

# **FORUM**

## **FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD**

Eight Years of Activism & Service

**Annual Number  
2007-2008**

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**FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD**

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## **The FORUM's Objectives are...**

- To be proactive and constructive
- To mobilize public opinion
- To stand up and make it heard on major issues exposing lack of concern or neglect of environmental consideration.
- To involve in decision-making on such issues.

The FORUM is focused on issues pertaining to Sustainable Development by highlighting the ecological and environmental problems caused by uncaring and unthinking developmental activities disregarding required prior assessment.

The Voice of the FORUM is being echoed from the past seven years in many Public Interest Areas, contributing significantly to the betterment of environmental/ecological concerns.

The forum came into existence in the year 2000 then became a registered public trust in 2003 and is functioning through various subcommittees, and net working with NGOs, bringing to light issues pertaining to Urban Planning, Development and Management, Heritage Conservation, Lakes & Water Bodies, Parks, Forests and Open Space, Traffic & Transportation, Water & Air Pollution, Solid & Industrial Waste Management.

These and many other such relevant issues are brought to the notice of the Authorities (and if required pressurizing them to take action) offering positive suggestions and optimum solutions. The FORUM also has the credit of Public Interest Litigations whenever called for, and we are proud to say that in most cases the FORUM filing has been successful in its endeavours.

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# FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD ANNUAL 2007-2008

## FOREWORD

*Er. Vedakumar M.*

*President, Forum for a Better Hyderabad*

As eight eventful years have gone by, the Forum is happy to witness the spread of its initiative. Since its inception in the year 2000, the Forum, comprising a growing group of Nature conscious individuals and NGOs, has expressed its concerns over several issues relating to the Environment and Ecological balance and development in the state of Andhra Pradesh particularly in the city of Hyderabad.

Hyderabad is proud to have a large number of Heritage Buildings and Monuments testifying to its historical, architectural and ecological heritage. Hyderabad was formerly called the city of gardens and ironically the neighbourhoods are gardens in name only today.

I am pleased to present a significant development that is enabling the Forum to take up more issues and successfully represent to the authorities its concerns and representations for the sustainable city. For the first time, the Forum is able to gather the support of several NGO's and other organizations. The collective efforts of these organizations like COVA, CHATRI, U-FERWA, APNAWATAN, CON-

CERNED CITIZENS, GAMANA, UFRTI, CHILDRENS' ACADEMY, SAVE ROCK SOCIETY, CITIZENS FOR BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT, UMANAGAR RESIDENTS' WELFARE ASSOCIATION etc., in association with and in support of the Forum's own efforts are creating a significant movement on the lines of a confederation, while tackling several issues with government departments. This has helped to highlight the issues more extensively and bring up more initiatives for discussion and implementation.

The Master Plan for Hyderabad has been notified and kept open for objections, suggestions and proposals for changes. The Forum has strenuously presented its viewpoints through Press Meets urging for greater discussion among the people. It had suggested that the Master Plan be made available to the people in more public areas to gather their objections, suggestions and complaints for remedial action. A Round Table Conference was held at Institution of Engineers Hyderabad with participants invited

from the NGOs and citizens on 9th July, 2007 and all aspects of the Master Plan were deliberated upon extensively. The conference demanded that the Government come out with a single comprehensive draft Master Plan for notification. The conference also demanded constitution of a Metropolitan Planning Committee and follow the provisions of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. These demands were presented to the Government and also to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for consideration.

The Forum has been active in urging the Municipal Administration and Urban Development authorities to lay down more stringent stipulations at the planning stage so that developers are not tempted to violate the norms with impunity and get them regularized later through the Building Regularisation Schemes. It had proposed that officials be made accountable for the irregularities. The Forum was critical of the Government's announcement of a new Compulsory Disclosure Scheme and FBH approached the court to direct the Government from bowing to the pressure of powerful builders' lobby and levying petty penalties. The Forum's view that imposition of severe penalties would deter the builders from committing violations.

The Forum, in association with several civil NGOs, put up a strong fight against the proposed amendments to the GOMs 111, which would have impacted severely on the water bodies of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar lakes. The unfettered development of the upstream and downstream areas and bulldozing of the legal issues would have led to the

death of the water resources that the Twin Cities rely on. The Forum objected to the High Rise real estate activity so close to the lakes. Forum has submitted its representation to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and subsequently it has filed a PIL.

Forum organized awareness programmes in schools in connection with Ganesh idols. The effort to save the water bodies from the pollution caused by immersion of the Ganesh idols. FBH also organized workshop in association with the A.P. Pollution Control Board for the artisans creating Ganesh idols out of environmentally friendly materials and using vegetable colours. The mass distribution of leaflets in newspapers, a programme at People's Plaza and a procession was organized to highlight the need for Eco-conservation.

Hyderabad is proud to have a large number of Heritage buildings and monuments testifying to its historical, architectural and ecological heritage. Hyderabad was formerly called the city of gardens and ironically the neighbourhoods are gardens in name only today. The Forum has been active in making efforts to prevent the destruction of the priceless heritage buildings due to road widening and unscrupulous developers.

I have been involved in the Heritage Listing project jointly undertaken by INTACH Hyderabad Chapter and HUDA. It is a matter of concern that only 137 + 14 buildings have been listed, where as Hyderabad deserves more than 1500 heritage buildings. There is a need for comprehensive listing as early as possible as these buildings may vanish in the

unchecked real estate development activity in the Twin Cities.

The Right to Information Act has proved to be invaluable to the Forum's efforts in tackling various issues. It has submitted several requests for information under the Act, and the information thus collected went a long way in getting the government to act upon its recommendations. The Act enabled the Forum to access documents and to present a strong case for action in several cases.

Myself and Prof.C.Ramachandraiah had a privilege to attend the International Water Conference in Berlin, Germany held in September 2007 and present a paper on water problems in urban areas and approach to solutions considering the aspects of sustainability. The paper highlighted the Forum's Musi Conservation Study Pilot Project. The project report was also submitted to the sponsors Humboldt University, Germany. The paper was well received by the distinguished audience of water experts from around the world.

The creeping urbanization has affected the environment with the mass destruction of trees to make way for roads and widening of existing roads and in the name of development. In this connection the Forum has strongly urged the authorities to lay down specific regulations under which trees could be conserved and cutting to be considered only as a last resort.

In this connection the Forum has strongly urged the authorities to lay down specific regulations under which trees could be conserved and cutting to be considered only as a last resort.

The Forum rededicates itself to advocate Human Accountability to the Environment, in the state of Andhra Pradesh and particularly Hyderabad metropolitan area. It will continue its contributions for creative and critical measures and offer solutions to Environmental and Ecological Issues also by involving young people. We are hopeful that the Forum's voice and its involving civil society will be able to influence the Government in a positive way for creating a better environment and enhancing the quality of life.

The Forum has actively participated in Environmental and Urban issues related workshops, seminars, conferences, organized by various Government Departments.

The Forum expresses its gratitude to Sri. K. Srinivasa Murthy and Sri.Mohan Rao for their valuable and timely legal service.

It is my privilege to acknowledge gratefully the silent and strong efforts of all who are working for the Forum in various ways.

We have traversed a long way certainly , but there is much more to be done and we humbly request the involvement of more and more number of committed and young people to join our fight on a larger number of issues for the greater good of society.

# Right to Information Act, 2005

*Dr. M. Mandal, Convenor, RTA*

The members of the Forum along with like minded NGO's conducted a one day programme to educate the public about the RTI act 2005. They also helped the persons to write out applications for information they needed under the RTI act 2005.

The Forum asked for information under the RTI act 2005 from the concerned departments in regards to:

Particulars of land allotted to Commercial Organizations

- a, Details regarding land allotted to M/s. Hinduja power project Ltd. Visakapatnam for establishing power project and the MOU and agreement with them.
- b, Particulars of land given to various private companies since 2000 for developing housing colonies, commercial buildings etc. and whether any advertisements were issued or tenders called for before allotment.
- c, Allotment of land to IT parks and Finance district Nanakramguda and details of land allotted to certain companies named in our letter.

d, Information was sought from various concerned departments regarding allotment of land under ITC policy for different years.

The requested information was furnished to us.

Information having a bearing on Building Penalization Scheme

We sought for information on several matters to enable us to examine the justification for the issue of BPS ordinance by the State Government. Our application was rejected direct by the Principal Secretary MA&UD who was also the appellate authority under RTI act on the plea that the information does not come under the ambit of the definition of information stipulated under the RTI act 2005. We contested the proposition before the State information commissioner. The latter directed us to appeal to the appellate authority of MA&UD, which we did. A reply is still awaited , although more than a month has elapsed since the submission of the appeal.

## **COST OF SUPPLY OF INFORMATION**

In an intresting case where the Forum had sought information regarding building plans /

correspondence & file notings concerning Big Bazaar at Ameerpet, the GHMC demanded a sum of Rs.44,787.00 on account of actual charges as per their bye-laws. On an appeal by us to apply the charges under the RTI act for providing the information, the State Information Commissioner upheld the stand taken by GHMC. We appealed to the Honorable High Court to grant our request and even to direct the GHMC to provide the information free of cost as the prescribed time was already past. Subsequently we requested the Court to direct the GHMC to furnish the information on payment of cost as per RTI act and we committed to pay additional cost if any as would be ruled by the Court. The Court granted the request and we got the information. Our contention, that information sought under RTI act should be furnished as per charges prescribed therein, and such rates of

charges should supersede the charges prescribed in the rules of the concerned departments, is pending with the Court.

**Restriction on certain types of vehicles to reach the new airport**

On perusal of report in some news papers, we inquired from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport authority at Shamshabad whether they have imposed any restriction on the entry of two wheelers / autos into the airport and if so under what authority. We made similar enquiries from the concerned district collector and the commissioner of Police.

We were informed by the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport authority that no such restriction was imposed by them on entry to the airport by two wheelers or autos.

**Last trees Begumpet**

*Courtesy : Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*





# Why are trees important in our life?

***M. Kamal Naidu IFS (Retd.)***

***Former, Chairman, Godavari Valley Dev. Authority & Principal Chief Conservator of***

When Charaka was asked by his teacher to procure the most useless tree, he wandered about extensively, and returned back empty handed, and said that “he could not find one”. So that is the importance of trees to mankind, nay to sustain life on this earth. It is for this reason a sanskrit couplet stated: “Moolto Brahmaroopaya, Madhyato Vishnurupini, Agrato Shivaroopay, Vraksharajay tenamah” meaning “From the roots to stem to crown, thou art the incarnation of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, my salutation to thee Oh Noble Tree”.

Man’s dependence on forest produce is as old as man’s existence on the earth. Early man depended on wood for fire, shelter and defense against animals; he depended on other forest produce for food, cure from ailments, and varied subsidiary needs. It had been their way of life as the adage goes “from the cradle to the grave”. Often the economic importance of non-wood forest products has been lost sight off inspite of being in reality the major used item of the forest products. Every other product of forests besides timber, small wood and fuel wood constitutes the non-wood forest product. They are chiefly listed as—foods or edible products, fodder and grasses, bamboos and canes, medicinal products (plants, leaves, flowers, fruit, bark and roots with curative properties), spices, resins, gums, commercial leaves, natural dyes and tannins, starches, oils and fats, insecticides, fibres and flosses, and animal products like honey, silk,

lac, horns and skins, bones, etc. Today therefore the role of forest produce has gained importance for sustainable development of rural and urban areas without disturbing environmental quality.

It was estimated in 2003 that there are 3000 plants having medicinal value, 250 bearing essential oils or commercial seeds, 100 species giving dyes, and 120 giving resin and gums. The recorded production of collection of different useful products was 101,200 tonnes of food products, 132,250 tonnes of myrobalans, 8, 000,000 tonnes of sal, mahua and neem seed, 1600 tonnes palmrosa, 1200 tonnes of eucalyptus, sandal oil, and lemon grass oil, 18,500 tonnes of gum, 70,000 tonnes resin, 360,000 tonnes bidi leaves, 4,716,600 tonnes bamboo, 5,570 tonnes fibres and 30,000 tonnes of lac. The unrecorded production of many hundreds of other species products are difficult to conceive.

Therefore Gautam Buddha said: “A tree is a peculiar organism of unlimited benevolence. It makes no demand for its sustenance and extends generously its products of life activity. It affords protection to all beings, offering shade even to the axe-man who destroys it.”

We went round mercilessly cutting down gigantic trees around Paigah Palace and Rajendranagar not realizing the tremendous negative impact on the micro-climate of these places as a consequence. In this regards it is pertinent to know that a 100 year old pipal tree, having 200,000

leaves with a surface area of 1200sq. meters, assimilates on sunny days 54000 litres of carbon dioxide from 36000 cum of air, and releases 94000 litres of oxygen. This tree contains 2500 kg of pure carbon, which it had stored during its life time, after processing carbon dioxide from 18 million cum. of natural air. This tree had changed photo-chemically 9100 kg of carbon dioxide and 3700 litres of water to give out 660 kg of oxygen for use of man and animal. During this period it had also lifted 2500 tonnes of water from its roots into the crown and dispersed into the atmosphere adding to its humidity by utilizing a heat equivalent to 25,000 kg of coal. A car using 9.6 litres of gasoline per 100 km on completing 30,000 km would have used up all the oxygen produced by this tree during the 100 years.

Today the oxygen consumption by one person is the same as it was by 16 persons some 25 years ago because of the high oxygen consuming gadgets he uses. For instance a car travelling 1000 km consumes as much as a man consumes per year. Again the burning process of 10 litres of gasoline or heating oil or 10 kg coal consumes on the average 23 kg of oxygen which is enough to meet a humans need for 3 weeks, as an adult consumes 500-700 litres a day or one-third ton per year, while 6 tons per year per person are used to operate his various gadgets or 'energy slaves' (machinery used for support of man such as cars, heating and cooling devices and appliances, etc.). To produce these 6 tonnes of oxygen requires green vegetation equal to 10,000sqm. or a tree with a photosynthetic build up of 4.4 tonnes dry substance. Imagine with heavy deforestation as to whether it is your tree that is being bull-dosed tomorrow.

It is on account of such realization in our ancestral days that Manu's Dharmashastra says "A fine must be imposed for injuring all kinds of trees, in accordance with their usefulness, this is the rule". It is again because of such importance that an amendment was made in our Indian Constitution in 1976 by incorporating duties and responsibilities

for the State and all citizens towards the environments through:

Article 48(A): State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safe-guard the forest and wildlife in the country.

Article 51(A)(g): To protect and improve the natural environment including forest, lakes and rivers, and wildlife, and to have compassion for all living creatures.

Trees provide shade and protection from sun and inclement weather. Trees permit a moderating or controlling influence on the city climate thus giving comfort to our living both in outdoors and also indoors. Cities have been called as "Urban heat islands" in the general temperature pattern of a region as compared to rural areas which are 10-15 degrees cooler. Trees can be used to screen people and surfaces from direct solar radiation. It is established that trees have a very direct influence on thermal comfort at a micro-scale by way of their modifying influence on the air-temperature, relative humidity, wind speed, solar radiation and infrared radiation. Landsberg (1970) reported his results of measurement using infrared thermometer of several surfaces and found on a bright summer day temperature of west facing wall and parking lot pavement to be over 45°C, and the surface of a grass lawn only 33°C, and the air over the grass in an enclosed space was 31°C only.

This fact can be experienced by anyone on a hot summer day, walking in the sun and walking under the shades of trees. Why do we park a vehicle in shade of a tree rather than out in the open even if it be for a brief moment? It had been studied that the climate was cooler in the open zoo by 4.8° than the premises of a building inside the city near Secretariat on a mid May afternoon. Therefore can we do away with trees in urban areas? It is for this reason that trees have been termed as nature's air-conditioner because of the large amount of heat that

is used in transpiring large quantity of water. It is reported that a medium sized tree of 0.1 sq. km leaf area can cool the air in summer equivalent as good as 20 ACs working for 20 hours a day.

Trees and other vegetation can also screen hot surfaces from the view of the people and thus reduce the infrared radiation effect by its interception. Infrared radiation from trees and its leaves is much less than from hot walls. Trees with columnar shape and relatively dense crowns are generally best.

Innumerable studies have been done which concluded that trees can alter the physical energy budget of buildings by influencing the air movement, radiation exchange and air temperature and thus reduce the fuel (energy) consumption. This was reported by CG Bates (1945) that 40% fuel saving was possible with a 10 row windbreak. W. Flemmer (1974) reported in 'The role of plants in today's energy conservation' that when a tree windbreak reached the height of the house it effected a saving in fuel of 10% per winter over the former exposed condition.

The Pennsylvanian State Univ. Noise Control Laboratory has shown that a typical forest floor of either decaying leaves or needles are excellent acoustic absorbers over a fairly wide range of frequencies. Several researchers made studies on sound transmission in moderately dense forests having visibility between 100-200 feet and found that a locomotive's noise was reduced to 73 dB from 93dB at the point of emission. Whitcombe and Stowers (1973) had reported in an article 'Sound abatement with hedges' in Florida that dense hedges 5 ft. thick and 8 ft. high provide significant reduction in noise from lawn-movers and traffic by 5 dB. They also stated that leaf size, shape and density were of prime importance. Cook and Van Haverbeke (1971) in 'Trees and shrubs for noise

abatement' reported in Nebraska that 65-100 ft. wide belts of trees and shrubs can be effective barriers of noise from high speed traffic if the edge of the belt is within 80 ft. of the nearest traffic.

Dust is another harmful agency for ill health especially in urban areas spreading both chronic and casual diseases. Dust is harmful to health as particles smaller than 0.005mm can enter the blood stream directly from the lungs, and strain the heart by clogging the finer arteries, and also cause bronchial disturbances. Dust also reduces ultra-violet radiation and thus hampers the beneficial aspects vitamin D synthesis in the body. It has been estimated by studies that one ha of forest acts like a filter and can collect 50 tonnes of dust each season. One large tree can absorb lead produced by burning 140 litres of petrol by motor vehicles from the air per year. If lead is not absorbed by plants it is reported to cause kidney, heart and brain disorders.

Zinke (1967) estimated the retention of air-borne material ranged from 17-57% in pine stands and 82-86 % in hardwood/broad-leaved forests. Dochinger (1972) in 'Improving city air quality with trees' concluded that trees have the capacity to reduce solid particulate pollutants in the atmosphere being efficient filters of airborne particles because of their large size, high surface to volume ratio of foliage, and frequently hairy or rough surfaced leaf, twig, or bark surface. White, E.J. and Turner (1970) reported that trees also catch airborne nutrient particles and were capable of removing annually 125 kg/ha of sodium, 6 kg of potassium, 4 kg of calcium, 16 kg of magnesium and 0.1 kg of phosphorus from the atmosphere. They also stated that leaf hairiness and small branches were more efficient than smooth leaves and larger branches in all species examined. This was substantiated by Smith, W.H. (1974) who reported that leaves of urban maple tree removed from the



atmosphere 60 mgm of cadmium, 140 mgm of chromium,, 5800 mgm of lead,, and 820 mgm of nickel during the course of a single growing season. It had been estimated in Russian studies that a 50 metre green belt around a factory reduced the SO<sub>2</sub> concentration by 90% and of nitrous oxide by 67% . In London the pollution effect has been regarded as equivalent to smoking 103 cigarettes per day by a non-smoker.

Therefore Schumacker called the trees as “the most marvelous, three dimensional incredibly efficient contrivance, more wonderful than anything man can make.”

Besides the protective qualities of trees they have Educational Values as reported by W. Heron (1957) in an article in Scientific American titled ‘The Pathology of Boredom’. He observed that it is a problem to increase the amount of novelty, change, motion and complexity, but trees can provide useful diversity in an otherwise dull and deficient environment, to achieve a variety by virtue of its naturalness like:

- a) Shape –irregular shape contains more information than a regular one.
- b) Colour—associated with tree foliage in different seasons and the flowers, fruit, seed pods, bark, etc.
- c). Motion—some trees have rigid branches and some flexible, therefore their response to wind, and the sounds associated with it vary.
- d) Seasonal changes—in the colour and degree of deciduousness or leafiness.
- e) External factors—when spacing the trees, species can be varied to give a variety of experiences by way of texture, size and shape of leaves, their branching habits, odour and similar variations.

Therefore Wordsworth had said “One impulse from a vernal wood may teach you more of man, of morals, evil and good, than all the sages can”.

It was realizing this that the Cree American Indian Tribes observed: “When the last of the trees has been felled, when the last of the fish has been eaten, and the streams have gone dry, Mankind has reached a stage when it discovers that it cannot eat money”.



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# A.P. Water, Land, and Trees Act ( WALTA ) - Some comments.

*Dr. M. Mandal*

Tree felling on a massive scale has been taking place in Greater Hyderabad in the recent few years. One of the objectives of the WALTA is “ to promote tree cover”. The focus of this article is on how to make WALTA more effective in achieving this objective,

WALTA has set two mechanisms to achieve its objectives regarding Preservation of trees:

- The Authority at State level , with the Chief Secretary as its vice chairperson, key officials of different concerned departments, Vice Chancellor of an Agricultural university, university professors of relevant disciplines, experts, some non-official persons, with the Secretary of Rural Development as member secretary ( Article 3(2)). The Authority at District level, with the Collector as chairperson, as members Deputy Conservator of Forests, key officials from other concerned departments, 5 non-official members (GO Ms 244 dt 26.6.02). The Authority at Mandal level chaired by the Mandal Revenue Officer, key officials from other concerned departments, Forest range officer of the nearest range, and three non-official members (GO Ms 244 dt

26.6.02, page 44).

- The Implementing agency is the Forest department for giving permission to fell trees. The Implementing agency for planting of trees is the GHMC. , municipalities. The latter also prescribe for compulsory plantations while giving building permissions. The Implementing agencies also are formed at aforesaid different levels.

## **What has gone wrong?**

- *State Authority does not play its role.* They are supposed to lay down policies, suggest legislations, guide, direct and monitor. Under the RTI Act, we have sought to know what exactly they have done so far, how many meetings have they held, what was the outcome of these meetings, Did they do any forward planning for conservation of trees, which would stand in the way of implementation of different projects in the state? Projects are conceived and planned quite a few years before implementation starts. And all projects are contained in the Master plan(s). Such projects as would need the removal of the trees could be easily

identified from plans; and their impact on trees in the project area in terms of number of trees, species, age, location, and time of removal could be determined well in time. Then a plan could be made for their suitable replacement. The state Authority can issue suitable guidelines to Authorities below to make similar exercise. They could also tell project authorities to make similar assessment in advance, to make tree conservation an integral part of their project planning. Authority at lower levels also do not make any such forward planning. . We have called for information about the functioning of the Authority at different levels under RTI Act. It seems that a representative body seems to have become defunct, at its different levels.

- *Alternatives to tree cutting are not explored.* The rule should be: First , try realignment, to save the trees. Second, try relocation through transplanting – technology is available, it is done elsewhere, cost is not prohibitive. Only the last option should be felling, but should be preceded by plantation, with proper matching in terms of species, and location. Locations for compensatory plantation should be proximate to the location where the trees would be felled, and such location should be identified beforehand. All these should be part of a project cost.
- *Decision-making process is defective.* A decision to deal with requests to fell should

be taken at the level of an Authority because of its broad base. The Implementing agency should only make a proposal. Requests for tree felling must be submitted by the project authorities, sufficiently in advance. The project authorities must explore all other alternatives and documentation of such exploration of all alternatives, should be submitted to the Authority. Further, before allowing felling, expert opinion must be taken by the Authority. A decision to fell should be subject to review by a higher Authority. This procedure will lead to better application of mind and prevent exercise of any pressure on an implementing agency at the last moment. As of now, permission is sought, close to the project completion time, and the implementing agency is rushed to take a hasty decision under pressure. Simultaneous compensatory plantation must be planned, and implemented. Also, there should be close monitoring regarding how many plantations survive beyond 3 years.

- *Corporation while giving building permission for building do not* provide for compulsory plantation or landscaping, for which provisions are there.
- Penalty for violation is levied on the basis of a dead tree, on the value of its wood, not on the basis of the utility of a tree which it renders when it is alive. What about the oxygen a tree gives and carbon it absorbs

and how many lives it thereby affects? What about the shade, and the shelter and food it provides to birds and insects? What about its aesthetic value - a tree changes the look of its surrounding! These numerous intangibles are forgotten while valuing a tree. The amount of penalty is meager. Further, violation of tree law is not a criminal offence, and one cannot register a complaint with the police.

There are provisions in WALTA, which if properly worked upon, can take care of many of these requirements. For example:

Article 2(11): 'Preservation of trees ' includes ( not synonymous with) planting of new trees and transplanting trees to other sites. In how many cases, if any at all, has the Authority/Implementing agency considered transplantation? ,

### Functions of the Authority:

Article 6(c) the state Authority is to make regulations for the functioning of the Authorities at District, Division, Mandal levels. What has the Authority done?

Article 6 (d) empowers the Authority to advise the Government on legislative & administrative measures for conservation of natural resources. What has the Authority done?

Under Article 6 (e), the Authority may advise on constitution and functions of District, Division, Mandal levels. Under Article 7, the Authority may delegate powers to District, Division, Mandal levels. What have they done?

28(1) authorizes the Authority to direct that every Municipal Corporation to insist Compulsory tree plantation with such number of trees and their maintenance , as may be prescribed while approving building plans – Such stipulations do not appear in building plans displayed.

28(3): No felling of trees or branches is permitted in an urban area without prior permission of designated officer. Where permitted, not less than two seedlings in lieu thereof has to be planted by the concerned person. This is hardly observed in practice.

29(1) : “ Any person, institution, organization or department, public or private, providing a public or private utility service including Roads and Buildings department, Energy department of the Government and Telecommunications Department shall ensure protection of trees and their branches while developing their infrastructure or carrying on their activities”. This is not enforced.

29(2) : Wherever laying of new roads or widening of existing roads involves cutting of existing trees,, the Authority may issue suitable guidelines for protection of such tree growth as it deems fit. Is this done at all?

30(1): The Authority may formulate guidelines for tree plantations along with the road margins, canal banks, tank-fore shores, and water bodies. Is this done?

30(4) : The Government may constitute a committee for protection and maintenance of the plantations raised in the lands outside the forest and

the said committee shall function as may be prescribed. Has such a committee been set up? What has it done?

### **WALTA Rules, 2004**

11(2) provides that in meetings of the District Authority, all decisions will be taken by a majority of votes, by raising hands. A laudable, democratic process is prescribed, but do proposals for tree-cutting come to the District Authority?

24(7) of Rules, 2004 provides that where permission to fell a tree is granted, the owner of the premises shall plant another two trees of the same or suitable species on the same site or other suitable place within thirty days. Is this enforced? Such a rule should be made applicable also to the providers of a public or private utility service including Roads and Buildings department, Energy department of the Government and Telecommunications Department.

All these show there is no application of mind before taking an action. There is no enforcement of the law, either. The conflict is not between development and conservation, as it is often stated to be, but between forward, imaginative and skilful expert, planning on the one hand and amateurism, adhocism and lack of democratic planning on the other. And a casualness towards the government's own rules and lack of proper appreciation which leads to non-implementation of the instructions. In the end the public suffers.

### **Our recommendations.**

We have lost valuable time due to faulty planning and are now faced with a situation where it is argued that unless trees which interfere with a project implementation are allowed to be cut, development will be delayed. What is the via media?

- Freeze for a period all permissions already given for tree cutting. Freeze all requests sought for tree-cutting. Examine all the projects which would need removal of trees in the next one year. Reconsider all these cases, by looking at alternative options, such as realignment of a project location, route, etc. In every case, re-plantation must be tried, irrespective of cost (which is not high). Take the help of experts and appoint an expert group with time bound program to examine options. Involve NGOs. Where tree cutting cannot be avoided, implement compensatory plantation on a matching basis covering all aspects.
- Involve all other stakeholders, including owners, builders, apart from NGOs., for saving trees .

Below is reproduced a request for site review to be filed by a Construction Agency to Maryland Forest Service. I recommend a close reading of the form to show the amount of care exercised before felling is permitted.



Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Forest Service

REFORESTATION SITE REVIEW

**Request for Site Review:** to be completed by Constructing Agency. Please complete the top portion of this form only, and return it, along with site plans showing site's location, forest area(s) to be removed (highlighted on plan), and removal amount (noted on dwg.) to the appropriate DNR Regional Forest Service office while project is still in initial design stages and prior to construction start (before any removal occurs).

Contract Number : \_\_\_\_\_ PDMS #: \_\_\_\_\_  
County: \_\_\_\_\_ Constructing Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person & Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Room #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Telephone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Fax # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Target Dates: Construction Bidding: \_\_\_\_\_  
Construction: \_\_\_\_\_  
Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Tree Clearing and Reforestation Summary: - - - - -

Estimated acreage to be cleared: \_\_\_\_\_ acres

Acres available for on-site replacement: \_\_\_\_\_ acres

Note: If on-site replacement is impossible, the constructing agency is expected to locate alternate reforestation sites on public lands.\*

Acres available at the off-site location(s): \_\_\_\_\_ acres

Proposed location for off-site planting (attach location map): \_\_\_\_\_

Date form was completed by constructing agent: \_\_\_\_\_

\* If you are requesting to transfer funds to DNR in lieu of mitigation planting, you must provide a detailed explanation of why you can not accomplish the planting obligations on-site and must receive Forest Service's approval before any payments will be accepted.

**Construction Site Review:** to be completed by DNR Forestry Personnel, within 20 working days of request receipt

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Field Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Forestry Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Estimated Acres to be cleared: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Dominant Tree Species Found: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Special Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Watershed in which this project is located: \_\_\_\_\_ Designation # (per map/key) \_\_\_\_\_

Has site been previously reviewed: Yes/No If yes, date: \_\_\_\_\_

Verified acres to be planted on site (amount): \_\_\_\_\_ acres

For any necessary notes regarding appropriate replacement planting species, spacing, need for shelters, etc., see back of this document.

SHA61.1-F830.10 Rev. 04/24/96 DNR/RCS 399 (June 19, 1995)

# Green-Abad Song

*by Sanghamitra Malik*

In the name of development, trees are being felled in our city of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, over the years, which has increased considerably in the recent past. Infact they are chopped down whenever there is a proposal to widen a road or for some major construction work.

The Green Movement was initiated in Hyderabad, by the concerned citizens of the city with the support of a national daily. The citizens were alarmed at the rate at which the city was losing its green cover and especially after the felling of the more than 200 years old banyan tree outside Paigah Palace- the earlier office of the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority and presently a temporary office of the US Consulate. It is believed that request was made to cut down trees both inside and outside the palace which included 42 full grown old trees inside and 18 full grown old trees outside.

