

**THE MISSING CIVIC MINDSET: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS**

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**Abstract:**

Civic mindset refers to the sense of responsibility that individuals show towards society, including maintaining cleanliness, following rules, protecting public property, and actively participating in community development. In many underdeveloped and developing regions, the absence of such a mindset has become a major reason for persistent civic problems such as improper waste disposal, poor sanitation, damaged infrastructure, traffic indiscipline, and lack of community participation. Despite the availability of government facilities and regulations, these issues continue due to weak civic awareness and low citizen involvement. This field project titled “The Missing Civic Mindset: Causes and Solutions” aims to study the reasons behind this behaviour and suggest practical measures to improve civic responsibility among citizens.

The study focuses on understanding the everyday civic problems faced by local communities and analysing how people perceive their civic rights and duties. It also examines the social, educational, economic, and administrative factors that contribute to the lack of civic discipline. Primary data was collected through direct observation, informal interviews, and interaction with local residents, while secondary data was obtained from articles, government websites, online reports, and social media sources. The study adopts a descriptive approach to capture real ground-level conditions rather than theoretical assumptions.

The findings reveal that although many citizens are aware of civic rules, they do not take them seriously in daily life. Cleanliness issues remain common due to irregular waste collection, lack of dustbins, and a general belief that maintaining public spaces is solely the government’s responsibility. Community participation is low, and people often feel that individual efforts do not bring meaningful change. Youth show relatively higher awareness levels, but active involvement in civic initiatives remains limited.

The study highlights that improving civic mindset requires a combined effort of awareness, behavioural change, effective governance, and community participation. In recent times, Artificial Intelligence has emerged as a supportive tool in addressing civic challenges by enabling digital platforms for issue reporting, monitoring, and faster response from authorities. AI-based applications allow citizens to report problems easily using images and location data, increasing transparency and accountability. Such technology helps bridge the gap between citizens and authorities while motivating people to participate actively in civic improvement.

The project concludes that the missing civic mindset is not only a social issue but also a behavioural one that can be improved through education, youth involvement, strict enforcement of rules, and the smart use of technology. When citizens understand that their individual actions matter and are supported by efficient systems, long-term civic improvement becomes possible. Small responsible actions, combined with community effort and AI-enabled solutions, can significantly contribute to building a cleaner, healthier, and more progressive society.

**Keywords:** Civic Mindset, Civic Responsibility, Cleanliness, Community Participation, Public Behaviour, Awareness, Underdeveloped Areas, Governance, Youth Involvement, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Platforms, Civic Issues

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**Introduction:**

The idea for this field project comes from simple, everyday moments:

Walking through a street filled with garbage, stepping over a pothole full of Muddy water, getting stuck in traffic on a narrow road, or watching a public Park slowly fall apart because no one feels responsible for it. In many Underdeveloped and developing areas, these scenes are no longer unusual—They have quietly become part of daily life.

People often complain about the smell, the mosquitoes, the broken footpaths, or the overflowing drains. Yet, At the same time, wrappers are thrown on the road, taps are left running, and traffic signals are ignored. This gap between what people say they want—a clean, safe, and orderly neighbourhood—and how they actually behave forms the heart of this study. If everyone desires a better locality, why does Action fall so far behind awareness? At the centre of this question is what this project calls the “civic mindset”—a simple sense of responsibility towards shared spaces and fellow citizens. It is not a complex idea; it shows up in small, everyday choices.

It appears when someone walks a few extra steps to find a dustbin, when a shopkeeper avoids blocking a footpath, or when a commuter follows traffic rules even when no police officer is watching. It is reflected when people treat public places with the same care they give their own homes. Many underdeveloped areas do have basic civic infrastructure like toilets, dustbins, drains, or roads. But these often fall into disrepair because they are Used carelessly or maintained poorly. This project begins with the Observation that infrastructure alone cannot transform a community unless People use it responsibly.

**Review of literature:**

A civic mindset refers to the attitudes, behaviors, responsibilities, and values that individuals hold

toward engagement in civic life, society, and governance. It encompasses awareness of public issues, appreciation of democratic values, and participation in collective actions (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Those with a strong civic mindset demonstrate commitment to community welfare, ethical citizenship, and social responsibility.

