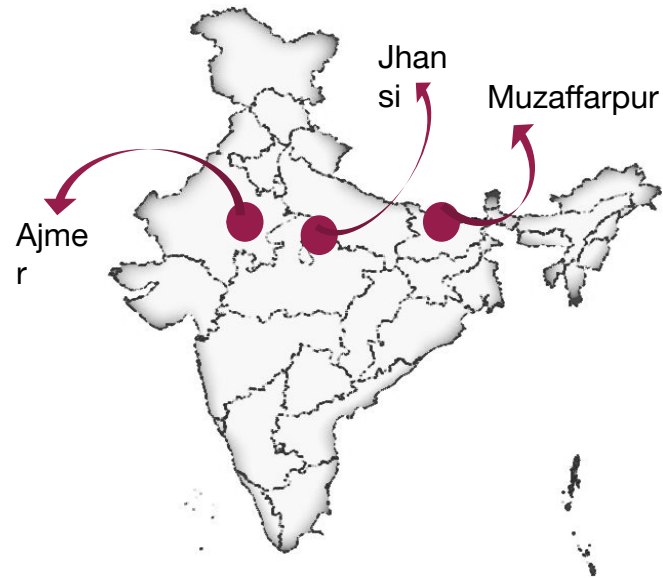
Adapted from
<https://www.citizenlab.co>



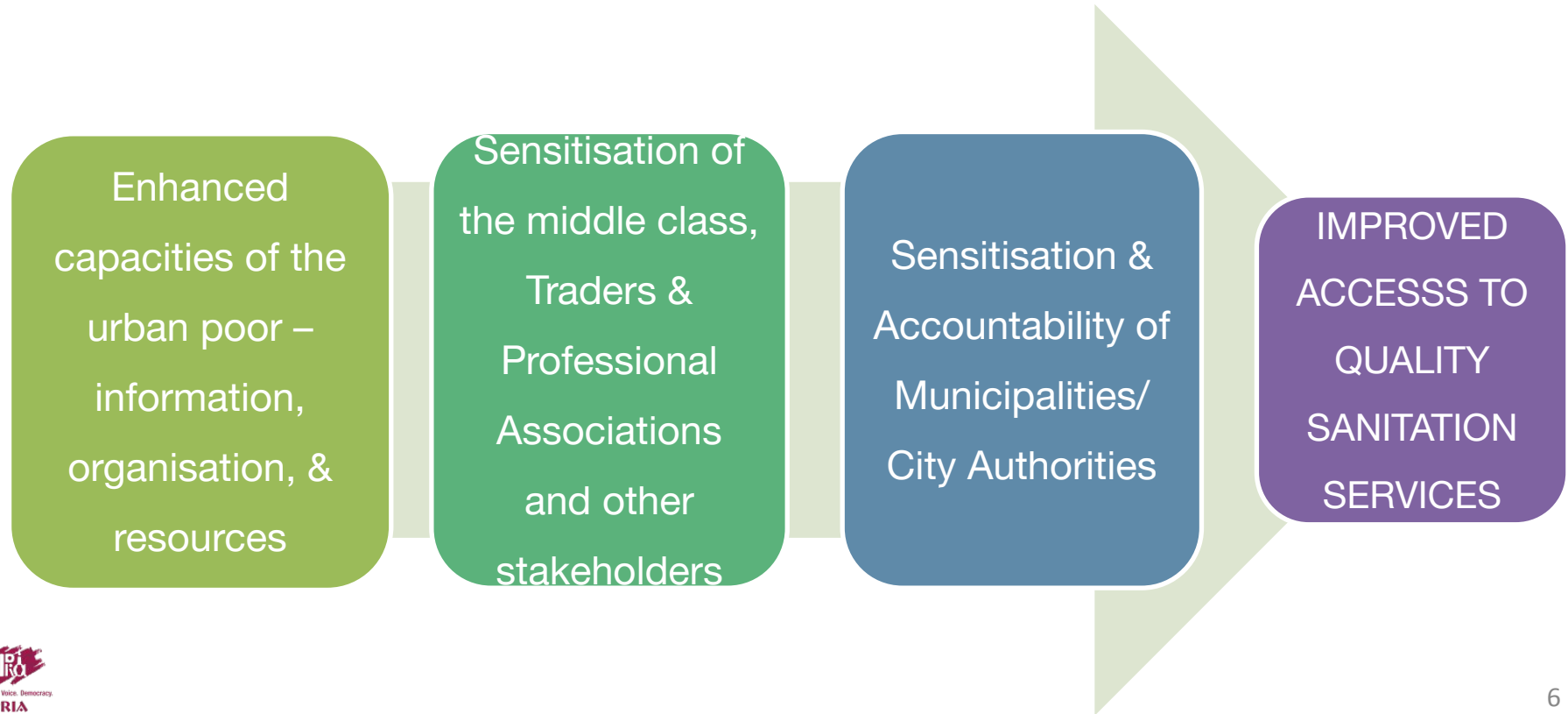
Engaged Citizens Responsive City

Strengthening Civil Society of the Urban Poor to Participate in Planning and Monitoring of **Sanitation Services** in Indian Cities

- ✓ Ajmer, Jhansi & Muzaffarpur in India
- ✓ 169 municipal wards
- ✓ 250 Informal Settlements



Engaged Citizens Responsive City – Theory of Change



PROCESS OF INCLUSION FOR URBAN POOR

Organising Urban
Poor through SIC

Preparing Settlement
Level SIPs

Settlement Level
Monitoring by SICs

Joint Awareness
Campaigns with MCs

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Mapping of
City-wide Informal
Settlements

