Mumbai Voter's Guide

A simple guidebook for every citizen to understand the what, how and why of the BMC election 2017

Operation Black Dot

Operation Black Dot is an apolitical initiative aiming to make voting easy, engaging and fun.

As a movement, we aim to bring about a change in the mindset of voters, by using a variety of platforms to achieve the objectives of increased voter participation in municipal elections and greater youth leadership in urban local governance.

The first and most important consideration for every individual who reads this guide is to take matters of local leadership in their own hands and get ready to vote. This voter guide will help in that process.

"Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve" - JB Shaw

February 2017

Introduction

Getting to know the city

Mumbai. Bombay.

A megacity of more than 12.5 million people. A city that is beyond all definitions, and stands for all the superlatives in the dictionary.

- Biggest city in India based on population [1]
- Highest GDP of a city in South, Central or West Asia
- Most number of billionaires in India
- Generates 6.16% of India's GDP
- 70% of capital transactions happen in Mumbai
- Home to one of the world's biggest entertainment industry
- Mumbai has the largest urban primary education system in Asia run by Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM).

Are these facts making you feel proud of being a resident of Mumbai? Wait a moment, take a look at these facts too

- Mumbai, especially Dharavi, ranks among the world's most densely populated areas.
- Mumbai has the highest level of noise pollution among all Indian cities [2]

- Mumbai is classified as the world's fifth most polluted megacity [3]
- The air quality in Mumbai swings between 'poor' and 'very poor', according to air pollution standards.
- The Municipal Commissioner admitted that Mumbai's footpaths were not in a usable condition
- 900 million litres of water, roughly 27% of the city's water supply, gets wasted every day. [4]
- 13 out of 100 students dropped out of MCGM schools in 2014-15 [5]
- 39 out of 227 MCGM corporators (elected representatives) face criminal charges, some for serious charges like alleged rape, criminal intimidation and molestation. [6]

These are not just numbers and statistics, these are everyday realities that influence our lives as residents of Mumbai. Why are we telling you this? Because while the achievements of Mumbai city are built by Mumbaikars, the startling and depressing statistics are owing to the shortcomings and neglect of the civic administration.

Context for the Voters Guide

Why is it so important to know more about Mumbai? What makes it so special?

- The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), also known as Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is the largest civic body in Asia, and has the biggest budget of any civic body in India. [7]
- The 2016-17 budget of 37, 052 crores is higher than the budgets of smaller Indian states like Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh.
- The MCGM elections to be held in February 2017, will give 227 elected representatives the reins of India's financial centre, Mumbai, for the next 5 years.
- Nearly one crore registered voters will have the power to choose 227 corporators whose responsibility it will be to serve their wards.
- Many among them will also be first time voters, youngsters from the age group of 18-22 who will exercise their right to vote, effectively playing a part in the destiny of Mumbai and its citizens.

Through this Voter's Guide, you will be empowered to:

- Identify the important issues of Mumbai which affect the quality of life of its residents

- Be updated on the progress and shortfalls by the civic administration in these areas
- Get inspired to vote in the upcoming MCGM elections in February 2017
- Make an informed choice while voting for a candidate who will represent you in the MCGM