As part of the Green movement and as a concerned Hyderabadi I wrote the Green-Abad poem in Hindi, for which I have actually given a tune and made it into a song for all tree lovers of our city especially children to sing whenever they begin a tree saving and tree plantation activity. I felt that this song written with very simple wordings would be a source of encouragement for all those enthusiastically working to save our green cover in order to save the environment. -Sanghamitra Malik

*Hyderabad shahar ko bachaana hai,  
Ise haraa bharaa banana hai,  
Agar dekho kahiin ek bhi ped kut rahaa hai,  
Faurun pedon ko bachaana hai.*

*Kuch samay se pedon ko kaate ja rahen hain,  
Kisii ko iski bhanak tak lagii nahiin,  
Pur magar ab log bhi sachet ho gaye hain,  
Aur faisla hai pedon ko bachane ka.*

*Bacche, bacche aur bade, paudhe lagaayenge.  
Is shahar ki hariyaali ko badhaayenge,  
Ped na kate kahiin aur naye paudhe lagaakar,  
Hyderabad ko Green-Abad banaayenge!*

*Hure patton ke beech  
Chidiya apnaa ghosla banaayegee,  
Suraj ki kirne, chidiyon ka chahakna,  
Hum sub kitne khush ho jayenge!  
Hyderabad ko Green-Abad banaayenge!*

*[The same song can apply to any city or town in  
India by just replacing the name Hyderabad with  
the name of another affected city or town]*

# ECO-SYSTEM APPROACH

## (Managing ecosystems in an integrated way)

*Dr. M.S. Kodarkar Mohan*  
*Member, Sci-Com, ILEC, Japan,*

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

Ecosystem approach underlines the idea of facilitating the nature to take care of structural and functional integrity of natural ecosystems that support survival of life on earth. Too much anthropogenic pressure beyond carrying capacity of natural ecosystems is identified as the basic cause for constant and sometimes irreversible degradation of natural ecosystems. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was perhaps the first effort of human community to integrate ecology with management of natural and man-made ecosystems on the earth. The convention has recommended the ecosystem approach as an appropriate implementation strategy for sustainable management of ecosystems in the world. The 12 principles of ecosystem approach have chartered the way for implementation of CBD.

The ecosystem approach underscores the importance of basic principles on which ecosystems function and emphasizes the socio-economic dimensions of nature management when implementing the CBD. It further advocates that human life, activities and well-being must be included as basic factors in the wider geographical application of the ecosystem approach. Biodiversity has to be integrated into the economy of the relevant communities, and the various values of biodiversity should be captured and realized at the local level to give the right incentives to those that are nearest to guard it.

At the heart and soul of ecosystem approach is the biodiversity which is the life insurance of life itself. The intra-specific diversity is the insurance for the species survival in difficult times, the inter-specific diversity is the guarantee for ecosystem functioning and services, and the variation of functional ecosystems is the life insurance for sustainable development.

### 2. ECOSYSTEM APPROACH :

Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), while elaborating on Ecosystem Approach has defined “Ecosystem” as a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit. The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. It is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization which encompass the essential processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of ecosystems.

The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its Fifth Meeting, endorsed the description of the ecosystem approach and operational guidance and recommended the application of the principles and other guidance on the Ecosystem Approach.



## **A. Description of the ecosystem approach :**

1. The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Thus, the application of the ecosystem approach will help to reach a balance of the three objectives of the Convention: conservation; sustainable use; and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
2. An ecosystem approach is based on the application of appropriate scientific methodologies focused on levels of biological organization, which encompass the essential structure, processes, functions and interactions among organisms and their environment. It recognizes that humans, with their cultural diversity, are an integral component of many ecosystems.
3. This focus on structure, processes, functions and interactions is consistent with the definition of “ecosystem” provided in Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity: “‘Ecosystem’ means a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.”
4. The ecosystem approach requires adaptive management to deal with the complex and dynamic nature of ecosystems and the absence of complete knowledge or understanding of their functioning. Ecosystem processes are often non-linear, and the outcome of such processes often shows time-lags. The result is discontinuities, leading to surprise and uncertainty.
5. The ecosystem approach does not preclude other management and conservation approaches, such as biosphere reserves, protected areas, and single-species conservation programmes, as well as other approaches carried out under existing national policy and legislative frameworks.

## **B. Twelve principles of the ecosystem approach**

Principle 1: The objectives of management of land, water and living resources are a matter of societal choice.

Principle 2: Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level.

Principle 3: Ecosystem managers should consider the effects (actual or potential) of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems.

Principle 4: Recognizing potential gains from management, there is usually a need to understand and manage the ecosystem in an economic context. Any such ecosystem-management programme should:

(a) Reduce those market distortions that adversely affect biological diversity; (b) Align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; (c) Internalize costs and benefits in the given ecosystem to the extent feasible.

Principle 5: Conservation of ecosystem structure and functioning, in order to maintain ecosystem services, should be a priority target of the ecosystem approach.

Principle 6: Ecosystems must be managed within the limits of their functioning.

Principle 7: The ecosystem approach should be undertaken at the appropriate spatial and temporal scales.

Principle 8: Recognizing the varying temporal scales and lag-effects that characterize ecosystem processes, objectives for ecosystem management should be set for the long term.

Principle 9: Management must recognize that change is inevitable.

Principle 10: The ecosystem approach should seek the appropriate balance between, and integration of, conservation and use of biological diversity.

Principle 11: The ecosystem approach should

consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices.

Principle 12: The ecosystem approach should involve all relevant sectors of society and scientific disciplines.

**C. Operational guidance for application of the ecosystem approach :**

1. Focus on the functional relationships and processes within ecosystems The many components of biodiversity control the stores and flows of energy, water and nutrients within ecosystems, and provide resistance to major perturbations. A much better knowledge of ecosystem functions and structure, and the roles of the components of biological diversity in ecosystems, is required, especially to understand: (i) ecosystem resilience and the effects of biodiversity loss (species and genetic levels) and habitat fragmentation; (ii) underlying causes of biodiversity loss; and (iii) determinants of local biological diversity in management decisions. Functional biodiversity in ecosystems provides many goods and services of economic and social importance. While there is a need to accelerate efforts to gain new knowledge about functional biodiversity, ecosystem management has to be carried out even in the absence of such knowledge. The ecosystem approach can facilitate practical management by ecosystem managers (whether local communities or national policy makers).
2. Enhance benefit-sharing Benefits that flow from the array of functions provided by biological diversity at the ecosystem level provide the basis of human environmental security and sustainability. The ecosystem approach seeks that the benefits derived from these functions are maintained or restored. In

particular, these functions should benefit the stakeholders responsible for their production and management. This requires, inter alia: capacity-building, especially at the level of local communities managing biological diversity in ecosystems; the proper valuation of ecosystem goods and services; the removal of perverse incentives that devalue ecosystem goods and services; and, consistent with the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, where appropriate, their replacement with local incentives for good management practices.

3. Use adaptive management practices Ecosystem processes and functions are complex and variable. Their level of uncertainty is increased by the interaction with social constructs, which need to be better understood. Therefore, ecosystem management must involve a learning process, which helps to adapt methodologies and practices to the ways in which these systems are being managed and monitored. Implementation programmes should be designed to adjust to the unexpected, rather than to act on the basis of a belief in certainties. Ecosystem management needs to recognize the diversity of social and cultural factors affecting natural-resource use. Similarly, there is a need for flexibility in policy-making and implementation. Long-term, inflexible decisions are likely to be inadequate or even destructive. Ecosystem management should be envisaged as a long-term experiment that builds on its results as it progresses. This “learning-by-doing” will also serve as an important source of information to gain knowledge of how best to monitor the results of management and evaluate whether established goals are being attained. In this respect, it would be desirable to establish or strengthen capacities of Parties for monitoring.

4. Carry out management actions at the scale appropriate for the issue being addressed, with decentralization to lowest level, as appropriate : As noted in section A above, an ecosystem is a functioning unit that can operate at any scale, depending upon the problem or issue being addressed. This understanding should define the appropriate level for management decisions and actions. Often, this approach will imply decentralization to the level of local communities. Effective decentralization requires proper empowerment, which implies that the stakeholder both has the opportunity to assume responsibility and the capacity to carry out the appropriate action, and needs to be supported by enabling policy and legislative frameworks. Where common property resources are involved, the most appropriate scale for management decisions and actions would necessarily be large enough to encompass the effects of practices by all the relevant stakeholders. Appropriate institutions would be required for such decision-making and, where necessary, for conflict resolution. Some problems and issues may require action at still higher levels, through, for example, transboundary cooperation, or even cooperation at global levels.
5. Ensure inter-sectoral cooperation : As the primary framework of action to be taken under the Convention, the ecosystem approach should be fully taken into account in developing and reviewing national biodiversity strategies and action plans. There is also a need to integrate the ecosystem approach into agriculture, fisheries, forestry and other production systems that have an effect on biodiversity. Management of natural resources, according to the ecosystem

approach, calls for increased intersectoral communication and cooperation at a range of levels (government ministries, management agencies, etc.). This might be promoted through, for example, the formation of inter-ministerial bodies within the Government or the creation of networks for sharing information and experience.

### 3. EPILOGUE :

Late E.W.Edmondson (Washington State University, USA) in the book titled “Uses of ecology” showed how effectively the knowledge of ecology can be applied in conservation and sustainable management of an ecosystem like lake Washington. The biosphere is evolved based on principles of ecology and human dependence on goods and services from ecosystems is basic to his future. No doubt science and technology has enhanced carrying capacities and human control on earth’s ecosystems, the full understanding of their structural and functional complexities will remain a challenge due to their dynamic nature. May be, human future is unavoidably linked to a harmonious relationship with nature and in this context ecosystem approach needs to be understood, appreciated and implemented. In deed this is already happening in the form of a host of eco-technologies which are being invented, improvised and implemented all over the world for conservation of lakes, rivers and forests all over the world.

(The write up is based on internet resources and readers can assess the same information through web search by the word – Ecosystem approach or Convention on Biodiversity).

Secretary, Indian Association of  
Aquatic Biologists (IAAB),  
P.O.Box 517, Putlibowli Post office,  
Jambagh, Hyderabad – 500095,  
Andhra Pradesh.  
Kodarkar\_mohan@yahoo.cocm

# BEWARE - THIS EARTH SURELY IS IN TROUBLE

*Sanghamitra Malik*

The earth surely is in trouble,

That big huge sphere made of rock, soil and water,  
With flora and fauna all around, surrounded by air  
that all living things breathe,  
Surely today it is in trouble!

People are out to dirty the air with gases and smoke,  
They are poisoning the water with chemicals and  
sewage,  
Damaging the soil with fertilizers and pesticides,  
Surely the earth is in deep trouble!

Air, water and soil are all necessary for survival,  
They are getting badly affected by pollution,  
Environmental pollution is destroying the ozone  
layer,  
And with global warming, the earth is in trouble!

Exhaust from motor vehicles are causing air  
pollution,  
Discharge from factories are polluting air and water,  
Too much of fertilizers and pesticides are ruining  
the soil,

Our very own earth is in trouble!

Crowded industrial cities have made pollution a  
major problem,  
Growing motor vehicles have made pollution  
worse,  
Various types of machines and vehicles fill the air  
with disturbing noise,  
Oh, our earth is in deep trouble!

Air pollution harms our health, kills plants and  
makes the clear air hazy,  
Water pollution upsets the water's natural cycles,  
harms the animals and plants living in  
the water,  
Soil pollution damages the fertile soil, essential for  
growing food,  
With all this, our earth is in trouble!

Much damage is being caused to the soil by erosion,  
It is the result of removing of trees, grass and other  
plants,  
One should know that these trees and plants hold  
the soil in place,  
Due to some people's carelessness, the earth is in  
trouble!

Full grown trees providing living things with oxygen and lots of shade,

Are being chopped off for many a construction projects,

There is road widening all around and real estate developments,

With green cover lost,the earth is in trouble!

Too much noise from aeroplanes,motor vehicles,trucks,trains and construction projects,

This constant noise can damage hearing and even cause deafness,

Prolonged exposure to loud sounds are said to result in blood pressure and ulcers,

Surely our earth is in great trouble!

Another highly dangerous invisible pollutant is radiation,

Radiation comes from the sun,from radio active materials and from harmless looking devices,

Constant exposure to mobile phones, lasers, x-ray machines, coloured tv sets and microwave ovens

Can be harmful, this earth surely is in trouble!

Technological advances in agriculture, industry and transportation have improved our way of life,

But these advances are also causing harm to the environment,

Methods to reduce pollution is being devised but much has to be done

For our earth, which is in deep trouble!

Plastics are a troublesome solid waste that don't breakdown and cannot be absorbed by the soil,

The air gets greatly polluted when manufacturing plastic goods and bags,

Plastics must be banned as our earth is in trouble!

Rivers,the lifeline of cities as well as lakes are shrinking or vanishing completely,

Houses are coming up on river and lake beds,

Every heavy shower is causing floods and much havoc,

With shortage of clean drinking water, our earth is in trouble!

It is time to rise to the occasion and take this serious matter in our hands,

Public attention is essential to put pressure on government and industry officials,

But above all,every one of us needs to help to save **HYDERABAD** from catastrophe,

Or else, our great city on this **EARTH** will surely be in trouble!!!

# TRADED FOR Rs. 50/-

## (A tribute to the grand old tree)

*Snghamitra Malik*

[The Banyan tree which belongs to the mulberry family gets its name from the word 'banian' meaning trader]

That big Indian Banyan tree standing all alone,  
It originated from a dropped seed, but how big it had grown.  
It was years back when birds dropped some banyan seeds  
On branches of some tree and the seeds sprouted & branches developed for its needs,  
The spreading branches sent down roots right up to the ground,  
The supporting roots enlarged into trunks all around.

The thickest trunk stood at its appointed spot as a mighty big tree,  
Branches spreading all around, roots coming down & leaves fluttering and free.  
This tree was many a Hyderabadi's greatest of friends,  
A permanent feature of the landscape, it only gave and lent.  
When the sun would shine brightly and it was blazing hot outside,  
Every soul on that lane was thankful for the shade it would provide.

For a mere fifty rupees, a three hundred and fifty years old tree is lost,  
This hateful act of reducing it to a stump, is nothing short of a blot  
On our so called Clean & Green city which has long since turned Brown,  
Our ecosystem is being damaged causing grave environmental concern.  
Green house gasses, global warming, not enough oxygen, but do the authorities care?  
The ever increasing traffic needs wide roads which are treeless and bare!!!

Some trees give us fruits to eat and some, beautiful flowers to admire,  
In the cold winter months, some trees provide wood to light a bonfire.  
So many birds find shelter to build their little nests,  
Weary travellers passing by find a place to sit down and rest.  
It is an outrageous act when those in power resort to chopping down trees,  
Only to make way for traffic or as in this case for better 'security'!

There was a time when trees in our city covered vast stretches of land,  
Trees help conserve soil and water with roots helping to store water underground.  
Some people are found resorting to cruelty and have turned greedy too  
In making concrete structures in places where trees grew.  
When will people realize that they must love & respect plants and trees,  
This indiscriminate felling of trees just must cease!!!



**A representation dt. 8.5.2008 Submitted by the FORUM(FBH)  
and other NGO'S to Dr. C.V.S.K. Sharma, I.A.S., The  
Commissioner and Special Officer, GHMC**

**Sub : Tree Cutting**



Protest demonstration by Forum members and NGOs  
at the Banyan Tree near Paigah Palace, Begumpet.

Cutting of a centuries old Banyan Tree in front of Paigah palace ( Old office of HUDA), now temporarily housing the US consulate.

Last Monday ( 5.5.08), a 200 years old huge banyan tree, was mercilessly axed except for its bare trunk, at the instance of the GHMC authorities on a request by the U.S.Consulate for road widening. Along with that 32 Ashoka trees within the approach road were also chopped off for a price of Rs. 50 each (see TOI report dated 6.5.08).

We do not know what precisely were the reasons for the GHMC to chop off these trees, in particular the banyan tree. If it was road widening, this cannot be a valid reason for chopping the banyan tree. With a little imagination and expertise the road widening plan could provide for skirting around such an ancient tree, which gives a character to the location, as is done in the case of religious structures. Unfortunately, GHMC's decision in the instant case not merely reflected a

lack of these qualities, but this decision and their earlier actions re cutting of trees also exhibit a dangerous trend toward insensitivity and violence toward nature, while they propagate a clean and green city, and an indifference to public sentiments. The GHMC never cares to consult the civil society organizations on these difficult issues, although they have enough time to do so as road widening plans are not made in a day but over months and years, and the planners would precisely know the blocks to road widening much in advance. Instead, they prefer unilateral action doing irretrievable damage to the environment.

Nor can the US Consulate's request be a valid reason for GHMC's precipitate action. After all, the US Consulate is housed only on a temporary basis at Paigah palace. So, their wishes should not have led to the felling of the banyan tree. If the US Consulate considered the banyan tree and other trees as security risk, they should have been asked to move elsewhere or adopt other measures for security in this age of technology. In this connexion, we would like to know your plan about the trees inside the compound of the US Consulate. We insist that these must be protected, and If the US Consulate requests for the removal of these trees also, on security risk, such a request should be firmly declined.

As per report, permission to fell the Ashoka trees was obtained by GHMC from the forest department because the latter had planted the Ashoka trees, but who gave the permission for felling the banyan tree? We demand to know whether permission was obtained from the proper authorities. In fact, the GHMC should not have applied for such permission. The banyan tree is on a special footing because of its age and for giving a character to the location. Its loss cannot

be compensated by planting of 3 saplings It should have been saved

A banyan tree is considered as a keystone species and cutting this down is equivalent to cutting down an entire ecosystem. An ecosystem may experience a dramatic shift if a keystone species is removed, even though that species was a small part of the ecosystem by measures of biomass or productivity. It has become a very popular concept in conservation biology. With the available know-how, one can try to transplant the cut tree to other suitable locations. Just planting 3 saplings in place of one tree cut does not bring the life attached to the cut tree back.

With global warming coming up on the State Governments agenda, urban trees can be good carbon sinks as well.

We demand to know the full facts of the case. In particular,

- Who arranged the cutting of the banyan tree
- whether permission was obtained by them from the proper authorities for felling the banyan tree

**M. VEDA KUMAR,**

C.C. To:

1. **Sri.A.Raghottham Reddy**, IAS., Chief Secretary, Government of A.P., Hyderabad
2. **Sri.K.Jawahar Reddy**, IAS., Vice Chairman, HUDA, Hyderabad
3. **Sri.G.Ashok Kumar**, IAS., Managing Director, HMWS & SB, Hyderabad
4. **Sri.A.K.Goel**, IAS., Principal Secretary, Energy Department, Govt.of A.P., Hyderabad

Encls: 1. Press Release in English & Telugu  
2. News paper coverage








- Whether any alternative plan for road widening by skirting around the tree was considered by the GHMC? Why were the civil society organizations not involved at all in finding a proper solution in this matter?

- What plan of action does the GHMC have in regard to the conservation of trees on roads proposed to be widened? Whether they propose to engage suitable expertise for a balanced planning and whether they propose to bring such issues into the public domain for wide discussion?

- Whether GHMC will have compensatory plantation of saplings in the same area where the trees have been cut?

- Whether the GHMC consider such integrated planning necessary in the wake of global warming.

We condemn the tree-cutting unequivocally and demand action against the persons responsible and adequate preventive action for the future.

<u>S.No</u>	<u>Name of the participant &amp; Designation</u>	<u>Name of the Organisation</u>	<u>Signature</u>
1	Rao C. K. N. RAO	IRAD/OPR/CHM	
2	C. Kulkarni Reddy	Concerned	
3	C. H. Arjunan	Citizen	
4	Fauzda Tampal	for the #B&W	
		WWF-India	
5	Kantha Kanna	The Right to	
		live	
	Usha Triaga-Ravelli	Triaga Foundation	
	M. Mandel	Forum for A&A	



**A Representation from FBH dt. 17.5.2008 to  
Sri. K. S. Rao, I.F.S., The Principal Conservator of Forest,  
Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Tree felling at Rajendranagar - Request to stall the action - regarding**



A series of trees chopped off for road widening at Rajendra nagar.

FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD has come to know that the tree-felling has been taken up to widen the road from Indra Reddy statue to Himayatsagar. The exact location is on the left side of the road from the Indra Reddy statue junction to the Rajendra Nagar police station. The works are taken up by the Roads and Buildings department with the permission of the Forest Department. The chopping is carried out by a contractor and it is clear that there are at least 20 more trees under threat immediately. The Forum for a Better Hyderabad team went for a site inspection and noted with distress that so far seven huge Banyan Trees, at least more than hundred years old each, have been

chopped mercilessly and even burnt from the roots so that there is no hope left for their sprouting leaves again.

*It is deplorable that the forest department has given the necessary permission to cut the trees. This belies the very purpose of its existence – which is the protection of tree cover. When the Tree, land and water act was passed, its purpose was to apply utmost scrutiny to any cutting of tree, to ensure that a cutting takes place when all options are exhausted, and in such cases, to ensure compensatory plantation of 3 saplings per each tree cut. Purposively, such authority was vested in the forest department. All these rules and the intention of the ACT have been violated by the total non-application of mind by the concerned forest authorities.*

In the first place, widening of the road from Indra Reddy statue to Himayatsagar was not necessary as the existing width of the road is quite sufficient for vehicular traffic. Further, there is land available on the right side of the road, belonging to the University and could easily have been acquired to make a double lane with the trees forming a central divider. And the road would have been a beautiful, shady, tree-lined avenue. The forest department should not have given permission to cut the trees, unless these options and other options were examined by the authorities seeking permission.

In a rather similar situation, concerning the

Banyan Tree outside the US Consulate, the GHMC Commissioner responded promptly and definitely, issuing significant orders stopping tree felling within the limits of GHMC. Though GHMC is not involved here but the R and B dept. is felling the trees in the limits of GHMC. It is our hope that the R and B, the Forest Department and the Ranga Reddy district administration will respond similarly like GHMC by taking a positive action to save our city.

FBH and the Civil Societies of Hyderabad further demand from the forest department that :

- Further felling of trees along the route be stopped immediately by issuing a blanket ban on felling of any tree
- The procedure for giving permission be streamlined, the discretion to give permission be vested in sufficiently high authorities in the forest department and any extraneous pressure to extract permission be firmly resisted. The process of taking a decision be minuted, with all facts.
- Locality-wise committees be formed with citizen's groups to scrutinize any request for felling of a tree. In every case, all alternative
- Large, old trees which have large carbon-absorbing capacity, e.g., a banyan tree, have to be treated on a separate footing, and compensatory plantation ( 3 to 1) cannot compensate the cutting of such trees. This must be kept in mind.
- Compensatory plantation must be near to the site where a tree is cut, and must match the type, size of a felled tree.
- Forest department must demand from the authorities connected with road widening, metro project , drainage, laying of cables, etc, i.e., which may affect the existing trees, to advise their plans sufficiently in advance to the forest department so that the latter can plan relocation of trees, replacement where necessary of trees of the same species, same size, etc

***The following organizations express concern:***

COVA, U-FERWAS, TURAGA FOUNDATION , CHATRI, GAMANA, IFHD, APNA WATAN , CONCERNED CITIZEN'S FORUM, UMANAGAR RESIDENTS WELFARE ASSOCIATION, FAPSCO, HUMSAB HINDUSTHANI TRUST, CEA, COALITION FOR PEACE & HARMONY, RIGHT TO WALK FOUNDATION, CHELIMI FOUNDATION

***Copy to:-***

1. M. Dana Kishore , I.A.S., The Collector, Ranga Reddy Dist.
2. Sri. Naveen Mittal, I.A.S., The Collector, Hyderabad Dist..
3. Sri. K. Jawahar Reddy, I.A.S.,V.C, HUDA.
4. Dr. C.V.S.K. Sharma, I.A.S., Commissioner and spl. Officer, G.H.M.C.
5. Sri. M.J.akbar, D.F.O,Hyderabad & RangaReddy Dist.
6. Sri. Hanmanth Reddy, M.R.O., Rajendra Nagar, RangaReddy Dist.

**A Representation from FBH dt. 22.5.2008 to  
Sri. P. Ramakanth Reddy, I.A.S.,  
Chief Secretary, Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Save the trees**

It may have come to your notice that a few days back, a 200-year old banyan tree was chopped ruthlessly in front of the proposed US Consulate. While the bare trunk of the Banyan tree stands there today, thanks to public uproar, 32 other Ashoka trees could not be saved and were completely destroyed in the same place.

The felling happened allegedly at the request of the US Consulate for security reasons. While the authorities are very well aware that consulate will be housed in the heritage structure of Paigah Palace temporarily and will move to Gachibowli in the near future, they have granted permission for the felling of trees without batting an eyelid. The GHMC sought permission and the forest authorities cordially and readily granted it.

The banyan tree, which has immense carbon-absorbing capacity, stood as a characteristic landmark, a symbol of life at the location. Sadly, the authorities have obviously failed to explore other options, such as relocating the tree, or skirting around just a little bit to widen a road as they do in the case of a religious structure.

One wonders whether the US authorities would have either sought or granted permission to touch a branch, leave alone a 200-year-old tree, in their own country, under any circumstances.

**Not the First Instance**

Earlier, a large number of trees, running into

tens of thousands, were cut off in various parts of the city, such as Jubilee Hills, Banjara Hills, Begumpet, Rajendranagar, etc., for road widening, for activities by various wings of the government and also by builders, with or without proper permission. Once again, without consulting any experts or examining any other option, because it is evident there WERE alternatives.

**FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD**

Hyderabad is, at present, going through several development projects such as, road widening, metro rails, BRTS, laying of cables, drainage and sewerage systems modernization, as also rapid building activity, high-rise apartments, commercial complexes, shopping malls, etc.

It has also happened in several cases that trees have been planted after a road widening, and after some time, these trees were felled due to a further road widening. This adhocism and lack of advanced planning for a sufficiently long term must stop.

**Problem Areas**

There is a definite absence of proper co-ordination among the regulatory authorities for these activities so that roads are being dug again and again, widened and re-widened, divider on roads created and then removed, trees are planted and then uprooted again.

Similarly, enforcement is hopelessly lacking by GHMC/HUDA/SCB so that building regulations are violated invariably, specially by those who have money power and political dadas. There is no hope for a minimum quality of life.

#### **How About Action Before It is Too Late?**

Hyderabad is fast losing its green cover and the quality of the environment, which should cause concern, specially in the context of global warming, to one and all. Wide roads, glittering malls, multi-storied apartments, huge cars, are not going to save lives when water sources are choked, greenery is obliterated and there is no clean air to breathe! Paupers and the rich will be equally devastated in such a setting.

All these are happening because of lack of advanced planning, and for not adopting a model of sustainable development. A model that, on the one hand, develops infrastructure and, on the other, promotes environment in the affected areas!

#### **Our Constructive Suggestions**

We, alongwith several concerned persons and organizations, have applied our minds and have the following suggestions to make with regard to the conservation of trees in and around Hyderabad.

- **Simultaneous Project and Tree Planning:** An advanced planning for conservation of trees that would interfere with the projects of various departments/agencies of the government (such as those for road widening, flyovers, metro rail project, BRTS, laying of telephone lines, electricity cables, water/sewerage pipes, high rise and commercial buildings, R&B, underground cables) should be made at the same time when these projects are planned. These plans and projects can be identified from a careful study of the master plans of HUDA, GHMC, HMDA, SCB, etc.

#### **FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD**

Thereafter, of the trees that would interfere with the projects, some trees can be transplanted, for others compensatory plantations can be taken up well in advance, and proximate locations of compensatory planning earmarked as such, as essential part of the planning for these projects. This would ensure that replacements of the right species and age are ready if and when a tree has to be removed. As of now, compensatory plantations are supposedly taken up after a tree is felled, not matching with the species or age of a tree, or consideration of its carbon-absorbing capacity.

- **Felling of a tree must be a last resort.** Alternatives such as transplanting to another location, irrespective of cost, culturing from its branches ( as possible with a banyan tree), which practice is adopted in other cities like Mumbai, Pune, Thane, etc; skirting a road around a tree, as done for sensitive religious structures, must be considered first.
- **Study of Alternatives Imperative:** At present, application for cutting a tree is made at a very junior level of a department. Permission for cutting a tree is given liberally by the forest authorities, and such sanction is given at a lower level of authority, e.g., a forest ranger. Accordingly, proper screening is not done, alternative options are not called for, nor examined and it becomes easier for vested interests to exercise pressure for permission. We suggest, a decision to apply for permission to cut a tree, and a decision to grant permission to cut a tree, be taken at a sufficiently high level of the concerned authority.

All alternative options should be called for and examined. Further, a committee or committees at different levels/ depending on the gravity of a decision, be appointed with participation from appropriate civil society organizations in sufficient strength, to examine a request for a tree-cutting – this will reduce the effect of pressure by vested interests. The decision-making should also be recorded for scrutiny by a higher level authority.

- Freeze permissions for Review: Pending the finalization and adoption of a suitable procedure on the suggested lines, all existing permissions given for tree-cutting by different departments be frozen. GHMC commissioner has already issued instructions to freeze sanctions received/ given by it for cutting of a tree in its jurisdictional area. Suitable instructions to this effect may be issued under your authority to all other departments concerned of the government and other bodies regulated by the government, such as: HUDA, HADA, SCB, HMDA, MAUD, panchayats, all municipalities in the state, etc .This may delay a developmental activity, but the alternative is to lose a tree forever. A letter from Commissioner, GHMC, and the other above bodies to all field functionaries should be issued to coordinate with Residents' Welfare Associations, and other appropriate forums that may be formed to save trees.
- Open Declaration of Statistics: Information on the number of trees cut, the departments cutting such trees, the compensatory plantations made as required under

WALTA, should be published, starting from a given year, so as to check the matching of plantations with the trees felled, in terms of the number, age, species, survival for more than three years, of the plantations, and the proximity of their locations to the locations of the felled trees.

- Awareness about Green Laws: WALTA, other related Acts, GOs etc. should be widely publicized through advertisements and leaflets so as to create community consciousness of the laws and modalities to protect the trees. Simultaneously, the local MRO's - who are the field level govt. authorities for receiving information officially - name, contacts should be publicized. Road widening /HMWS&SB /Electricity /Telephone /R&B / Underground cables/HUDA plans that involve possible cutting/transfer of trees – to be made public knowledge.
- Effect of METRO project on trees – needs to be spelt out and informed to public prior to project launch
- Underground cables to replace overhead cables so that trees do not have to be cut.
- Police/ other authorities may be instructed to officially back the vigilance of trees by citizens.
- People's role in New Plantation: To plant/ nurture trees – to be made mandatory in new localities, institutions, corporate offices, public/private buildings, along the roads, in parks, SEZs, MNCs, private layouts etc.



# THE CAPITAL CITY'S WATER SUPPLY: A WELL CRAFTED TRAGEDY

*Sri Naram Krishna Rao*

The city of Hyderabad had always boasted of having one of the best water supply systems in the country. Today it finds itself in the most unenviable position. For the last 23 years water is being supplied once in two days. Some areas do not receive even that, Surely the much trumpeted development has gone awry. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, Aristotle had said, a government is best judged by the manner it provides water to its people. In the early seventies, the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi dismissed the Karunanidhi government for being unable to quench the thirst of the people in Madras. After due consultations, she promised water from the Krishna river in Andhra Pradesh.(I had told our then chief minister Sri Jalagam Vengal Rao that unless special steps are taken, the water may not reach Madras safely. After spending hundreds of crores of rupees on it, Telugu Ganga does not provide an assured supply.)

There is a myth woven around the Krishna water. A cabal seems to decide who should avail it and who should not. Although the city lies in the Krishna basin, the water from the river was not allowed to enter it for almost half a century after the formation of the enlarged state. When the demand shot up as a result of the formation of enlarged state, water was diverted from the river Manjira, a tributary of Godavari in Medak district.

Even as the people of Medak protested, the quantity of water drawn from the Manjira went on increasing, leaving almost nothing for them. And when the increased drawals affected the ayacut under the Nizamsagar, there was an outcry from the people who had settled there having come from the districts of Krishna and Guntur in Madras province when the project was completed in 1931. Industries sprung up along the Manjira pipeline whose wastes destroyed all the water sources of Patancheru, surface as well as ground and also Hussainsagar in the heart of the capital city.