Researchers identify civic mindset as multidimensional, involving:

**Civic knowledge:** Understanding of political and social structures (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). **Civic attitudes and values:** Belief in justice, equality, and common good (Doolittle & Faul, 2013).

**Civic engagement:** Active participation in community and political processes (Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). The missing civic mindset reflects a deficit in these components, often resulting in apathy, low participation, and weakened democratic engagement (Galston, 2001). Several studies highlight a decline in civic participation and awareness among young people: Putnam (2000) documents falling civic engagement in America, linking it to reduced social capital. Kahne & Sporte (2008) find that students seldom engage in civic learning outside classrooms, contributing to disengagement. Watts, Williams & Jagers (2003) observe that youth often feel powerless to impact political systems, weakening their civic interest.

Civic mindset refers to individuals’ internalized commitment to participate in civic life and uphold democratic values (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Research shows that this mindset has declined in many societies, particularly among youth, due to educational shortcomings and the influence of digital media (Putnam, 2000; Bennett, 2008). Putnam’s work highlights the erosion of social capital and civic participation over time, arguing that reduced involvement in community associations correlates with weaker democratic engagement.

A growing body of research identifies multiple, interrelated causes behind the decline of civic mindset across diverse populations.

**Educational Deficits:** One of the strongest themes in the literature is the inadequacy of civic education. Studies show that civic learning in schools often focuses narrowly on knowledge of rights rather than actionable participation skills, leaving students poorly prepared for active civic life. Young people frequently lack substantive opportunities to engage with real civic issues, which limits their understanding of civic responsibility and diminishes their motivation to participate.

**Erosion of Social Capital and Community Connections:** Robert Putnam's seminal work *Bowling Alone* highlights the long-term decline of social capital — the networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity that foster civic participation — as communities become more fragmented and individualized. Putnam links declines in community involvement, such as reduced membership in civic associations and lower volunteerism, with a weakening of civic culture.

Contemporary surveys also demonstrate that youth who lack in-person community engagement are less likely to believe they can make a difference or participate in civic life, indicating that weakened communal ties directly impact civic attitudes.

**Individualism and Cultural Shifts:** Sociological accounts suggest that the rise of individualism and consumer culture has diverted attention away from collective action. Emphasis on personal achievement and consumer pursuits can overshadow concern for shared civic responsibilities. When individual goals are prioritized over community well-being, civic engagement may decline as people feel less connected to common goals and public institutions.

#### **Objectives of the study:**

The objective of this study is to carefully identify the

major civic challenges experienced by local residents. These problems include poor cleanliness, Irregular or unreliable waste collection, traffic indiscipline, and the careless or Irresponsible use of public spaces. However, instead of just recording these issues as generic points, the study aims to understand them from the perspective of people who face them daily. By gathering people's experiences, emotions, complaints, and small stories, the study hopes to build a realistic picture of how civic failures truly affect daily life.

#### **Application of AI in Improving Civic Mindset :**

Artificial Intelligence can play an important role in improving civic mindset by providing smart and easy solutions to everyday civic problems. AI-based applications can help citizens report issues like garbage dumping, potholes, broken streetlights, or drainage problems through photos and location tracking. These systems can automatically categorize complaints, prioritize urgent issues, and forward them to the concerned authorities for faster action.

#### **Scope of the study:**

The scope of this study grows directly from the everyday lives of people living in underdeveloped and developing localities—places where civic problems are not simply statistics in a report, but part of the morning walk to school, the route to work, and the evening trip to the market. For many communities, issues such as poor cleanliness, weak waste management, traffic chaos, and careless public behaviour are not separate topics; they are all tightly connected habits that shape people's health, dignity, comfort, and even their relationships with neighbours. Instead of trying to cover an entire country or big cities, this study intentionally narrows its focus to local neighbourhoods—streets where children play, markets where shopkeepers sweep only their doorsteps, lanes where garbage piles up, and schools where students step around stagnant water.

