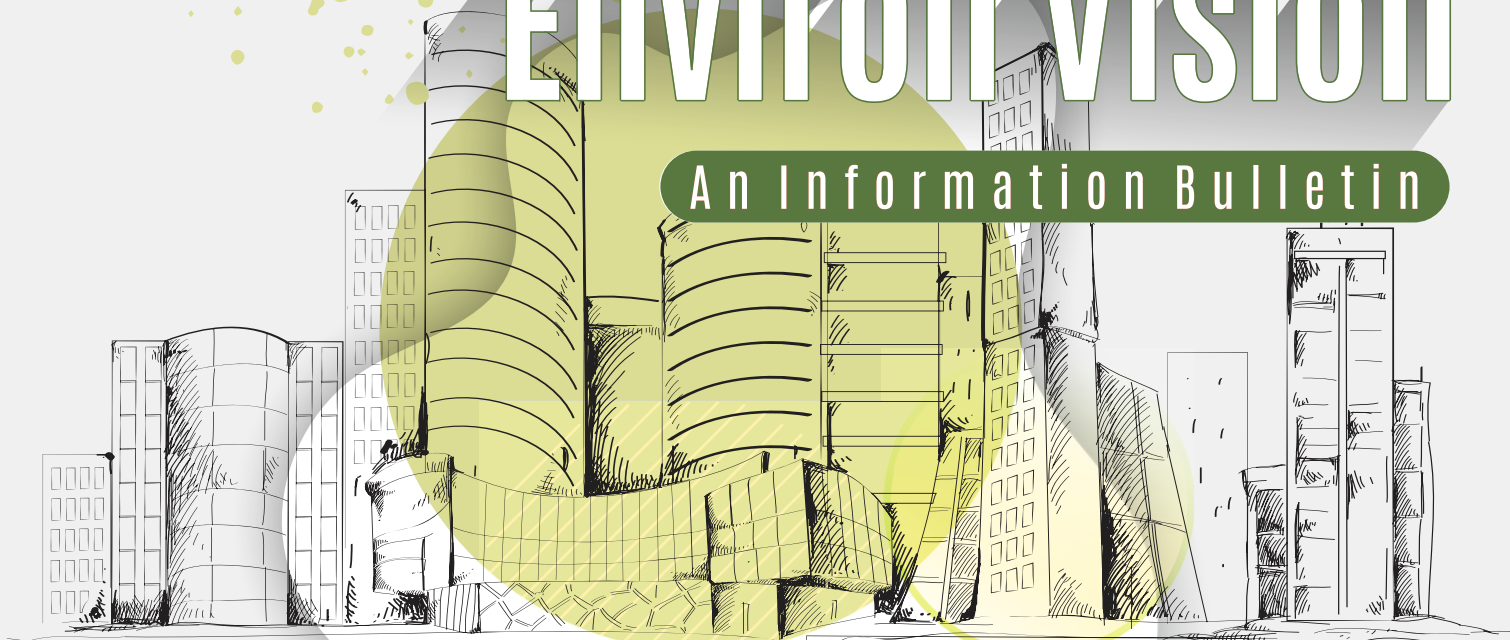


Vol - 20 No. 8 August 2025

**RCUES, Mumbai**  
Enabling better cities...

# Urban Environ Vision

An Information Bulletin



**RCUES**  
Mumbai

**Regional Centre for Urban & Environmental Studies**  
**All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai**

Established in the year 1968, supported by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India

***Urban Environ Vision aims to take its readers through offline and online training programs of RCUES, Mumbai while providing encouragement and knowledge to its participants and displays the efforts undertaken by RCUES, Mumbai.***

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# Regional Specialized Web-Based Training Program on Digital Inclusions in Urban Areas

05<sup>th</sup> August 2025

## Key Highlights

**The training program explored the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Internet of Things (IoT), and e-governance tools to bridge the digital divide, with expert sessions on digital literacy, citizen participation, and inclusive urban service delivery.**

## BACKGROUND

As cities expand and become increasingly connected, it is vital to ensure that everyone can participate in the digital world. However, many individuals still face significant barriers, such as limited internet access, lack of digital devices, or insufficient digital skills. Digital inclusion aims to address these challenges by promoting affordable internet access, providing appropriate devices, offering technical support and enhancing digital literacy. This becomes even more crucial as essential services like education, healthcare, employment, and government support continue to shift online. The centrally sponsored programs like Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Smart City Mission (SMC), Digital India, etc., rely heavily on digital tools to enhance service delivery and achieve inclusive development objectives. Facilitating

digital access for everyone, which is not just a matter of technology, but is a key step toward equitable urban progress.

Considering this background, the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) of All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), Mumbai, organized a Regional Specialized Web-Based Training Program on 'Digital Inclusion in Urban Areas' on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2025. This training program was supported by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI).