And there is still another myth inside the Krishna myth. If Krishna water has to be brought to the city, it shall be from Nagarjunasagar and not from the Srisailem Reservoir forcing the people of the city to pay more for 300 feet of extra pumping and for all time to come. It is another matter if Srisailem water is used for umpteen purposes elsewhere.

What defies logic and the basic common sense, is government's chopping off a third of the capacity of the ongoing project bringing Krishna water to the city. This is done while raising the demand for water by declaring the city as Greater Hyderabad, and encouraging industries and institutions all around the city. Strange as it may seem, those in power now, had promised the people of Medak to

put an end to Manjira water coming into the city. The big joke is that is being perpetrated on the people cruel as it may be, is the promise of round-the-clock supply of water. They have been doing this for the last three years. The latest is, it will be done in another 3 to 4 years! (The Deccan Chronicle:19.5.2008).

In these circumstances created by the government itself, curtailing the water supply meant for drinking, would sound inhuman. What is being hidden from the public is the fact that even if the entire quantity of water recommended by the expert committee and accepted by the State and Central Governments is brought to the city from Krishna river, it will make no dent in its capacity or that of Nagarjuna Sagar, with the storage of 400TMC. Our total drawl envisaged is only 16.5TMC, out of this 5.5TMC is cut off now. What we should remember is also the fact that even if the total quantity is drawn, it will be, much less than what we contribute to the basin by return flow of this water and by the diversion of Manjira water to the city. It is time the government sheds its prejudices. No one doubts the inevitability of bringing Godavari water to the city. We inevitably should take care to see that the scheme will not meet the same fate as the supply of Krishna water to Chennai. It should also be realized that the proposed cut in the supply of Krishna water to the city is contrary to the principles laid down in the National Water Policy where the priority accorded is for drinking. The saved water cannot be used for any other purpose.

There is more trouble ahead. The traditional sources Osmansagar and Himayatsagar are under threat. Studies carried out by J.N.T.U have warned about their early demise. In 2003, Muslims offered prayers on the dry bed of Osmansagar to highlight

government failure to protect these proud possessions of the city. Water from them flows into the city entirely by gravity and is therefore less expensive and more reliable than any other source. Hussainsagar which was the main source for the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad has already been destroyed. The last nail in its coffin was driven by building a sewage treatment plant in it, which discharges into the lake five million gallons of sewage effluent everyday. (Though Hussainsagar was built before the Taj Mahal, it is not declared as a heritage precinct, probably to enable its destruction) Osmansagar and Himayatsagar are covered by an order which restricts certain types of activities around them. While this is violated with impunity, Government is now seeking to even relax its strict provisions. This will release large tracts of land from the purview of the order and open the door to real estate dealers to make fortunes overnight.

A new danger is baring its fangs. Government has proposed an outer ring road close to Himayatsagar. When vehicles start plying, lead from their exhaust gases will settle on the water of the lake jeopardising the health of several lakh people who drink Himayatsagar water (A child in USA was found to have died of lead poisoning as the child had consumed the milk of a cow that grazed on a pasture by the side of a highway.)

The people living in the state capital, are likely to face difficult times ahead if the mindset of the government does not change for the better. In a city where water flowed freely, people are compelled to believe how difficult it is to get it now. Lord Byron rightly said "Till taught by pain, man knows not water's worth".

# WATER HYACINTH

*Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*

You would have seen the variety of plant floating on lakes, rivers and swamps growing to heights of two feet above the water. Purple flowers are seen grouped around the top of the stem.

Water hyacinths grow mainly in the tropical regions of the world. Someone must have introduced this plant in Hyderabad. The already shrunk Hussain Sagar lake is often seen covered with a thick growth of water hyacinths. There is absolutely no control on its growth. They are found to grow very fast and today have turned into a serious environmental problem, as I see them.

They grow very rapidly and form a thick carpet on the surface of the water. All plant and animal life in the water gets destroyed. Plants in the water are devoid of sunlight owing to the thick growth of the water hyacinth and the roots of these plants use up the oxygen in the water

depriving the fish to get sufficient oxygen. Most of the oxygen gets used up and therefore no fish is able to survive in Hussain Sagar. Earlier, there was fish in Hussain Sagar. The thick growth is periodically removed but they need to be removed as soon as they begin to grow. It is a fact that Hussain Sagar is getting polluted more by discharge from industries which contain toxic chemicals than by the other source, namely sewage. It is eutrophication which is the process by which wastes add nutrients to water that changes the balance of life in the water.

At the same time water hyacinths could be useful as they have the ability to absorb many chemicals, including sewage and industrial wastes. Polluted water could actually be purified by passing it through a series of tanks that contain water hyacinths.



# SAVE THE OSMAN SAGAR, SAVE THE HIMAYATH SAGAR

*Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*

It is indeed a matter of great worry,  
It is many of our's grave concern,  
Osman Sagar and Himayath Sagar,  
Any day we might just lose,I learn.

Way back on 28th September 1908,  
When flood waters entered the city,  
When the swollen River Musi washed away  
So many homes and people, of this city.

Houses collapsed like pack of cards,  
Trees got uprooted and scattered,  
People ran helter skelter, in fear,  
Mehboob Ali Pasha with his entourage, gathered.

He personally oversaw the rescue operations,  
Was determined to find some way  
To find a permanent solution,  
And never ever have to see such a day.

It was only in 1914,that across River Musi  
Work began in right earnest,  
By the year 1920,a dam was built

Ten miles away towards the city's west.

Then by 1927,came another lake,closeby,  
Not far from the earlier Osman Sagar,  
This lake was somewhat larger  
And was named Himayath Sagar.

Thus, the devastating floods got contained,  
And drinking water was provided for all,  
It was Sir Vishweshwaraya,the famous engineer  
And Chief Engineer Ahmed Mirza who stood tall.

The water from these two great lakes,  
Have given **life** to the people of this city,  
They have been the two **main** sources of  
**drinking water**,  
We just might lose them,oh what a pity!

This is the time to **wake** up friends,  
It is the time to take things in our hands,  
It is the time to **save** these two water bodies,  
The time to protect **all** lakes and the  
**encroached** lands!

# "SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT"

*Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*

An Environment Awareness Campaign should be organized with the objective of creating environmental awareness.

Sub-themes for conducting the campaign should include management of household waste / municipal waste, bio-medical waste, plastics waste, electronic waste and industrial waste including fly ash, composting/vermi-composting & waste management.

Registered NGOs, voluntary organisations, educational institutions, State Government Departments, registered professional bodies etc. working in the field of environment and sustainable development should conduct various activities such as Seminars/Workshops, Camps/Padyatras/Rallies, Competitions, Street Theatre/ Science fairs and prepare educational resource material on environmental issues etc. for creating environmental awareness on the identified theme amongst the masses. The proposal **must also include an action oriented component**, which would result in environmental improvement and benefit to the local community.

Every single day in every national daily, in English or regional languages, we find letters written by residents, sometimes with photographs showing piled up or scattered garbage on the roadside and in various residential areas, stagnant water and debris piled up in various places leading to extremely unhygienic conditions for people to live in. Those carrying out construction work, do not have the minimum consideration for other members of the public who are put to a lot of inconvenience owing to the piling up of huge quantities of construction debris on road sides, thereby occupying and blocking narrow lanes and by lanes.

This problem needs to be addressed on a war footing and the public adequately educated to help the civic authorities to ensure a clean disease and pollution free Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

The members of the public have to be penalized for violating the rules in relation to maintaining of cleanliness no matter who they are. The rules should be the same for all.

Since Greater Hyderabad is a huge area to cover, it may take a lot of time to cover the whole area, but let us at least make a beginning and go about achieving success with the entire area step by step.

Day by day, we notice there is further deterioration in the cleanliness and upkeep of various areas of the city owing to public apathy and callousness of the civic authorities to a large extent.

There is a definite need to emphasize the importance of local citizen action in combating the same and may receive priority and consideration by the different Residential Welfare Associations.



Heaps of garbage in front of Divyashakti Apts., Ameerpet

# RAIN WATER AND UMANAGAR

*Capt. Manohar Sharma*

Three decades back Uma Nagar Colony Begampet, being very close to Hussain Sagar Lake had plenty of under ground water. At 50-60 feet deep the water was available in plenty. However the scenario changed dramatically after twenty years and

Ten years back Umanagar had more of dry bore wells than houses... Every summer frantic phone calls rushing on two wheelers or cars to water works or the water tankers was not an uncommon sight. With a high summer temperature and no water, it was difficult to say in Hyderabad language— Do the residents have more of “BHAJJI FRIES OR FRIED BHEJJAS” in their houses.(Situation is going to be worst in coming years.)

Well ten years back, (URWA) Umanagar resident's welfare association took up the matter of rain water harvesting in Uma Nagar under the guidance of Prof. M. V. Nayudu and well supported by some of the active committee members of our welfare association. The Ground Water department and Metro Water Works responded well... The work relating to the rainwater-harvesting pits was taken up on war footings. . Private houses and apartments were encouraged to make such rain water harvesting pits in their compounds. Residents made trips to Water Works and Ground water departments as a follow- up action and moreover whenever the department people came to the colony area, half a dozen of our residents

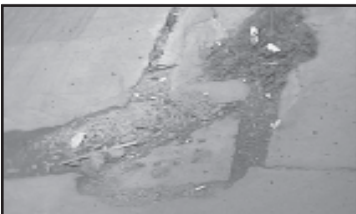
are there to greet them. The efforts from both sides became a success story.

It is said that the proof of pudding is in eating, the result of the rainwater harvesting pits are there for everyone to see. On Street No1 where four rain water-harvesting pits were made, all the new complexes that have come up in last few years have adequate bore water. In Peace Court a multi storied complex where the builder fully cooperated in making the pits which resulted in hundred percent harvesting of rain water. . In fact it has been found in Peace Court that in good rainy season, when rain water harvesting pits are well maintained, their have been no water shortage. URWA is taking all the steps before monsoon to get the pits clean and maintain them properly.

Just to give one more example, the bore in the Colony Park is just beside a rainwater harvest pit. The park is lush green not because there is water in the bore, but there is a rain-harvesting pit, which is feeding the bore with water. The colony park got lots of media coverage as well maintained park by a welfare association.

One can definitely say that, Ground Water and Water Works departments enthusiasm for making Umanagar a water scarcity free zone, was well appreciated by the residents... All out efforts are on hand to make Umanagar a water tanker free zone.

WATER IS GOING TO BE IN SHORT SUPPLY LIKE OIL LETS PRESERVE IT.



The condition of the rain water harvesting pits are seen before the monsoons arrival which have been now repaired and set right to receive the rain.



# A Representation from FBH & CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS dt. 22.7.2007 to Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhhar Reddy, Chief Minister, Government of A.P.

**Sub : Proposed Draft Notification-Regulation for development-G.O.Ms.No.111**  
**Ref: Memo No. 261/1/2006 dated 16-07-2007 issued by MA&UD Department,**  
**GOAP.**

As concerned citizens of city of Hyderabad we would like to share our misgivings, anxieties and concerns regarding the above Draft Notification.



Sri M. Vedakumar, Sri. C. Ramachandraiah and Prof. Kodarkar along with NGOs submitting the representation

To begin with - we wish to bring to your notice that a water body is influenced not only by activities in catchment areas and the lake itself **but also in command area**. That is why a **holistic approach** becomes very important particularly in case of lakes acting as drinking water sources - as in the case of Osmansagar and Himayatsagar – the two lakes in question. This is in conformity with professional understanding of lakes at the global level as reflected by two major documents World Lake Vision (WLV) – A Call to Action and (2) Integrated Lake Basin Management (ILBM – A report for Lake Basin Managers and Stakeholders- published by International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC), Japan, that have

deeply influenced actions for conservation and management of lakes and reservoirs across the globe.

GO 111 is a comprehensive order that is in tune with International thinking, policymaking and administrative practices. It was a better instrument created taking in to consideration (a) water shed of Hyderabad region and (b) integrated approach for long-term sustainability of these lakes.

It is rather shocking to see proposed modifications with reference to down stream areas of these reservoirs. Proposed amendments go contrary to an 'Integrated approach' and Lake environment is being analyzed in fragmented way as up-stream, and down stream which is against global thinking, experience and practices. The amendment seems to be an exercise Government is forced to undertake under the pressure of vested interests. Implementation of these amendments will open floodgates to destructive developments and degradation and final destruction of these reservoirs that will go Hussainsagar way.

Specifically, we are opposed to the Draft Notification for following reasons:

- First, all members of the committee that recommended the amendments were from Governmental organizations, without any representation to Civil Society and independent Academic institutions. It appears to be 'For, Of and By' the Government. This is unacceptable to us.

- Make all relevant documents public and give sufficient time before the process is restarted
- There was no public hearing or elicitation of opinion of civil society.
- The areas proposed to be earmarked as per amendments for down stream construction activity – euphemistically referred to as “development” - have no scientific basis and arbitrary.

We demand comprehensive rethinking on the issue and with drawl of proposed amendments.

It needs a statesman to steer destiny of a nation and we appeal to you (CM) to stop this whole negative process of private appropriation of natural resources for personal gain of few at the cost of stifling the historic lifeline of Hyderabad city.

We look forward to a citizen sensitive governance from you and hope that our views as above will receive due consideration as the matter is a serious public issue with grave implications for future generations.

## FORUM FOR A BETTER HYDERABAD & CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

(Representation to Hon'ble Chief Minister on GO 111)

<p>Dr. S. Sekhri Mary</p> <p>M.D. Ashfaq</p> <p>Syed Bilal</p> <p>V. Solomon Raju</p> <p>JAYASRI</p> <p>Sanghamitra Malik</p> <p>Umesh Varma .P</p> <p>Jasveen Jairath</p>	<p>Campaign for Housing and Tenorial Rights (CHATRI)</p> <p>" " "</p> <p>" " "</p> <p>Gamania (NGO)</p> <p>DECCAN DEVELOPMENTS SOCIETY</p> <p>APNA WATAN</p> <p>Forum for a Better Hyderabad</p> <p>Concerned Citizens of FBH</p>	<p><u>Chun</u></p> <p><u>H. H.</u></p> <p><u>S. B.</u></p> <p>V. Sol on Raju</p> <p><u>Jasveen</u></p> <p><u>A. Varma</u></p> <p><u>J. D.</u></p>
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**A Representation from Sri Naram Krishna Rao,  
dt. 27.7.2007 to The Principal Secretary, MA&UD,  
Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Planned Destruction of drinking water sources of the city**

Few cities can boast of such ideally located drinking water sources as Osmansagar and Himayathsagar which we have. They are highly dependable and least expensive as the water flows into the city entirely by gravity. The quality of water is good and reputed to be addictive. These sources are under attack now. There is large scale exploitation in the catchment areas of these reservoirs. Although the Government made attempts to stop it by entrusting the responsibility to do so to the departments of Revenue and Panchayat Raj, there is no improvement in the flow into the reservoirs which is reduced to alarmingly low levels. The G.O.No. 50 of 28.1.1989 was issued for the purpose. Subsequent surveys have revealed an enormous increase in the number of check-dams across streams and pumping of ground and surface water. Un-authorized Check-dams were to be destroyed and power supply to pumps cut off. The situation worsened and devout Muslims offered prayers on the dry bed of Osmansagar to draw Government's attention to the deteriorating condition of the reservoirs. Studies carried out by JNTU predicted their demise in the next thirty years. In all the cultures of the world destruction of

drinking water sources is a deadly sin. But what happens if the Government is found guilty of the Act?

As though this is not enough, the Government has now come up with a proposal to remove some of the restrictions imposed through another Order issued eleven years ago in an effort to protect these lakes. G.O.Ms.No.111 of 8.3.1996 bans constructional and other activities within 10 k.m. from these reservoirs on their upstream and downstream sides.

Whereas a Memo (No.261/4/2006 dated. 16.7.2007) is issued for publication in the gazette on 17.7.2007 giving 15 days time to the people to offer 'objections or suggestions on. the proposal is to ban the activities within 500 meters from the lakes (and one k.m. in some cases) instead of 10 k.m. In other words the activities which were found injurious to the safety of the drinking water sources catering to six million people will be literally brought to the doorstep of the lakes. The provocation for doing so is not clear. However, the Notification says, there will be no direction "pollution" of the lakes and that "acidification of

lakes is not of concern in the Hyderabad Region”. It is not specified to whom it is of no concern. Already the ORR that will pass by the side of Himayathsagar has started worrying all those who know the consequences of hundreds of vehicles that ply on it, emitting poisonous gases from their exhaust pipes. The Nitrogen and Sulphur Oxides and the particulate matter are known to have around 40 carcinogens in them. There is also lead which is a cumulative poison. (As per medical records a child died of lead poisoning because it consumed milk of a cow that grazed in a field by the side of highway). The statement that there will not be any direct pollution if activities are allowed downstream of the lakes, is also not correct. It will be next to impossible to prevent activities spreading to the catchment areas. And if that happens, the lakes may have to be abandoned as drinking water sources. This is how the destruction of Hussainsagar, once the main drinking water source for the capital city, had started. Now the lake has turned into a cesspool and a garbage dump. Lakes

attract people and thus their decay starts. The Committee setup by the Supreme Court and headed by a former Secretary, Environment has recommended decongestion of the area around Hussainsagar.

There is no real substitute for Osmansagar and Himayathsagar if they perish. The talk of filling up these reservoirs with water from Godavari in the contemplated manner, is without much substance. As in the case of water supply to Chennai from the Krishna River, there can never be an assured supply (Chennai now wants to desalinate sea water). Government should now remove the obstructions in the catchment areas and refrain from scuttling the Orders contained in G.O.Ms.No.111 of 8.3.1996. The unseemly hurry on the part of the Government to free vast areas of land below these vital sources of water supply, from the restrictions imposed eleven years ago is questionable. The 15 days’ time given to the people to offer suggestions is too short. The interests of 6 million people lie in the safety of these reservoirs Osmansgar and Himayathsagar.

Copy to

- 1) **The Chief Secretary**, Govt.of AP, Secretariat, Hyderabad
- 2) **The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister**, Secretariat, Hyderabad
- 3) **The Managing Director** , HMWS&SB, Hyderabad.
- 4) **The Member Secretary**, APPCB, Hyderabad.
- 5) **The Vice Chairman & Managing Director** , HUDA , Hyderabad.
- 6) **The Commissioner & Special Officer**, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Hyderabad.
- 7) **The President**, Forum For A Better Hyderabad, Hyderabad.

**A Representation from FBH, dt. 28.7.2007  
to The Principal Secretary, MA&UD,  
Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Suggestion/Objections on Draft notification to G.O. 111.  
Ref.-Ref. - Memo. No. 261/1/2006 Dt. - 16-07-2007 issued by your office.**

With reference to the above, have the following requests to your office.

a) The above referred Memo is not published in Telugu thus cutting off many people from understanding the memo and sending their objections / suggestions to your office on a very important issue concerning the citizens of Hyderabad. when there is a GO directing that every important document released by Government has to be compulsorily also translated into Telugu and published simultaneously. It is suggested to issue the memo in Telugu also.

b) Without making the concerned reports (Technical committee report submitted on 25/09/2006 and the report by EPTRI) into public documents on the basis of which the suggested guidelines on regulation of development, are being done, and without these reports being widely circulated and discussed it is felt one is not in a position to make any constructive suggestions or comments.

c) It is suggested that the total process be put on hold and all the concerned reports are made public on which public discussion is initiated by holding workshops/meetings etc in different places

so that informed choice/decision is possible.

d) Request your good office to issue copies of the following reports/GOs mentioned in the memo referred to above at the earliest.

- 1) G.O.Rt.No.952 MA&UD DEPARTMENT Dt:- 29/11/2005
- 2) D.O.LETTER No.EPTRI/EQM/75/2/AHWQ-H/2006/1139 DATED 25/09/2006
- 3) FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR, HMWS&SB, HYDERABAD LETTER No.MD/GO111/2007/1973, DATED 21/04/2007.
- 4) REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE, DATED 25/09/2006.
- 5) COMPLETE COPY OF THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION TRAINING & RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NGRI / IICT ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF ESTABLISHING NON-POLLUTING INDUSTRIES WITHIN 10 KMS DISTANCE IN THE DOWNSTREAM AREA AS MENTIONED IN PARAGRAPH 4 OF APPENDIX OF THE NOTIFICATION IN THE ABOVE REFERRED MEMO No.261/11/2006 Dt: - 16/07/2007 ISSUED BY PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MA&UD

Copy to

- 1) **The Chief Secretary, Govt. of A.P, Secretariat, Hyderabad.**
- 2) **The Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Secretariat, Hyderabad.**
- 3) **The Managing Director, HMWS&SB, Hyderabad.**
- 4) **The Member Secretary, APPCB, Hyderabad.**
- 5) **The Vice Chairman & Managing Director, HUDA, Hyderabad.**
- 6) **The Commissioner & Special Officer, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Hyderabad.**

## **A Representation from Dr. M.S. Kodarkar to The Principal Secretary, MA&UD, Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Proposed Draft Notification-Regulations for development-G.O.Ms.No.111,  
Ref - Memo. No. 26/11/2006 Dt. - 16.07.2007 issued by your office**

As the Constitutional obligation, the Article 51 A which, states that : **It shall be duty of every citizen of India – To protect and improve natural environment including Forests, Lakes, Rivers and Wild Life, and to have compassion for living creatures** – I would like to record my opposition to proposed draft notification with reference to GO 111. Further, I would request the Government to implement set of protective actions as envisaged in the GO 111 in letter and spirit.

### **The catchment (Up-stream) :**

The two lakes in question are our natural heritage and a creation of great visionary Sir Mokshgundam Vishveswarayya. They are supplying water of a very high quality for years at almost no cost. Unfortunately uncontrolled developments in their catchment have adversely affected in-flows and these reservoirs are not even getting filled for years. We demand measures as per GO 111 be initiated to remove all causes affecting natural in-flows in to the reservoirs.

### **The water bodies (Reservoirs) :**

The lakes despite of GO 111, is under tremendous stress from population growth in the villages around (Ex. Chilkur), tourism and

developments which are not eco-friendly. Many pockets of the water bodies are showing clear signs of eutrophication – a process showing degraded water quality and growth of algae and weeds. Hyderabad was witness to Surana Industry episode. Thanks to the intervention by Supreme Court of India, the disaster could be averted. The building of CDFD (Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics) is right on the shore of Himayatsagar violating the GO 111 that prohibits any construction in the bio-conservation zone is another face of failure in implementation of the GO.

**Command (Down stream) :** There is increase in population of villages in the down stream zone and a lot of developmental activities are altering its ecology. There is a need to protect the ecology of this zone as per GO 111 as the area is life line of river Musi down stream. There is vast scope for ecological enhancement of this zone.

### **Impacts of proposed amendments :**

#### **River Musi :**

The proposed recommended amendments have such a disastrous consequences that they will not only affect the water bodies by further accelerating negative developments up-stream but

also totally alter the river Musi environment down stream. The amended GO will open flood gates for industrial developments and pollution of the river and health and livelihood of thousands of poor people living along the river course up as well as down stream. We have to live with the reality that though on paper it will be only so called select on-polluting industries, but in reality all kind of industries will mushroom after some time. The effect on flood moderation function of the river could be disastrous for people living along the river. The amendments will lead to a situation for river Musi like the one for Hussainsagar which is testimony to this process.

The reservoirs and their up and down stream environment (bio-conservation zone) needs protection as per GO 111 as the provisions are in accordance with water shed concept.

The emissions from industries and effluents (sewage from non-point sources) from the proposed industrial and residential areas will affect ground water as well as ambient air quality. Ground water pollution without access to protected water supply will hit poor people and weaker sections of the society very hard.

Finally on the following counts I feel the proposal needs further discussion before coming to any conclusion :

1. The committee that recommended the amendments did not have representatives from civil society, research organizations and academic institutions who could have articulated conservation issues in a comprehensive manner.

2. The extent of down stream zonation proposed does not take in to consideration the ecological angle.
3. Going by record on enforcement of regulations in the prevailing permissive politico-socio-economical environment, proposed zonation will remain on the paper and whole region will be a victim of haphazard developments of unmanageable magnitude.
4. The proposed Musi river beautification and conservation will be a lost cause.

Finally, I may also add that if we look at global thinking on the issue of conservation and sustainable management of lakes, an integrated approach as envisaged by Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) principles advocated by Global Water Partnership (GWP) and principles of World Lake Vision (WLV) as envisioned by International Lake Environmental Committee Foundation (ILEC), Japan, conservation of a lake or reservoir should be based on lake basin approach that includes up-stream, water body and down stream zones and role of bio-consevation zone is central to such an integrated approach. Fragmented approach will not help the intended cause in short as well as long terms.

I hope that the Government will undertake more detailed exercise before finalizing such amendments of disastrous consequences and take in to confidence all sections of society to come to acceptable actions.



## **A Representation by FBH, dt.2.6.2008 to The Vice Chairman, HUDA, Hyderabad.**

### **Sub : Bam ki Bowdi located at Hasan Nagar**

Following a report appearing in the Hindu dated 14.4.2008, “Realtors eye royal spring” near Mir Alam Tank (paper cutting enclosed), Forum For A Better Hyderabad sent a team to the site and find out the facts. A route map to reach the site and photographs of Bam Ki Bowdi and a pond next to it. are attached.

Bam Ki Bowdi is a small natural pond or well located next to a natural spring which flows with water always. Bam Ki Bowdi is located in Hasan Nagar, beside H.P.Petrol Pump & Jai Bhavani Roads & Transport, No: 4-33/4/B Hasan Nagar Mandal: Rajendar Nagar. Dist: Ranga Reddy. It is about 1 k.m. from National Police Academy and about ½ k.m. from Mir Alam Tank. “Bam Ruknud Dowlah” is the original name to the pond/ well and in colloquial Language it is called “Bam Ki Bowdi”. The pond/ well has never gone dry for the last 12 years.

Beside this Bowdi there is “Janatha Swimming Pool” and HUDA Nursery.

#### **By way of threats to Bam ki Bowdi, we observe:**

- Boulders are being put into the well/pond ( please see photograph), and in course of time may fill up the pond/well.
- Constructions are coming up along the

catchment area of the well/ pond - please see photographs - and these will prevent flow of water into the pond.

- These may indicate surreptitious effort for reclamation of the pond/well and the pond / well may disappear, unless the above actions are stopped forthwith.

#### **We recommend as follows:**

- Government land around the well/ pond should be clearly earmarked and protected.
- Even private land owners around the well/pond should be made to comply with the water laws and not allowed to change the land use or do any thing that may affect the pond/well.
- Encroachment on the catchment area should be removed immediately and no fresh encroachment allowed, irrespective of land ownership.
- The Well/pond should be recognized as a natural heritage. It must be protected as such with immediate effect. In due course, it should be notified as natural heritage by the Heritage Conservation Committee.

We request immediate action to save the water body.

#### **Dr. M. Mandal**

- C.C:
1. **The Collector, R.R.Dist., Hyderabad**
  2. **The Commissioner & Special Officer, GHMC, Hyderabad**
  3. **The Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, HUDA, Hyderabad**

# WHEN THE GOVERNMENT STEALS EVEN OUR BANNERS

*Campaign for Housing and Tenurial Rights (CHATRI)  
Hyderabad*

**The Congress Government of Andhra Pradesh has revived the disastrous Musi Riverfront Development Project that was abandoned by the previous Telugu Desam Government after it met with stiff resistance from the public, technical calculations of the consultants about inflows were proven completely wrong by floods, and overseas donors backed out.**

**The project is now ironically named Save Musi Campaign, the very name that was chosen by the popular resistance platform in 1999. The only difference this time is that the Congress Government has been more efficient in identifying ‘surplus land’ that could be turned into real estate markets for commercial development. To do this, the government is leveraging the funds released by the Central government under the National River Conservancy Project to set up sewerage lines and treatment plants.**

Once the river is cleaned, the government plans to set up a special purpose vehicle with public private partnerships. The lands obtained by evicting urban and periurban farmers, washermen and slum localities will be transferred to this special purpose vehicle which will then mobilize private investments in multiplex theaters and shopping malls.

The project was launched in June, 2007, and is expected to be completed in 30 months. Evictions and acquisition notices have already begun. Over 700 farmers who have received notices have challenged it in the court and less fortunate people with insecure land tenures like squatters, pattedars and leaseholders are awaiting their fate. Nearly two hundred families of rag-pickers living on the riverbed have been thrown out and not given any housing even though there is a court stay order against such removal.

**River Musi and Hyderabad:** The historical geography of Hyderabad urban development is closely bound with that of the River Musi. Until about 1920s, the city was largely to the South of the river with some development on the North side, the most prominent of these being the Secunderabad Cantonment since 1865. However, after the massive floods of 1908, the ruler decided to move North of the river and a new urban dynamics developed. After 1930, the flows in the river were limited because the water was stored in two balancing reservoirs at Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar but until even a decade ago there was water flowing in the river especially in rains.

The course of the river in the city has a steep gradient which results in stagnant pools along the river when there is not adequate water which is

often. There are currently 10 bridges across the river although the government maps show only 9. The draft Master Plan 2020 proposes 8 more bridges. There are between 65 to 85 sewer drains emptying into the river besides industrial pollution. There are settlements, karkhanas, bazars, Dhobighats, temples, mosques and grave yards all along the river and on the river bed. Some of these are old and others of recent vintage. The river divides the city in two with the Old city south of the river having experienced stagnation in the economy, and prone to violent riots periodically. The traffic has grown tremendously with the growth of population along the Vijayawada-Bangalore route. Currently, the city does need creation of new traffic corridors to ease the pressure at least temporarily.

**Nandanavanam Project:** With the new development paradigm that was inaugurated by Vision 2020, it was no surprise that the formula for urban redevelopment would focus on public private partnerships, creation of spaces for elite consumption, and cluster-based development invested in IT and knowledge-based industry. It was also not very surprising that Hyderabad like all other Indian cities claims that its best asset is land. Thus in place of money, the government attempted to offer land as its stock in public private partnerships. One such project proposed in 1997 was Nandanavanam-Musi riverfront development project. The consultants for the Project was Environmental Planning Collaborative of Ahmedabad which had proposed a similar project in Ahmedabad for Sabarmati Riverfront Development.

The project entailed restricting the river course to a narrow concrete channel at the center of the river so that the small amounts of water discharge will maintain a flow, roads and green belts on both sides of the river, recreational spaces and malls. It

was estimated that nearly 20,000 people will be displaced.

However, revenue department's attempts to acquire land were resisted by people strongly. The resistance was organized first under the banner of *Nandanavanam Bustee Parirakshana Samiti* a local organization and then under the banner of *Musi Bachao Andolan* a platform bringing together environmentalists, farmers and slumdweller and human rights activists and then *Campaign for Housing and Tenurial Rights* a broad coalition of organizations looking at housing rights on a city scale. Some of the strategies used were:

*Litigation:* Two Public Interest petitions one asking for a public hearing as per environmental regulations and the other objecting on lack of proper rehab arrangements. The first petition was thrown out while the second managed to get an absolute stay. We do not know the status of this stay at the moment.

*Direct Action:* Rallies and Dharnas, prevention of surveyors and demolition squads from entering the slums. Lobbying with senior officials.

*Local political pressure:* Involvement of a number of local politicians in Amanullah Khan, Sudheer Kumar etc. in negotiations and protest actions.

The project ultimately failed because of backing out by funding agencies, lack of 'ownership' by any single government agency and also the chaos created by the floods of 2000. However, as the government was keen on constructing the road, CHATRI hired the help of students from JNTU to propose a realignment of the road to minimize demolitions. This has however not progressed further because the entire project has been in suspension for some time.