We will divide this voter guide into 2 parts. Part 1 will focus on the various departments of the MCGM and the various services and activities that come under the ambit of the MCGM, thereby affecting the overall condition of the city. In some way, these crucial factors are the ones we can influence by casting our vote. Part 2 discusses why these systems fail, their relationship with our voting and finally the process of casting a vote in Mumbai.
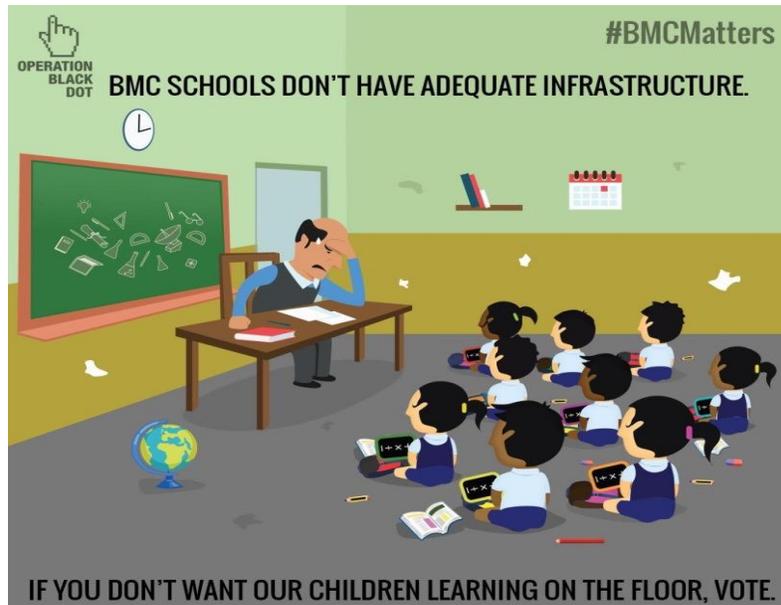
Part 1: Essential Services

Services provided by the MCGM and their current situation

The Voter's Guide will make you aware of the important facts related to the most crucial aspects of living in a city like Mumbai. These are:

1. Education
2. Infrastructure
3. Public Health
4. Environment (Pollution)
5. Water Supply

1. Education [8]

Nearly 3.40 lakh students study in BMC run civic schools, the largest urban education program run in Asia. Across 8 languages, the enrollment in schools has dropped by 40,778 students from 2010 to 2015. If this trend continues, the Class 1 enrollments will go down from 63,392 in 2008-09 to just 31,096 in 2018-19.

Why is this happening?

1. **Success ratio:** The percentage of students passing the SSC exam from a civic school is lower than that of a private school. To their credit, civic schools have shown a marked improvement in SSC pass percentages - from 59% in 2011 to 72% in 2015. But they still lag behind significantly when compared to the 85% pass rate of private schools in 2015.

2. **Quality of education:** The quality of education provided is evident in the comparison of scholarship receiving students in civic and private schools. While 9.8% of private school students received 4th Standard scholarships, the number was 1.6% for BMC school students. For the 7th Standard scholarship tests, the numbers were 8.8% for private school students and 0.3% of BMC school students.

3. **Inefficient funds allocation:** The 2016-17 BMC budget allocated Rs 2,394.10 crore for the education department. The budget allocation in 2015-16 was almost double the allocation figures in 2010-11. The BMC spends nearly Rs.60,000 on a single student in a year. However, the results don't speak for it, and students continue to drop out at alarming rates.

4. **Apathy of councillors:** Despite the BMC education machinery being far from ideal, 166 councillors did not ask a single question on the subject of education in the year 2014-15, while only 5 councillors asked more than 4 questions.

On the brighter side, nearly 80% of the budget was utilized in 2014-15, as compared to 59% in 2013-14. However, the lack of interest of councillors with regard to municipal education and the resultant dissatisfaction of the students and parents regarding school facilities is a major cause of the BMC school system not performing at optimum levels.

2. Infrastructure

a. Roads

The 2016-17 BMC budget allocated Rs.12,874 crore for infrastructure development in the city, apart from Rs. 1000 crores for the much talked about Coastal Road. Of this, Rs. 3477 crores were set aside

for road repairs. A substantial amount, but did you know that till the end of November 2016, BMC has spent only 12% of this amount, which comes to Rs. 441 crores. [9]

1. Mumbai's infrastructure under BMC's purview consists mostly of roads and footpaths. Mumbai around 2,000 kms of roads, which, barring the 50 kms or so of highways, is managed by the BMC.

2. Most of Mumbai's roadways may look slick, but every year, the monsoon reveals the shoddy work that has gone into making these roads. And we have the numbers to prove it.