## KEY OBJECTIVE

The training program focused on bridging the digital divide by enhancing internet access, digital literacy, and technology used to support equitable urban development and better governance.

## PARTICIPATION

In all 67 participants, comprising Additional Engineers, Legal Officers, ICT Officers, MIS Engineers, MIS Experts, Sanitary Health Inspectors, Sanitary Inspectors, Computer Operators, Line Foreman, and Sanitary Workers attended the training program.

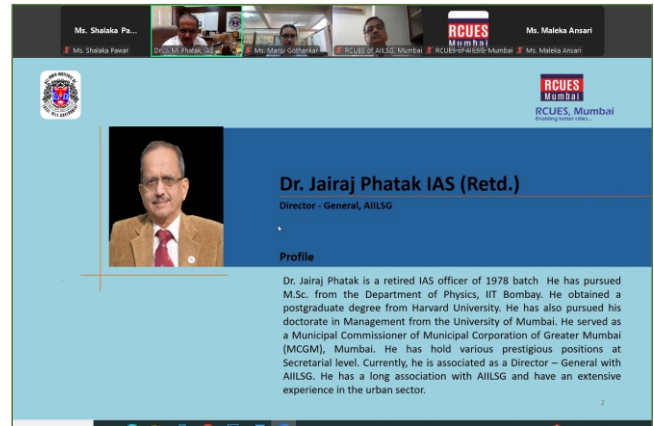
## INTRODUCTION

Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai, provided an overview of the role of RCUES, Mumbai in capacity building, research, and knowledge sharing to strengthen urban governance. She emphasized that the training program on digital inclusion was organized to address the growing need to bridge the digital divide in urban areas to ensure equitable access to technology, enhance digital literacy, and enable better service delivery.



**Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.**

## INAUGURATION



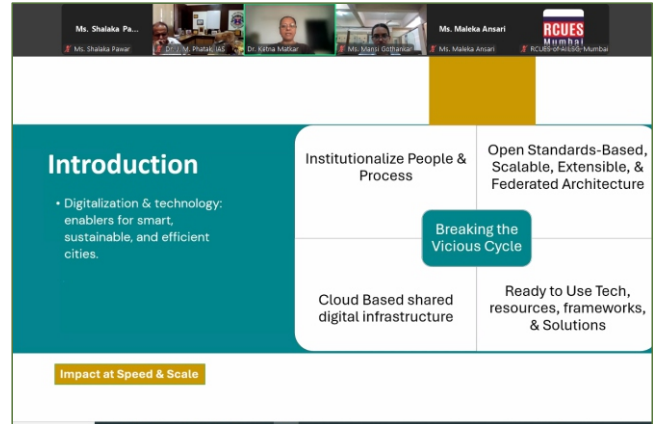
**Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG addressing the participants.**

The training program was inaugurated with a thought-provoking keynote address by Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG, whose words set the intellectual and aspirational tone for the day. Drawing upon historical and global perspectives, he reflected on how nations that hesitated to embrace transformative changes, such as China's delayed adoption of the Industrial Revolution, were left behind for decades; hence, adapting to new technologies is necessary. He cautioned that in the ongoing digital revolution, India must seize the moment, leveraging its greatest asset, i.e., a vast and skilled technical workforce capable of driving innovation and inclusive growth. To underscore the balance between technology and human insight, Dr. Pathak invoked the wisdom of Pablo Picasso, noting that “Computers can provide answers, the real challenge lies in asking the right questions”, emphasizing that human judgment remains irreplaceable even

in an age of rapid technological advancement. His address not only highlighted the urgency of digital transformation in urban governance but also inspired the participants to view technology as a tool for empowerment, equity and sustainable progress, setting the perfect prologue to the expert sessions that followed.

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

In the first session, 'Understanding Digital Inclusion and Its Role in Urban Governance', Dr. Ketana Matkar, Founder & Managing Director, Cipher Environmental Solutions LLP, Thane, Maharashtra presented a comprehensive overview of how digitalization catalyzes building smart, sustainable, and citizen-centric cities. She outlined the growing urban challenges of rapid population growth, resource scarcity and climate change, emphasizing that technology-enabled governance can shift cities from reactive to proactive management. Drawing on examples such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in city operations, Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping based urban planning, and Internet of Things (IoT) enabled smart grids, Dr. Matkar highlighted how digital tools ensure inclusive development, enhance transparency and facilitate real-time management of services like waste, water, and traffic. She also underscored the critical role of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in bridging the digital divide, leveraging national initiatives like the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM), BharatNet, and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) to create citizen-centric services. Stressing the need for capacity building, data-driven policy-making, and collaboration with the private sector, she provided a stepwise roadmap from pilot projects to full-scale integration, positioning digital inclusion as a foundational element for equitable urban governance.