Yet while there were no major demolitions, a number of changes have taken place in the slums since the first assault. First, one of the slums on the riverbed under the Shivaji Bridge caught fire and was moved out. Many of those who moved out at that time have since come back into the city and a new slum has emerged at the same spot. Then, residents of the older slums especially those who did not have any tenurial rights to their dwellings moved out to Nandanvanam the site where rehabilitation was proposed.

### **The Save Musi Campaign:**

The Congress government has revived the project under a new name: Save Musi Campaign. The project essentially remains the same but comes with better packaging and clever manipulation of institutions and processes. If the government pushes the project immediately, we do not know, how many of the slum-dwellers will want to stay put and how many of them will be willing to move out. But what we do know is that the Save Musi Campaign is a major conspiracy in the guise of an ostensibly noble project. It will be pulled off in four steps:

1. Creation of a Special Development Authority.  
To change zonal/building regulations. This will be done through the Assembly, HUDA, Secretariat. A scale of decision making which is not accessible to local democratic processes and political pressures. It will be put in the hands of IAS officers.
2. Creation of a company with MCH, HUDA and Metro water as principal partners.  
This will be done through the Assembly or an administrative decision (Government order) which again will not be accessible to the public.
3. Transfer land and authorize reclamation and relocation.

The company will have no equity. The municipality has no credible means of fund raising. Municipal bonds have not succeeded very much anywhere and there will be no investor confidence even if it is sought. So the only stock the company can have will be land which will be either reclaimed from the river, or by declaring a number of settlements and land uses along the river bed as illegal and acquiring land through Land Acquisition Act. These lands will be sold, leased or held in stock as equity.

Somewhere around this time, new claims on the land will be created by landgrabbers/politicians/investors.

### 4. Rehabilitate, evict, demolish, ghettoize.

Some of the people will be relocated in the name of rehabilitation package. Those who refuse to move will be ghettoized and then at some stage will be pressured into selling out. If there are still people who refuse to budge, they will be easy to handle either through police or through other violent means.

The project entails : North South Drives , i.e. roads flanking the river, creation of three precincts... *ecological precinct* from Tipu Khan Bridge to Musallam Jung Bridge (7 km) , *heritage precinct* from Musllam Jung Bridge to Chaderghat Bridge (4 km) and *metropolitan precinct* Chaderghat Bridge to Nagole (8 km). It is in the metropolitan precinct that the land to be acquired and turned into equity lies. And it is also here that the largest number of poor inhabitants live.

Going by the experience of other cities this is a process that takes at least five years. However, the present government plans to complete it in 30 months and the project has already started. We must recognize that this is a complex battle in which a number of actors and institutions and processes are involved at different locations and scales.

# HYDERABAD'S WATER ISSUES AND THE MUSI RIVER NEED FOR INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

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## **Abstract**

As Hyderabad has grown in size and is emerging as a global megacity, its growing water requirements have been met by undertaking long-distance water projects over the years. The local water resources have been neglected. Despite an improvement in the total volume of the water supply recently, intra-city inequity continues to be an issue that has not been adequately addressed by the policy makers. As a result, people in poor areas are falling victim to water-borne diseases. Non-implementation of the environmental laws and haphazard planning and growth of Hyderabad city have reduced the Musi river to a sewer drain carrying the domestic and industrial waste generated in Hyderabad city adversely impacting on the river ecology. The government's approach to the conservation of Musi has not considered the wider catchment area of the river. This paper argues that the future water security of Hyderabad city lies in an integrated management of the entire catchment area of the Musi river and a number of water bodies that are still existing in and around the city.

## **Introduction**

Hyderabad urban agglomeration (HUA), the capital city of Andhra Pradesh State in India, has a population of about 6 million. With an area of about 778 square kilometres, the HUA consists of the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH), Secunderabad Cantonment and the ten surrounding municipal towns as important components. The HUA has registered a decadal growth rate of about 43 per cent, 67 per cent and 28 per cent during seventies, eighties and nineties respectively with much of the spatial expansion in the last two decades occurring in the peripheries. Very recently in April 2007, much of the HUA has been constituted into a single urban local body, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). It is the sixth largest city in India, closely behind Bangalore. In recent years, the city has emerged as an important information technology centre in India and has acquired a global image in this field.

Being located in an undulating topography of the Deccan Plateau of the Indian subcontinent,



Hyderabad city and its environs were blessed with a number of natural and man-made water bodies locally known as *Cheruvus*, *Kuntas* etc. These water bodies acted as water storage reservoirs for irrigation, drinking and groundwater recharge, and have been an inalienable part of the urban ecology of the city. Gradually, while some lakes were encroached and replaced by concrete buildings, several others got severely polluted with the domestic and industrial effluents. With the loss of water bodies and the consequent decline in groundwater table, long-distance and expensive water projects are being undertaken to provide water to the city.

The crisis of water shortage in the city has been more evident since mid-1980s with the citizens getting municipal water supply on alternate days. Increasing number of bore wells and the decline of groundwater table has resulted in the bore wells

now being dug up to over 800-1000 feet in several areas as many old bore wells are drying up. Due to increasing population in HUA and the slow expansion of water board coverage area the people are increasingly resorting to groundwater usage. The recently approved Water, Land and Trees Act (WALTA) has not made any impact in urban areas. Under the Act, it is compulsory to seek and get permission from MRO (Mandal Revenue Officer) before digging any bore well. It is also prohibited to draw water from below 500 feet of ground. To meet the growing demand, people of all sections of the society frequently flout both these requirements.

### Water Sources and Water Supply

The main sources of surface water are Osmansagar, Himayatsagar, Manjira Barrage, Singur Dam and Krishna water (Table 1). Osmansagar was built in 1920 across Esi, a tributary

**Table 1. Main Water Supply Sources for Hyderabad**

Source	Osman sagar	Himayath sagar	Manjira Phase-I	Manjira Phase-II	Manjira/ Singur Phase-III	Manjira/ Singur Phase-IV	Krishna water scheme
Year of Commissioning	1922	1927	1965	1981	1991	1994	2004
River	Musi	Esi	Manjira	Manjira	Manjira	Manjira	Krishna
Name of the Impoundment	Osman sagar	Himayath sagar	Manjira	Manjira	Singur	Singur	Nagarjuna

Source: [www.hyderabadwater.gov.in](http://www.hyderabadwater.gov.in) except for the last column (accessed in March 2005).

Note: First phase of Krishna Water Scheme has been completed and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase was started in September 2005.

\* Already existing.

of Musi river, and Himayatsagar was constructed in 1927 across Musi. Before these two reservoirs were built Hussainsagar and Mir Alam Tank (built in 1562 and 1908 respectively) supplied drinking water to the city till 1930 or so. Over the years, the latter two got polluted and are no more used as drinking water sources.

It may be noted from the above Table that with the passage of time, the city has been drawing water from longer distances. The second phase of Krishna project, when completed, is estimated to bring 90 mgd more into the city and total quantity may reach 320 mgd (million gallons a day), making daily water supply a distinct possibility. As of now there seems to be no infrastructure to store the water brought from the Krishna water scheme. There are plans to construct 12 new reservoirs of 100 mld (million litres per day), including eight in the old city, and lay pipelines to take Krishna water to all areas. The new reservoirs will enable the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) store the huge volume of water. The board currently has 80 reservoirs with storage capacity of 200 mld.<sup>3</sup> The government of Andhra Pradesh has plans to supply water round the clock to the entire city in the six months or so.<sup>4</sup>

The Census data for 2001 reveals that while tap is the principal source of water supply for 93 percent of households in MCH area, the corresponding figure is only about 60 percent and below in the several surrounding municipalities. The location of the tap is outside the premises for a substantial proportion of households in several municipalities. For many families that depend on hand pump, the source is located outside the premises. The municipalities in the HUA are among

those facing several acute water shortage in Andhra Pradesh (Ramachandraiah, 2003).

From Osmansagar and Himayatsagar there has been a decline in water supply over the years due to reduced inflows and, for the first time in about 80 years, Osmansagar and Himayatsagar dried up in 2003. When full, these two sources were supplying 45 Mgd to the city. Himayatsagar has dried up again in November 2004 while the Osmansagar became dry in April 2005. A study found that there has been a progressive decline in the percent of rainfall converted into inflows into these two reservoirs during 1961-1996 even though the rainfall pattern has not changed much. These two water bodies reached their full reservoir levels more times (10 times by Osmansagar and 11 times by Himayatsagar) in the first 18 years of 1961-96 compared to the second half of the period (only 5 times by Osmansagar and 6 times by Himayatsagar). Based on this trend, it was concluded that these two reservoirs may dry up completely in future: Himayatsagar in 2036 and Osmansagar in 2040. Even if they do not dry up, they will receive mostly polluted water resulting from the increasing urbanisation of the catchment area and would cease to be the sources of drinking water, unless proper remedial measures are taken (Venkateswar Rao and Srinivasa Rao, 1998). Despite copious rains in Hyderabad and its surroundings during July-September 2005 and 2006, the inflows have been very less into these reservoirs. This is due to construction of check dams and other encroachments in their catchment areas. The total water in these two reservoirs thus accounts for only 1 Tmcft (Thousand million cubic feet) as against their storage capacity of 7 tmcft.<sup>55</sup>

*The New Indian Express*

, Hyderabad, 19 September 2006.

There has been an improvement in the water supply position in the city in general with more

water being brought into the city with the Krishna water project. This improvement has happened in those areas which already have piped connections and sufficient water storage facilities. The low-income and slum areas, which do not have such facilities, have not witnessed any significant improvement. Irregular supply of water in terms of duration (once in three or four days instead of alternate days), low pressure, inadequacy and poor quality are some of the problems regularly faced by such areas. Intra-city inequity in water supply as an issue has not been addressed by the policy makers. As a result, people in such areas fall victim to water-borne diseases. Analysis of data for 34 diseases in the Ronald Ross Institute of Tropical Diseases, popularly known as Fever Hospital, in the city reveals that a large number of visits/admissions of patients is caused by water-borne diseases. This is a major referral hospital for infectious diseases for the poor and low-income people. Of the 34, 14 diseases, especially diarrhea, malaria, enteric fever and viral pyrexia/fever, are accounting for over 90 percent of the morbidity cases and even a higher share of deaths. The cases of gastro-enteritis have come down after 2001 but diarrhea cases are increasing. Diarrhea and viral pyrexia/fever are the two major causes of hospitalization of the poor in the city. It may be noted that both these diseases are related to lack of clean drinking water, poor sanitation and low resistance (Prasad and Ramachandraiah, 2007).

### **Osmansagar-Himayatsagar and GO 111**

In view of the importance of Osmansagar and Himayatsagar for drinking water needs of the city, the State government issued a Government Order (GO No. 111) in 1996 prohibiting certain activities in their catchment areas.<sup>6</sup> The HMWSSB constituted an expert committee to suggest ways

and means to monitor the quality of water in these reservoirs. After detailed discussions and field visits the expert committee submitted two reports making certain recommendations for the protection of the two lakes. After the first report the GO Ms.No.192 dated 31 March 1994 was issued prohibiting various developments, within 10 km radius of the lakes. The State Government, after careful examination of the second report of the committee, issued GO No.111 dated 8 March 1996 by modifying the earlier GO. Based on satellite maps, an area of about 140 sq.km was recognised as a 'dangerous zone' in their catchment areas.<sup>7</sup> It is reported that the catchment areas have shrunk to the extent of 80 per cent for Osmansagar and 70 per cent for Himayatsagar.

The GO No. 111 stipulates prohibition of industries, major hotels, residential colonies and other establishments that generate pollution in the catchment of these two lakes up to 10 km. from full tank level. Eighty-four villages falling within the prohibited area have been identified and their names are notified in the GO. However, the GO permits residential developments in the zones identified and earmarked for residential purposes, subject to certain conditions, to protect water flowing into the lakes. Two such important conditions are to restrict the floor space index (FSI) to 1:0.5 and to keep 60% of total area as open spaces in the notified 84 villages. The HUDA has been directed to take action for classification of 90% of the catchment area as recreational and agricultural which is inclusive of horticulture and floriculture. The HMWSSB has been directed to periodically monitor the levels of different fertilizers and pesticides residues carried into the lakes and review the results once in 6 months.

The AP Pollution Control Board (APPCB) has

been asked to make further study of the existing industries in the upstream and downstream of the lakes and take appropriate action as per the existing laws. The Zilla Parishads of three districts in which the catchment area falls (Ranga Reddy, Mahaboobnagar and Medak), the Panchayat Raj Department, the Irrigation Department and the Social Welfare Department were directed not to take up any building works, check dams, lift irrigation works and storage reservoirs across the streams (*vagus*) in the catchment area flowing into these lakes. Unfortunately, none of the organisations and departments has acted upon various measures to protect the two lakes. The HMWSSB has failed to monitor the quality of water in the lakes and review the results every six months. The APPCB has not bothered to carry out a study of the industries and initiate action against the polluting industries in the catchment area. In utter disregard to the precautionary measures of the GO, the district collectors are permitting the change of landuse and the Industries Department is exempting the industries from the provisions of the GO (Rama Rao, 2004).

In a judgment of far reaching importance on 1 December 2000, the Supreme Court of India prohibited setting up of water polluting industries within 10 km radius of these two water bodies in view of their importance in meeting the drinking water needs of Hyderabad. The Court applied the 'precautionary principle' to protect these two water bodies, and ordered the closure or shifting of the existing polluting industries within their 10 km radius.<sup>8</sup> The Supreme Court further held that access to clean drinking water is a fundamental right under 'right to life' in Article 21 of the Constitution of India and that the State is duty bound not only to

provide adequate drinking water but also to protect water sources from pollution and encroachment.

### ***Decline of Other Water Bodies***

A number of historic water bodies built by the Qutub Shahi rulers (1534-1724 AD) and later by the Asaf Jahi rulers (1724-1948 AD) in and around Hyderabad city have been shrinking in size. Ibrahimpatnam Cheruvu, built in 1850 covering an area of about 1300 acres originally, has dried up for the first time in 1993 and again in 2000. Two water bodies, Satam Cheruvu and Jamalikunta, near the historic Golconda fort, are facing threat due to construction of a golf course. Nandi Muslaiguda Cheruvu in the old city has shrunk from the original area of 15 acres to 10 acres due to encroachments and reduced inflows of water. It was observed that some of the water bodies like Chalmakunta, Irlakunta, Mallaiiahkunta, Yamkunta, Kanukunta and Garlonikunta have been converted into residential land use. The 100-year old Errakunta in Secunderabad has been reduced to a mere 2 acres or so from its original area of about 26 acres.<sup>9</sup> The four water bodies in the Uppal region (Ramanthapur Pedda Cheruvu, Chinna Cheruvu, Uppal Nalla Cheruvu, and Pedda Cheruvu) are facing severe threat to their existence due to encroachments.<sup>10</sup> Two prominent localities in the city are known by the names of the disappeared water bodies: Nallakunta and Masab Tank (Ramachandraiah, 2004).

One of the consequences of the encroachment of water bodies was seen in the unprecedented floods in the city in August 2000 due to a 24 cm rainfall in 24 hours. When the city witnessed heavy rains, the narrowed/encroached water courses/bodies could not carry rainwater thus inundating large areas in the vicinity. Low-lying areas down the Hussainsagar, though occupied by middle and upper middle class people, experienced worst ever flooding. In these navy boats had to be used to traverse in the flood waters. Flood water levels

reached up to the first floor level in some apartment complexes.

### ***Pollution of Water Bodies***

In addition to encroachments, pollution of lake waters by untreated domestic sewage and toxic industrial effluents has been going on over the years. Many lakes which provided drinking water earlier no longer serve the same purpose. While there were six very old industrial areas in the Hyderabad city corporation limits (Azamabad, Musheerabad, Sanathnagar, Kavadi guda, New Bhoiguda, and Lalaguda), eleven new industrial estates came up around the city in course of time.<sup>11</sup> Many of the industrial estates are located in the foreshore areas of the lakes. Continuous discharge of untreated industrial effluents into the water bodies has turned them into 'toxic ponds' almost devoid of any life.<sup>12</sup> Some of the important rivers/streams polluted by the industrial effluents are Bollaram, Isakavagu, Nakkavagu, and Manjeera (upstream of Nakkavagu confluence). Due to seepage and infiltration from these polluted water bodies/drains and other waste dumps, the groundwater and drinking water sources in the area are highly polluted (Kishan Rao, 2001: 24-26). In a study done for HUDA, it was found that 18 water bodies were identified as the most polluted while 67 were polluted to a lesser extent. Of the 38 lakes identified as potential sources of drinking water, bacteriological and chemical tests revealed that the water of only 6 lakes was in a usable condition.<sup>13</sup>

The pollution control board has been ineffective to a large extent in penalizing the polluting industries despite the provisions of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the Water Act, 1974 and the Air Act, 1981. Rampant corruption and the industrialist-politician-bureaucrat nexus have played havoc on water bodies. The industrial lobby is so powerful that a sitting judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court was transferred

overnight for giving closure orders to the highly polluting industries in Patancheru area.<sup>14</sup>

The HUDA has initiated a lake conservation programme with the assistance of Royal Netherlands government under the Green Hyderabad Environment Programme (GHEP). 87 lakes have been identified for conservation based on their pollution levels. They are grouped into Category-I or highly polluted lakes, which number 18. The remaining lakes are put into Category-II or moderately polluted. Three major lakes in the highly polluted category - Safilguda, Saroornagar and Langer Houz – 'have been cleaned up and are being conserved with a green belt around'.<sup>15</sup> Sewerage treatment plants (STPs) have been set up in these lakes for treating sewage before being let into their waters. A study undertaken by the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) for the HMWSSB has identified 38 water bodies in and around the twin cities as potential drinking water sources, which would mean an additional supply of 17 million gallons per day.<sup>16</sup>

A notification by the HUDA<sup>17</sup> gives particulars of 169 lakes of 10 hectares and above, covering an area of approximately 90.56 sq.km. While 62 lakes are fully owned by the government, 25 are under private and 82 are under partly by government and private ownership. As per this notification, the entire area falling within the full tank level must be kept free from any type of constructions, irrespective of the ownership or any land use or master/zonal development plans that may have been previously notified. Further, a buffer belt of 30-metre width on all sides of each lake must be kept free of any type of construction in the interest of prevention of pollution to the lake and allow free flow of water into the water bodies.

The WALTA clearly states (in Section 23) that the concerned authority 'may notify water bodies like lakes, village ponds and minor irrigation tanks along with nalas (water course or drainage course)



as heritage bodies and conservation areas to prevent conversion of their intended use and the authority shall take all measures to permanently demarcate the boundaries....as per the memoirs of lakes/tanks/ponds/nalas... and shall take measures to evict and prevent encroachment'. Further, as per Sections 19.1 and 23.3 of this Act, the groundwater resources shall not be contaminated in any manner by anybody and undesirable wastes including liquid wastes shall not be dumped in the water bodies (GoAP, 2002: 18-20). The implementation at ground level is, however, discouraging.

There are about 200 Central and State laws to protect environment in India (Sinha, 2001: 47). As per section 24 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, poisonous, noxious or polluting matter shall not be discharged, directly or indirectly, into water bodies, sewers or on land. Similarly, under sections 7 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 'no person carrying on any industry, operation or process shall discharge or emit or permit to be discharged or emitted any environmental pollutant in excess of such standards as may be prescribed' (Divan and Rosencranz, 2001: 653, 676). The government of India's (GOI, 1992) policy statement on abatement of pollution declares four guiding principles with the objective of integrating environmental considerations into decision making (*Ibid.*: 36): (i) prevention of pollution at source, (ii) adoption of the best available technology, (iii) the polluter pays principle, and (iv) public participation in decision making.

### **The Musi River and Hyderabad City<sup>18</sup>**

The River Musi emerges from Anantagiri hills in Vikharabad district situated at 661 metres above mean sea level. The river flows for 70 km before reaching the reservoirs of Osmansagar & Himayatsagar, which are constructed on Esi (its tributary) and Musi respectively as discussed earlier. These reservoirs were constructed after the devastating floods in 1908 during the regime of Mir

Osman Ali Khan, the VII Nizam. The technical inputs for their construction were provided by Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvarayya, a renowned civil engineer. Osmansagar has a storage capacity of 110 mcm (million cubic metres) a watershed of 738 sq. km. The Himayat Sagar has a storage capacity of 84 mcm a watershed area of 1311 sq. km.<sup>19</sup>

From these reservoirs the river continues to flow east through Hyderabad city. Downstream of the city, the river has 24 diversion weirs, locally known as *kathwas*, the first being Uppal Kathwa. The total irrigated land under these irrigation structures was planned to be 25000 acres, but this has increased dramatically to 87000 acres owing to increasing volume of sewage that enters the river from the urbanised area of Hyderabad. At about 216 km from its origin, a larger reservoir was constructed across the river in 1963 at Suryapet where another river, Aleru, joins the Musi. About 30183 acres of land is estimated to be irrigated under this reservoir. The Musi joins the River Krishna at Wazirabad, 40 km down from Suryapet. That makes the total length of Musi to be 256 kms.

The River Musi divides Hyderabad city into the south and the north. The city was founded on the banks of this river by Md. Quli Qutub Shah, the fourth ruler of the Golconda kingdom. The river has a gradient of 2 metres per km within the city. Conservation of Musi has assumed relevance only in recent years. Until the 1960s, Musi River was looked at from the point of view of a river flowing through the city of Hyderabad and as a water source (in the form of reservoirs built on its tributaries). It is interesting to note that Musi is also a hub for the city as the Interstate Bus Terminal is located on an island in the river.

In India a river is a common property resource of the people and thus it is the responsibility of the State to protect water resources. Since the government functions and exercises its duties with the help of various departments, the onus of

conserving, management of Musi falls on the following departments: Irrigation, Revenue, Musi, Town and Country Planning, Department (TCPD), Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA), Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH), Forest Department, Agriculture, Industries, APPCB, Rural Local Bodies, Urban Local Bodies etc. The responsibility, however, also lies on the part of the society at large. The multiplicity of organisations can become a major obstacle for efficient coordination and handling of issues of a natural resource like a river that flows through several administrative divisions in a state. The government systems have become behemoth and independent and isolated in the case of some issues and therefore leading to a lack of integrated policy formulation, implementation and monitoring systems. The end result is the loss of environmental quality and inefficiency in the functioning of the system and social discords.

### ***Water (or lack of it) in Musi***

It is not known exactly when Musi dried up as a river. But interviews with people and information collected from secondary sources indicate four major reasons which have led to no water flowing in Musi:

1. Degradation of the catchment of Musi in the upstream in Vicarabad area.
2. Impounding of water by the Osmansagar and Himayatsagar, and degradation of their immediate catchment areas.
3. Changes in the drainage pattern of Hyderabad urban region affecting free flow of water into the Musi from various directions.
4. Disruption of the interlinkages of the numerous water tanks in the region (numbering more than 1000) and their encroachments overtime, which were otherwise feeding the river.

Till about two decades ago the Osmansagar and Himayatsagar were overflowing into the main river during the monsoons. In extreme cases flooding would occur and the river would actually get washed up. As discussed earlier, these two reservoirs are not reaching their FRLs even in the years of normal rainfall.

The major reasons of the deterioration of the catchment of the two reservoirs are:

- Building of thousands of check dams within the catchment area despite the GO No.111.
- Indiscriminate plotting of the catchment area by the real estate players
- Changing land use and changing agricultural practices like converting fallow lands to agriculture, and shift from rainfed crops to irrigated crops etc.
- Quarrying in the catchment area is known to have diverted some of the feeder channels.

There is hardly any water flowing into the Musi. The water flows downstream very quickly during rainy seasons. Water can be seen only at the *kathwas* or at the reservoir at Suryapet. Whatever the water that is found in the riverbed in the form of a small stream is actually the sewage/drainage from Hyderabad city. Large parts of the urbanised area does not have underground sewer systems. Either the settlements have septic tanks which are not the preferred system of disposal from a long term perspective or the sewer lines are combined with the storm water lines. Thus many natural storm water drains have been actually carrying domestic sewage into the river. Compounding to the problem immensely are the industrial effluents which are treated only partially and retain harmful trace elements which enter the food chain. The CETPs (Common Effluent Treatment Plants) are a typical case of a system getting away with murder due to official connivance. The two CETPs present in the

Hyderabad urban agglomeration have not been functioning to their capacity.

Several villages downstream of the city along the Musi irrigate their fields with the water (ie. a cocktail of industrial effluents plus domestic sewage) from Musi river. Such “water” is diverted from the kathwas into the village irrigation tanks which in turn is used for cultivating crops. Several such village tanks are perennial in nature i.e. they are never dry due to the regular flow of the cocktail from Hyderabad. Underground water in such villages is polluted beyond acceptable standards. People from several such villages travel as much as 10-15 km to reach the outskirts of Hyderabad city to collect drinking water in plastic cans.

As per information provided by the HMWSSB, about 80% of the water used by people is released back as sewage, which flows back into Musi everyday. In the absence of the properly conserved catchment areas and lack of proper rainfall in the region, the only water that can flow through Musi is this sewage. The task is to treat this sewage properly and let it out into the river. The problem about industrial effluent will still remain. According to HMWSSB sources the total industrial effluent generated is 87 mld. This contains toxic compounds posing a great threat to the people using Musi river “water” for whatever purpose: fisher people, fodder and vegetable growers living downstream, washer people. The citizens of Hyderabad city are the main consumers of the agricultural produce and vegetables grown with such “water”. This is how the villagers downstream of Hyderabad pay back to the city dwellers for the pollution caused to them!<sup>20</sup>

The lone sewage treatment plant (STP) at Amberpet is woefully inadequate and is known to treat only 20% of the sewage in the city that too at a very primary level. The ecological destruction of Musi is very much linked to the callousness of the state and city governments in not expanding the

capacity of the Amberpet STP and also in not setting up new STPs along with the growth of the city. The “Save Musi” project taken up recently by the state government involve setting up of six new STPs at several points along the Musi’s stretch in the city. If properly implemented, this would go a long way in “washing” the river of its accumulated pollution. The other aspects of the project relating to road development along Musi may lead to disfigurement of the skyline along the river and may also lead to displacement of many low-income families as per the views expressed by the civil society groups. They further argued that, instead of taking up only urban stretch of the river, the entire catchment of the river should be taken up for conservation and development.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Conservation/Beautification of Musi.***

Any development or redevelopment plan for Musi affects a number of people/stakeholders especially related to housing, livelihoods, and physical environment. Implementation of most of the plans prepared or being undertaken would involve eviction of people living within the banks of Musi (owners and squatters), and also those living on the banks (owners and squatters). This leads to displacement of houses which affects the work and livelihoods. It is, therefore, important to understand the ground level situation and have a consultative process for planning and implementation. Any physical intervention also has to take care of the heritage of Musi River, its embankments and the various structures located around it. There are heritage regulations which give guidelines for development and in some cases restrict development. Conserving Musi and restoring its past glory would also involve extensive heritage conservation.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This paper brings out clearly that as the city of Hyderabad has grown in size and is emerging as a global megacity, its water resources have been

neglected to the detriment of long-term water security of the people. Non-implementation of the environmental laws relating to the protection of water resources and haphazard planning and growth of the city have exerted tremendous pressure on the city's water resources: Musi river, Osmansagar, Himayatsagar, and innumerable water bodies that were built by its early rulers. With the old sources declining and the demand for water growing, the city is drawing water from longer distances.

The Musi river has been reduced to a sewer drain carrying the domestic and industrial waste generated in Hyderabad city. This has had an adverse impact on the river ecology and the villages in the downstream of the river. Even today, the government's approach to the conservation of Musi is piece-meal in nature and not integrated. The future water security of Hyderabad city lies in an integrated management of the entire catchment area of the Musi river and a number of water bodies that are still existing in and around the city.

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# TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION - THE HYDERABAD SCENARIO

*Sanghamitra Malik*

India has more than 1,550,000 kms of road.

Lakhs of motor vehicles on the roads of Hyderabad and Secunderabad are causing too many traffic problems. During the rush hours in the morning and evening, city streets are getting jammed with cars. Roads linking the different areas in the city are too crowded for comfort or safety.

Motorways are being built and roads constantly widened. It has become difficult to find parking places. Parking at the roadside is being prohibited in more and more places in order to make additional street space available for the constantly growing traffic.

Improved public transport systems help relieve congestion when the service is **convenient, comfortable and inexpensive**.

Efficient use of existing streets can be obtained in some of the following ways:-

- Creating one-way roads.
- Changing traffic lanes/streets to one-way operation during hours of heavy traffic, as is practiced in Kolkata, Delhi and other places. [In Hyd, parallel roads and inner & arterial roads are almost nonexistent.]
- Prohibiting parking on main roads but providing parking place all the same at alternative sites.
- Installing co-ordinated traffic-signal systems as well as pedestrian controls.
- Developing through street systems to move traffic faster. [This was proposed some time back with much fanfare but never saw the light of day.]

Thousands of people are killed or seriously injured each year in traffic accidents.





Both, drivers and pedestrians can reduce the number of traffic accidents, injuries and deaths by watching and **obeying traffic control signs, signals and also pavement markings**, which we do not see in Hyderabad or in India at all. Electric signs that tell when to cross busy roads should aid pedestrians by operating in conjunction with vehicle traffic signals.

Adequate use of warning signs, well designed and well located road signs have great value in helping the flow of traffic.

Modern traffic lights are made so that they can be set to change when the traffic demands it. When there is heavy traffic, the light can remain green for a longer time. To control pedestrian traffic across a busy road, special signals work from a switch operated by the pedestrian, as seen in the US.

Warning and guide signs should be covered with luminous paint to be visible at night.

Traffic regulations should be uniform, so that the drivers everywhere will know exactly what action to take under similar conditions.

Traffic police must enforce traffic control measures and regulations and control traffic emergencies and not look the other way when their services are needed the most as we regularly see happening in Punjagutta and many other important junctions. Opening of one flyover at Punjagutta and the other at Greenland [which is not fully complete] has somewhat eased the situation, but having parallel roads one above the other is definitely not the best solution as the vehicles reach the same place at the end of the flyover and presently, till the Greenland flyover is fully made, there is actually a traffic jam on this flyover!

Fast, dependable transportation is essential to the economy and way of life in developed and developing countries.

The development of the motorcar has led to the growth of sprawling suburbs around big cities. People depend on their own cars or two wheelers for their shopping, personal work, or to get to and from work. The low car prices are attracting one and all to go for these four wheelers. With no adequate public transport as we see in Hyderabad, people have to depend on their own private vehicles. At any given time more than 40 % of the over 20 lakh vehicles are seen on the roads of our city. We can see what this huge number of private vehicles is leading to. In other metros, even people owning cars use the public buses on some occasions.

But countries with the most number of cars also have the most road system, but **do we?** Our twin cities have the **highest vehicle density of 2337 vehicles per kilometer** of road but the **least space** for roads. We have a meager **6 % of space** for roads. It is indeed frightening. Can you imagine a day when every or almost every vehicle in the twin cities is out on the road. Today, Kolkata is believed to have 814 vehicles per kilometer of road, Mumbai has 766, Chennai has 616 and Delhi has just 184 vehicles per kilometer of road. Yet, the most interesting thing is the **total number of cars in Delhi exceeds the sum total of the cars** in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai put together.

Buses should be the principal means of public transportation. **Do we have sufficient buses?**

#### **Problems of modern transportation:-**

- Traffic safety.
- Declining fuel reserves.
- Environmental problems
- Inadequate public transportation.