3. The monsoon of 2016 saw an average of 150 complaints a day to BMC through their app, website and Facebook page regarding road conditions and potholes. Potholed roads have been proven to not only damage people's health and their vehicles, but are also a safety hazard by causing accidents. [10]

4. Mumbai is India's hotbed of road accidents. In 2015, Mumbai saw 23,468 road accidents, the highest among all the cities in the country. 77% of which were pegged on 'driver's fault'. Mumbai's top rank in road accidents is not a surprise. Poor maintenance of roads, coupled with vast volumes of unmanageable traffic are fertile grounds for fatal accidents to occur. [11]

5. Even more surprisingly, being a tainted contractor and doing subpar work doesn't guarantee that the BMC will stop giving you contracts worth hundreds of crores. This was proven in 2016 when 16 contractors who were under the scanner for shoddy work were handed 648 of the 1004 road construction contracts worth a whopping Rs. 1500 crores. The shortcomings of these very contractors had cost wastage of Rs. 959 crores through defective roads. [12]

b. Footpaths

BMC Commissioner Ajoy Mehta recently admitted that "I can't send my parents on the footpath", revealing the deplorable conditions of footpaths in Maximum City. Here are some not so fun facts about Mumbai footpaths.

1. Mumbai has around 2200 kilometres of footpaths [13]. The actual need for a city like Mumbai is more than 4000 kilometres.

2. The BMC is building footpaths at a rate of only 140 kms per year. At this rate, it will take nearly 13 years for Mumbai to get the footpaths it deserves, till which time the need for footpaths will have increased again.

3. In December 2016, the Municipal Commissioner warned 3 assistant municipal commissioners of suspension if they didn't repair the footpaths and remove encroachment from them.

4. There are 12 lakh cars in Mumbai which have to jostle for 10% of this number, i.e., 12,000 parking spots. Most of these cars are parked on the road or low lying footpaths, creating issues for half of Mumbai's population that uses footpaths during the day. [14]

5. Mumbai has more than 2,50,000 street vendors conducting their business from the footpaths of Mumbai, leaving no space for millions of Mumbaikars to walk.

6. Despite the lack of footpaths causing serious issues and even injuries in the city, questions related to footpaths didn't even make it to the Top 25 issues raised in the years 2015 and '16 by councillors. Only 19 questions were asked on the subject in 2016, down from the already abysmal number of 20 in 2015. [15]

3.Water Supply

The island city of Mumbai has a need of 4300 million litres of water per day. This is the amount of water needed to keep all the families and industries functioning smoothly. Out of this need, 3,750 MLD of water is supplied by the 7 lakes that have been given the responsibility of quenching Mumbai's thirst. Nearly 27% (900 MLD) water is lost due to leakages, unauthorised connections and errors in metering. [4]

Mumbai has around 4.80 lakh water connections in the city, including 1 lakh unmetered ones across the city.

Factors affecting Mumbai's water supply are:

1. Lack of sufficient zonal, district meters and metered outlets at reservoirs
2. Low pressure of water
3. Irregular maintenance of water systems
4. Delay in connecting new pipelines to existing pipelines
5. Replacing old pipelines
6. Leakage, pilfering and hoarding of water

24 hour water supply will be one of the major talking points in the upcoming 2017 BMC elections. After years of promises and reworked deadlines, 24 hour water supply is still a dream for most wards in Mumbai.

Steps taken to improve water supply:

1. 3000 crore Sujal Mumbai Abhiyaan was launched in 2007. Mumbaikars grappled with dug up roads for weeks so that new pipelines could be installed to prevent leakage. An estimated expense of Rs. 800 crore later, the new pipelines failed to materialize in the city.
2. Water Distribution Improvement Project - An ambitious project aimed at 24x7 water supply to the city, started in 2014 with a 10 point programme to supply more water to the city.
3. The BMC set up 6 sewage water treatment plants to treat and supply non potable water upto 5.5 MLDs.
4. Rainwater harvesting has been made mandatory for projects with an area greater than 1000 sq. mts.
5. In the last decade, Rs. 26,593 crore has been set aside to maintain and boost the city's water supply and sewerage capacity.

