



About Janaagraha:

Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy is a non-profit trust in the Jana group co-founded by Swati Ramanathan and Ramesh Ramanathan in 2001. Janaagraha's mission is to transform the quality of life in India's cities and towns. It works with citizens to catalyze active citizenship in city neighborhoods and governments to institute city governance reforms (what we call "City-Systems").

The "City-Systems" framework is a whole-of-systems approach to solving for India's cities. It comprises four distinct yet interdependent components: Urban Planning and Design (master plans, design standards for public utilities), Urban Capacities and Resources (municipal finance, municipal staffing and technology), Political Leadership (empowerment, legitimacy) and Transparency and Citizen Participation (public disclosures, citizen participation, service level guarantees and grievance redressal).

About SDC Foundation

SDC Foundation is a Dehradun based not for profit organization that is primarily engaged in research, advocacy and on-ground initiatives on the challenges of urban governance, solid & plastic waste management, citizen engagement and public health.

Founded in 2017, SDC has been working closely with stakeholders on urbanization, plastic waste management, responsible tourism, urban policy, access to healthcare and COVID-19. The Foundation has vast experience of working on key central policies like Swachh Bharat Mission, National Smart City Mission and National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem.

For Immediate Press Release

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Janaagraha and SDC Foundation to submit proposals for transformative urban governance in Uttarakhand ahead of Assembly elections

Janaagraha, a Bengaluru based not for profit with an experience of two decades in urban policy and governance, and Dehradun based SDC Foundation will collaborate on transformative urban governance in Uttarakhand. Janaagraha and SDC Foundation will work together to resurface urban governance as an election agenda, submit recommendations to all political parties for inclusion in their manifestos and will be committed to offering support to the newly formed Government of Uttarakhand in making transformative urban governance a reality.

Uttarakhand is 30.2% urban based on census 2011, but has an average annual urban growth rate of 4.0% which is much higher compared to the rural growth rate of 1.2%. As per projections, the State would be 46% urban by 2050. Cities of Uttarakhand are haphazardly planned, and governed; Dehradun, Haridwar, Roorkee, Haldwani, Kashipur, Rudrapur, Rishikesh, Kotdwar have witnessed rapid growth beyond their capacities. Further, being a hilly State, the cities of Uttarakhand face unique challenges, particularly on the environmental front. However, urban governance reforms are yet to be a mainstreamed political agenda in the State. Transformative urban governance is key to enabling the cities of Uttarakhand in delivering good quality of life to its citizens.

The key proposals of Janaagraha and SDC Foundation are to empower the city governments of Uttarakhand and create vibrant and participatory cities. The two organizations would extend support for the enactment of new municipal legislations that take into account contemporary realities and needs of Uttarakhand's cities, replacing the legacy municipal legislations of the erstwhile united Uttar Pradesh. They would like to help with empowering city governments with powers over funds, functions and functionaries ensuring a strong political leadership and accountability in Uttarakhand's cities.

Janaagraha and SDC would like to support the establishment of a state level training institute Uttarakhand Municipal Training Institute/ Uttarakhand Institute of Local Administration to build capacities for municipal governance. Janaagraha has extensive experience to help with making a model for democratically vibrant cities particularly among hill states, by implementing participatory budgeting in all cities, and adopting 'Open Cities' framework, to foster citizen-centric transparency in governance.

It would also pitch to constitute ward committees and area sabhas in each ward to ensure voices of women and children, urban poor and other marginalized groups are factored into city governance. Finally, the two organizations would extend support with strengthening climate governance in cities, and building climate action plans at ward and city level to equip cities to adapt and mitigate the challenges of climate change

Cities of Uttarakhand are growing rapidly and quality of life for citizens depends on quality of urban governance laws and policies. We urge all the political parties to empower city governments by devolving funds and function, empower citizens by forming ward committees and giving them a say in making city budgets at ward level. We hope to make urban governance reforms a hot topic during the upcoming election cycle in association with SDC Foundation. Based on Janaagraha's extensive work on urban governance, citizen participation, municipal finance, participatory budgets across many states, we believe Uttarakhand must focus on city governance for improving quality of life for all citizens." said Srinivas Alavilli, Head – Civic Participation at Janaagraha

"We are excited to be partnering with Janaagraha. They have extensive experience of working on city reforms with several state governments. We hope that our collaboration can support the strengthening of our Urban Local Bodies. This will ultimately trickle down in the form of improved services for the citizens of Uttarakhand. We urge the political parties in our state to include the issues of sustainable urbanization in their manifestos" said Anoop Nautiyal, Founder, SDC Foundation.