Assessment of Sanitation
Services through PSE

Sharing SIPs with MCs

City Level Monitoring
by SIC Forum

Formation & Strengthening of Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs)



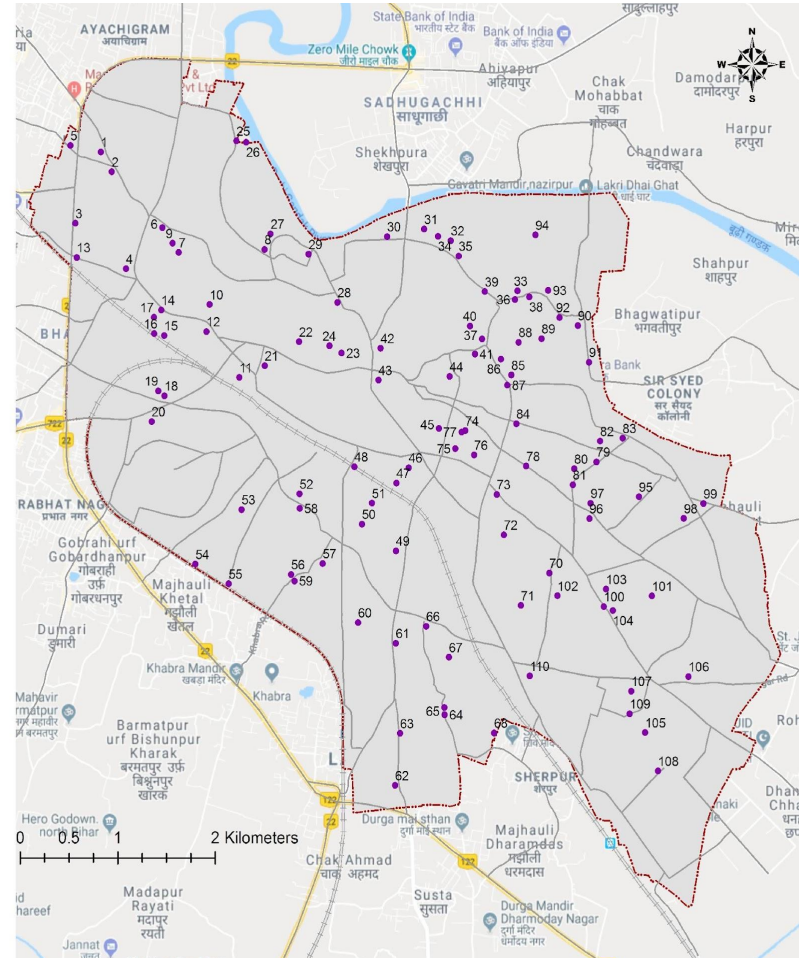
- ✓ Why do "we" need an organization?
- ✓ Interactions with communities to deal with accumulated mistrust & despair
- ✓ Identifying & prioritising issues and strategies to address them in short-term as well as long-term
- ✓ Formation of SICs with women and youth

- **250** ^{leadership} Settlement Improvement Committees (SICs)
- **3,210 members** of SICs (53% women and 48% youth)
- City level **Forums of SICs** and **Citizen Forum**

City-wide identification and mapping of informal settlements

- ✓ Where do urban poor live in the city?
- ✓ How many slums/informal settlements are there in the city?

Joint exploration with the Ward Councillors, Local Urban Poor, and PRIA Team



Facilitating Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA)



- ✓ **Transect Walk** with the community members
- ✓ **Timeline** tool to reconstruct the history of settlement
- ✓ **Social & Resource Mapping** for identifying institutions, services, & infrastructures available

Participatory Settlement Enumeration (PSE)



- ✓ Youth from the community were trained in mobile based surveys
- ✓ Listing of all households in a systematic manner
- ✓ Covering all households in a settlement
- ✓ Sharing of findings with the community members in open forum & preparing proposals
- ✓ Sharing of findings & proposals with the Ward

Councillors & Municipal Officials

22,975 urban poor HHs in **250** informal settlements covering **1,10,328** population

Participatory sample survey of **15,527** HHs across **169** wards

City-wide campaigns



- ✓ Led by SIC members involving youth from the communities & city authorities
- ✓ Celebrations of various important days – IWD, WTD, WED etc.
- ✓ A coalition of the urban poor, middle class, and other stakeholders emerged as City Development Forum
- ✓ 90% of the proposals from SICs has received positive response from the city authorities

#ECRC IMPACTS – AT A GLANCE



- ◉ Bottom-up and citizen-centric approach

Participatory processes of data collection & analysis, convening & advocacy strengthened relationship between municipalities and citizens

- ◉ Enhanced participation

SICs, City-wide SIC Forums & Citizen Forums provided vibrant spaces for participation in planning, implementation & monitoring of sanitation services

- ◉ Provisioning of sanitation services & other entitlements

Sanitation services & other entitlements (Aadhaar Card, Voter ID, Jan Dhan Account, etc.) were made accessible in informal settlements

- ◉ Multi-stakeholder partnerships

KEY LESSONS

Citizen Participation in Decision Making is the Cornerstone of Inclusive City Governance



Facilitating access to information



Making universalised institutional spaces through collectivisation and mobilisation (to check elite capture)



Activating particularised spaces for excluded and marginalised through building organisation



Enhancing capacities of local governance institutions to engage citizen collectives



Promoting mechanisms for transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in local governance institutions