<u>The result?</u>

1. Only Rs. 14,649 crore, or just above 55% of the Rs. 26,593 crore set aside to maintain and boost the city's water supply and sewerage capacity has been utilized by the BMC in the last 10 years. [16]

2. 4.31% of water supplied, on an average, is undrinkable. Of this, Mulund gets the most contaminated water with 11.90% of the samples taken in 2016 being deemed unfit for consumption. [17]

3. As mentioned earlier, 27% of the water supplied is wasted for various reasons.

4. Recycled water has not found many takers in the city, leading to wastage of nearly 4 MLD treated water.

5. A total of 126 questions about water supply were asked last year by Mumbai councillors. [18]

4. Public Health

The MCGM has an annual budget of approximately 200 crores for public health. But comparatively, little is understood about where the money is being spent on health every year. Some statistics acquired for the years between 2011-2015 display the following:

a. Diseases [19]

1.   The various diseases rampant in the city are Dengue, Malaria, Diarrhea, and Tuberculosis.

2.   With respect to dengue, cases have gone up by 711% from 2011 to 2015. Deaths because of dengue have also increased from 62 to 124.

3.   41172 Tuberculosis cases were registered at government hospitals between 2015-16. From April 2011 to December 2015, Tuberculosis took 33,442 lives.

4.   Diarrhea deaths have also gone up by 20% in the last five years.

5.   There were 207 cases of Cholera in the year 2015-16.

There is a high level of discrepancy in numbers collected by various government sources.

For example, MCGM surveillance shows only 16 people malaria deaths in 2015, but the Public Health Department had issued death certificates in 92 cases with the mentioned cause of death as Malaria in the same year. This highlights both the discrepancies between agencies reporting death due to public health issues as well as the lack of coordination on public health.

b. Public Health and Households

1. Among the 2,50,000 plus households in Mumbai, 9% of the annual family income of poorer segments, specifically the Socio Economic Class (SEC D and E) is spent on hospital or medical cost.[20]

2. Out of every 1000 households, 47 households use private or charitable clinics or hospitals.[21]

3. 115 councillors, of which four were health committee members, have not asked a single question on Health.[22]

We see the rampant inefficiency of the Public Health Department of the MCGM, as well as the ineffectiveness of data collection and corroboration.

What is being done? And is it enough?

According to the last Mumbai Human Development Report, Mumbai has the best health care in India. But it still isn't enough. Here is why:

1. Mumbai is still running short on medical professionals as compared to requirement. The State and Municipal hospitals are short of medical staff like nurses by about 25% and doctors by about 40%[23]

2. While Mumbai's medical infrastructure was mainly laid down between 1950 and 1980, to serve a population of about 7 to 8 million; today these services are being used by more than 13 million people.[24]

3. The large numbers of migrant population that comes into the city each day consumes public health as it is the only affordable option. The density of population combined with decades old base infrastructure and very little being done at the level of technology is combining to form a menace for medical services to the citizens of Mumbai.

4. Mumbai has a total of 400 plus public hospitals and dispensaries, which is the highest for any state in Mumbai, but it wanes in comparison to the private medical infrastructure, which is above 6000. Hence the poor have no option but to avail of very costly services by private hospitals, and only about 30% of the population of Mumbai actually ends up using medical services.
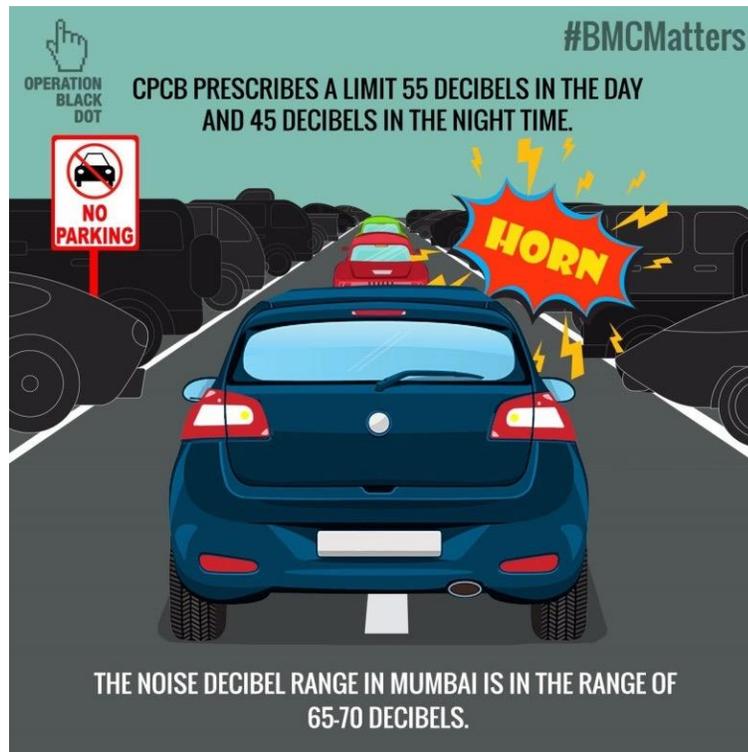
Looking at global standards, Mumbai being the best, falls short terribly.