### Research methodology:

This study uses a people-centred research methodology that focuses on understanding the real lives, habits, and emotions of residents living in underdeveloped and developing localities. Instead of relying only on statistics, the research combines surveys, friendly interviews, group discussions, and on-ground observations to capture both what people do and how they feel about their civic responsibilities.

The study involves a diverse group of participants—children, youth, adults, elders, shopkeepers, workers, and local leaders—to ensure that different voices and experiences are heard.

Researchers visit neighbourhoods, streets, markets, and schools, carefully watching daily behaviours like waste disposal, use of public spaces, traffic discipline, and interactions with community facilities. These observations are supported by photographs and field notes that reflect the true conditions of the locality. Throughout the process, ethical care is taken to respect people’s privacy and comfort. By combining numbers with personal stories, this methodology creates a complete and human picture of the civic mindset, showing not just the actions people take, but the deeper reasons behind those actions.

### Causes:

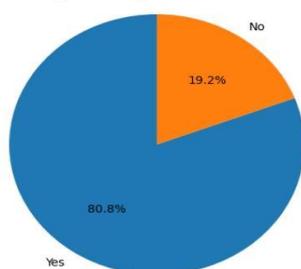
The missing civic mindset in many communities is not caused by a single factor—it grows slowly from a mix of personal habits, social influences, and everyday struggles. One of the biggest causes is lack of

awareness and education, where many people were never taught the importance of maintaining clean surroundings, respecting public spaces, or following basic civic rules.

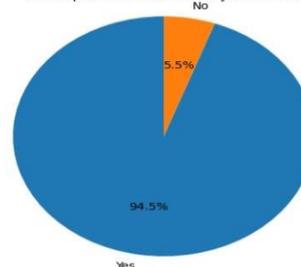
### Findings:

The findings of this study reveal that the civic mindset of many communities is shaped by a mix of awareness, habits, and everyday challenges. Most people genuinely want cleaner surroundings, safer roads, and more disciplined public behavior, but they often feel that their efforts alone will not make a difference. Many residents admitted that they avoid following certain Civic rules—not because they do not understand them, but because they see others breaking them without consequences. In several underdeveloped areas, poor infrastructure, irregular government services, and lack of strict enforcement make it even harder for people to stay responsible. The study also found that a large number of citizens have grown up in environments where littering, ignoring traffic rules, or misusing public spaces is seen as “normal,” and these habits continue into adulthood. At the same time, there were positive findings: people responded strongly when cleanliness drives or awareness programs were organized, showing that with proper guidance and community support, individuals are willing to change. Overall, the findings highlight that the missing civic mindset is not due to a lack of care, but due to weak systems, old habits, and the absence of a collective sense of responsibility

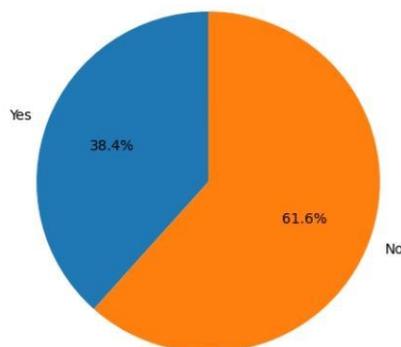
Willingness to Improve Civic Behaviour



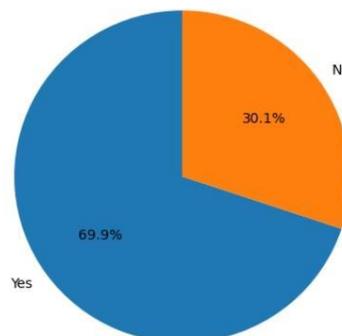
Participation in Community Activities



Government Support Satisfaction



Awareness of Civic Responsibility



App Mechanism :- Civic hive

To bridge this gap, we designed a digital solution called Civic Hive – a reward based civic reporting system. Before explaining the steps, here`s how the system will function in reality:

1. The app`s development and maintenance can be supported through CSR funding from local industries.
2. Additionally verified volunteers will be boarded on the app with their consent.
3. These volunteers may include senior local reporters, municipality officials, and recognised NGO`s people who already work closely with community issues and can serve as trusted verifiers. Now the app mechanism works like this:

Step 1: Users register and receive a unique code.