**Dr. Ketana Matkar, Founder & Managing Director, Cipher Environmental Solutions LLP, Thane, Maharashtra addressing the participants.**

In the second session, 'Promoting Digital Literacy and Community Empowerment', Dr. Ajit Mokal, Gender Expert, Mumbai, delivered an insightful presentation on how digital literacy has evolved from a technical skill to a fundamental enabler of economic opportunity, service access, and grassroots empowerment. He explained that true digital literacy extends beyond operating devices and encompasses the ability to access e-governance services, conduct secure financial transactions, critically evaluate online information, and safeguard against cyber threats. Highlighting successful government-led initiatives such as the PMGDISHA and the Digital India campaign, he underscored their role in creating a strong national foundation. Dr. Mokal showcased how Common Service Centres (CSCs) have emerged as empowerment hubs, delivering services and training, while community-driven models such as leveraging Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and training local 'Digital Champions' have proven effective in empowering women and marginalized groups. He outlined key implementation strategies, including

mobile-first approach, localized content, public Wi-Fi access, and targeted outreach to vulnerable populations. Drawing on examples from corporate and NGO initiatives like Tata Trust's 'Literacy as a Service (LaaS)' program and the Digital Empowerment Foundation's 'SoochnaPreneur' model, he further demonstrated how multi-stakeholder partnerships can bridge the digital divide. Through this comprehensive presentation, Dr. Mokal made a compelling case for sustained, inclusive, and community-rooted approaches to digital empowerment in urban areas.

improve accountability, and make information more accessible to the public. Drawing from real-world examples such as UMANG, e-Nagar, and NUDM, she illustrated how mobile applications, GIS, and Management Information Systems (MIS) are enabling ULBs to track assets, monitor projects, and make data-driven decisions. She showcased city-level innovations, including grievance redressal apps like Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) 24x7, integrated dashboards for real-time monitoring of waste collection & water distribution and digital payment platforms for tax and utility services. Highlighting the case of Indore's GIS-enabled waste management system and Pune's integrated service portal, she demonstrated how integration of services leads to higher citizen satisfaction. While acknowledging challenges such as the digital divide, data privacy issues and resistance to change, she emphasized opportunities in AI, IoT and public-private partnerships. Through this session, Adv. Borude presented a compelling case for adopting scalable, inclusive and citizen-centric digital innovations to transform urban governance.



Dr. Ajit Mokal, Gender Expert, Mumbai addressing the participants.

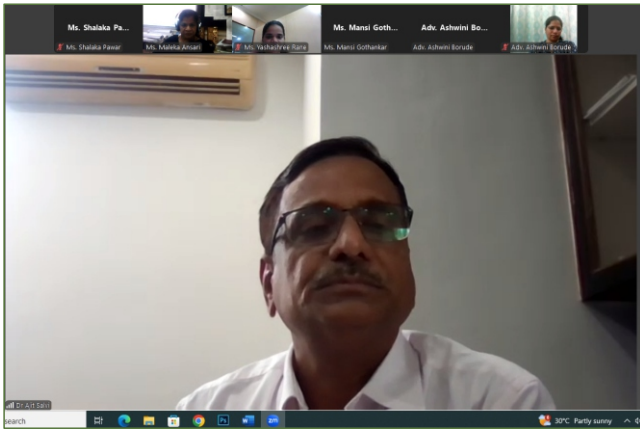
In the third session, 'Digital Tools and Platforms for Inclusive Urban Service Delivery', Adv. Ashwini Borude, Waste Management Consultant and Chairperson, Shree Aastha SHG, Mumbai, provided a practical and solution-oriented overview of how technology can strengthen municipal service delivery, enhance transparency, and improve citizen engagement. She began by explaining the core principles of e-governance and its potential to speed up communication, reduce operational costs,



Adv. Ashwini Borude, Waste Management Consultant and Chairperson, Shree Aastha SHG, Mumbai addressing the participants.

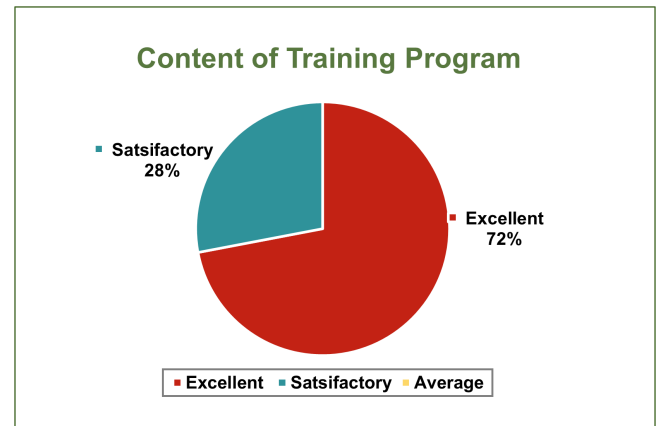
## SUMMING UP

The Web-Based Training Program concluded with highly engaging and impactful closing remarks by Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai, where he emphasized that digital inclusion is not merely about technology, but about ensuring equity, empowerment and universal access for all citizens. He reminded the participants that digitally empowered citizens are truly empowered, underlining the transformative role of inclusive digital governance. The training program concluded with expressions of gratitude to all expert speakers, participants, and the organizing team for their contributions to the program's success. It reinforced the collective responsibility to drive equitable digital transformation in urban areas.



**Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.**

as 'Excellent', appreciating its relevance, practicality and usefulness in their work. The remaining 28% rated it as 'Satisfactory', showing that the training program met expectations for all participants. Importantly, there were no ratings as 'Average', reflecting that the training was well received by everyone.



This encouraging response demonstrates the training program's overall success and provides a strong foundation to make future sessions even more impactful.

## TRAINING EVALUATION

The feedback on the training program was overwhelmingly positive. A strong majority, 72% of participants, rated the content

## GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIALIZED WEB-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM

**Government of India Initiatives**

- Smart Cities Mission-ICT-enabled services, data-led decisions
- NUDM-CSCs, BharatNet, PMGDISHA for literacy
- AMRUT 2.0-Shared digital infra for ULBs
- Digital India-Digital tools for service delivery improvement

**Key Implementation Strategies**

- Localized and relevant content is crucial
- Mobile-first approach is most effective
- Building trust overcomes hesitation and fear
- Focus on financial and livelihood integration
- Address the existing gender digital divide
- Ensure sustainability for long-term impact

**Digital Enabled ULBs and Digital Innovations Implementing Urban Development Missions**

Good Evening, Welcome! Citizens

Dear Name and email to: [Name] [Email]

My Children and I want your help

Have you been to Amravati? [Yes/No]

Let's Plan! [Plan]

**NUDM-Platforms**

Urban Citizen Knowledge Platform

OpenSource Platform

SmartCode: Fostering Collaboration and Co-creation

ONLINE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO THE CITIZENS



# Regional Specialized Training Program on Role of Elected Representatives & Mission Functionaries in Implementing National Missions

19<sup>th</sup> August 2025  
Nadiad, Gujarat.

## Key Highlights

**The key highlights of this training program were to enhance capacities of the mission functionaries through focused sessions and exercises, showcase best practices, and facilitate actionable planning. It fostered cross-mission learning and collaboration, advancing the vision of healthier, inclusive, and sustainable urban development.**

## BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI) is furthering urban transformation through key missions such as Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), National Health Mission (NHM), etc. While these programs have achieved notable progress, implementation challenges persist at the local level.

Effective urban development relies on strong collaboration between elected representatives (ERs) and mission functionaries. Elected representatives ensure that the policies

reflect community needs and foster citizen engagement, whereas the mission functionaries translate these policies into action through efficient planning and execution. Their combined efforts enhance transparency, accountability and responsiveness, which are vital for achieving inclusive, sustainable, and smart urban growth.

To strengthen the impact of these initiatives, the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) of the All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), Mumbai, organized a Regional Specialized Training Program on 'Role of Elected Representatives and Mission Functionaries in Implementing National Missions' on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at Nadiad, Gujarat. This training program was supported by the MoHUA, GoI.

## KEY OBJECTIVE

The key objective of this training program was to explore the vital collaboration between ERs and ULBs in implementing national missions, focusing on how this partnership can improve urban governance and promote sustainable development in cities.

## PARTICIPATION

A total of twenty-eight participants attended the training program. The attendees included the Municipal Engineers – SBM, City Managers – SBM & Information & Technology (IT), Community Organizers, Sanitary Inspectors, Sanitary Supervisors and representatives of SHGs from Gujarat.

## INTRODUCTION



**Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.**

Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai, extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries, domain experts and attendees. She highlighted the significant capacity-building initiatives led by RCUES and AILSG in Mumbai, which have played a crucial role in strengthening the ULBs across the western and northeastern regions of India. Additionally, she provided a comprehensive introduction to the training program, detailing its core goals and expected impact on urban governance and development practices.

## INAUGURATION



**Mr. Chintan Desai, Municipal Secretary, Vadodara Municipal Corporation, Gujarat inaugurated the training program by lighting the lamp. (L to R) Mr. Mahendra Desai, Dy. Municipal Commissioner, Nadiad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat, Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, and Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai.**

The training program was inaugurated by Mr. Mahendra Desai, Dy. Municipal Commissioner, Nadiad Municipal Corporation & Mr. Chintan Desai, Municipal Secretary, Vadodara Municipal Corporation, Gujarat, in the presence of officials from RCUES, Mumbai, including Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, and Ms. Mansi Gothankar.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Mahendra Desai highlighted Nadiad's recent elevation to a Municipal Corporation, noting the expansion of its geographic boundaries and the resulting population growth. He emphasized that these developments bring new administrative and developmental challenges, which require strategic planning, expert guidance and strong community support to effectively implement mission-driven urban initiatives.



