

# Media Framing of Civic Issues in Post-Pandemic Mumbai: A Study of Urban Governance and Civic Journalism

## Abstract

We are most affected by our immediate surroundings, and the cities we live in are our most intimate landscapes, shaping our daily experiences and quality of life. In Mumbai, a sprawling metropolis full of diversity, the importance of covering civic issues cannot be overstated. Civic issues, ranging from waste management and public transportation to housing and water supply, directly impact the well-being of millions of residents. They form the backbone of urban life, influencing not just the physical environment but also the social and economic fabric of the city. The rapid pace of urbanisation has put immense pressure on its infrastructure, leading to problems like traffic congestion, pollution, and inadequate public services. By shining a light on these issues, media coverage in the form of hyperlocal news coverage can play a crucial role in fostering transparency and accountability. It can bring attention to the needs of marginalised communities, highlight the efforts of civic authorities, and inspire collective action towards sustainable urban development. Moreover, covering civic issues in Mumbai is essential for empowering citizens. Informed citizens are better equipped to engage with local governance, advocate for their rights, and contribute to the city's growth. Media plays a pivotal role in this process by providing a platform for dialogue and debate, amplifying the voices of those often unheard, and ensuring that civic issues remain a priority in public discourse. Hence, this research presents a case study of Mumbai's civic coverage, focusing on common frames employed in articles related to solutions, participatory governance, and citizen journalism. By adopting the constructivist perspective in media theory, this study aims to underscore the media's role in shaping reality, particularly through framing. To achieve this, a qualitative content analysis of 16 articles published in the post-pandemic period from 2022 to 2024 will be conducted to identify prevalent frames in civic coverage. In addition to the content analysis, the research will include four semi-structured interviews. These interviews will be acquired through a purposive sampling method, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. The interviews will delve into topics surrounding hyperlocal news, local governance, solutions storytelling, and citizen journalism, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these elements interact and influence public perception. By exploring these themes, the research aims to illuminate the ways in which media coverage can foster informed and engaged communities. The insights gained from this study will contribute to a broader understanding of the media's role in civic life, particularly in a complex urban environment like Mumbai. Ultimately, this research seeks to demonstrate how effective

media framing can drive positive change, encouraging participatory governance and highlighting innovative solutions to urban challenges. The findings indicate that while coverage emphasises solution-oriented and participatory governance themes, significantly shaping public discourse and engagement, legacy newspapers still struggle to prioritise these issues.