

Minutes of meeting - Participatory Urban Governance

Date: Thursday, 24/09/2020

Time: 4.00 pm -5.00 pm

Venue: Google Meet (online)

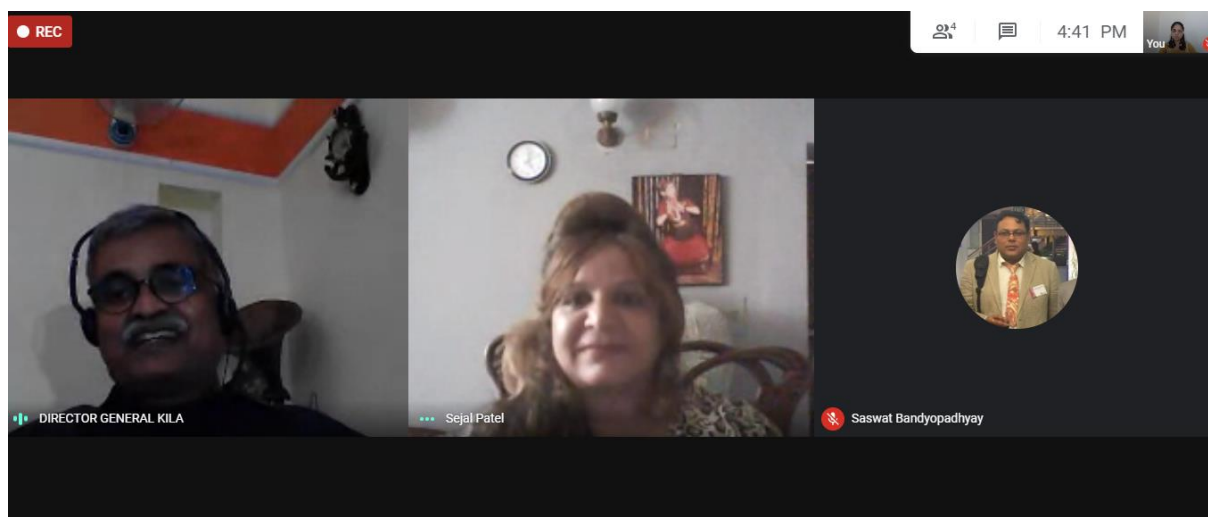
Attendees:

From Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA):

1. Dr. Joy Elamon, Director General, Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)

From CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF):

1. Dr. Saswat Bandopadhyay, Professor, CEPT University
2. Dr. Sejal Patel, Professor, CEPT University
3. Vijaya Salanke, Research Associate, CRDF



Discussion :

- Meeting started with an introductory address by Dr. Saswat Bandopadhyay followed by Dr. Sejal Patel explaining the topic of the study, overview of the work done so far and some key questions pertaining to Kudumbashree and Ward committees in Kerala to seek guidance from Dr. Joy.
- Dr. Joy spoke about urban scenario in Kerala in terms of Municipal Corporation and Municipalities. Kochi due to its highly urbanized characteristic might not be able to reflect the actual picture of Urban Kerala.
- While talking about Kudumbashree, he explained that how Kudumbashree is different from SHGs in other States. There is a symbiotic relationship between Kudumbashree and Municipal Corporation which links it to the local governance system. It is an autonomous entity but still a part of the system.
- Kudumbashree is not only a poverty alleviation program but also a truly women empowerment program which is also empowering women in the sector of governance. Most of the elected representatives come from Kudumbashree background.
- He further explained that, in the annual plan preparation process, working groups are the main space for participation. It is a space for deliberations between officials, elected representatives, experts, Kudumbashree members and other stakeholders.

- Development seminar is a larger platform with people from different groups participating in large numbers and hence its participatory nature is lost.
- Dr. Joy explained that Ward committees (WC) in Kerala represent a mixed group. RWAs mostly consist of people from middle and upper-middle class. But presence of NHGs has helped to avoid elite-capture within these groups. Role of WCs is more powerful in the smaller Municipalities.
- In Kerala, there is no ward-wise distribution of budget, but there is need-based division of the budget based on plan.
- Dr. Sejal enquired about the allocation of budget to the local governments, to which he replied that, when PPC was started in 1996, there was allocation of 35-40% of State plan budget to local governments. But now, the percentage of budget allocation is decided by the State Finance Commission every year.