# MMTS - ON A BUMPY TRACK?

*K. Vijaya Raghavan*

The Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) decided to go in for Multi Modal Transport System (MMTS) as a part of MRTS, to deal with the Traffic congestion and also to curb the pollution levels. This project was initiated with an objective to enable the suburban Railways to carry a greater portion of commuter traffic and to provide comfortable, clean, fast, efficient, regular, reliable and affordable suburban commuter transportation to the Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration.

It was decided to introduce MMTS by using the already existing rail section viz. Falaknuma – Secunderabad / Hyderabad - Lingampalli as a part of Phase I. However the consultants planning for MMTS recommended the development of the following sections:

- Medchal - Secunderabad, Ghatkesar-Moula Ali – Secunderabad
- Secunderabad – Shamshabad, Lingampalli – Patancheru
- Lingampalli – Nampalli – Koti – Uppal

in different time frames. Though the consultants recommended the Medchal - Secunderabad, Ghatkesar-Moula Ali – Secunderabad section to be taken up on priority, this was planned to be taken up only on Phase II.

Even 5 years after introducing the MMTS, that too when patronage for this has increased tremendously – as per the statistics the passenger traffic has increased by 67.90% to 2195516

passengers in Mar 2008 from 1307670 passengers in Mar 2007 - a question mark lies on why there are no development or improvements happening with regard to MMTS. In the absence of any governing body and also because MMTS does not enjoy the Sub-Urban train system as in the case of Bombay and Madras, no one – neither the Government nor the Railways - is bothered to implement Phase II and extend it to the routes suggested by the consultants.

An analysis into whether the objective of MMTS project has been met will raise more questions than answers.

There are factors encouraging the use of MMTS. The design of the coaches has been very good and it provides comfort to the travelers – not just the passengers who sit and travel but also for those who stand. The fare is competitive – in fact very less compared to the other modes of transport – which attracts many passengers. Moreover, the time taken for travel is very less when compared to road travel – considering the traffic in the twin cities.

On the other hand, there are many impediments which hamper the passengers from having a pleasant travel or discourage the passengers from using it.

The major issue which needs immediate action is increasing the frequency of trains. Only way the frequency can be increased is by having additional rakes running on the existing lines, as the existing rakes will not help much in increasing the frequency

as these are being utilized to the maximum extent possible. Even if the railways decide to procure additional rakes – for which the government support is needed – they may not be able to increase the frequency beyond a certain level as the existing lines between Falaknuma and Lingampally or Hyderabad and Lingampally have little space to handle these additional services. Hence the long term solution would be to have dedicated lines for MMTS trains as in the case of Bombay and Madras. Even though SCR has adequate land in most of the areas in the existing route, it may have to acquire land in a few areas like Begumpet. This should not be a major hurdle considering the fact that government is spending a lot in acquiring land for the METRO project. This should work out provided there is government support.

Till this permanent solution is attained, railways can think of increasing the number of coaches in all the services in order to accommodate more passengers. Even this is possible only when the government shares the capital expenditure cost.

The next major issue is the non availability of feeder services from MMTS stations to major roads or junctions. In the absence of feeder services, public have to depend on autos to reach the desired places from various stations which proves too costly compared to the fare they spend travelling on MMTS. This in fact discourages many people from taking MMTS to reach their destinations. RTC and SCR must work together in resolving this issue by providing link services connecting each MMTS train at all stations. The decision to issue “Combined Ticket” is a welcome move but this has to be extended to people who travel in First Class in MMTS and also should be allowed in Metro / Veera services of RTC, as currently with this pass, you can neither travel in First Class nor in Metro / Veera services of RTC.

The other issue which has been haunting the travelers is the poor connectivity to city suburbs like

Bolarum, Medchal even though there are railway lines available in this route. Temporary solution would be to link the local trains running between Secunderabad and Bolarum / Medchal to the MMTS trains. As a long term plan, electrification of this route can be carried out and MMTS can be extended in this direction – this is already part of the MMTS Phase 2 plan. For this to be done, government should allocate funds and pressurize the railways to take this up on priority basis.

Apart from these major issues, there are problems like Overcrowding of passengers in ticket counters resulting in them missing the trains at some instances. This in fact discourages people to use MMTS as the waiting time between trains is too long. Though this is a very minor issue, this can only be resolved when the SCR thinks of some innovative ideas like Automatic Ticket Vending machines, Issue of Pre-Printed tickets, Operation of Multiple counters during the times when the rush is too heavy.

There is also a problem of Unauthorised travel in First Class and ladies compartments. Though the SCR can increase the vigil on Unauthorised travel, this can be completely resolved only when the awareness level among the passengers increase and there is some self discipline. Probably in due course we could see the first class or lady passengers themselves prevent entry to unauthorized travelers as being the case in Bombay and Madras.

Considering all the above facts, it is pretty clear that there are no efforts being made to carry a greater portion of commuter traffic in the twin cities. The way forward to revive or improve the MMTS would be to set up a governing body comprising of officials from Railways, Government and RTC though the major control could be with the Railways as its existing track is being used for operations. This body should have control over effective operations of MMTS and work on improvement measures by taking care of the public interest. Or else chances are more that MMTS would derail.



# INTACH-HUDA Heritage Listing Project, Hyderabad

***Er. Vedakumar. M***

*(Urban Planner & Project Co-ordinator)*



Raja Diwan Prasad Samadhi, Opp.Hotel  
Mariat-Style-Qutub Shahi

It is a matter of great pride that Hyderabad has a rich treasure of built heritage extending far beyond the 400 years of history.

This glorious

heritage is embedded with many historical events under the patronage of the Qutub Shahis, Asaf Jahis. The result is there are many historical, architectural and cultural marvels in the shape of constructions, customs and festivals to enthrall and help enhance the skills of the present generation. Unfortunately, the pace of urbanization is taking a heavy toll of this priceless heritage. The important constructions need to be preserved at all costs as they are the lifeblood of the culture, tradition and art of our times.

Hyderabad is a true reflection of the Matrix of Civilization, with its Architectural Heritage spread all over the various phases of growth in the city. The historical cities of Hyderabad and Secun-

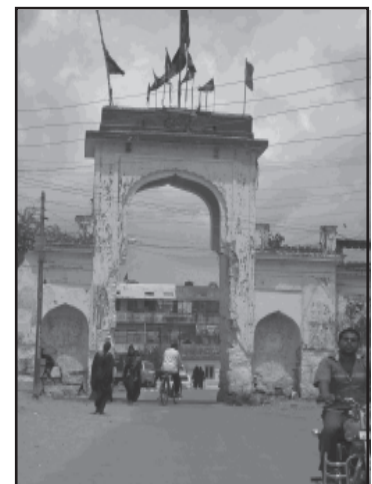


derabad abound in heritage structures, of which only a small number have been notified. Many more buildings and precincts need to be recognised. At least a thousand more buildings deserve to be notified. To identify these heritage places, a study is being conducted in accordance with the international and national Heritage Guidelines. This project will be a trailblazing model to follow for identifying other heritage projects in the country.

## **A brief background of the project:**

Considering all the above, a proposal for the listing of additional Heritage buildings and heritage precincts in Hyderabad, I N T A C H , Hyderabad Chapter and HUDA have undertaken the massive project in the Hyderabad

agglomeration. In 1998, Government of Andhra Pradesh had issued notification of Heritage Buildings and Heritage Precincts in Hyderabad city through GO Ms. No. 102, M.A dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1998 with a list of 137 Heritage buildings and 9 rock formations, as well as 6 Heritage Precincts.





Apart from the above, there are listed and protected buildings under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)-2 and State Archaeology (Government of Andhra Pradesh)-32. Recently HUDA has added an additional 14 buildings to the list.

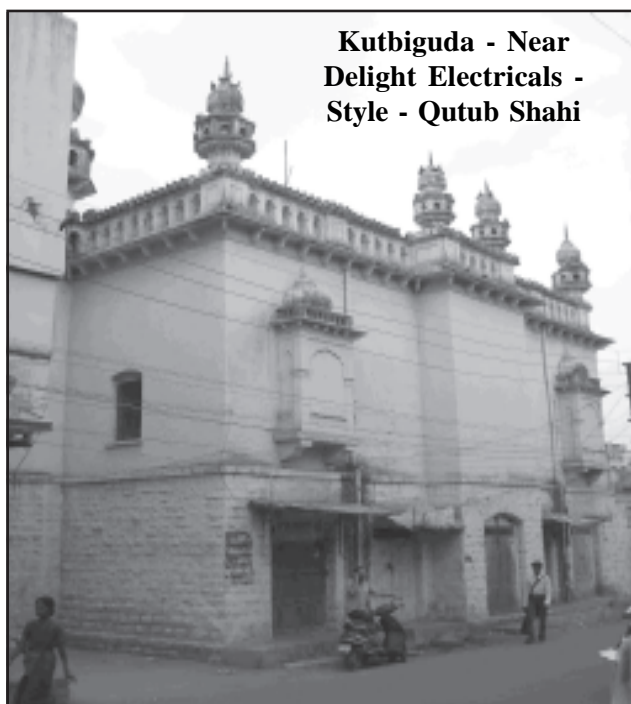
However, when we look at the city of Hyderabad and its buildings, it is evident that the list is not fully indicative of Hyderabad's Architectural Heritage. This sentiment has been echoed by many conservation Activists, organizations, academic institutions, tourism related institutions and general public frequently in the decade after the notification was issued.

### **Heritage Listing Project**

Thus there is urgency for listing, inventorying and mapping of additional architectural heritage comprising comprehensive locations and styles of buildings constructed and developed at various time periods in Hyderabad.

### **Present status of the project:**

INTACH Hyderabad Chapter, under the auspicious of INTACH New Delhi, had



commenced a survey from 14th Feb 2007 by a team of qualified architects and planners.

This project is supported by HUDA and partly by INTACH New Delhi. The Sub Committee had met three times during this period and also gave the report and presentation to INTACH Convener and Co-convener in November. The project concept was presented to Heritage Conservation Committee and to Vice Chairman HUDA.



**Esamia Bazar - Style Vernacular - Art Deco**

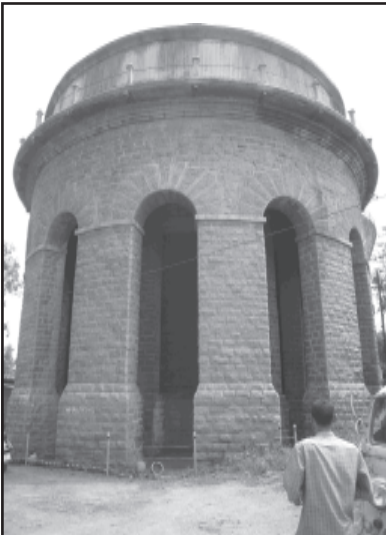
The project has involved Architectural, Town Planning, Civil Engineering Institutions/ Professors, Archaeology & History Institutions / Professors, Conservation Architects / Engineers and Trained Architects in history of Architecture to prepare a comprehensive listing, inventory and mapping in Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration.

So far, the team has taken up **22 wards** of the 35 wards in the erstwhile MCH, and identified about **750 Heritage buildings**.

**Architectural Styles Identified:** The project enabled us to find out the potentiality of the Heritage Buildings in the wards. In every ward it was possible to identify 20-25 buildings with different Architectural styles (Osmanian, Indo-Sarcenic, Qutub Shahi, Regional Moghal Variation, Asif Jahi, Vernacular, Colonial, Gothic, Art Deco, German Design, European, CIB) with

a period variation of about 70-80yrs, 200yrs and 400yrs.

**Benefits and Use for general public and government:** This important project highlights the character, identity, lifestyle and culture of Hyderabad. After Independence, the master plan process of cities in India largely ignored the need for protecting and saving natural and cultural resources in its focus for creating new infrastructure, new layouts and meeting the housing needs of the population. The exploding population growth and demand for land for new infrastructure and housing is posing a tremendous threat to the inner cities and



**Red Hills - HMWS & SB-Style - Colonial**

culturally vibrant locations of Hyderabad.

Globally, International communities and cities have recognized the importance of sustainable development and growth of cities. H A B I T A T conferences and resolutions have emphasized the

importance of protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources of communities across the world for sustainable development and growth of cities. Incorporating sustainable development patterns into master plan processes in cities of India also emphasizes the need for communication and network among cultures of the world and India. This indicates the tourism potential along with larger economic potential in any country.

### **Heritage Listing Project**

In places like the United States of America, most cities are part of International networks and Organizations like UNESCO (United Nations

Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation), ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and receive a lot of attention and support for preservation and maintenance of cultural resources. We are also aware that WMF (World Monument Fund) is funding and supporting an International project for Conservation of British Residency (O.U. Women's College, Koti), which indicates the growing concern towards protection of cultural resources across the world.

### **Integration of Heritage, Tourism and City Master Planning:**

The present listing will certainly help Master Planning of Hyderabad City with a sustainability perspective. This generates International Tourism. All the localities will get prominence and equitable distribution and recognition for better administration, infrastructure. This automatically improves the financial status of general public and city. With this realization, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has started a special focus on Tourism and Heritage. Government of Andhra Pradesh is also receiving special recognition in the Tourism sector. The focus can be strengthened in the cities like Hyderabad with a better database on cultural, natural and Tourism resources, which are intertwined with civic administration.

This inventory will help to get World Heritage status for a few important places and also World Heritage Status to the City of Hyderabad. The identification process will help the general public to put these Heritage buildings for proper and appropriate use. This may also raise the need for continuous maintenance of Heritage buildings and sites. Once the recognition process is included as a part of administration, master planning and international identification, the entire process of development and growth will also integrate inner cities and heritage precincts.

The process has to be viewed as an inclusive, necessary procedure for preserving the cultural identity and wealth of places and people for the

posterity. In the inclusive process of planning, minor issues like property divisions, property removal can be resolved through the integrated planning process rather than the rule oriented and stringent master plan processes.

Incentives like Tax benefits, support of financial and corporate institutions for conservation and effective use of heritage buildings, transferable development rights to heritage building owners are some of the inclusive planning process methods, which can lead to protection and maintenance of heritage buildings and precincts.

### **Hyderabad the initiative City for Heritage Planning:**

The Government of Andhra Pradesh, as the first state to enact regulations for Heritage buildings as part of HUDA Act, has exercised a few of the incentives and legal processes for heritage buildings identification, listing, notification and regulation.

490, St.No.11, Himayathnagar, Hyderabad-500 029 Office Tel.No.: 27636214 ; Fax No. 27635644

Mobile: 9959922022 Project e-mail ID: ihlphyd@gmail.com, Personal E-mail ID: vedakumarm@yahoo.com,

Raja Diwan Prasad Samadhi, Opp.Hotel Mariot-Style-Qutub Shahi

Kaman-Amber baba nagar-Entrance gate to MCH Quarters-Style-Qutub Shahi Revival

Kutbiguda – Near Delight Electricals – Style – Qutub Shahi

Esamia Bazar – Style Vernacular – Art Deco

Red Hills – HMWS& S B – Style – Colonial

Begum Bazar – Style - Vernacular – Art Deco

Nizam Shahi Road – Style Colonial

Opp.Race Club, Jam Bagh Shyle - Regional

Nr.Kali Kaman and Hanuman Temple, Nr.Manju Theatre, Scc'bad – Style – Vernacular



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**మీరు అందించే**  
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**చికిత్స కన్నా మిన్నా**



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# HERITAGE CELL REPORT 2007-2008

*The Struggle for Preserving Our Heritage continues...*

***By Er. Vedakumar M.***

Convenor, Heritage Cell, FBH

A haphazard and relentless urbanization and development is taking its toll on our priceless architectural treasures and resulting in irreparable damage to the Heritage Buildings and Precincts in Hyderabad particularly in the old city. It has been the constant endeavour of the Forum for a Better Hyderabad to make dedicated efforts to conserve, preserve and restore our Heritage Buildings and Heritage Precincts so that future generations will be able to appreciate our glorious history.

The Forum for a Better Hyderabad initiated several activities in the past year in the cases of the G-Block building in Secretariat, Falaknuma Palace, Mitti Ka Sher, Old Gandhi Medical College and Moula Ali Khama to prevent demolitions, unauthorized and irregular constructions and deviations. The Forum has confronted the attacks on the Heritage structures and precincts and to a very large extent was able to successfully prevent the loss of our architectural heritage. In some cases, the Forum filed Public Interest Litigations and sought directions from the High Court to the government and other authorities.

The Heritage Cell also sought information from the government

departments under the Right to Information Act with regard to some cases. Based on the documents received, the Forum was able to present its viewpoints strongly and suggest appropriate action to the authorities concerned.

This report presents a short description of the Forum's strenuous efforts in the field of Heritage conservation.

## **Mitti-Ka-Sher:**

This important Heritage precinct was threatened due to the road widening works being undertaken by the GHMC. Several buildings were slated for demolition to create space and thanks to





the alertness of some local residents the Forum swung into action in June and took up the issue with the Collector of Hyderabad District and other concerned authorities of the HUDA, HCC and MCH. The Heritage committee made a representation to the Hyderabad collector, Addl. Commissioner GHMC (then he was the in charge of the work) and later brought to the notice of Vice-chairman HUDA and Chairman, HCC. As a result of these efforts, the demolitions were stalled. Further, HCC has sent a committee to ensure strict adherence to the norms laid by HCC during demolition. The demolition of the Heritage buildings in the narrow street, which has a very high heritage value, has been stopped. Forum members are regularly making visits to the area to monitor the situation constantly. This was also brought to the notice of Mr. Susheel Kumar, Member and Acting Chairman of H.C.C and Mr. Shravan Kumar, Convener, INTACH Hyderabad Chapter with a request to take appropriate measures to ensure that the demolition squad adheres to the guidelines of H.C.C. The Forum has also made written representations to the concerned authorities.

#### **Moula-Ali-Kaman:**

This historic structure near the Moula Ali Dargah hillock was damaged and was in danger of



collapsing. T Roads and Buildings department commenced demolition as it hindered the traffic. Resistance from the local residents and the Forum convener succeeded in convincing the archeology department to take up restoration work of this centuries-old structure. The Forum is in regular touch with the Archeology department and GHMC in order to get the restoration work started as early as possible.

#### **G-Block, Secretariat:**



The Heritage Cell was successful in preventing the demolition of this building in the Secretariat. The government had constituted an Engineering Committee to inspect the building and report on the structural soundness of the G-Block Building. The Committee report had reported that the G-Block Building is in dilapidated condition. Pursuant to the report, a group of HCC members visited the building to independently assess themselves the structural strength of the Building and found that contrary to the engineering committee's findings, the building is structurally strong and safe for restoration. This report was submitted to the High Court and the Government, urging for the restoration of the building, as it has immense architectural and historical value. The Heritage Cell is putting pressure on the Government



to take a quick decision to notify the building as a Heritage building and commence restoration work immediately to prevent further deterioration. The Heritage cell is in constant touch with HUDA, HCC and the government on this matter.

### **Gandhi Medical College:**

The Heritage Cell is in constant contact with the concerned Departments to expedite the restoration work at the site in order to save the building from collapsing in the monsoon season.

### **Listing of Heritage Buildings in Hyderabad:**

M. Vedakumar was named the coordinator of the project for listing of heritage buildings in HUDA area, which has been undertaken under the auspices of the Hyderabad Chapter of INTACH. The Forum has achieved significant progress in the project and it is hoped that the work will be completed soon on an urgent basis to get the Heritage buildings identified and notified by the HCC at the earliest.

### **Falaknuma Palace:**

The Heritage Cell took note of the construction activity undertaken by the promoters around Falaknuma Palace in the Old City. The cell urged the INTACH members to update the Government departments to ensure that the provisions of the HCC guidelines were strictly followed in the construction. The Heritage Cell emphasised that the SCORPION shape of the Falaknuma Palace was preserved by ensuring that there was no deviation from the authorized plans. The Heritage Cell urged the Heritage Conservation committee to instruct the authority to monitor this issue and to ensure that the promoters were obliged to adhere to the guidelines.

**Malwala Palace, Chowmahalla Palace and Mahboob Mansion:** The Heritage Cell had filed PILs in the High Court urging the concerned authorities for taking up restoration work of these Heritage buildings



and requesting a stop in the demolitions and construction work affecting these structures. It is in regular contact with the GHMC, HUDA, HCC and government to expedite the formalities involved.

### **Restoration of Qutub Shahi Tombs:**

The Department of Archeology had commenced the restoration work on the Qutub Shahi Tombs with financial aid from Central Government. Heritage experts from Iran are lending technical support to this restoration project. In this connection, the departments of Archeology and Tourism have jointly convened a meeting, which was attended by Heritage and Archeology experts from Andhra Pradesh and other states. Several valuable suggestions were offered during the meeting. Mr.M.Vedakumar has been included in the committee that was formed for the restoration of Tombs.

### **Road Widening and Threat to Heritage Structures:**

Extensive road widening works in various areas of the area under HUDA pose a threat to important Heritage buildings or Heritage precincts and these may vanish for posterity if people are not vigilant. It is imperative that comprehensive information is collected from all sources on the Heritage issues from the people. The Heritage Cell made a representation to the authorities to save Heritage Buildings along the route from Charminar to Falaknuma. The presence of religious structures in some roads hampered the smooth flow of traffic and caused jams and inconvenience to the people. However, some political parties like MIM and BJP did not agree to suggestions that the structures be relocated elsewhere.

Unfortunately the HUDA & GHMC is giving importance to very few listed buildings and is

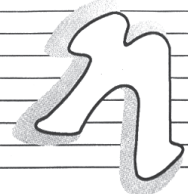
completely ignoring the Heritage precincts. There are many more Heritage sites and precincts that need to be listed and protected. The Heritage Cell members will meet the newly appointed Additional Commissioner -Heritage, Dr. J. Kedareshwari about this matter.

### **Heritage Workshop:**

A Three-day workshop on “Conservation of Heritage Structures” was held from 1st – 3rd Feb 2008 at the Department of Civil Engineering, O.U. Hyderabad. Heritage Cell member, Dr.V.K.Bawa and Mr. M. Vedakumar attended the conference and enlightened the participants on Heritage conservation. Mr. M. Vedakumar’s proposal to the O.U. authorities, which had organized the workshop, to consider starting a regular course on Conservation Engineering. The proposal was accepted and the authorities indicated that it could probably materialize by June/July 2008.

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## **A Representation from FBH, dt. 26.6.2007 to The Commissioner, GHMC**

**Sub : Demolition of dilapidated begins in city vide, The Hindu report in issue dated 26.6.07**

We refer to the captioned report in The Hindu of 26.6.07 (copy enclosed), wherein the report states that GHMC has undertaken demolition of nine dilapidated buildings, that they have targeted 120 buildings for immediate action on account of their perilous state, and that they have identified 400 vulnerable buildings in the erstwhile MCH area. The report further states that GHMC plans to remove 15 buildings every week and that demolitions were carried out in Hussainialam, Abids, Gaddiannaram, Lower Tank Bund, Kurma Basti, Lalapet, etc.

Please let us know which are the areas covered under “etc”. Also, please furnish us with a list of the 9, 120 and 400 buildings referred to in the previous paragraph. It should be ensured that the buildings being / proposed to be pulled down should be examined as to their heritage value, before being demolished. As Hussainialam is within the Charminar precinct, please ensure that no building is demolished which, although not notified as a Heritage Buildings, may have heritage value by itself, or may affect the heritage value of the precinct. For this purpose, the Heritage Conservation Committee should be consulted as per the heritage regulations and as directed by the A.P. High Court in a number of cases.

The buildings which have heritage value and/or whether the demolition of such a building is likely to diminish or destroy the value and beauty of the Precinct inside which it may be located. A list of old “unsafe” buildings may be made within a time-bound programme, and a quick inspection by the Heritage Conservation Committee, or a team of persons approved by them, may be arranged to inspect such buildings and take an on-the-spot view whether it can be demolished without detriment to the value and beauty of the relative Precinct, or because it is devoid of any heritage value. If, on the contrary, this body finds the need for conserving the building, and if the building is considered unsafe for occupation, it should be immediately evacuated, with a proper signboard regarding its un-safety, and steps should be taken so that the neighbours or passers-by are also not put to any risk. We are confident that it is practicable to take such a measure.

Please let us have your advices at an early date.

Thanking you,  
Yours sincerely,

**(M.VEDAKUMAR)**

President, Forum For A Better Hyderabad

Mobile: 98480 44713

Encl: Report published in Hindu (26.6.2007)  
**copy to:**

1. The Vice Chairman, HUDA, Hyderabad
2. The Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, Hyd.
3. The Convenor, INTACH Hyderabad Chapter, Hyd.

**A Representation from FBH, dt. 1.12.2007 to  
Sri. G.P. Rao, I.A.S., (Retd.), Chairman,  
Heritage Conservation Committee**

**Sub : 1) Road widening from Mitti Ka Sher to Motigalli preservation of precinct Character along the route.  
2) Road widening as announced recently by GHMC, vide Deccan Chronicle dated November 27, 2007.**

**Subject: 1**

We refer to the recent minutes of your meeting held on 5.11.2007 to consider the request of GHMC to permit road widening under subject 1 mentioned above. We quote:

“ We are of the view that your above view gives insufficient consideration to the contents, and accordingly the needs, of preservation of a Precinct. Firstly, identification & notification of heritage buildings is a continuing process and there will be many more buildings in the Charminar precinct area which have heritage qualities but have not yet been notified. If these buildings are allowed to be demolished in the process of road widening, we lose them forever. Therefore an effort should be made to make a quick inspection of old buildings along the routes of the road widening before any building is allowed to be demolished.

Secondly, a precinct is a precinct not only because of the notified heritage buildings within the precinct area. Had that been so, there would have been no need for conceptualizing and notifying a precinct in addition to identifying and notifying the heritage structures in a precinct. A precinct includes everything which gives it the character of a heritage area, in addition to the notified heritage buildings

therein at a point of time, These additional ingredients of a precinct are, for example the traditional shops, the footpath, even the narrow roads and by lanes precisely because of their narrow width. small lanes and by – lanes and the. Heritage precinct is an entire zone, designated as such, which is to be conserved in entirety, includes its surroundings, and not merely the notified heritage buildings in that zone. Regulation 13.1 of HUDA Zoning Regulations, 1981 states that “buildings included in Heritage Precincts (HPs) shall maintain the skyline in the precinct [without any high-rise development] as may be existing in the surrounding area, so as not to diminish or destroy the value and beauty of the said listed HB/HP. The development therein shall be in accordance with the guidelines framed by vice chairman (VC), HUDA in consultation with Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC).” In its notification No 3023/PR/HUDA/2000 Dt 30-04-2000 re the Charminar precinct, HUDA went on say that “ The notification of HP’s will imply that development proposals, street furniture, road-widening proposals and outdoor publicity within the HP’s shall need to be approved by the VC HUDA and the HCC before permission granted by the MCH or other competent authorities.”

In this connection, we have also to draw your attention to the definition of HP in international charters to which India is committed. The Venice Charter, the



Charter for Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas adopted by The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), 1987, the UNESCO 'Recommendations concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas' (Warsaw Nairobi, 1976) and also various other instruments, indicate what are to be conserved. For example,

- Qualities to be preserved include the historic character of the town or urban area and all those material and spiritual elements that express this character, especially, Urban patterns as defined by lots and streets, relationships between buildings and green and open spaces; the formal appearance, interior and exterior, of buildings as defined by scale, size, style, construction materials, colour and decoration; the relationship between the town or urban area and its surrounding setting, both natural and man-made; the various functions that the town or urban area has acquired over time. Any threat to these qualities would compromise the authenticity of the historic town or urban area.
- Traffic inside a historic town or urban area must be controlled and parking areas must be planned so that they do not damage the historic fabric or its environment.
- When urban or regional planning provides for the construction of major motorways, they must not penetrate an historic town or urban area, but they should improve access to them.

In the light of the foregoing, your interpretation that it would be enough if only the notified heritage buildings in a precinct are preserved for the preservation of a precinct is wrong.

## **Subject: 2**

We understand vide a report of Decca Chronical of November 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 (copy enclosed for ready reference) that GHMC is set to widen roads along the following routes – Charminar-Falaknuma; Lakdikapul-Khairtabad-Erragadda; Liberty-Narayanguda; Musheerabad Junction-Boat Club; Musheerabad Junction-Narayanguda; Asifnagar-Noble Talkies Road; St. Ann's-Tarnaka; Jambagh Road; Bapughat Road; Miralam Road; Mittikasher Road (Inner Ring Road)

While we are not against the development of infrastructure in the city, of which road widening is an essential part, we would like to emphasize that such road - widening should build into its planning the preservation of Heritage, not merely Heritage Structures but also Heritage Characteristics, along the routes to be widened.. Not merely the notified Heritage Structures but also other old Structures which may not yet have been notified but have Heritage Features should be preserved. For this purpose the GHMC / HCC / HUDA should form a suitable team, who should quickly go around the routes and identify the buildings which have Heritage Features and the other Heritage Characteristics along the routes so that these are not summarily demolished but sought to be preserved in a planning of road widening. A similar approach was taken by erstwhile MCH while widening the road from Charminar to Falaknuma. They even provided us staff and vehicle support to us to go along the route and suggest buildings which need to be preserved. We subsequently commissioned an expert to identify such buildings and submitted a list of buildings to be preserved.

We request you to consider our suggestions and appropriately advise the GHMC.



**A Representation from FBH, dt. 10.4.2008 to  
Sri A. Raghotham Rao, I.A.S., The Chief Secretary,  
Government of A.P.**

**Sub : G Block in the Secretariat premises (Saifabad palace)**

We refer to the meeting held on 27.2.08 in the office of the Chief Secretary to discuss what should be done about the G Block. ( Saifabad palace). We have not so far received the minutes of the meeting. We recall ( a) The meeting noted the Hon'ble High Court's judgment dated 31.12.04 "In case the Committee expresses opinion to include it in the heritage buildings, it will be for the Government to take steps to amend the notification." (b) The Heritage Conservation Committee has since advised the government of its recommendation to include the 'G' Block building in the Secretariat in the list of notified heritage buildings. (c) A committee of engineers appointed by the state government stated that it will not be worthwhile saving the building considering the high cost of preservation

During the discussions it emerged that the engineers do not state that the building could not be saved; they only referred to the cost of

saving. On questioning they opined that the building could still be preserved.

It was also noted that the Heritage Conservation Committee, to whom the report of the committee of engineers was referred to by HUDA earlier, had reiterated their recommendation that the G Block should and can be preserved, and had noted that the committee of engineers had never stated in their report that the building was not capable of preservation, but the committee of engineers had only referred to the cost of preservation. Historic buildings should be considered for protection not on the basis of the cost of preservation or its use but its historical, architectural, associational and other values which abound in the G Block.

The meeting was participated in by Chairman, and members of the Heritage Conservation Committee, ,Forum For A Better Hyderabad, INTACH, HUDA , Principal

Secretaries of GAD, MAU & D, TR & B. concerned departmental engineers (R & B ). Speakers after speakers from the Heritage Conservation Committee, ,Forum For A Better Hyderabad, INTACH, stressed the values of the G Block and opined unambiguously for its conservation. It was further stressed that the building was owned by the government, and the A.P government was a pioneer in framing heritage regulations and it should show an example in protecting a building with heritage qualities which belongs to it, as an eye opener to the private owners of heritage buildings It is also noted that the engineers or any department of the government did not

contradict that the building was capable of being saved.