**Mr. Mahendra Desai, Dy. Municipal Commissioner, Nadiad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat addressing the participants.**

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Chintan Desai, who emphasized the pivotal role of the RCUES, Mumbai, in enhancing

the capacities of the ULBs across Western India, the Northeast, and Union Territories (UTs). He highlighted training, research, knowledge support, etc., as the core functions of RCUES, undertaken with the support of the Government of India in collaboration with the AILSG. Mr. Desai also drew attention to AILSG's upcoming centenary celebrations in 2026, its extensive presence through more than 48 centres across India, and its strong global partnerships. These, he noted, have significantly reinforced RCUES's mandate to deliver impactful, high-quality capacity-building programs, thereby strengthening the institutional capabilities of ULBs and promoting sustainable urban governance.

## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

Mr. Chintan Desai delivered first insightful session on 'Overview of National Missions and their Significance', underscoring the crucial role these initiatives play in advancing urban development. He outlined key flagship missions such as the SBM-U 2.0, AMRUT 2.0, PMAY, DAY-NULM, NHM, etc, highlighting their collective contribution to strengthening urban governance.

Mr. Desai outlined how these urban missions have effectively addressed a range of pressing challenges, including sanitation, waste management, infrastructure development at the ULB level, affordable housing, poverty alleviation, livelihood generation and improved access to healthcare. These initiatives, he emphasized, have played a pivotal role in elevating the overall quality of life in Indian cities.

He further underscored the missions' contribution to fostering sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development.

Concluding the session, Mr. Desai presented a comprehensive analysis of the progress made, highlighting the tangible outcomes and transformative potential these efforts have unlocked. His insights reflected the significant strides Indian cities have taken in implementing these programs and the measurable impact they continue to deliver.

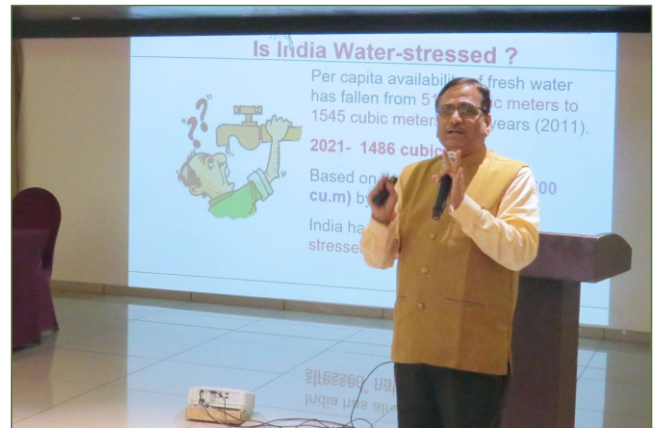


**Mr. Chintan Desai, Municipal Secretary, Vadodara Municipal Corporation, Gujarat addressing the participants.**

Dr. Salvi, delivered second session on 'AMRUT 2.0 – Urban Infrastructure, Water Security, and Reforms', addressing the growing water crisis in India, driven by rapid urbanization, population growth and poor resource management. He noted that although India holds only 4% of the world's freshwater resources, its demand is projected to rise significantly, reaching 1,447 billion cubic meters (BCM) by 2050. Dr. Salvi highlighted the alarming levels of untreated wastewater, inadequate infrastructure and the widespread misconception that waste management is solely the responsibility of municipal bodies. He stressed the need to shift from the prevalent “take, flush, and forget” mindset, citing the example of Nadiad,

where only 70% of residents have piped water connections and 20% still rely on unsafe wastewater discharge systems.

Dr. Salvi emphasized AMRUT 2.0 as a transformative opportunity for cities to implement sustainable, data-driven approaches through the formulation of City Water Balance Plans (CWBP). These plans aim to identify and address critical gaps in water supply, wastewater management, and non-revenue water (NRW), currently estimated at 38%. He advocated for the reuse of treated wastewater, the adoption of rainwater harvesting, and the upgrading of distribution infrastructure to move towards a circular water economy. In the concluding session, he outlined the program's key targets: achieving a significant increase in water reuse and reducing NRW to below 20%, all supported by smart, cost-effective solutions and real-time monitoring systems like SCADA.



**Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.**

Mr. Akash Parmar, Jr. Town Planner, Government of Gujarat, made a presentation on 'SBM 2.0 & NHM – Sanitation, Health

Linkages and Inclusive Urban Services' in the third session, emphasizing the critical interconnection between sanitation and health in building sustainable and resilient urban communities. He highlighted the need for sanitation and health convergence as an essential step toward improving overall public health outcomes, reducing disease burden and enhancing quality of life for urban residents.