The doctors per 100,000 of the population in cities across the world are:

- New York- 393

- Sao Paolo- 81

- Beijing- 355

- Tokyo- 282

- Shanghai- 296

- Mumbai-54[25]

4. Environment

a. Pollution

As we begin to define the scope and extent of pollution across the city, we can start with the formulation of its definition. Oxford defines pollution as "The presence in or introduction into the environment of a substance which has harmful or poisonous effects." The three recognized forms of pollution, air, water and noise, are rampant in cities across the globe. With the toxic substances used in the everyday technology today along with unchecked practices, air and water pollution have made cities fall sharply in the quality of life index.

With cities in India having air pollution levels as high as issuing an 'emergency' situation, there is also significant and unstoppable water pollution coming from industrial and household waste. With regards to Mumbai, this pollution rises exponentially with the various pollutants entering the sea and harmful chemicals being dumped onto the sea. Mumbai also faces very high and dangerous levels of noise pollution due to mismanagement of traffic and increase in numbers of private vehicles each year. Some insights on all the three types of pollution:

i. Air Pollution

While a lot of news has been diverted to the National Capital and its levels of pollution, the reality is that Mumbai has a topography which helps in the constant circulation of wind around the city. This should negate any serious threat of air pollution. But that is not the case.

SAFAR, a platform to record and monitor air quality in the Mumbai-Pune region (System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research), has showed some alarming levels of pollution. The days following the Deonar dumping ground fire in Mumbai, mentioned in the earlier section, showed air quality in the area as bad as 341. To measure air quality levels, particulate matter (PM10) below 100 is considered safe. between 200-300 is considered unhealthy, and 300-400 is considered extremely unhealthy air quality. Even on an average day, the city wide Air Quality is bordering on 200, with a high presence of fine particles of pollutants from vehicles, industries and other areas. [26]

On the other hand, even while an Air Pollution app is now available for citizens to track air quality in the city, the elected bodies seem unaware of air pollution as a concern at all. According to a Praja report, pollution features as a one of the top civic complaints in Mumbai. Among those companies, about 90% is related to Air Pollution. At the same time, pollution does not feature among the top questions asked by muncipal corporators in ward committees. [27]

ii. Water Pollution

In surveys conducted last year, it has come to notice that even today, after many initiatives by the city and state government and civil society, 4.3% of all water supplied in Mumbai is polluted.

The good thing is that there has been a long list of initiatives undertaken by the MCGM over the last decade to improve the state of drinking water, which seems to have been effective. In the year 2012-13, the pollution percentage was about 19% and similarly 10% in 2013-14. This shows some positive change in the levels of water pollution across the city. [28]

A major reason for water contamination in the city is the sewage and water supply infrastructure that is extremely old and thus has many chances of leakages where sewage water can get into the drinking

water supply. The major pipelines of the city are more than a 100 years old and a lot of work is still to be taken up to change and revive these pipelines, as they succumb to leakages more often.