Step 2: they report an issue by clicking a photo – AI identifies it automatically.



Step 3: verification happens through :

- Citizens within 500m confirming it
- A trusted volunteer verifying it



Step 4: after verification users earn clean coins , based on GPS + crowd confirmation.



Step 5: each valid report gives 2 clean coins, up to 10 coins per day



Step 6: local shops and partners offer discounts / vouchers for active users.



Step 7: High scoring users receive badges and appreciation.

#### ◆ Application of AI in Civic Hive

AI in Civic Hive is not cosmetic. It is the core enforcement and trust engine. Most civic apps fail because of fake reports, low engagement, and no accountability — AI fixes exactly that.

#### 1 AI-Based Issue Detection (At the Time of Reporting)

##### •How it works

User clicks a photo of a civic issue

AI analyses the image to:

Identify type of issue

(garbage, pothole, broken streetlight, water leakage, illegal dumping, etc.)

Check image authenticity

Fresh image (not gallery-uploaded old photos)

No screenshots or reused images

##### •Why it matters

Prevents false categorization

Stops spam and recycled images

Removes dependency on user honesty

•What makes Civic Hive different

Most apps rely on manual tagging by users

Civic Hive uses AI tagging + validation at source

2 AI + GPS Integrity Check

•How it works

1.AI cross-verifies:

2.Image metadata

3.Real-time GPS coordinates

4.Timestamp

5.Flags:

Mismatch between photo location & user location

Repeated reporting from same spot by same user

•Why it matters

Stops reward farming

Ensures reports are real-time & local

Differentiator

Other apps trust location permission blindly

Civic Hive uses AI logic + metadata consistency

3 Smart Crowd Verification using AI Logic

•How it works

AI identifies users within 500m radius

Selects credible verifiers based on:

Past verification accuracy

Civic score

Requires 5–6 confirmations to proceed

•Why it matters

Prevents mass fake approvals

Reduces bias

Differentiator

Existing apps allow open verification

Civic Hive uses AI-curated micro-crowds

4 Volunteer Credibility Scoring

•How it works

AI tracks volunteer behaviour:

Accuracy of verification

Frequency of fake approvals

Assigns trust weight

Higher weight = more authority

Repeated wrong calls = demotion

•Why it matters

Prevents corruption or negligence

Builds self-regulating system

Differentiator

Most platforms treat volunteers equally

Civic Hive uses dynamic trust scoring

5 AI-Controlled Clean coin Distribution

•How it works

Clean coins released only when:

AI issue detection

GPS + time verified

Crowd & volunteer confirmation

AI enforces:

1.Daily caps

2.Report limits

3.Suspicious pattern detection

•Why it matters

Protects reward economy

Prevents inflation and abuse

Differentiator

Other apps reward instantly

Civic Hive rewards after AI validation

6 Behavioural AI Nudges

•How it works

1. AI studies user behaviour:

2. Reporting frequency

3. Verification participation

4. Drop-off points

Sends personalized nudges:

1.“Your area improved by 18% this month”

2.“2 reports away from Civic Hero badge”

•Why it matters

Converts action into habit

Reduces app fatigue

Differentiator

Others send generic reminders

Civic Hive sends context-aware nudges

### Conclusion:

The study on civic mindset reveals a simple but powerful truth:

The way people behave in public spaces reflects much more than habits—it shows how connected they feel to their community and how responsible they feel for the environment they live in. Through conversations, observations, and real-life examples, this research found that many civic problems—like littering, traffic indiscipline, misuse of public spaces, and neglect of common facilities—are not just caused by lack of resources, but by a deeper lack of awareness, motivation, and trust among citizens. People often know what the right thing is, but daily pressures, poor role models, weak enforcement, and a feeling that “nothing will change” stop them from acting responsibly. Youth, in particular, have shown strong potential to influence their surroundings when guided and encouraged.

The missing civic mindset is one of the main reasons underdeveloped regions continue to face repeated issues such as poor sanitation, lack of unity, and slow overall progress. Although most people are aware of basic civic duties, they often fail to follow them in their daily lives. This gap between awareness and action highlights the need for better participation, stronger accountability, and supportive systems.

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