The discussion covered key aspects of Open Defecation (ODF), ODF+ and ODF++ sustainability, stressing that moving beyond toilet construction to ensuring long-term usage, proper maintenance, and behavioural adoption is vital for lasting results. Mr. Parmar also focused on Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) as a core element of urban sanitation, ensuring safe containment, collection, treatment, and disposal to prevent environmental and health hazards.



**Mr. Akash Parmar, Jr. Town Planner, Government of Gujarat addressing the participants.**

Further, the session underlined the importance of inclusive service delivery, ensuring that sanitation and health services reach vulnerable and marginalized groups, including the urban

poor, women, children and differently abled individuals. Mr. Parmar emphasized behavioural change communication and community participation through ERs, whose active involvement can strengthen accountability, awareness and citizen engagement in sanitation and health initiatives.



**Mr. Kaushik Mehta, former Town Planner, Urban Development Department, Government of Gujarat addressing the participants.**

Mr. Kaushik Mehta, former Town Planner, Urban Development Department, Government of Gujarat, delivered fourth session on 'Housing for All: Strategies and Progress under PMAY-U 2.0', highlighting the mission's key components and field-level implementation aspects. He explained the process of beneficiary identification and elaborated on the different verticals of the scheme, including Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) and Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC), which collectively aim to provide affordable and adequate housing for all eligible urban families.

The session further focused on addressing local implementation gaps and strengthening on-ground execution through the active role of City Level Technical Cells (CLTCs), which act as

key facilitators in planning, beneficiary outreach and project monitoring. Mr. Mehta also underlined the use of technology-enabled systems for grievance redressal and real-time tracking, ensuring greater transparency, accountability, and timely delivery of housing benefits under PMAY-U 2.0.

Ms. Ansari, delivered fifth session on 'Understanding the Sakhi - One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, offering the participants a clear overview of the OSC scheme's vision, structure and field-level significance. She traced the evolution of the scheme, explaining how it was conceptualized as a response to the rising need for an integrated support mechanism for women facing violence in both public and private spheres.



**Ms. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai addressing the participants.**

The session highlighted the objectives and target beneficiaries of the scheme, emphasizing that the OSCs are designed to provide comprehensive support services such as medical aid, legal assistance, counselling, temporary shelter and police facilitation to the women affected by physical, emotional, psychological, or economic violence, irrespective of age, caste,

class or marital status. Further, Ms. Ansari stressed the importance of integration with allied schemes, such as the 181 Women Helpline and Swadhar Greh, to ensure holistic service delivery. This convergence approach enables OSCs to function as a single-window platform, ensuring timely redressal, rehabilitation and empowerment of women in distress.

Mr. Jatan Bhanvadiya, Chief Minister's Fellow, Government of Gujarat, delivered sixth session on 'Collaborative Governance – Clarifying Roles of ERs & Mission Functionaries', emphasizing partnership and shared accountability as the foundation of effective urban governance. He outlined the importance of role demarcation and joint responsibilities, where ERs provide political leadership and citizen engagement, while mission functionaries ensure technical planning, execution and monitoring.



**Mr. Jatan Bhanvadiya, Chief Minister's Fellow, Government of Gujarat addressing the participants.**

The session highlighted the need to build synergy for city-wide outcomes, showing how collaboration bridges communication gaps, prevents duplication and accelerates progress across

the national missions. Mr. Bhanvadiya illustrated this with successful cases of institutional coherence, including Nahan (Himachal Pradesh), where SBM–NULM convergence strengthened waste management, accountability, and citizen-led monitoring, and Florence (Italy), where smart, climate-resilient projects in energy, mobility and ICT were enabled through robust multi-stakeholder mechanisms. These examples demonstrated how convergence and collaboration can deliver impactful urban governance and improved service delivery.

## GROUP EXERCISE

As part of the training program, a group exercise was conducted on the theme 'Integrated Mission Action Plan Objective'. The participants were divided into four groups and tasked with creating a unified action plan by aligning key urban missions, namely SBM, AMRUT, PMAY and NHM at the ULB level. Each group selected a local issue and engaged in collaborative discussions to develop integrated, mission-aligned strategies. The outcomes were then presented by all groups in a structured format.



Participants engaged in group exercise.

Each group proposed three actionable points addressing their chosen issue, clearly defining the roles of stakeholders and specifying implementation timelines. After all the presentations, one group was recognized for the best theme and the presentation, was felicitated with a token of appreciation. This exercise emphasized the importance of inter-mission convergence, teamwork and practical planning to address urban challenges effectively at the local level.