Slums with unchecked drainage and sanitation facilities are a big factor contributing to the pollution of the sea coast across the city, and the focus of slum sanitation needs to increase for any improvement in this situation.

iii. Noise Pollution

A report by the Central Pollution Control Board called Mumbai the noisiest city in the country in early 2016. The CPCB data suggested that in Mumbai on normal days, the noise decibel range was around 65 and went up till 70 decibels. According to global health standards, a noise level of 80 decibels for 8 hours a day over a period of 8 years can lead to deafness. The CPCB prescribes a limit 55 decibels in the day and 45 decibels in the night time. [29]

But as the report showed Mumbai to the noisiest city, civil society and the civic administration have taken steps to curb the noise levels of the city and bring it to manageable limits. Over the rest of 2016, noise pollution levels have been steadily reducing, including festival season. Citizen participation has demanded for mapping of noise pollution levels, silent zones, time limits and reducing of vehicular honking.

Though some positive development has ensued, the city is still gripped by both commercial and vehicular noise as well as increase in sound decibels for social events.

While civic society and the municipal body work together, active participation from elected representatives and inclusion of pollution as a major component in manifestos and budgeting is still needed to be seen. Political apathy will go a long way to delay and destroy the process of making pollution a lesser evil across the city.

b. Solid waste Management

#BMCMatters

DEONAR DUMPING GROUND IS TALLER THAN AN 18-STOREY TOWER.

WorldOne — 442 M

Deonar Dumping Ground — 30M

IF YOU THINK THAT A LANDFILL SHOULDN'T BE ONE OF MUMBAI'S TALLEST BUILDINGS, VOTE.

Before you think, 'It's just garbage', take a look at some figures related to solid waste in Mumbai. Mumbai generates 9500 metric tonnes of garbage every single day. This garbage, a mix of dry, wet, recyclable, e-waste and construction debris finds its way to landfills, street corners and storm water drains.

Mumbai has 3 landfills where this garbage is accumulated. Far from being a solution, this is a huge problem in terms of health, hazards, land usage, environment and corruption in the city. Let's take a look at the current situation of Solid Waste Management, aka SWM in Mumbai.

1. In January-February 2016, multiple fires broke out in Deonar dumping ground, spreading smog all over the area leading to 74 schools being shut down temporarily to avoid the hazardous smoke. The smoke from the fire was visible from space. [30]

2. Nearly 50% of Chembur and Deonar residents suffer from health issues arising from air pollution.

3. Eye irritation, choking, coughing, breathlessness are common in areas around landfills, and the infant mortality rate is also higher than the city average in these areas.[31]

4. Under the Municipal Solid Waste management rules, 2000, it is mandatory for all local bodies to scientifically treat the waste and provide infrastructure for segregation, collection, transportation of the waste.

5. Out of the 9500 metric tonnes of waste, only 3000 tonnes is treated, while the rest is dumped in landfills without treatment.

6. Segregation of waste, which was made mandatory under the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000 and under the BMC's Cleanliness and Sanitation Bylaws, 2006 is not being done by most households and local bodies. This is leading to mixing of different types of waste, accumulation of garbage which could be recycled.

7. Mumbai sorely lacks processing plants, with the exception of an incineration plant for biohazardous waste at Deonar.

8. From June 30, 2017, the BMC will not be allowed to dump 5,200 metric tonnes of waste daily at either Deonar or Mulund dumping ground.

9. Mumbai produces 1 metric tonne of plastic waste every day. There are no provisions for plastic segregation and recycling on a large scale in Mumbai currently.

10. Out of the 116 major nullahs in the city, around 50 are expected to be blocked and overflowing every monsoon owing to garbage being dumped in the drains,rendering them useless.

What's being done?

1. 106 questions about Solid Waste Management were asked by councillors in 2016. [18]

2. 52 hectares of land near Kanjurmarg given by the State Government to BMC will increase the dumping ground's capacity to 6,000 tonnes.

3. The BMC has been given a 52.10-hectare plot at Taloja in Navi Mumbai for disposing of solid waste from Mumbai. The State Government owns only 39.19 hectares of the land, some of which has been encroached upon. The State Government has also given BMC 32.77 hectares near the Airoli bridge.

