



AVANTHA
FOUNDATION

GOVERNANCE FELLOWSHIPS

A two-year fellowship program for young professionals to engage in live urban governance reform projects. Fellows are placed with Urban Local Governments, contributing through research-based and participatory action projects aimed at improved public service delivery, fiscal governance and enhanced citizen participation.

Governance Fellows from Batch 2014-16 after their valedictory in Pune



The fellowship program provides a unique opportunity for young professionals in governance and public policy space to improve their knowledge and gain first-hand experience in contemporary urban local governance. Fellows serve as catalysts for affirmative action at both systems and community levels.

Engaging the System

Fellows actively engage with decision-makers, elected representatives and municipal functionaries in their assigned towns. They are placed within the Urban Local Government and serve as a key resource for implementing a range of governance reform initiatives, including vision-building, capacity strengthening, enhancing workplace efficiencies through improved systems and processes, knowledge transition and innovations as well as improving ULG's connect with citizens.

Working with Communities

At the community level, Fellows serve as facilitators for decentralized governance by improving citizen participation at different levels of decision-making. They work with elected representatives to form and build capacities of Ward Committees and promote a wide range of citizen-centric activities including formulation of decentralized ward development plans through public participation. They help bring an enhanced level of talent and technical competence to the ULG to support innovations such as GIS-based town planning, citizen report cards etc.

Selection and Mentoring

Post-graduates in social sciences, public policy, development studies, social work, law or humanities are considered for the fellowship. Applicants who qualify the interview and are willing to independently live and work in the intervention town are awarded the fellowship.

Fellows are mentored by the core team at Avantha Foundation besides being provided with technical inputs by subject experts. Periodic reviews, experience-sharing meetings and peer learning opportunities are part of the learning process.



PHOTO CREDIT: Avantha Foundation

Fellows undergo an induction program prior to being assigned to intervention towns. The induction program covers following topics:

- Urban governance frameworks
- Federalism in India
- Urban infrastructure
- Municipal finance
- Role of GIS
- Government relations
- Leadership



“I found the experience of Avantha Governance Fellowship one of its kind. It has helped me bud into a dynamic professional that I am today. The learnings have been of immense value in exploring my strengths and leadership skills.”

Rima Sengupta, Senior Project Officer, Quality Education Support Trust Fellow (Batch 2014-16)



“Interactions with urban development experts and organizations working in different cities provided me with a deep understanding of the challenges and limitations in small urban towns. I explored the scope for innovation with effective service delivery mechanisms, citizen engagement and sustainable revenue generation. The fact that I am now preparing for doctoral studies in urban governance is a true measure of inspiration provided by this fellowship.”

Bikrama Nayak, Founder Secretary, Sandhaan Fellow (Batch 2014-16)



“The Fellowship gave me an opportunity to understand the nuances, challenges, and complexities associated with delivering change in ULGs. I was able to make a positive contribution in Kumhari town, where the municipality initiated an innovative program to manage solid waste. It was a life-changing experience.”

Rashmi Ranjan, Program Officer, PRIA Fellow (Batch 2014-2016)

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