## SUMMING UP

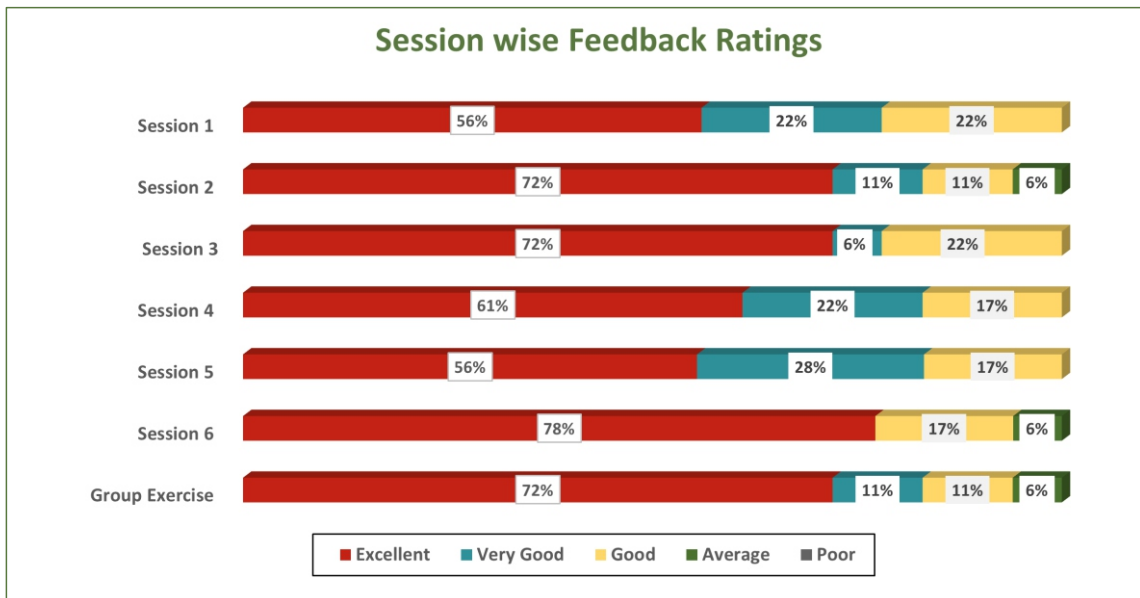
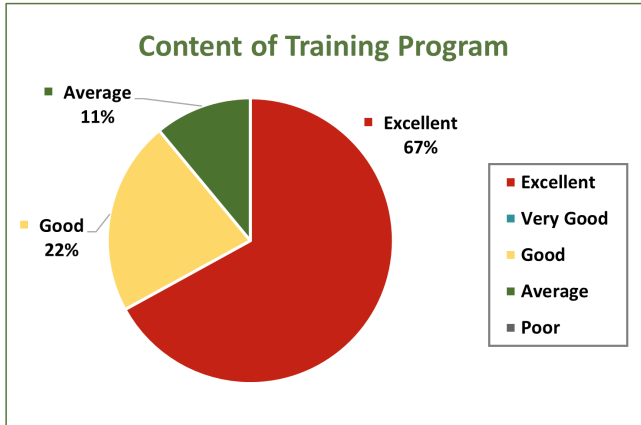
Following the feedback and interactive Question & Answer session, the participants were felicitated with Certificates of Attendance in recognition of their active involvement. The program concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Ms. Ansari, who expressed sincere appreciation to the trainers for their insightful sessions and to the participants for their enthusiastic engagement and meaningful contributions, which enriched the overall learning experience. Finally, she said that this program brought together participants from multiple national missions, fostering cross-mission learning and integration. This convergence was highlighted as a pathway to build healthier, more inclusive and sustainable urban environments.

## TRAINING EVALUATION

The training program received very positive feedback from participants, with 67% rating the content as 'Excellent', 22% as 'Good', and 11% as 'Average'. This reflects strong approval of its structure and delivery. The lack of negative ratings demonstrates the program's effectiveness in meeting

participants' expectations, as its well-organized format and practical relevance consistently receive positive reviews, confirming its success in achieving the desired learning outcomes.

Session-wise feedback further emphasized the program's success. The session on 'Collaborative Governance - Clarifying Roles of ERs & Mission Functionaries' was the top-rated, with 78% of participants rating it as 'Excellent'. Sessions covering AMRUT, SBM 2.0 & NHM schemes, and the Group Exercise on the theme 'Integrated Mission Action Plan Objective', each received 72% 'Excellent' ratings, indicating consistent quality and engagement. However, sessions covering the PMAY-U and OSC Scheme received more varied feedback, suggesting opportunities for improvement in content delivery and participant alignment.



## GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAM





Special Program on

## One Stop Centre (Sakhi) Scheme: Ensuring Women's Health, Safety and Empowerment

04<sup>th</sup> August 2025  
Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, popularly known as Sakhi, is a flagship initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, aimed at providing integrated support services, like medical, legal, psychological and shelter, to women affected by violence. To strengthen awareness and enhance capacity for effective implementation of OSC - Sakhi scheme, Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES) of All India Institute of Local Self Government (AIILSG), Mumbai organized a Special Program on 'One Stop Centre (Sakhi) Scheme: Ensuring Women's Health, Safety and Empowerment' for the staff members of AIILSG, Mumbai on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at AIILSG, Mumbai with support from Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI). The event witnessed the active participation of 55 staff members; notably, women made up over 60% of the attendees, reflecting their commitment and engagement with the theme.