4. In January 2017, the BMC gave the contract to process 60 lakh metric tonnes at the Mulund dumping ground.

5. No steps have been taken to ensure that dumping ground fires are avoided, or extinguished quickly.

6. The BMC hasn't been successful in either penalizing households that don't segregate waste, or incentivize the ones who do.

7. No provision for plastic waste processing has been made in the last few years by the BMC.

8. In comparison, Cairo, one of the world's largest garbage generating cities at 15,000 tonnes of waste every day, manages to keep its city clean, and recycle its waste efficiently. This is done through the synergy between the formal and informal waste management agencies. [22]

9. The Zabbaleen, or the waste collectors, collect around 60% of the total solid waste generated in Cairo and recycle up to 80 percent of the collected waste everyday. This includes segregation and recycling of non-degradable materials, and elimination of biodegradable waste. This percentage of waste management is far ahead of many Western cities.

10. Mumbai has a sizeable number of ragpickers which can contribute to this manpower intensive job. But the lucrativeness of the waste management business, vested interests and apathy towards public health and environment are obstacles in the way of efficient long term waste management solutions.

These are the various concerns across the most important civic services across the city. Amidst an ever growing population and the pressing need to increase resource and services each year, it is also important to know that the dynamics of the city governance itself poses issues in its effectiveness. Apart from the MCGM, many other para state and regional departments work alongside the municipal body, which has over the years lead to too many authorities trying to govern various aspects of Mumbai. For the city to govern itself in a more efficient manner, the Municipal Corporation needs to be the strongest and most in favor of its citizens which also means a very strong decision making body that is empathetic and devoted to the citizens. Voting and choosing the right candidates for this responsibility is a must.

Part 2: Voting dynamics across the city

How many people vote in a Mumbai election? How does that make a difference?

The last election of 2012 recorded 44.6% voter turnout, which means only 46 lakh people voted out of the city's 1.03 crore population that has voter cards. Moreover, the city's population is roughly 2 crore or 20 million. This means that in a given election like the last one, only one fourth of Mumbai city uses its right to elect its own leader. [32]

Current voting patterns and effects of poor voting

- As mentioned earlier, only 25% of the city of Mumbai comes out to vote, and this has been a steady trend for the last decade and more. The growing apathy in people about voting, which is evident in the growing number of people who don't get their voter's card made or don't vote, is quite disturbing.

  Putting this problem in context, it is important to know that a municipal electoral ward in Mumbai covers a large number of voters. After the recent delimitation, or the rearrangement of ward boundaries, each electoral ward sees a population of 54,000 people on an average. This is a considerably large area for any elected representative to cover. [33]

- Moreover, the city's diversity is yet another factor. Most wards have a mix of slums and gated colonies, street markets and high end malls, corporate centers and informal trading spaces, pockets of people from different ethnicities and religions, socioeconomic class, etc.

- As a result, when a small percentage of the overall population chooses its representative, given the heterogeneous nature of the population, it is easy for the winning candidate to concentrate only on the pockets which have voted him/her to power, and not on others. The elected representative has the power to dictate what kind of development will take place in the ward, which means that the quality of life of all the citizens of a particular ward is in his/her hands. Voting for the right candidate is the only way to ensure that these hands are capable enough to take the responsibility. By not voting, you are making a decision to not be a part of this important democratic process to ensure your area's progress.

- The best way for a democracy to work, especially at the local level is to ensure equal and absolute voting and thereby increased pressure on the elected representative to be competent in enabling development, and being answerable for the same to the people who voted them into power. In a megacity like Mumbai, voting is not just a right, but an essential duty of a responsible citizen to be an active part of decision making in your city. It is the most basic responsibility of every eligi-

ble voter to not just vote, but cast an informed vote and ensure that people around them do so too.

Voting Infrastructure: Things to remember

Let us look at some essential components that make up the voting infrastructure. Here are the chief components.

Voter Card

The card that determines your eligibility to vote is the voter card. A photo identity card, the voter card gives details of the person and where they stay, using which a person can find out in which polling booth they can vote. But the voter card is not enough. Though the voter card makes you eligible to vote, it is your name in the electoral roll that officially qualifies your voting in a particular election. This is also known as an Electoral Part.