Considering all of the above discussions, we conclude that the meeting was in favour of the preservation of the G Block. Accordingly, we earnestly request the government to preserve the building and notify it as a heritage building, thereby honouring the wishes of all and the sentiments of the Honourable High Court. . There should be no reason for any further delay in taking the decision to preserve the building and such delay will only add to the cost of preservation.

## **M. VEDA KUMAR**

### **C.C to:**

- 1. Sri.R.M.Gonela, IAS.,** Principal Secretary to the Government, GAD., Secretariat, Hyd.
- 2. Sri.T.Chatterji, IAS.,** Principal Secretary to the Government, TR & B, Secretariat, Hyd.
- 3. SriS.P.Singh, IAS.,** Principal Secretary to the Government, MA & UD, Secretariat, Hyd.
- 4. Sri.G.P.Rao, IAS.,** Chairman, Heritage Conservation Committee, HUDA, Hyderabad
- 5. Sri.K.Jawahar Reddy, IAS.,** Vice Chairman, HUDA, Hyderabad

# NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR HYDERABAD

*Er. Vedakumar. M*  
(Urban & Regional Planner)

As cities evolve, they develop a character and unique identity of their own. Over the decades, through sustained efforts of the urban planners, they acquire a personality, impressing the visitors.

It is a well known fact that sustainable development cannot be achieved without proper planning. The Old City of Hyderabad south of the Musi River was certainly a planned city with the Charminar at its centre. Over the 418 years since its inception, Hyderabad has grown enormously into a metropolitan city and emerged as the capital of Andhra Pradesh state. Today there are nearly 80 lakh inhabitants and the area has expanded from 173 sq. km. in 1973 to 522 sq. km. in 1991. Today, the Greater Hyderabad City encompasses an unprecedented 637 sq. km. It remains to be seen how the GHMC will be able to effectively serve the 637 sq. km. today, when the earlier Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) could not properly manage even 172.6 sq. km area.

The development of Master Plan has started since 1975. From 1990 onwards, the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority (HUDA) began developing the Master Plan. By 1994, HUDA presented 18 zonal plans including the MCH and other metro zones. It is unfortunate that the draft Master Plan for Metropolitan Area incorporating the Vision 2020 has not been notified.

The Master Plan lays down the zonal regulations for land use, buildings, layouts, sub division, so that all future development and the environmental aspects are carefully regulated. It takes into consideration how wide the roads have to be, how to ensure the provision of adequate civil services to the growing population. It decides the parameters of future development and reserves certain specific areas for future development. The success of any Master Plan depends on the dedication, sincerity of the authorities, and the strict adherence to the regulations by the people. Once a Master Plan is notified it becomes law and has to be followed by the authorities, the government and all concerned without exception.

It is indeed unfortunate that the absence of Master Plan is becoming a tool for enjoying lack of accountability in dealing with instances of misuse and encroachments. The existence of water bodies, large open spaces and forest areas is essential for environmental and other reasons. The gradual disappearance of these areas and the failure to properly plan the provision of adequate civic amenities are leading to several critical problems.

## **Urban Development extends beyond Urban Area**

Any urban development for the future must be planned to blend harmoniously with the past and the present at the right time in the right way to ensure that civic infrastructure caters to the projected population effectively. It must also look beyond the present area

to foresee into the future and consider the geographical and regional aspects as well as the future needs of the citizens. Regional imbalances must not be allowed to impact on the planning. All development must not be concentrated on a specific urban area to the detriment of other areas. Hence, all urban areas need to be developed equally. Then it would be possible for people to go back to their smaller urban areas if there was proper improvement of civic amenities there.

Regional planning and development, focussed on a specific urban area to provide modern civic infrastructure leads to a migration of people into the city, which defeats the purpose of urban development and puts unprecedented pressure on the city services. People across the society are resorting to encroachments. The growth in the population is also leading to a rise in water, noise and air pollution.

To attain sustainable urban development, decentralization is also important. To reduce migration into the city, there is a need to involve people as partners in the administration. It is essential to establish smaller satellite towns to reduce the pressure on the bigger cities.

### **Transparency and people's involvement are absent**

Transparency is critical in the planning for sustainable development, which is unfortunately missing in the present case, even though regular efforts have been made to redress the situation. It is necessary to follow the 73rd and 74th Amendments as well as Schedule 11 guidelines. So far the proposal for public participation has not been accepted by the government. Otherwise there would have been a major change in the activities of the Planning Committee and Development Committee. Ad Hoc decisions and irrelevant decisions mark the decisions regarding the planning ignoring the speci-

cations and regulations laid down by the government. The consequence is that lakhs of people are suffering with several problems. There is a need to oppose this style of functioning where middlemen are influencing the decisions that are not appropriate for the people. Though public hearings are held intermittently, they provide vague and insufficient information.

Since there is no transparency in GHMC's operations, there are no opportunities to pose questions on its activities. The sums collected through the library cess are diverted to building roads. The betterment charges collected by GHMC are being spent on other services. There is a need to make the officials accountable to prevent this type of misuse of funds.

### **Why do we need to develop and improve Satellite Cities?**

It is impossible to understand why the planners are looking towards the examples of Rio, Seoul, Cairo, Jakarta, Mexico, and Delhi in planning a huge agglomeration for Hyderabad. Urban planners have long suggested that development of satellite towns around major cities as the solution to decongest them. These towns should have good infrastructure with all civic amenities in place to attract the people. Towns with less than 20 lakh population each will have the offices close to them. Students attend schools that are close to their homes. The populations are also considerably less in number, with no congestion and lower levels of pollution. Satellite towns also enable more efficient waste disposal and solid waste management.

### **Law and Order Issues**

Rapid development of the cities puts tremendous pressure on the existing law enforcement in-

frastructure as the area for policing gets unmanageably large and difficult to control. Satellite towns, because of their size, enable more effective policing and maintenance of law and order.

### **Residents must share the benefits of Development Projects**

Citizens desire facilities like good roads that enable them to travel faster without traffic jams and reach their destinations in comfort. But the authorities are implementing developments that will only increase water, noise and air pollution and result in long travel times even in short trips due to traffic congestion. The Government Order no 111 permits the operation of polluting factories close to the fresh water lakes like Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar. The location of new International airport is partly in a bio conservation zone reveals the government's callous disregard to environmental norms. This project and the Outer Ring Road project have both displaced countless farmers engaged in traditional farming for generations in the name of development. The notification was amended several times and the compensation paid was meager causing huge losses to the local residents. There is a need to ensure that in projects like these, the displaced residents should be offered land for land elsewhere in addition to compensation for the loss of their lands, to be paid out of the profits earned by the institutions acquiring their land. The residents must be assured of a continuous income that they had lost due to the land acquisition.

No one is objecting to development projects but it is necessary to consider beforehand in detail the objections of the affected residents as well as NGOs like Forum for a Better Hyderabad.

### **Drips and Drabs to the Common Man, but Unlimited for the Corporates**

Water is Nature's most precious resource; hence we need to use it very carefully. The HMWSSB is highly negligent in supplying water to the citizens. But it is supplying corporates and some elite colonies as demanded at a slightly higher price, which does not justify the supply. Even though the Krishna River water is being brought to the city at a huge financial investment and operating cost, ordinary citizens are unable to get enough water for their needs.

### **Vanishing Water Bodies**

Under the pretext of beautification, tourism and development, HUDA and MCH have embarked on projects that are potential, long term environmental disasters. Examples are the Buddha Purnima project, the encirclement of the historic Hussain Sagar by restaurants, memorials of prominent politicians, water and amusement parks, an IMAX theatre, which will lead to a terrible geographic environmental degradation. And the beautiful lake is in danger of getting swamped by pollution. Every day, about 115 million litres of pollutants are entering the lake and only 35 MLD are being treated by the sewage treatment plant at the lake. This is the result of the flouting of all regulations.

Even though 169 lakes have been notified, many of these lakes have either getting encroached completely or are in danger of vanishing soon. Lake beds are being transformed into colonies or land-



Manikonda reservoir is being filled up by private persons



scape gardens. Lakes, ponds and kuntas are an essential element of the eco-system. They facilitate recharge of the groundwater and provide resting places for birds, insects and lower the temperature of the surrounding area. The Lake development beautification schemes ignore this vital aspect and are endangering the environment permanently.

### **In the name of Musi Beautification...**

The Musi Beautification Scheme is another environmental disaster. The Scheme envisages establishing shopping complexes, multiplexes, roads and entertainment zones along the riverbank in the name of developing and beautifying the river. They will only serve to destabilize the Musi River, which serves an important role as a flood control for the city. The planners have forgotten that the Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar lakes had dammed the river to prevent floods and provide a water source for the city. Tampering with the river banks will leave the city vulnerable to an environmental catastrophe in the future. The Scheme, when examined closely appears to be a boon to the aspirations of the real estate developers, who are aiming to amass huge profits from the scheme. Displacing the thousands of slum dwellers and others living on the grassy banks for generations to places kilometres away severely affects their livelihood and denies them their fundamental right to work and tenurial rights.

### **Is Improving the lot of Slum Dwellers' not the Government's responsibility?**

The growth of city slums points to the migration of villagers in search of livelihood. They cannot be blamed for the proliferation of the slums. If enough opportunities existed in the villages, they would have remained there. Most of the slum dwellers are low paid workers. 12.5 lakh people live in

nearly 2000 slums, which are bereft of any civic amenities. The government has notified only 811 slums, which means that residents are eligible for government schemes that provide meagre benefits and the great majority of slums are denied these benefits. The slum dwellers' labour is significant contributor to the city economy and it is only fair that the government fulfils its responsibility to meet their civic needs.

### **Large Scale Pollution is contaminating the Groundwater Resources**

Industrial estates like Nacharam, Mallapur, Miyapur, Patancheru, Jeedimetla and Kattedan have created an environmental crisis by letting untreated effluents into nalas and kuntas and are poisoning the groundwater with dangerous pollutants. The air is also polluted due to the fumes of the factories mixing in the environment. The situation is a testimony to the negligence of the A.P. Pollution Control Board and the Department of Environment & Forest and other authorities in not forcing the polluting industries to install effective effluent treatment systems. The Supreme Court's displeasure over the ineffective working of the Jeedimetla Effluent Treatment is well known. The irregularities in the working of the dumping yards for waste disposal have also been criticized. It is estimated that Hyderabad generates more than 2200 tons of garbage daily. It is necessary to follow the nationally and internationally recognized norms in waste management and set up appropriate systems to dispose the waste scientifically. In this connection, concepts like recycling need to be encouraged.

### **A Beautiful City of Gardens Yesterday....A Concrete Jungle Today...**

Till about 50 years, Hyderabad used to be called a City of Gardens due to the profusion of

huge expanses of gardens and areas with huge green landscapes called baghs in different localities in the city. Today the situation has turned to be the opposite with gardens being in name only and vast areas of concrete. The daily temperatures keep rising inexorably each year in the city. Despite having laws on conservation of trees, the greenery area-wise is vanishing from the city.

### **The transportation infrastructure enervated and ineffective**

The explosive growth of vehicles in the city, which is next only to New Delhi, has led the transportation infrastructure to virtual collapse. People are taking hours even to travel short distances due to the roads being choked with all types of vehicles crowding into the limited space. Distances that used to be calculated in terms of kilometers are now being calculated in minutes and hours. Though car owners comprise only 30 percent of the total vehicles, they occupy 70 percent of the roads, leaving only 30 percent to 70 percent of the other vehicles, and pedestrians have a harrowing time while crossing the road. Flyovers have been constructed on various roads to ease the congestion, but they are instead adding to the choking of roads. The solution to this problem rests in the development of an integrated traffic management plan for the long term.

### **Historic Heritage Structures Disappearing under Pressure**

The emergence of high rise apartments and office buildings in Hyderabad has completely changed the skyline and imageability of this historic city. It has become difficult to see the sky as so many tall structures block our vision and even the ground covered by lifeless concrete. The ancient and historic monuments and charismatic buildings that we have grown up with are disappearing



from our landscape. There is a need for an Urban Arts commission to guide the situation. The Heritage Conservation Committee of HUDA must study the Heritage buildings and precincts carefully. Hyderabad's unique identity is the result of the many hillocks, hills, rocks formations, and other natural wonders surrounding it. But it is sad to see them disappearing from our horizon and they must be conserved before are completely gone.

How is it possible to neglect the rich architectural beauty of our rocks? We must recognize their individual beauty and include them while designing homes and build around them. We have many beautiful examples where this has been done while constructing houses in Hyderabad. Hyderabad has been the torch bearer in architecturally including the rocks within buildings and monuments. We need to propagate this culture among the people and preserve our heritage. The Government has so far notified 137 Heritage buildings, 14 additional heritage buildings and 9 rock formation, 6 Heritage Precincts. It is a small number when compared with the 1700 notified Heritage structures in Mumbai and 2772 in Bhubaneswar. Surely Hyderabad has a richer heritage and more glorious history to boast of in terms of Heritage structures. It is estimated that there are more than 2000 Heritage buildings in Hyderabad and it is necessary to prepare Additional Listing at the earliest, so that they are pre-

served for posterity. Even today, one by one they are slowly sinking into the folds of history to remain as a memory.

### **Where there is a will, there are solutions**

The historic city Hyderabad is beset with several problems. Scientific planning and development only can lift it from the poverty it has fallen into and there is a need for scientific study to develop an integrated awareness. The GHMC must establish an integrated task force to handle the issues of drinking water supply, sewerage, groundwater recharge, solid waste management to function as a Multi Nodal agency in Hyderabad. A specially integrated action plan with long term vision must be launched immediately to resolve the crisis in traffic management and transportation issues. A mass transit system, which is appropriate for all classes of people, must be implemented. The government has clearly failed to address the health issues of the people. An effective and efficient Urban health Care system is an imperative for Hyderabad.

### **The Question of Rising Issues**

It is estimated that the population of Hyderabad will reach 10 million in few years. Hyderabad's contribution to the state economy is 12 percent. The Property Tax collection figures in Hyderabad are rising sharply each year due to the explosive rise in residential areas. Collections by way of advertisement tax on hoardings and other media have also risen.

The rise in urban poverty and migration from villages indicates that the economic infrastructure will face a crisis in the near future. It can be averted only through sustainable and integrated urban development in the right direction with proper and effective implementation of a long term vision. Decentralization of municipal finances, addressing

environmental problems, transparency in governance, accountability of officials, a comprehensive poverty alleviation programme, are elements for establishing a stable and powerful development programme for Hyderabad.

Providing health care, employment opportunities, education and loans to the urban poor should form part of the sustainable development of Hyderabad.

Hyderabad is in a crisis today due to the unplanned and intermittent, economically unsound and thoughtless development taken up by the authorities. Without proper planning and strategies, sustainable urban development is impossible to achieve.

Otherwise, future generations have to pay the price and suffer the consequences.

### **Conclusion:**

The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw Hyderabad at the height of its glory as documented by historians. It is not fiction that diamonds were sold on the street like other consumer goods in the capital, as the state was renowned for its enormous wealth. Travellers like Tavernier praised the Qutub Shahi rulers for their noble governance. The founder of Hyderabad, Quli Qutub Shah had entreated God to populate Hyderabad like the fishes in the ocean.

Though it is past history, it is not impossible to recreate the glory and unique character of Hyderabad as the Jewel of the World (Kohinoor). If the city's present planners and administrators, driven by the same glorious vision of the founder, formulate and implement the right strategies and work with determination to achieve the goal of sustainable development, it will be possible to show the world a self sufficient, thriving and admirable Hyderabad.

# HYDERABAD UNLIMITED!

## Corruption and Urban Planning

***Dr. C. Ramachandraiah***

Researcher and Activist

“..in addition to land-use plans, detailed area development plans should be worked out which will relate density and floor-space indices (FSI) to the builtform and to the volume and heights of buildings. ..This,...if neglected, can lead to a city being destroyed by haphazard development, as is evident today in so many cases”

– *National Commission on Urbanisation, 1988.*

The new Rules under the G.O. Ms. No. 86 (3-3-2006) in Hyderabad, “have removed the concept of floor area ratio (FAR) and ground coverage that are two familiar pillars of building rules in India” and make it possible for unlimited number of floors or height even on a 30-meter wide road with sky as the limit. The FAR or FSI (Floor Space Index) can go up from the previous 2.00 to as high as 24.00 in the new rules.

- *A senior planning officer in the state government (2006).*

The state government stated that there was no proposal to reintroduce floor space index (FSI) in the building bylaws and decided to continue implementation of the existing order that guided building permissions without FSI, which “were appreciated as futuristic and developmental” and “many other States were

replicating the model” (media reports, 21 February 2008)

Hyderabad is the most corrupt city in India - *T. S. Rao, former Director General of Police (The Times of India, Hyderabad 12 Feb 2001).*

### **Town planning and corruption**

The regularization of illegal constructions and those deviated from the sanctioned plans throughout the urban centres of Andhra Pradesh in one go by issuing an ordinance and two government orders (Nos. 901 for buildings and 902 for layouts, dated 31 December 2007) spells doom for urban planning and regulations, and the quality of life in cities in the state. Stung by widespread criticism, the government reduced the penal amounts by G.O. Nos. 112 and 113 dated 31 January 2008 but that does not make the action of the government legal in any way. That the intention of the government to make quick money by fleecing the middle class was very clear in that there was no debate whatsoever on how the building laws were (not) implemented in the past and what mechanism the present government is going to put in place to correct the situation. Further, the said ordinance and the GOs were totally silent on the role of builders and the corrupt officials which indicates the rot in the system of politics and governance in Andhra Pradesh.

Town planning regulations are drafted for orderly growth of the city so that the carrying capacity of the infrastructure is not severely stressed out and the quality of life of the people does not deteriorate. When certain numbers of dwelling units are permitted (for example, in an apartment complex) as per the existing FAR or FSI rules by a local authority, it is incumbent on the latter to see that the rules are enforced. Otherwise, every aspect of the urban life is adversely affected: higher density of people and congestion, more vehicles, higher noise and pollution, higher loads of solid waste, higher sewage loads and overflowing man-holes etc. It is the constitutional responsibility of the local authority to enforce its rules so that the life in an urban centre does not become a harrowing experience. When the violator (owner/builder) and the enforcer (local official) collude, the consequence is the proliferation of building violations and a disaster for quality of urban life which we are witnessing in Hyderabad and several other cities in the state. The government is now penalizing the owner by leaving out the other two more power players. This is unethical and justifies the non-performance of the constitutional responsibilities by the local authorities.

This is what Jagmohan, former Delhi Development Authority Vice Chairman has to say on corruption, legal system and illegal structures (*The Challenge of Our Cities*, Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures, Vikas, Delhi, 1983): “Taking advantage of the weaknesses of urban institutions, the illegal builders have perfected a cunning technique – obtain stay orders from the courts, buy time, and then plead that illegality is old and the only practical way is to regularize it. More often than not, the plea for regularization has succeeded, and this has encouraged more and more people to adopt the same technique and get away with huge illegal benefits”.

“What is worse is that this urban indiscipline is being abetted by the legal system and its various components. ...the vested interests are able to exploit the system, and this is causing incalculable harm to the city, the people and the rule of law itself. For instance, one court issued as many as 1833 stay orders in a year or so against the notices issued by the civic authorities”.

### **GOs 422, 423 and 86**

Given below are some excerpts from the relevant government orders which were not implemented by the governments (previous and present) and still do not have any mechanism to do so. The system of accountability and transparency do not exist. The local authorities are showing least interest, rather creating hurdles, in implementing the people-friendly Right to Information Act.

The GO. N. 419 dated 30<sup>th</sup> July 1998 on Building Regularisation Scheme (BRS) clearly states “the unauthorised constructions made after 30.6.1998 shall not be regularized under any circumstances”. The then MCH Commissioner, P.K. Mohanty said in unequivocal terms (July 2, 1999) that the MCH would bring down structures erected in the cellars of residential and commercial buildings” once the BRS was over. We would like to know what measures the government has taken to prevent unauthorized constructions after 30.6.1998.

After the GO on BRS, the government issued GO. No. 422 (for Municipalities not covered under Urban Development Authority areas) and 423 (for Municipal Corporations; Municipalities and Other Areas falling under Urban Development Authority areas) dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998. These two GOs were meant for rationalization of Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and other Standards of Building Requirements. The GOs 422 and 423 have come into force from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1998.



The government has to clarify what mechanisms were put in place to enforce the important provisions of the GOs 422 and 423 by which building violations would have been reduced drastically. For group housing, on rear and side set backs the Rule 6.6b, Note-c of 422 and Rule 9C-5 Note-ii of 423 clearly specify that “The distance between two blocks shall not be less than half of the height of the tallest block or building”. One finds apartments in Hyderabad very close to each other thus preventing free flow of air, light, and movement of fire department personnel in the event of a mishap.

### **Mandatory Inspections**

Construction of a building takes some time and cannot (and should not) appear overnight. In the process certain mandatory inspections are required to be carried out by the local officials. Rule 12 of 422 and Rule 13 of 423 specify clearly that the local authority “shall carry out mandatory inspection of the construction at (a) foundation level (b) plinth level and at (c) first floor level”. The understanding is that, by this level, the basic design of the structure is put in place and deviations could be detected easily. The local authority is so empowered that a security deposit is collected from the builder at a certain rate which will be refunded only on production of Occupancy Certificate (OC) issued by the concerned local authority (Rule 10 of 422 and Rule 11 of 423). The moot question is how have the local authorities issued OCs and refunded the security deposit to so many buildings with deviations. Or they have not implemented this provision at all? Can we know some facts in this regard from the higher officials of the ministry of urban development who were so keen on penalizing the flat owners?

### **On Relaxation Powers:**

What is the meaning of these Rules (422: 16 and 423: 15) - “Government or any other authority

shall have no powers to relax any site from the provisions of these Building stipulations either in part or in total” - when governments issue new orders with scant regard to the existing rules?

### **GO 86- free-for-all?**

The GO 86, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006, has heralded a new system of free-for-all in the building rules as quoted earlier. It has dispensed with the system of security deposit. To make the owner comply with the sanctioned plan, the Rule 20(c) of GO 86 states that “the owner is required to hand over the ground floor area or first floor or second floor area, as the case may be, to the sanctioning authority by way of a Notarised Affidavit..” Upon failure to comply with,,the “Sanctioning Authority may dispose the handed over portion of the building by public auction *duly removing the violated portion*” (italics by the author). Upon pressure from the builders’ lobbies, the GO 86 was amended by the GO 623 (1-12-2006) by modifying the area to be handed over from an entire floor to “or 10% of the built-up area whichever is less”. Is it not profitable to the builder to build 100% more area and hand over 10% to the local authority?

The government thinks that with the GO 86 there will be no need for the builders to violate the sanctioned plan. Doesn’t that mean the said GO has been made so liberal that the anticipated violations of the builders have been taken care and provisions incorporated accordingly? One senior planning officer in the government has remarked that in Hyderabad, with the GO 86, “the sky is the limit now” and the new Rules “have removed the concept of FAR and Ground Coverage that are two familiar pillars of building rules in India”. He further says that unlimited number of floors or height can be built on a 30-meter wide road after leaving a “maximum” 16

meters set back on all sides! The FAR can go up from the previous 2.00 to as high as 24.00 in the new rules. The new Rules of GO 86 have allowed higher densities, reduced parking and road width and high rise buildings. This is perhaps “a natural response to the hordes of MNCs supposed to be lining up to open shop in the city”. Really, it is Hyderabad unlimited!

Can the authorities show compliance with this Rule 20(iv) of GO 86 which says that the sanctioned plan with all the related details “shall be displayed by the owner/builder on Board at the site”?

### **Good bye to rainwater harvesting**

It was mandatory in the GOs 422 and 423 to construct percolation pits for collection of rainwater and recharge of groundwater though its implementation was tardy. Instead of seriously implementing the same in a water scarce city like Hyderabad, the GO 86 has bid good bye to rainwater harvesting. On the other hand, it offers an incentive of 10% rebate in the property tax for those who undertake “both recycling of waste water and rain water harvesting structures”.

### **The most corrupt city?**

Our argument is that the degeneration of the urban regulations is reflective of the rot in the politics and administration. We conclude with two examples. First, in a judgment on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2002, the AP High Court lambasted the builders of Topaz and Emerald complexes at Punjagutta for large-scale violations and constructions in utter disregard to public law. Without mincing words the judge described the concerned builder as “unscrupulous” and a “habitual violator of law”(“HC lambasts Topaz, Emerald complex builders for violations”, *The New Indian Express*, 16 November 2002, Hyderabad). The judge issued a

series of directions for constitution of a three-member tribunal to consider all cases of regularisations and relaxations. He further observed that such large-scale violations would not be possible without the active connivance of municipal authorities, and that such failures must reflect in the service records of erring officials and disciplinary action initiated. He also pointed out how the bureaucracy and municipal corporation had granted exemptions illegally, and criticized the political executive for favouring this builder in 1995.

Second, the State Cabinet has regularized an apartment complex, at a reduced rate of penal amount, in Ameerpet belonging to a Congress Party legislator in November 2005. What is significant about this complex is that the municipal corporation officials refused to regularize this complex (a rare feat indeed!) since ten floors were constructed after taking permission for only five floors. God forbid, a fire engine cannot even move in this complex should a situation arise. What kind of message has the Cabinet sent to the public by its action? The main promoters in the above two instances have been big defaulters to the Prudential Cooperative Bank.

Raids by Anti-Corruption Bureau sleuths on officials of the GHMC are revealing huge amounts of unaccounted properties. One town planning officer in Kukatpally municipality had Rs. 95 lakh cash alone in addition to crores of other property. A raid on a director of water board revealed crores. One sub-inspector swallowed Rs. 4000/- (of Rs. 500 denominations) and ran to escape. While there are lower level officials, the less said the better at higher levels: both in administration and politics. When corruption rules the city, it is the common public who suffers and the city degenerates.

# DEVELOPMENT VS DISPLACEMENT

**S. Jeevan Kumar**

Human Right Activist

Gurajada Apparao's famous line, *Desamante matti kadoi Deshmante Manushuloi* (Roman Telugu), should form the basic premise our development. It means that a country is not a just real estate as understood by land mafia but people living on the land and who impart value to land and its resources. The social and economic philosophy expounded by the Indian Constitution is concerned with Distributive Justice and the Constitutional statement of social development is explicitly spelt out in the preamble. These should form the understanding of development.

India has 1027 million people with an urban population of 27.7 percent (285 million in 2001). The decadal growth rate over 1991-2001 is 21.5 percent of which urban growth rate is 31.13 percent and the rural growth rate is 18 percent. Housing is the most neglected human development activity in the country. In the year 1991, housing shortage was estimated to at 22.90 million units, which has shot up to 40.8 million units in the year 2000.

We find two Indias today: One that shines with its fancy apartments and houses in rich neighborhoods, corporate houses of breath-taking sizes, glittering shopping malls, high-tech wide roads over which flows a procession of a wide and huge model cars. And there is the other India of helpless peasants committing suicides, dalits being lynched regularly in the villages adjacent to modern towns, tribals dispossessed of their forest land and livelihood, children working in small workshops

and some begging in the shining India. The rage of the poor from this other India is palpable; it has engulfed 130 districts out of 607 districts of this country in the Naxalite movements. The India of glitter and privilege, it seems is bent on turning its back and receding fast from the other India of despair, rage and inhuman poverty. This is not just a matter of growing inequality between the two Indias.

A more brutal process is at work, with the convenience of Governments at the Centre and State, which is only widening this divide between the two Indias and it, is deepening consciously the absolute poverty and misery of poor India.

A massive land grab by large Corporations is going on in various guises aided and abetted by the land acquisition policies of both Centre and State Governments. A new design of this sort is creation of Special Economic Zones. Destruction of livelihoods and displacement of the poor in the name of growth oriented industrialization, big dams for power generation and irrigation, corporatisation of Agriculture despite farmer's suicides, modernization and beautification of cities by demolishing slums- tell us how development can turn pervasive.

## Delhi

The national capital city of Delhi, with a population close to 13 million, has seen wave after wave of brutal demolition of the slums. About 35% of the population resides in over one thousand slum

colonies. The population grows by the day as the rural poor, mainly from the northern states affected by drought, pour into the city.

The Common Wealth Games, proposed to be held in Delhi in 2010, saw the largest ever displacement from Delhi starting from the year 2000. There are no records available of the number of homes demolished, but NGO's estimate that over 200,000 people have been evicted. From the Yamuna Pushta area 150,000 people were brutally evicted in phases in order to create parks and fountains. This population was overwhelmingly Muslim giving rise to allegations that the demolitions had a communal flavor to them. There were many complaints that the police had set fire to the huts while evicting families. The homes where the disabled stayed were broken with equal ferocity.

#### **Mumbai**

With a population close to 16.5 million people, Mumbai has half of its population living in slums. They occupy only eight percent of the city's land. Formally, those who were listed in the 1976 census of slums were eligible to be covered by slum improvement schemes and eligible for an alternative plot in case of evictions. This introduced the concept of a cut-off date. This was then shifted to 1985 to 1990 and later to 1995. In 2003, eighty six thousand families in and around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park were evicted despite being covered by the cut-off dates under the orders of the High Court, which took the extreme step of using helicopters and deploying retired military officers to evict the poor inhabitants. Along these lines, several massive demolitions took place in Mumbai.

Between November 2004 and February 2005, over 300, 00 people were rendered homeless when over 80,000 homes were smashed. More than 150,000 children were rendered homeless. Police personnel, 3989 in number, were used during the operations. Hundreds of activists protesting the demolitions were arrested.

A survey done of the evicted families by a reputed educational institution, the Tata institute of

social sciences, found that in one-third of the cases, there was loss of employment. The ration cards, which need to be produced to obtain subsidised grain, were not transformed to the new locations. People were hungry and without food. Women were selling the remnants of their jewellery to meet household expenses. In the located sites, there were no schools, employment, burial grounds or medical facilities.

#### **Chennai:**

Similarly, South India's largest city, Chennai, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu with a population of seven million, saw repeated demolition of slums notwithstanding a government policy requiring mandating that evictions could be done only for a public purpose and that too with due notice and after provision of alternative accommodation and basic amenities.

Major evictions took place due to the construction of a Mass Rapid Transit system in the 1980's. In 1994 large-scale evictions angered people, the unorganized workers took to the streets in large numbers. Then came the evictions of families from the riverbanks. They were proposed to be relocated 20 km away. Then came the evictions of those close to the Marina Beach. They were relocated 20 km away with no drinking water, transportation, electricity, toilets or school facilities. After that, the Marina Beach fishing community was shifted despite massive protests. Wave after wave of demolitions followed. The people of Chennai opposed the setting up of five five-star hotels, foreign missions and new secretariat at Marina Beach.

The tsunami, which hit Tamil Nadu in 2004, destroyed the houses of the poor along the coast. The government took advantage of this and prohibited families from reconstructing their houses on the shore as before asking them to move back by 100 meters. The coastal land thus vacated was to be allotted to industries, resorts, hotels, and other corporate projects. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank acted quickly to exploit the



situation promoting fishing industry projects over local fisher people. Private companies began to move in. The dalit communities, who live on the seashore but without any record of rights, were not permitted to return. Thus, the tsunami paved the way for the privatization of coastal areas and the commercialisation of the coastal zones.