The program commenced with a warm welcome by Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, followed by opening remarks from Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, RCUES of AIILSG, Mumbai and a

special address by Dr. Sneha Palnitkar, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Waste Management Research Centre (WMRC), AIILSG, Mumbai, emphasizing community-led approaches to women's empowerment. Dr. Jairaj Phatak, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AIILSG, inaugurated the special program with a lamp-lighting ceremony and emphasized institutional commitment to gender equality and inclusive urban governance. CA Devarshi Pandya, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Shekar Naik, Executive Director, HR & Admin., and Mr. Amit Biswas, Executive Director, Training & Exam of AIILSG, and Sr. Research Officers from RCUES Mumbai, Ms. Neha Hardikar & Ms. Maleka Ansari were also present.

Ms. Ansari explained the Sakhi Scheme's evolution and its survivor-centric approach through integration with healthcare, legal aid and local authorities. Dr. Vijaya Datey, Faculty Member & former Medical Officer, Public Health Department, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Mumbai spoke on the health and psychological support provided at OSCs, emphasizing timely intervention and holistic care. Adv. Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar, former Mayor of Mumbai and former

Chairperson of the Maharashtra State Commission for Women, detailed the legal framework (POCSO Act, DV Act, JJ Act), victim compensation, and the role of DLSA in justice delivery.

An engaging Q&A session allowed participants to clarify aspects of the OSC scheme, its convergence with helplines and shelter services and legal frameworks.

Dr. Salvi concluded the session with a Vote of Thanks, appreciating the contributions of all speakers and participants. Feedback was collected to assess the program's impact and effectiveness.

This special program successfully enhanced awareness, built institutional capacity, and reaffirmed AILSG's commitment to women-centric urban development.

## GLIMPSES OF THE SPECIAL PROGRAM





# Consultation on Social Protection for Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Populations: Assessing Needs and Exploring Strategies, organized by SNEHA, Mumbai.

25<sup>th</sup> August 2025  
Mumbai, Maharashtra.

On 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025, the RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai, team was invited to a Consultation on 'Social Protection for Vulnerable Rural and Tribal Populations: Assessing Needs and Exploring Strategies' organized by Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA) at the Savitribai Phule Gender Resource Centre, Prabhadevi, Mumbai.

Dr. Ajit Salvi, Director, RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai, delivered a presentation titled 'Decentralized Governance in Action: Maharashtra's Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)', drawing upon the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment, emphasizing that PRIs stand as the cornerstone of decentralized democracy and are pivotal in bridging critical gaps in social protection, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and service delivery. Dr. Salvi highlighted the powers, functions and fiscal roles of PRIs, further focusing on implementation challenges and their alignment with national missions such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G), the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and the National Health Mission (NHM), with the transformative outcomes of

case studies from Hiware Bazar, Ralegan Siddhi, Jalna's women-led Panchayats and Beed's drought resilience initiatives.

Mrs. Maleka Ansari, Sr. Research Officer and Ms. Mansi Gothankar, Research Associate, from the RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai's team, actively participated and provided inputs in a group exercise that evaluated a Gram Panchayat's performance based on designed indicators across various thematic areas.

Panel discussions reinforced the importance of capacity building, convergence of schemes, community participation, women's leadership in strengthening governance, improving health & nutrition outcomes, social protection needs of rural & tribal populations, barriers to access and collaborative pathways with PRIs.

Prof. Amita Bhide from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai helped set the broader context by highlighting the link between PRIs and social protection. Building on this, grassroots perspectives were brought in by Dr. Kavita Ware, Sarpanch from Murbad Taluka, who shared practical challenges and

opportunities of PRI functioning at village level. Together, these insights connected both conceptual clarity and ground realities.

For RCUES, Mumbai, the consultation was important as it offered insights into rural governance and the role of social

protection systems in shaping local development. The discussions also opened pathways for future opportunities to contribute in bridging urban and rural strategies for inclusive and sustainable growth through collaboration with such organizations.

## GLIMPSES OF THE CONSULTATION





## Framing the Future



*The RCUES of AILSG, Mumbai, had an effective meeting with Mr. Gunvantsinh Solanki, IAS, Municipal Commissioner, Nadiad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat. The discussion laid the groundwork for future collaboration for training to achieve a greater impact by clubbing nearby ULBs.*

*Mr. Mahendra Desai, Dy. Municipal Commissioner, Nadiad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat, promised mutual commitment to build stronger collaborations for sustainable urban governance in the future for the newly formed Corporation.*



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Since 1968 the RCUES, Mumbai is supported by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India

Printed by All India Institute of Local Self-Government, Mumbai.

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