Electoral Roll

All registered voters across the city are listed in the electoral roll, which also provides the details of the polling station or the place where the individual goes to vote. Electoral rolls are updated before every election and it is advisable to check in advance to see if your name is on the Electoral Roll, even if you have already voted in a previous election.

In reality this is a messy process. The records of voters are not handled properly and many times, before the election you will not be able to find your name in the electoral roll, even though you have a voter card and have cast your vote before. This creates unnecessary chaos which can be avoided if the entire system is upgraded and digitized, the process of which has started.

Electoral Part

The atomic part of the voting infrastructure in the city is the Electoral Part. It is the list of voters in a particular locality. On an average, an Electoral Part can have 500-1000 registered voters, usually people living in the same locality, a slum or a few buildings. The electoral part also determines where you can go to cast your vote.

On the day of the voting, you are supposed to go to a room in an authorized government building and cast your vote. In Mumbai, this building is usually a school, and you will be told to go to a classroom corresponding to your electoral part and vote there. A voter card usually gives you the details of the electoral part, which makes it easy to vote.

Polling Station

If a classroom in a school is designated to an electoral path, the entire school is a Polling station. Typically, on the day of voting, many classrooms in a school have voting activity going on simultaneously. Such a structure is called a polling station.

A corporator ward has anywhere between 7-8 polling stations and each polling station usually has 7-8 electoral parts. So in any corporator ward, there will be a total of 45-50 electoral parts or a voting population of 25,000 to 30,000 voters.

So to know where to vote in a particular election, you need to know your polling station. If you go to the BMC website, you will find a map that tells you the polling stations in your ward. An easy way to guess your polling station is to check its proximity to your home. This many not be the case with everyone, but for most people, it is.

How does one become a voter in Mumbai?

In the last part of this manual, let us quickly tell you the steps you need to take to become a voter and cast your vote. To make this simple, we are considering a first time voter.

Fill a form

There are different forms available to register as a voter and depending on your situation you can fill the relevant one. These are the different electoral form numbers:

For inclusion of name on the electoral role- Form 6

For inclusion of names of NRI's- Form 6A

For deletion of name from the electoral role (in case of a deceased person) Form 7

For corrections in the voter details - Form 8

For change of address (in case you are shifting to a different place within the constituency) Form 8A

Submission of form

Along with the voting form, you will need proof of residence, proof of age and a passport sized photograph.

You can go to the BLO and submit your form, and receive a receipt of your submission once it is accepted. You need to save this receipt in case the voter card is not delivered to your doorstep, and you need to take further action.

The voter card takes somewhere between 45-60 days to get delivered. You can also go online and check for your name on the electoral roll with the details given on the receipt, after a time given to you by the BLO for updating of the electoral rolls.

Voting day

On the day of the voting, you need to have your voter card and the receipt denoting your details on the voter list. If you have not received your voter card, the receipt and an id proof may also suffice.

It is a good practice to locate your polling station before Election Day so that the process becomes easier. You can vote anytime between 7 am and 6 pm on the day of the election. There might be a line for voting so you keep some time aside for the entire process.

Operation Black Dot

these factors in mind, Operation Black Dot, an initiative in creating mass awareness for Mumbai Voters for the 2017 MCGM elections, brings you some initiatives that will help you understand more about this election, along with more information about voting, voting cards, candidates and FAQ. Details here:

1. **To check one's name in Voter list/ Find polling booth (2 ways)**

Option 1: Via Chatbot

1. Click on the link - https://m.me/operationblackdot
    2. Open Link on FB Messenger and click on Voter Tools in Main menu
3. Enter Voter ID card number to find polling booth

Option 2: Via Website

1. Voting Card number/ Via Name Search https://localbodyvoterlist.maharashtra.gov.in/
2. Enter Voter Card Number or search via Name

2. **Candidate Info**

1. Click on the link - https://m.me/operationblackdot
2. Open Link on FB Messenger and click on Candidate Info in the Main menu
3. Checking at your home location to get details of candidates in your ward

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