### **Kolkata**

Formerly known as Calcutta, is the largest city in the east with a population of more than 13 million. Evictions here have gone on relentlessly since the late 1970's. In 1996, the Kolkata Corporation started "Operation Sunshine" evicting thousands of hawkers from the pavements. In 2001, pursuant to an Asian Development Bank initiated, over 20,000 people were displaced. City NGO's set up a 'People's Commission on 'Eviction and Displacement' consisting of retired High Court judges. In September 2002 the commission enquired into the displacement and concluded "the system is not only colonial; the judicial system is downright pathetic. To say that it is designed for the rich is an under statement. The poor in this country have not the slightest chance of even approaching a court of justice, let alone pursue a case". On December 10, 2002, while the World was observing International Human Rights Day, the West Bengal govt. evicted 4000 people from Beliaghat in which is now known as the December 10, carnage. In February 2003, 7000 persons from the scavenger's community were evicted from Belligious Park. A three year old died of starvation during that period. An Asian Human Rights Commission team appealed to the govt. to provide the families alternative accommodation, but nothing was done. In 2005, twenty five thousand families were asked to vacate their premises due to the construction of the Budge-Budge Trunk Road. The slum dwellers put up strong resistance and the eviction was temporarily postponed. The same year saw the proposed evictions of thousands of families due to the Asian Development Bank project aimed at constructing national and state highways with no plan for rehabilitating those displaced.

### **Ahmedabad**

Ahmedabad, the capital of Gujarat in western India, saw the demolition of slums go hand in hand with the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims, but it was not always like this. The eviction of the 1950's and 1960's were replaced in the 1970's by the up gradation of slums. But this period of relative peace was short lived. The slum up gradation programme initiated by the World Bank in 1984 collapsed due to the inertia of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the project was abandoned in 1992. By 2004, the World Bank perspective had changed and led by the Country Director Michael Carter, the World Bank evolved the policy to remove slum dwellers.

The most vulnerable were the Muslims. In the eviction connected with the Riverfront Development Project, 40,000 families were to be displaced, 80 percent of whom were Muslims. In the place of slums, commercial complexes, markets, hotels, motels, cinema houses, farmhouses, water resorts, canals, fountains and showers were planned. Grabbing the riverside land from the poor was the key. From 203 onwards, thousands of families had their homes bulldozed. Street vendors were systematically evicted. In a few instances alternative plots were provided, which were over 20 Km away.

### **Hyderabad**

Hyderabad has seen unimaginable development over the past ten years. It has surpassed over many cities and presently accounts for 10% of total software exports of the country. The rapid growth has given way to a large migration of people from other parts of the state as well as country. The population has increased from 2.9 millions to 5.75 million within 20 years. The present population is expected to be around 6.5 millions. This growth has created a lot of pressure, on the natural resources especially on land and water.

Due to unrestricted flow of global capital and changes brought about as a result of investment in the form of loans and grants by Financial institutions like World Bank, DFID etc there is a section of



population comprising of realtors, traders, local venture capitalists and politicians who have gained a lot in the process by way of accumulating land for themselves or for the external investors. A remarkable real estate boom has erupted engulfing the lands around Hyderabad cutting into Rangareddy, Medak, Nalgonda and Mahabubnagar Districts. The major losers are the general population who has lost in terms of their restricted access to uses of urban land: - 1) Land for housing 2) Open lands like parks, lakes and 3) Conservation Lands like forests.

The proposed Outer Ring Road encompassing Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration (HUA) is a giant like ring of 162 Km with 500 meter width is passing through 45 Villages in 51 Mandals. An estimated area of 6,750 acres of land is under acquisition to build this road. It will be an eight-lane road with a projected outlay of Rs.3,000 Crore. The proposed aim is to decongest the city by providing arterial roads into and out of the city so that the city can expand outside this ring road and population settling on the outer peripheries of this road will have quick access to various locations within the city. The frequently changed alignment of the road and the politics behind it testifies the intention of the Government. Already more than 3000 farmers who had small stretches of land have been thrown out and by the time it is completed, it is difficult to imagine the magnitude of displacement.

About 1500 acres of land was sold by Government in Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy Districts apart from the allocation 41,770 acres of land to Corporate Companies. A.P. Industrial Infrastructure posses 6,490 acres of land in R.R.District alone, while HUDA owns 5,800 acres of land in 11 Mandals off R.R. District. It is planning to build Townships by acquiring(through Land Acquisition Act) about 800 acres of land from 7 Villages, under PPP and aiming at earning 500 Crore profit on it. In addition to this the State Government has created a new company by name DIHL, which would advise these two organizations on matters of land dealings, sale and would be a Government realtor itself.

Like every other city in India, Hyderabad in the past one decade has new spaces being created for the select few by their own class of kith and kin who are finely described as rulers, with scant regard to the existing populations and communities and their needs. Hi-tech city and Hussain Sagar Lake surrounding areas are prime examples. The previous government led by Chandrababu Naidu created these new urban spaces by special ordinances and government orders. The present Government is truly keeping up the tradition by giving way to Gated Community Colonies, Green Valleys and creating Paradises around Hyderabad

Can we call this a development? If one wishes to call it, one needs to spell out in clear terms whose development it is. In this entire process, where are the 11% slum people of Hyderabad City. They still languish in around 2,500 slums of which 811 have been notified a decade ago, offering their sweat and blood to the city dwellers as service providers, paying taxes, seeking livelihood on their own without any complaint. The newly designed JNNURM or the redefined DFID or the slogan “striving to make a slum free city” is not going to change their life. Leave the question of protecting their right to life, but one needs to understand the design is to deprive their right to life. May it be the Dalits and Weaker sections of Mamidi Pally, Galvaguda and Anantha Reddy Guda villages in Shamshabad, whose assigned lands have been taken to build much talked about the International Airport or the Dalit families in Ravilala, where Fab City is in the offing or the peri grass growers all along the Musi River and lives associated with diary industry, as 800 acres of land adjacent to Musi is under active consideration for development under Public Private Partnership. All these people are losers in this development. As members of Civil Society do we have answers to the questions raised by them? They would one day ask us, “What were you doing when all this was happening?” We need to grope in darkness for answers.

# Biodiversity Loss in Urbanizing Hyderabad and its Threats

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The 400-year old Hyderabad has literally come to its 'age' and like all other cities of the world is expanding. Ever-increasing urban population, development of habitation and concurrent industrialization has snatched the abundant green cover present in the sub-urban and surrounding areas of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The first casualty of the urbanization is the green cover and with it goes the local and indigenous flora and fauna. Public outcry on the rampant tree felling resulting from road expansion activity in the wake of easing traffic flow in Hyderabad has brought the issue of urbanization point blank on to the face of the common man.

We had been studying the faunal collapse in the semi-urban areas surrounding Hyderabad and have found that in the past 40 years as many as 80 percent of the mammals, 50 percent of birds and herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) have disappeared totally. Many wetlands and waterbodies that used to be home to numerous individuals of birds have been obliterated in the name of urban development. The remaining wetlands have become eutrophied as a result of

water pollution due to industrial effluents and urban sewage. The diversity of planktons, fishes and aquatic (submerged, emergent and floating) flora has plummeted drastically in these wetlands as the heavy metal pollutants and other contaminants in water as well as sediments have escalated as is documented in Hussain Sagar Lake. Vast expanse of typical Deccan scrub forest and grassland habitats (locally known as *kanchas*) have vanished and with them numerous species of both known and yet-to-be-discovered flora and fauna have been lost. Rupicolous elements of reptiles too have declined greatly or vanished altogether from some areas.

The importance of biodiversity for human life needs to be understood holistically. As an integral part of the biota and greatly dependent on biological resources than other living organisms, we humans need to empathize with the fact that our survival is linked with the well-being of other living organisms. Besides having the aesthetic value, the biodiversity has economic, food and medicinal value and this 'value factor' of biodiversity needs to be understood to drive in the urgency and need of biodiversity conservation. To-

day we have known that each tree of an average growth helps sequestering carbondioxide, cleaning particulate pollution from the air and returning oxygen to environment – a service worth crores of rupees that directly benefits the common man. If this mindless destruction of green cover and our apathy continue, the existing woes related to ambient temperature, water table level, solid particulate matter in air, noise pollution and respiratory diseases will continually escalate endangering human lives.

Although the negative effects of urbanization on biodiversity especially in terms of irrecoverable habitat fragmentation and loss, associated physical changes and local extermination of native species is slowly being understood by scientific community, the recent happenings in Hyderabad signifies a positive standpoint of informed citizens. In this context, what needs to be appreciated is the fact that the greatest challenge to biodiversity due to urbanization is its current and growing geographical extent and more and more surrounding areas getting converted in to urban expanse by real estate and infrastructure developmental activities. Studies have shown that the semi urban areas are relatively better in terms of biodiversity in comparison to urban cores where non-native, exotic and invasive species (which are ruderal and synanthropic, and are tolerant to high levels of disturbances, air pollution, trampling and alkaline compacted nitrogenous soils, and exploit predator-free environments and abundant food subsidies) tend to dominate. The native species tend to become rare and are restricted to sites that have escaped high intensity development, such as city parks, graveyards, campuses, areas adjacent to railway tracks and roads, avenue plantations, etc. Off the species that dwell in urban conglomerates ‘urban exploiters’ (usually hardy non-native species) outnumber ‘urban adapters’. Species those are sensitive to

habitat disturbance – ‘urban avoiders’ get annihilated totally from urban areas.

On this World Environment Day (June 5, 2008) the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has launched ‘10 Lakh Sapling Plantation Programme’ in Greater Hyderabad. Many NGO’s, Government Departments, Universities and institutions are taking part in this campaign. The GHMC aims to restore lost vegetation through such programme and over time aims to change Greater Hyderabad to Greener Hyderabad. Each one of us need to be part of this campaign and plant at least one sapling per year and take care of them till they grow up to their splendour. Furthermore, major industries and multinational companies that operate from Greater Hyderabad could play a vital role in promoting and funding development of small to medium sized (5 to 50 ha area) woodland lots in places where rocky boulders and wetlands exist either by direct ownership or by people’s participation (public-private partnership).

### **Brief Biosketch**

Dr. C. Srinivasulu teaches Zoology in University College of Science in Osmania University, Hyderabad. A wildlife and conservation biologist by training, he is with the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union, Gland, Switzerland. He is also a co-opted member of the Andhra Pradesh Biodiversity Board, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad. His research interest lies in biodiversity documentation, tetrapod diversity, ecology and taxonomy, bats and rodents, and effects of urbanization on biodiversity. He is an ardent conservation educationist, and delivers lectures in schools, colleges and other gatherings.

# The recent ordinance on building penalisation scheme is a specimen of bad governance

***Dr. Rao V.B.J. Chelikani,***

President, United Federation of Resident Welfare Associations

It is towards the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that the civil society has started emerging as a partner in the governance in the modern societies. This phenomenon is necessitated by two facts. In the developing countries, as many as fifty to sixty political governments have been declared as failed states since they have not been able to fulfill the purpose for which they are there i.e. to govern. Secondly, the mature democracies in the Western societies recognize that the governments have no other agenda than to satisfy the needs of the civil society. The United Nations and all its affiliated or related organizations, like ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank have been constantly moderating the rigid state structures and bureaucracies by holding parallel consultations with the so-called Non-Governmental Organisations, at all levels. Consulting the local civil society organizations is conditional to their granting loans. Powerful economic and political groups of governments, commonly called as G-5 and G-7 are afraid of publicly announcing their meeting venues for fear of being challenged by the civil society activists, on the spot, for their omissions and commissions.

Unfortunately, our local governing mechanisms at the state level are, still, blissfully ignorant of these world wide historical trends and despise any comments from the public on their royal pleasure expressed through Ordinances and G.O.s.

The Government of A.P. has, suddenly, without any consultation with the civil society, has issued, one more, one-time measure i.e the Ordinance of 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2007. It is followed by G.O.s 901 and 902. There was an open apprehension that these measures were taken politically under the pressure of the builders' lobby. We arrived at this conclusion since these measures suffer from the single defect of throwing heavy burden on the resident-owners only and letting off the builders and the officials who are the initiators of these irregularities. In fact, having learnt about this arbitrary measure, a couple of days, in advance, a delegation of sufficiently-well represented civil society organizations have visited the ministerial and secretarial offices to request them to withhold this, so as to discuss with the stake-holders. This was not heeded as this language of consultations itself was an anathema to them. Once, the Ordinance was, any way, issued by the Government, we again went and handed over a number of suggestions to them to be taken into account. One such widely distributed document is titled as: Principles and Rules for Effective, Equitable and Efficient Implementation of the Ordinance of 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 on Regularisation of the Past Building Construction Activities. The head of the Administration who personally committed himself to react to our proposals in writing, has failed to do so.

Since then, five months have elapsed without that Ordinance being neither effective, not equitable nor efficient. Further, it has very seriously damaged the credibility of the Administration, which has been enjoying, so far, more credibility than the political decision-makers. Above all, what is most painful in this affair is the damage done to the respect for Rule of law in our society. The Executive must realize that, as much as the Legislature and the Executive, it has some constitutional responsibilities, which it cannot surrender to any political order. The Chief Election Commissioner has recently confirmed this in another affair.

The symptoms of bad governance are the following: After a few weeks, the G.O.s 901 and 902 were suspended and new G.O.s 112 and 113 were quickly released, this time also, without consulting any body. The penalties were reduced but the rationality has not been improved. Consequently, there have been, some more, G.O.s clarifying and modifying the situation. Still, people are not clear, if we judge by the number of queries we receive. People were not assured of any better handling of these declarations by the officials. All said and done, every day the new irregularly-constructed buildings are cropping up right under your nose. How, then, can one be regretful about what he has done in the past? The past Building Regularisation scheme was repealed without clearing all the applications received nor the money being refunded. The new scheme penalizes but does not promise to regularise!

There is a judicial angle to it too. Previously, the Courts have judged that without taking action against the officials who have, very clearly, abetted the irregular constructions and against the builders who have first committed the infraction in complicity with the officials, the whole burden cannot be

thrown upon the current owner who has the illicit baby in his or her hands! First of all, who conceived this illicit baby? Naturally, the matter, at present, is sub-judis. The whole thing could be scrapped, any time. We have already warned the Administration about this, even before they issued the Ordinance.

Their deadlines are never taken by the public very seriously as they are being extended several times. As such, all those that are supposed to declare have not done so, thinking that there would be further extensions. The very acquisition of irregular flats or buildings was also done by the owners always with a vague hope that nothing serious would happen. B.R. S. or no B.R.S., all undeclared irregular buildings were never, really, demolished, so far. We are in a democracy. Even when the Courts sternly ordered for demolitions in certain cases, after a few real ones, the whole thing boiled down to symbolic demolitions. Take out a brick from the compound wall and call it a demolition.

Since a bad law is better than no law, at all, and the respect for rule of law is the corner-stone of any civilized society, we have persuaded some to declare their irregular constructions or lay-outs. But, we are sure that a much bigger number of people have not done it. They think that there are other alternatives, if it comes to that. As long as there is a wide gap between the law and its application, as long as the law is made in the interests of a few and its application is influenced by money and muscle power, there can be no good governance and consequently human progress would be retarded. Those who are responsible for this situation, must really search within themselves, whether they are in peace with their conscience.



# LET US REVIVE HYDERABAD'S PRISTINE BEAUTY!

*Omim Maneckshaw Debara*

Hyderabad, the 5th largest metropolis of India, is the capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. It is known for its rich history and culture with monuments, mosques, temples, a rich and varied heritage in arts, crafts and dance. Hyderabad and Secunderabad are twin cities, separated by Hussain Sagar, an artificial lake constructed during the time of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah, in 1562.

The city is more than 400 years old and is noted for its natural beauty, temples, mosques and minarets, bazaars (markets) and bridges, hills and lakes. It has a special character of its own. Its palaces and buildings, houses and tenements, gardens and streets have a history and an architectural individuality of their own..

The Qutb Shahi dynasty founded the Kingdom of Golconda. . All the seven rulers were patrons of learning and were great builders. During the Qutb Shahi reign Golconda became one of the leading markets in the world for diamonds, pearls, [[steel],] arms, and also printed fabric.

When the British and the French spread their hold over the country, the British stationed a Resident at Hyderabad, but the state continued to be ruled by the Nizam.

The rule of the seven Nizams saw the growth of Hyderabad both culturally and economically.

Huge reservoirs, like the Nizam Sagar, Tungabhadra, Osman Sagar, Himayath Sagar, and others were built.

Soon after India gained independence in 1947, all princely states were invited to join the Republic. Nizam VII was reluctant to do so; but in September 1948, after the Police Action, his state was merged into the Indian Union.

On November 1, 1956, the map of India was redrawn into linguistic states, and Hyderabad became the capital of Andhra Pradesh based on Telugu linguistic majority. . Languages spoken include Telugu, Hindi and Urdu, with a significant amount of English used in business.

In the late 1990s and the early years of the 21st century, the increasing numbers of software companies located here - both home-grown ones as well as offshoots of American companies - have led people to call their city “Cyberabad”.

Hyderabad is a seat of learning -with 8 Universities and several professional colleges. The Indian School of Business is an institution of great repute.

Hyderabad is the city of pearls and pearl ornaments, silverware, saris; ‘Nirmal’ and ‘Kalamkari’ paintings and artifacts; unique ‘Bidri’

handicraft items; lacquer bangles studded with stones; and silk and cotton, handloom clothing materials.

The city now even has a modern international airport, the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad, befitting its current status in the global economy.

The city has a number of historical sites and landmarks worth visiting like the Charminar, Chowmohalla Palace, The Nizam's Museum, The Mecca Masjid, the Falaknuma Palace, The Golconda Fort, the Qutub Shahi Tombs, the Paigah tombs, Asmangarh Palace, Raymond's tomb, the Town Hall which later became the Legislative assembly, Mauzam Jahi market, Gunfoundry, the Laad Bazaar and several other monuments as well as the world famous Salar Jung museum.

One of the most picturesque spots of the twin cities is the Hussain Sagar, an artificial lake constructed during the time of Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah in 1562 A.D. Later a giant statue of the Buddha was installed on an island in the centre of the lake. Today the lake has been encroached by the people and the authorities and reduced to one third of its original size. The state of the water in the lake and the stink emanating from it is to be seen and smelt to be believed.

Hyderabad's palaces and buildings, houses and tenements, gardens and streets have a history and an architectural individuality of their own, which makes Hyderabad such a beautiful city.

ALTHOUGH THE great flood ravaged the domain of Hyderabad in 1908 three years prior to the ascent of the VII Nizam, Nawab Mir Osman Ali Khan to the throne, one of his first assignments was to invite Visweswaraiah to advise him on how

a similar flood could be controlled and excess water be put to good use. In accordance with his suggestion, the embankment

of the Musi River and construction of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar Dams at Gandipet were undertaken. Yet, today we find that advanced technology and scientific know-how is not being implemented to take necessary precautions when required. Today, everyone is living a fast life and very few stop to remember the last Nizam -whose contribution to his people was tremendous.

The City Improvement Board was set up by him and slums were replaced by planned colonies. Health and hygiene were amongst the several welfare programs he pioneered. Unfortunately he set out to plan for the population existing at those

times but today it has increased by several folds but continues to depend on almost the same civic amenities provided during the Nizam's time.

There is a lot that today's civic bodies have to do with the cooperation of the public to improve the quality of life of the people. The green cover of Hyderabad which has been systematically removed damaging the eco system has to be revived.

The citizen's movement which has begun lately will hopefully turn Hyderabad into a city of trees and gardens and places like Basheerbagh, Bagh Lingampally, Kundan Bagh, Rambagh, Kanchanbagh, Anandbagh, Bagh Amberpet and many other areas will be areas of garden and greenery in name and spirit.

Hopefully, this serious participation by the residents of this city as well as some Corporate Houses will help to restore the trees and gardens of Hyderabad and later the water bodies too!!!

**A Representation from FBH, dt. 12.12.2007 submitted to  
Sri Koneru Ranga Rao, Hon'ble Minister for Municipal  
Administration and Urban Development, Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Bulding Regularisation - Concerns/Objections**

We would like to take this opportunity to raise our concerns on the proposed Building Regularization Scheme being proposed and as per the news paper reports this scheme has been approved by the Cabinet of which you are a senior member. Sir, as per the same news paper reports we have come to know that the government is about to issue these orders to regularize almost all the Building Rules violations across the state by reinforcing the same through an ordinance.

As an organization which has been engaging the government and citizens of Hyderabad and surrounding areas consistently over the years on issues like Master Plan, Conservation of water bodies, pollution etc and even knocking the doors of the court as a last measure we are dismayed and deeply disappointed with the decision.

We fail to understand the reasons behind the decision. If the intention is to safeguard the rights of people in the urban areas of this state as is being declared by some quarters, we fail to see how this decision will serve that purpose. This decision of yours will, on the contrary put law abiding citizens in an unhappy situation and result in hardships to them. It will lead to increased pressure on Environmental attributes and civic amenities of cities which are already in a poor shape. An innocent law abiding citizen will be put into a proverbial pan-to-fire situation.

This decision will also lead to a situation where unscrupulous builders feel emboldened to persist with their illegal ways and continue building many more structures which are not safe and/ or healthy for the inhabitants as well as put the civic amenities under pressure. This decision will lead to more violations in the future as the state will be seen a soft state which cannot take harsh but necessary decisions and enforce the same.

We fail to understand how the government proposes to address future violations if it cannot address them in the present. Instead of initiating action against the builders as well as errant officials in the harshest manner possible to set the standards of administration really high it seems to have opted for an easy way out of the mess for which it is solely responsible. The bonus of hefty compounding fees seems to have been another inducing agent.

Sir, for a few hundred crores of rupees you are embarking on a journey which will forever condemn the fate of Urban Andhra Pradesh by designating it for a haphazard, unplanned, choked and dirty area to live in. The existing building rules are the product of sound scientific principles of planning and sustainability and play a major role in ensuring the healthy growth and survival of a city and its citizens. If necessary, the rules could be changed and made practically applicable. But, while keeping the same rules, accepting violations,

now and then, make people lose faith in the rule of law. The previous attempt of regularization still remains unfinished.

In such circumstances, the judiciary also may not recognize such measures as legitimate, if we go by previous judgments. One of the most recent judgments by the Hon'ble High Court of Tamil Nadu in (W.P.Nos.18898 of 2000, 19998 of 2001, 24316 of 2002 and 17646 of 2006) has reiterated the illegality of such acts. In W.P.No 25011 of 1998 the Hon'ble High Court of Andhra Pradesh has declared that regularization scheme announced in 1998 in Hyderabad was illegal. Government in that

case promised not to allow regularization in future. In CONSUMER ACTION GROUP -VS- STATE OF TAMIL NADU ((2000) 7 SCC 425) the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that BRS can be allowed only as a one time measure and cannot be continued in perpetuity.

In view of the above, we urge you to initiate consultations with the concerned sections of the society, i.e. the representatives of the residents, owners, builders, architects, town planning officials, police, before launching any new regularization process.

**M. VEDAKUMAR**

**O.M. DEBARA**

CC to:

1. The Chief Secretary, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad
2. The Principal Secretary, MA&UD, Secretariat, Hyderabad
3. The Commissioner & Special Officer, GHMC, Hyderabad.
4. The Vice Chairman, HUDA, Begumpet Hyderabad
5. The Director, Town and Country Planning, Hyderabad

<u>S.No</u>	<u>Name of the participant &amp; Designation</u>	<u>Name of the Organisation</u>	<u>Signature</u>
	M. Mandel, Eo. member	Manager, Road & High Association	L. hantur
	Omash Varnan, Member	Forum for a Better Hyderabad	[Signature]
	Dr. Rao CHAKRAVARTI	United Federation of A.M.A.	[Signature]

# **A Representation from FBH, dt. 31.12.2007 to The Principal Secretary, Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Government of A.P.**

## **Sub : Certain clarifications sought on the "AP Ordinance No. 15 of 2007 - Regularization of Violations"**

**Ref:** 1) our letter to Hon'ble Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development dt: 12/12/07 a copy of which was marked to you.

2) Our meeting with you on 12/12/07 in your office.

We would like to seek some clarifications to the above-mentioned Ordinance.

a) How is this different from any other Building regularization Schemes launched in the state earlier? What is the difference between 'regulate' (vide section 455AA) and 'regularize', the term used in earlier BRS 1998?

Where is the provision for compulsory declaration? How will you ensure that all unauthorized constructions have been declared?

b) Does this ordinance address the issue of willing defaulters- builders? Does it at all distinguish between willing, habitual defaulters and first time, ignorant defaulters? Or, does it treat the two categories of defaulters at par? Does it distinguish between a defaulting builder and a defaulting purchaser? How?

c) How does this ordinance propose to root out corrupt officials involved in abetting unscrupulous builders? What preventive and punitive steps and any other steps are contemplated?

d) What, if any, are the parameters laid down for a Commissioner in regard to the exercise of

powers granted to him/her under Section 455AA of the new ordinance?

e) Does Section 455AA overrule section 455A, particularly, subsection (b) thereof, when it says it supersedes, to the extent stated therein, the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act, 1955? Does it mean that the parameters laid down in several statutes as mentioned in 455A(b) can be over-ruled and violations thereof can be condoned by the GHMC Commissioner?

f) Section 455AA says, inter-alia, that the powers there under will be exercised by the GHMC Commissioner "as per the procedure and by levying with such penal amount as may be prescribed." Where is the procedure laid down? Why is the procedure not made part of the Ordinance itself?

g) As the menace of illegal buildings is not subsiding how would this ordinance address the issue and minimize it in the future? What is the basis for your undertaking that this would be a one-time measure (vide section 455AA)? Why did the government fail to prevent unauthorized constructions after it declared to the High Court that the 1998 BRS would be a one-time measure? What additional measures are you taking to substantiate such a statement? Why are not such measures stated in the Ordinance itself, just as you have mentioned the penalties to be levied in the Ordinance?

In light of the recent Madras High Court



judgement, would repeated “regularisations” be legal at all? If we were to challenge the Ordinance itself in the court of law and if the Court were to disallow it, would the concerned persons in the government individually bear the consequent infructuous expenditure of the government?

Unauthorised buildings have come up with the knowledge and support of the officials of the Town Planning & other wings of the municipal bodies in some cases. If the responsibility of identifying such buildings, even after the so called “regularisation” orders, is to be entrusted to the same officials, would it serve the purpose? Considering the magnitude of the violations (nearly 1 lakh across the state even after many regularization schemes ), would the government consider setting up separate vigilance units at the State & municipality levels to identify all such violations, initiate cases against the builders & officials? We feel that such vigilance units should have carefully screened town planning officials along with others drawn on deputation from ACB, State Vigilance etc. The head of these units should himself be a senior officer, preferably a senior IPS officer. If an official has been found to have either implicitly or explicitly been a party to more than one unauthorised building coming up, would the government automatically initiate a vigilance case on the basis of prima facie case of collusion?

- h) What is the basis of your arriving at the quantum of the penalties, if the purpose of them is to make unauthorized constructions economically unviable to a builder as well as to a purchaser? Specially, in the context of the deep pockets of the buyers, the scarcity of land in the city proper, and the fast rising price of land – which makes today’s land price, however high in relation to yesterday’s price, seem a bargain to what will be the land price tomorrow? With the scale of penalties prescribed, a builder/ buyer will find it cheaper

or at the most as costly to build in excess and pay the fine than the cost of building after leaving all prescribed set backs. How have you determined the quantum of penalty that would be adequate to make excess construction economically unviable for a builder/owner?

- i) Where does this ordinance specify what violations, if any would not be regularized at all, and what proceedings would be initiated in such cases? What physical interventions, if any, you propose to make, such as altering, demolishing, etc, to prevent unauthorised buildings? Can all buildings, whatsoever is their irregularity, be regularized only by payment of penalty?
- j) This Ordinance is supposed to be a one-time measure; therefore, unauthorized constructions in future will not be amenable to regularization. If, however, unauthorized constructions do come up in future also, as they came up after 1998 ‘one time’ BRS, what provisions will apply to such unauthorized constructions? Why has this not been stated in the Ordinance?
- k) You mentioned in our meeting that the offence of unauthorized construction would be made a cognizable offence. Where are the specific provisions, if any, regarding that? Why have such provisions not found place in the Ordinance itself? Will they become enforceable if not mentioned in the Ordinance itself?

Builders who have become habitual violators of the law need to be identified on the basis of well defined criteria. For example, after 1998, if a builder has violated the rules once again, he should fall under this category. Would the government, in addition to prosecuting them, also consider black-listing them from all public construction schemes?

It will be greatly appreciated if you would be kind enough to clarify on the above questions.

**Dr. M. Mandal**

## **A Representation from FBH, dt. 7.6.2007 to The Principal Secretary, A.P. Secretariat, Government of A.P.**

**Sub : Need for extending the time for Public comments on the proposed master plan of HUDA.**

We observe that the time of 15 days given to the members of the public to scrutinize and comment on HUDA's Master Plan (MP), displayed centrally at HUDA's office is too short and not fair to the public for whom the plan is intended and who will be affected by it. The time limit for inspection and comments must be extended. The MP has long standing implications, is central to all other development plans, and the approaches and decisions taken in the MP are usually not subject to change. The MP is of a strategic nature.

When the previous MP was displayed, it was displayed for comments for a much longer time. A printed version of the MP was also available for closer scrutiny. Finalisation of such a plan takes a long time as would be evident from the fact HUDA took so much time to present a revised plan after receiving public comments.

We have to point out the following further points in support of our request to extend the time for Public comments on the proposed master plan.

- The public notice inviting comments has not been properly displayed by giving prominent ads in the newspapers and television.
- The population of 65 lakhs has been given only 15 days (including holidays) to file submissions.
- The maps of the master plan are being displayed

only at one place for the public to come and see, which is a very centralized form of display and inconvenient to a large number of population. It is not a realistic approach.

- The new Zonal Development Plan maps are not being sold to the public which means the people have little opportunity of going through the details at their own pace and place.
- All the maps are exhibited on large display boards that make it difficult for anybody, particularly, the elderly/ physically challenged people to spend time standing in front of them to look at the particulars in the map in detail.

We, therefore, urge upon you to extend the time to at least three months. Please also bring out a printed version of the draft plan, within say two weeks from now, which can be purchased by interested persons and organizations for scrutiny at their own pace. Many other persons and organizations, who are not members of the Forum have expressed the need for extending the time for inspection of the Master Plan and comments thereon.

### **M. VEDA KUMAR**

- C.C: to
1. Sri.J.Hari Narayana, IAS., Chief Secretary, Govt.of A.P.,Hyd.
  2. Sri.Jayesh Ranjan, IAS., Vice Chairman, HUDA, Hyd.
  3. Sri.C.V.S.K.Sharma, IAS., Commissioner & Spl.Officer, GHMC, Hyd.
  4. Sri.K.S.Jawahar Reddy, IAS., Managing Director, HMWS & S.B, Hyd.
  5. Sri.R.V.Chandravadan, IAS., Collector, Hyderabad Dist.,
  6. Sri..L.Premchandra Reddy, IAS., Collector, R.R.Dist.,

**A Representation from FBH, dt. 14.6.2007 to Sri. S.P. Singh, I.A.S.,  
Principal Secretary, Department of MA & UD, Secratariat**

**Sub : Draft Revised Master Plan - HUDA - Irregularities - Objections**

**Ref: 1) Our letter to you Dt. 08-06-2007**

**2) Memo. No. 9225/II/05 Dt. 26-05-2007**

With reference to our earlier letter Dt:- 08-06-2007 we have requested your office to extend the deadline of the notice given to people to submit objections and suggestions to the Draft Revised Master Plan and have also raised some objections to the way in which the whole process is being carried out.

Sir, We have come across a glaring lacuna in the whole process in reference to the Memo No. 9225/II/2005 and comparing it to the actual process and found out that the Maps on display at HUDA Premises in Paigah Palace, Rasoolpura, Secunderabad are only Master Plan maps. The existing Land Use maps are nowhere to be seen. On requesting for the same the answer we got was "They are not required to be displayed". We fail to understand the logic of this statement. The Memo issued by you, which was referred to in the above

lines in Paragraphs, marked as No.7 and No.8 clearly specify that the Land Use has to be displayed.

We believe that an Existing Land Use Map is one of the most important documents for people to compare with the Master Plan and try to understand the proposed changes and the impacts it has on the overall development of a Zone/Area. Without being in a position to compare the existing and future scenarios simultaneously how is one supposed to come to any conclusions and accordingly submit suggestions or objections to your office?

In view of the above, we request you to immediately display the Land Use Maps along with Master Plan, come out with a printed version and further extend the date by at least 3 months.

**O.M. DEBARA**

C.C to:

**Sri. Jayesh Ranjan, IAS., Vice Chairman, HUDA, Begumpet, Hyderabad.**

# **A Representation from FBH, dt. 15.6.2007 to The Principal Secretary, Department of MA & UD, Govt. of A.P., Secratariat**

**Sub: - Objections/Suggestions on Draft Proposed Master Plan in HUDA Area.**

With reference to the above letter of ours and memo issued by your office, We have the following Suggestions, objections to the Draft Proposed Master Plan in Non MCH HUDA area: -

According to the provision in "The A.P. Urban Areas (Development) Act, 1975"

**Chapter III 6. (2) (a) The Master Plan Shall – define the various zones into which the development area may be divided for the purposes of development and indicate the manner in which the land in each zone is proposed to be used (either after carrying out development thereon or otherwise) and the stages by which any such development shall be carried out.**

The stages of development are not given in the maps we have seen at HUDA office at Paigah Palace Rasoolpura.

In "The Urban Development Authority (Hyderabad) Rules, 1977" the following provisions are there: -

**Rule 12. (3) Any Such plan shall include such maps and descriptive matter as may be necessary to explain and illustrate the proposals in the Master Plan and shall include a present Land Use Map.**

**Rule 12.4** Soon after the preparation of the draft (Master) Plan for the development area or any part thereof, the authorities shall publish a notice in Form No.1 appended to these rules in a prominent place in at least three local daily news papers inviting objections and suggestions allowing a period not less than 15 days from any person or local authority. The said notice shall also indicate the place and time where copies of

**the draft master Plan may be inspected. Any person residing or owning a property within the inspected area or local authority operating within the affected area will be entitled to represent in writing to the authority any objections and suggestions which they may have in regard to the Land Use Map or Draft Master Plan.**

**Rule 12.5:** After expiry of the said period, the authorities shall prepare a list of objections and suggestions in Form No.II appended to these rules, to consider the representations so made within the time specified and any other information available to it and finalise the present land use map and draft master plan as it thinks fit.

**Rule 12.6** The authority will then submit the land use map and the Draft master Plan to the government, as required under section 9 of the Act for their final approval.

**Rule 12.7** After the governments approval the Authority shall publish a notice in a prominent place in at least three local daily news papers indicating the fact of the final approval of the Land Use map and the Master Plan and the place(s) and time(s) where a copy of each of the said land use map and the master plan can be inspected.

**Rule 12.8** A land Use map and Master Plan published by the authority under Section 10 of the Act shall be conclusive proof of their having

**been duly made and approved. Such Land Use Map and master Plan shall have the affect from the date of publication of such notice and be conclusive proof of their contents. The Execution of the plan shall be commenced forthwith.**

- From all the above paragraphs it is clear that Land Use Map and Master Plan are separate documents and Land Use Map is one of the most important document and only on comparing it to Master Plan will we get an opportunity to understand the impacts of proposed changes. But the display in HUDA office is showing only Master Plan Maps and not Land Use Maps. This we believe is against the provisions of the above mentioned rules.

**- The Other** aspect is the constitution of “Metropolitan Planning Committee” for Hyderabad Metropolitan Area as a whole, in accordance with **Article-243-ZE** of the Constitution of India.

The “Metropolitan Planning Committee” for Hyderabad Metropolitan Area comprised in one or more Districts and consisting of two or more Municipalities or Panchayats or other contiguous areas, is to be constituted immediately in accordance with Article 243-P ( c ) of The Constitution of India, if not already done. Without the Constitution of the above committee approving the Master Plan will be in violation of the provisions and spirit of The Constitution of India.

Apart from the above specific points please understand that **The Master Plan** contains the **Spatial Policies**, programmes and guidelines to the executing and planning agencies in matters of planning and development, apart from indicating the **existing Land Use** and the **Proposed Land Use**, to organise environmentally sustainable future urban growth. The Spatial Policies for the development will have to be looked into, taking into consideration the National and International

standards and practices followed for urban planning and development.

Without coming out with a detailed book containing the above details including maps and other relevant data and making it available extensively as it was done in 2003, would be a gross injustice to the people of Hyderabad.

We have noticed that the Land Use Changes permitted under various categories since 2005 have not been incorporated into the Draft Proposed Master Plan Maps being displayed. We believe that this single decision of the authorities not to show the above mentioned changes has ulterior motives behind it. We demand that the authorities come out clean with an explanation as to why the process is being done in a hurry with incomplete details.

We have approached the office of Vice Chairman, HUDA with a request to grant us copies of the Maps so that detailed examination is possible and concrete suggestions can come from our group of committed individuals and organisations to make the Master Plan a well organised, thought out and people friendly, environmentally friendly document. We have been given a copy of Land Use Zoning Regulations, but they could not give us the copies of the maps and directed us to approach your office for the same. The letter addressed by HUDA is enclosed for your reference. We request you to please provide us the same and also a soft copy map of 1: 10000 scale of the Master Plan.

We reiterate on this occasion our earlier request to you, to extend the deadline given for Public comments and ensure that the people of Hyderabad are given every possible document/data so that an informed citizenry can make a well understood choice.

**M. VEDA KUMAR**

C;C to: **The Vice Chairman**, HUDA, Begumpet, Hyd.



# **A Representation from FBH, dt. 27.6.2007 to The Principal Secretary, Department of MA & UD, Govt. of A.P., Secretariat**

**Sub: Revised Draft Master plan 2020 - Suggestions and Objections.**

This is to thank you for a prompt response and kindly extending the time for receiving public suggestions & objections, by another 15 working days as per our request to you.

We would like to bring to your notice that the implementation of your orders as per your letter Dt: 16-06-2007 to the Vice-Chairman, HUDA, a copy of which was marked to our office, is not upto the mark. The wide publicity in papers is not visible and the request to display in more places is not implemented as per our knowledge.

With reference to MAU&D, Memo No.9225/II/05 dated 26-5-2007, regarding proposed extensive modifications to the Master Plan of Non-MCH area of HUDA Jurisdiction, requesting public objections and suggestions, our suggestions and objections on the draft Master Plan, are given in the following paragraphs, for your consideration, while finalizing the Master Plan 2020.

## **Bypassing Constitutional Process**

It is surprising to note that, even after pointing out during Public Consultations in 2001 and 2003, the democratic process of notifying **Hyderabad Metropolitan Area after demarcating it** (Area Covered by HDA/HMDA) as per Article 243-P (c) and constituting **Hyderabad Metropolitan Planning Committee**, as per Article 243-ZE of the Constitution of India, have been ignored and bypassed. This does

**result, in loss of confidence in the democratic process being followed by the State Government.**

## **Story Part Told**

The Master Plan exercise in view of the changed scenario, i.e. creation of GHMC and HMDA will remain an incomplete one. If the stated objective of creating the above organisations is indeed integrated development, then we fail to see the logic of developing Master Plans separately for erstwhile MCH area, Non MCH - old HUDA area and newly extended areas of HUDA. Integrated Planning cannot be done in isolation. How can a concerned citizen know/assess/object to the impacts of the Master Plan without knowing the complete details?

We suggest that the process be suspended immediately, steps should be taken up to prepare a common Master Plan encompassing all the three areas and only after constituting MPC and referring the draft common Master Plan and getting their inputs should it be finalised.

## **Policies- Lopsided Urban Growth in the State**

The declared policies of the State Government seem to be at loggerheads with their implementation - namely achieving balanced development of urban areas in the State.

The figures of Census-2001 have shown that the State, has a large concentration of urban population in few larger cities, with **Hyderabad Metropolitan**

**Area (HMA) accounting for nearly one third of the State urban population.** The larger cities in the state continue to grow much faster than several mid-sized established urban centres, some of which have actually declined in population.

This is mainly attributable to concentration of most of the developmental activities and investments in and around Hyderabad, and Visakhapatnam more recently, at the cost of other towns, **resulting in heavy migration of population to these focal urban centres.** This goes against, the stated/declared objective of achieving the balanced urban development of the State.

It is time to give greater attention **to induce population growth of, Kakinada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Guntur, Nellore, Anantapur, Kurnool, Mahaboobnagar, Nizamabad,** and many other urban centres, which have good connectivity and the potential, by directing more investments and infrastructure developmental activities, so that **the population growth of HMA is arrested and reversed.**

**Master Plan-2020- A Much Delayed Paper Exercise**

The **Master Plan in case of HMA has been reduced to a paper exercise** by undertaking / launching various development activities such as ORR, Satellite Townships, Skyscraper Zones, MRTS, Issue of G.O No.86 dated 3-3-2006- 'Hyderabad Revised Building Rules-2006' etc and then incorporating them in the draft Master Plan-2020.

**The Master Plan** is supposed to be a long-term perspective development plan, in this case up to 2020, containing development policies, programmes and guidelines to the planning and executing agencies concerned. The Master Plan normally comprises of proposed Land Use plan, Zonal Development Plans, based on which Zoning, Layout & Building Regulations are prepared.

**Integration – A must**

GHMC and MA&UD have entered into a legally bound agreement on JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) with MoUD (New Delhi). The project envisages huge investments in Hyderabad to the tune of nearly 20,000 crore in Seven years with strict timelines. We believe that this mission mode project will change the way the city functions. Our observations conclude that the CDP (City Development Plan) and master plan have been treated

Broad Land Use	Present Use (2000) Area(Sq.Km) %		Proposed Use (2020) Area(Sq.Km) %	
Residential	214.17	12.66	500.57	29.58
Commercial& Industry				
Public & Semi Public,	186.89	11.04	420.17	24.83
Multiple & Public Utilities, Transport & Communication				
<b>Forests</b>	88.41	5.22	88.41	5.22
<b>Water Bodies</b>	84.30	4.98	95.44	5.64
<b>Conservation,Agl etc</b>	1117.73	66.05	490.99	29.01
<b>Open Space &amp;Heritage</b>	0.77	0.05	96.69	5.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>1692.27</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1692.27</b>	<b>100.00</b>

as independent documents and, this lack of clarity will lead to haphazard developments.

We urge you see to it that the Master Plan authorities immediately suspend the master plan and look at ways to integrate CDP and Master Plan and then consult MPC to finalise the Master Plan

#### **Proposed Land Use Pattern -2020**

The particulars of Land use pattern proposed up to 2020 for non-MCH area of 1692.27 Sq.Kms, in HUDA jurisdiction (excluding erstwhile MCH and newly extended HUDA areas) are summarised below: **(2003 Draft)**

#### **Residential Use**

Based on projected population of 136.44 Lakhs by 2021 against the population of 63.83 Lakhs in 2000 for entire HUDA area, the Residential demand for non-MCH area is **computed at 327 Sq.Kms** in 2003 Plan. But the revised draft Master Plan has **over designed the Residential Zone by 53%** (170 Sq Kms) extra area of over above **what is needed for 2020 population**, as per National Density Plans. We fail to see the necessity for this huge increase.

**There is no justification for converting Conservation or Agricultural zones, which are already reduced to about 44% in area, for residential use any more for at least another 20 years.**

#### **Adverse Impact of ORR- Growth Corridor**

The government direction to incorporate in the Master Plan, **Growth Corridor of 1 Km** along and around proposed ORR, will add **nearly 200 Sq Kms** more to Residential, Commercial, MPUZ etc and further reducing Conservation Zone by that much area, **which is not be desirable at all.**

If decided to go ahead with one Km wide belt, named as Growth Corridor, on either side of ORR, **we strongly object to its development on the outer**

**side of ORR, falling in the prohibited catchment area as per G.O.111**, namely between Mirzaguda & Janwada towards Shankerpally on the north and Kishanguda towards NH7 on the south.

#### **G.O.111 –Bio-Conservation Zone**

The deletion of Multiple Use Zone, proposed earlier in the

Prohibited catchment areas of the reservoirs, as per G.O.111 **is most welcome**. But the proposal to locate IT & BT centres, in violation of the provisions of G.O.111, namely **restriction of FSI to 1:0.5 in catchment area of 10Km**, is strongly objected.

**The HUDA, as directed in the G.O.111, should take action for classification of 90% of catchment area up to 10 Km from FTL as Conservation Zone (Agriculture, inclusive of horticulture and floriculture).**

#### **High-Rise & Skyscraper Zones**

The 15 High Rise Development Zones (HRDZ) and 10 Sky Scraper Zones (SSZ) carved out of the Development Zones in the revised Draft Master Plan, as per the directions of the State Government, are likely to have adverse impact on the civic amenities in the respective areas. **The high rise buildings are known to be energy intensive and not known to be eco-friendly.**

The **Low-Rise and High Density urban development** is more desirable than High Rise & High Density development. When there is no upper limit for height of the buildings as per G.O.No 86, except in Banjara & Jubilee Hills, where is the need to set up these zones? How can one justify the zones, where buildings with less than certain height or number floors are prohibited?

We believe it will lead to compulsive land concentration and is highly discriminatory towards

small land holdings and is more for the benefit of few rich people of the builders lobby.

The master plan cannot restrict itself to just demarcation of land use. It has to consider the infrastructure demands, the change in land use is going to induce. We can not plan for a improved quality of life in a city without proper plan for civic amenity infrastructure. The new high rise buildings if allowed should be made to comply with Green Building norms compulsorily, without any exceptions in HRDZ and SSZ.

### **Forest Zone – How Realistic?**

The forest zone of **88.41 Sq.Kms** shown in the draft Master Plan, is reported to be **34 Reserved Forest areas** as notified by the Forest Department. Taking into account the area **surrendered from Chilkur RF for ORR project, allocation of about 270 acres from Kothaguda RF near High-tech city for Botanical Garden etc**, the present status and ground realities of notified Reserved Forests / Degraded Forest areas, at Kazipally, Doolapally, Gaganpahad, Cherlapally, Shamirpet, Suraram, etc the **actual forest area available will be much smaller.**

The exact extent of RF area available on the ground, needs to be assessed, updated, demarcated & indicated, instead of reproducing the age old figures given by forest department. Steps are to be taken by the concerned agencies to restore, protect and preserve the notified Reserve Forest and Degraded Forest areas from misuse and official / un official diversion for other purposes.

### **Water Bodies – Paper Exercise?**

The area of the water bodies in HUDA area is being shown as **120 Sq.Kms (98 Non-MCH & 22 MCH) all these years**, based on the Full Tank Levels published by the competent authorities. As per draft Master Plan the areas have shrunk to **84.3 and 8.63**

**respectively making it a total of 92.93 Sq Kms.** The actual area of water bodies, taking into account the present ground realities, may be even lower.

The proposed land use in draft Master Plan restored the FTL area of 98.65 Sq.Kms, in Non MCH area on paper. This can be done be authorised demarcation of FTL and reclaiming lost lake bed areas. Do the authorities have enough commitment to change a system of rampant encroachment and ensure that it does not remain a paper exercise?

### **Conservation & Agl. Zones - Drastic Reduction**

The area of **1117.73 Sq.Kms (66% of total area)** under Conservation and Agriculture zones has been reduced to **490.99 Sq.Kms (29% of total area)**, in the draft Master Plan prepared in 2003. This amounts to reducing the area under these zones to **44%**, by diverting the area to other uses. It will be further reduced to about **300 Sq.Kms (27%)**, in the proposed land use of the re-revised draft Master Plan-2020, incorporating the proposed growth Corridor.

**Further reduction of Conservation & Agriculture Zones** covering the lands under Agriculture, Orchards, Grass growing, Poultry sheds, Hillocks, Vacant plots etc **is strongly objected.** We Suggest that the area under these zones, be **maintained at not less than 35 % of the total area**, as against the **proposed 27%** in the re-revised draft Master Plan.

The areas used for **Quarrying (13.91 Sq.Kms)** and **Brick Kilns (3.10 Sq.Kms)** are at present covered under these zones. There should be an **upper limit of 10 Sq Kms or so**, for the areas used for quarrying & brick kilns at any one time. The areas used for quarrying should be restored as open spaces and **indiscriminate destruction of hillocks should not be permitted.**

## Open Space & Heritage Zones

The area at present covered under **Open Space Zone** (Earlier known as Recreation Zone) is only **0.77 Sq.Kms.** it is proposed to be increased to **96.57 Sq.Kms** in the draft Master Plan 2020, by utilising large pockets of land in 86 locations, for open air Parks, Playgrounds, Sports facilities and all other outdoor activities. This is in addition to HUDA Green Belt Project areas and the buffer green belts around water bodies, industries etc.

**It is a very welcome change, if the proposal can be implemented at the ground level, without any deviations.** It is important that open air parks, playgrounds etc are provided for each locality / cluster with the **population of about 25,000 or so with the provision of at least 3 Sq. Mtr. per capita, instead of providing at a centralised places like Indira Park, KBR Park, JVR Park, Chandrakant Park etc.**

The increase in proposed Land Use to **0.12 sq. Kms,** under **Heritage Buildings, Monuments etc** is also welcome.

### **G.O.No.86 – Unlimited FSI & Heights for Bldgs?**

The Provisions of G.O.No.86 dated 3 rd March 2006, in respect of **FAR, Heights, Setbacks etc** of Buildings, are **in total departure** from the **National Building Code –2005,** the Urban Development Plan Formulation and Implementation Guidelines of the Government of India and even the building norms in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai.

In fact the G.O.no.86 has **removed the concept of FAR and Ground Coverage that are the two familiar pillars of Building Rules in India.** By allowing several times higher densities, relaxing parking and road width norms and aggressively promoting high rise buildings, **The G.O. has aggravated many of**

**the City's Civic Problems, having serious long term adverse impacts on Quality of Life of the City dwellers.**

### **Urban Poor- Where are They?**

In **Chapter 2, Para 13** of “Draft Master Plan for HMA –2020”, it is stated that the **plan should particularly aim at making things easier for the urban poor in terms of access to serviced land and basic amenities.** By the very fact the draft plan document is published only in English language, excluding Hindi, Urdu and Telugu languages, the urban poor have been deprived the opportunity of taking part in the planning process and express their views. **It is not clear how things will be made easier for the urban poor in accessing the serviced land and basic amenities.**

The effectiveness of the layout regulations in providing smaller residential sites for low-income groups **will have to be judged by actual implementation of the regulations at the ground level.** Desegregation of land earmarked for residential purposes of urban poor has to be done and demarcated clearly. Just as open space zone is earmarked in the layouts, for parks, playgrounds etc, **adequate area should also be earmarked for service population, without which the layouts cannot survive.**

### **Urban Land**

In ever changing global-scenario, the land use prescription of a Master Plan will have to be based on **future quantity of land needed for various activities / uses, that never existed before.**

At present **the urban land, is simply regarded as a commodity and not part of larger ecosystem,** intimately linked to the surrounding air, water, vegetation and life, inflicting environmental / ecological damage. Let us not forget that, by treating “**Land as**



**a Commodity”, we are the first generation to create serious environmental problems and we are the last generation to escape their consequences.**

#### **Sanctity of Land Use Pattern?**

From the proposed land use pattern up to 2020, it is observed that about **1220 Sq. Kms**, out of total land of **1692 Sq.Kms**, working out to **more than 70%**, is proposed to be utilized for various development activities, **reducing the conservation zone to 290 Sq.Kms by 2020 (1117 Sq.Kms in 2000).**

If this dangerous trend continues unchecked, **the future generations will not be left with any land to cater for their essential needs**, apart from having adverse impacts on quality of life of the citizens of HUA/HMDA. Therefore it is essential that **all developmental activities be restricted to below 50% of the total land available, leaving the balance 50% for Forests, Water Bodies, Open Spaces, Agriculture Conservation etc**

The **change of Land Use** in zones notified for Water Bodies, Forests, Open Spaces, Heritage etc **should not be permitted under any circumstances.**

. The Land Use Plan does not serve the intended purpose, unless the Land Use Zoning Regulations for the specified categories are ruthlessly implemented, **ensuring that violation of land use regulations is made a high-risk business instead of a high profit business** and make the violators realise, by imposing abnormal penalties, **so that it does not make any economic sense.**

#### **Environmental Clearance**

As per Notification No.S.O.1533 dated 14-9-2006 of Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests , the Environmental Clearance is required for the following, under Category B:

- a) Buildings and Construction Projects with Built-up area **e”20000 Sq.mtrs and <1,50,000 Sq.mtrs.**
- b) Townships and Area Development Projects Covering an area **e•50 ha and or built up area e”1,50,000 sq .mtrs ++**

While implementing the above strictly, the State Government may consider making public consultation and Environmental Clearance compulsory for certain urban development projects such as Flyovers.

#### **Conclusion**

The success of any Master Plan depends on its effective implementation, **which is possible only if it has the support of the largest section of people concerned.**

A master may be a good plan or a bad plan. **For some one who wants to break the law, no Master Plan is a good plan.** The implementing agencies of the Master Plan at various levels, **should be empowered and made accountable for enforcing, monitoring and supervision of the land use, zonal regulations, layout and building regulations in force. Citizen group monitoring should be introduced for effective implementation.**

**M. VEDA KUMAR**

**O.M. DEBARA**

- Copy to**
- 1) The Chief Secretary, Govt. of AP**
  - 2) V.C. & M.D, HUDA**
  - 3) Commissioner, GHMC**

# **A Representation from FBH, dt. 10.7.2007 to The Principal Secretary, Department of MA & UD, Govt. of A.P., Secratariaat**

**Sub : Objections/Sugsesions on Revised Draft Master Plan in HUDA Area.**

**The Round Table discussion held on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2007 at Institute of Engineers, Khairtabad from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the proposed Hyderabad Master Plan was participated by a number of Civil Society Organisations and Public-spirited individuals, discussed threadbare issues related to the Master Plan in the interest of the formation of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation and the Hyderabad Metropolitan Area.**

A power point presentation was made before the participants, to initiate the discussion. The participants unanimously endorsed the contents of the PPT. A copy of the PPT is enclosed.

The participants overwhelmingly felt that the process of Master Plan preparation by the Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of A.P., is very faulty and undemocratic. We believe that there are several Master Plans in the HUDA area, some are finalized and some are under preparation. (Viz., CDA, HADA, forming MCH, HUDA, HMA, Cantonment etc.,) No Plan can be prepared for one particular area in such a situation.

The participants felt that the Master Plan should have a statement of purpose, vision, mission and objectives. Reference can be made to the recent MP of Delhi in this regard. **The Draft Master Plan**

**for Delhi-2021, put up for Public Notice ( the Gazette of India) by the Delhi Development Authority - ( See link [http://www.dda.org.in/planning/draft\\_master\\_plans.htm](http://www.dda.org.in/planning/draft_master_plans.htm) ) has a written Vision and Policy Statement for development of the region around Delhi city ( for balanced regional development and decongestion of the main city ) and approaches adopted in planning various sectors, preceding the land-use maps, which is not provided with the Revised Draft Hyderabad Master Plan. The Plan published in 2003 also has not included the policy stating the direction of growth when compared to the topics covered by the Delhi Master Plan.**

Participants felt that the state government must first comply with its undertaking for various measures of local self-government given as per the MOU with the Central Government under the JNNURM. There should be concerted pressure upon the government to do so.

Road widening plans should be undertaken after proper traffic flow study, and after planning for ample tree plantation in lieu of the fast dwindling but yet partially existing tree corridors along some roads which may disappear by **Elevated Railways/ BRTS.**

The participants felt that the absence of a Master Plan permits all parties including the state government to take ad hoc decisions and actions. At the same time it should be framed in the proper manner.

**We demand that the Government of Andhra Pradesh should prepare a Single Draft master Plan by incorporating all the existing plans (completed as well as those under preparation) in the coming 3 to 6 months. Such**

**Integrated Draft Plan should be made available in English, Telugu and Urdu for individuals and the public so that meaningful suggestions could be made after public debate. This process cannot be complete without a regional plan for the area.**

*We also demand the Government of Andhra Pradesh take immediate measures to constitute Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) and follow the provisions of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment.*

## **M. VEDA KUMAR**

### **C.C to:**

1. **The Chief Minister**, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad.
2. **The Minister**, Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad.
3. **The Chief Secretary**, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad.
4. **The Vice Chairman**, HUDA, Begumpet, Hyderabad.
5. **The Commissioner**, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, Hyderabad.

## A Representation from FBH, dt. 11.1.2008 to The Chief Secretary, A.P. Secretariat, Government of A.P.

### *Sub : Objections & Concerns on Building regularisation scheme*

The members of Forum For A Better Hyderabad along with like minded organisations spread across the state strongly feel the need to express our disappointment with the recently announced Compulsory Disclosure Scheme and point out several discrepancies in the proposed act.

#### **Our Objections/Concerns:**

- a) The only change in the present scheme is the wording “Compulsory Disclosure Scheme” instead of “Building Regularisation Scheme” as it was on the earlier occasions. The new scheme does little to prevent/deter future violations. The new scheme does not mention any additional measures to prevent future violations when the earlier measures and mechanism failed to prevent violations after the last BRS in 1998. The amount of penalties levied will not make violations economically unviable. No strict penalties like pressing criminal charges on both violators and errant officials have been proposed. In the circumstances, the claim that the CDS is one time is hollow.
- b) The scheme does nothing but regularise all illegal/unauthorised building across urban areas of the state. It rewards law-breakers and penalises law-abiding citizens.
- c) The present move by the Government goes against the concept of holistic urban planning and governance and lays to waste all the efforts put in so far on managing and regulating the growth of urban centres in the state.
- d) The whole focus seems to be on taking the easy way out by bowing to the pressure of unscrupulous but powerful builder lobby that has flagrantly violated all norms and laws on building in urban areas in their greed to make more and more money at the cost of environmental degradation and deterioration of civic amenities.
- e) The schemes ignores the professional builders who know every rule but still went ahead and built many illegal and unauthorised high rise buildings, cheating gullible buyers, bribing corrupt officials and violating the neighbours rights and instead fines only the majority innocent buyers.

- f) The scheme will lead to sweeping under the carpet of all major violations like building with additional floors which are also going to be regularised. At one go it will give a clean chit to violators and complacent/corrupt officials whose duty it is to prevent the same.
- g) The new scheme does little to prevent/deter future violations. No strict penalties like pressing criminal charges on both violators and errant officials have been proposed.
- h) None of the preparatory work in issuing the ordinance involved discussions at wider level with various stakeholders like RWAs NGOs or CBOs.
- i) The new scheme entrusts the scrutiny of applications for regularisation once again to municipal officials, many among whom have been directly or indirectly responsible for the

past violations. This would create further scope for corruption.

- j) The scheme does not explicitly exclude CRZ violation from regularisation. It is therefore prima facie illegal.

In view of the above points we feel that this new scheme ushered in by an ordinance is unsound and defeats the whole purpose of laws for urban governance and planning. And needs to be scrapped immediately

We demand the government to immediately scrap the ordinance and examine the issue in a more holistic manner, involve all stakeholders in a transparent way, and ensure that tomorrow a honest citizen is not tempted to break law as today he sees his unscrupulous neighbour/colleague getting away with similar things blatantly.

**M. VEDAKUMAR**

Copy to:

**1. The Principal Secretary, MA & U.D., Govt. of A.P., Secretariat, Hyd.**

**2. The Commissioner & Spl. Officer, GHMC, Hyd.**



# OF ROCKS AND TREES

*Frauke Quader*  
*Save the Rocks Society*

The recent public outcry of our NGOs about the cutting down of a 200 year old Banyan tree near Paigah Palace reminded me strongly of all the trees we have mourned these last years that had to yield to road widening. Especially sad was the disappearance, apparently over-night, of the high-vaulted canopy formed by ancient Rain Trees on the Old Bombay Road near Khajaguda. And remember the beautiful line of Copper Pods on the Begumpet Road in front of Hyderabad Public School? Road 36 in Jubilee Hills, bereft of all the Pongamias and Acacias planted in the sixties looks absolutely naked now. And so on, and so on.....

But then again: Is not Hyderabad now a much greener place compared to what it was 30 years back? Just think of Osmania University which looked arid and bare and is now a veritable forest. Do not trees grow incredibly fast? You can have your Gulmohar at roof level in less than five years. A Jacaranda of 10 years of age will overshadow the whole of your garden. And a Banyan Tree that we planted in the mid-eighties in front of our gate is now double the height of our house.

Which brings me to the rocks of the Deccan, the other natural treasure of our city. Their picturesque, piled-up forms are less and less around us. They are being cut down for road widening and construction. But whereas trees grow back in a relatively short period of time, the granite rocks once destroyed will never come back to us. Each rock is a geological history of the earth, a sentinel of time unlimited, and still they are done away with as "coarse rubble stone".

Let us compare the age of the rocks with that of our 200-year-old Banyan Tree.

Geologists say that the granite boulders of the Deccan, originated from molten magma that pushed up against the just formed crust of the earth, about 2.500 million years back. It cooled and hardened under the crust. When the softer top layers of the crust had weathered away and the granite domes were exposed, they weathered along their cracks (horizontal and vertical sections can be detected in almost all rock formations around us) into ever rounder forms by spheroid or onion-peel weathering. Some of the rounded boulders fell down, some remained perched on top of each other. Over millions of years they became our bizarre formations, sculptures of nature itself.

Now if we take the age of the 2.500 million-year-old rocks as 1 year on a scale, and compare the age of man on that scale, humankind would be just 3 and a half hours old. And our Banyan Tree's age would come up to 2.4 seconds! Do not the ancient granites of the Deccan deserve to be treated with more respect, and equal awe?



*Greenlands Guest House*  
*Courtesy : Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*

# TO LIVE WITH ROCKS

***Frauke Quader***  
***Save the Rocks Society***

A question often asked is: What do I do if there



***Mr. Narendra Ludher's Drawing Room***

is a rock in my plot which I don't want to destroy – but I have, after all, to build my house!

Well, how about designing the house to include the rock? Or rocks. Did you know that there is a surprising number of house owners in Hyderabad – from Moulali to Jubilee Hills - who are so much in love with rocks that they have integrated the natural rock features of their plots into their architecture? Either as the solid ground to build on, or as walls of their rooms, or as decorative attributes in staircases, all kinds of walls, and even bathrooms!

In fact, the first house in Banjara Hills –

Banjara Bhavan built by Mehdi Nawaz Jung in the 1930s – was built well into the rocky site, each room shaped out of the natural rocks. It is now on the Heritage Conservation List.

We are giving you here a few other examples of the ingenuity of rockitecture designed by Hyderabad architects:



***Dr. Mrs. Ismat Mehdi Drawing Room***

*Photographs Courtesy : Smt. Sanghamitra Malik*

# AN EXPERIMENT IN SELF- GOVERNANCE IN TARNAKA

*Dr. Rao V.B.J. Chelikani*

**In the modern urban context, increasing social capital permits a society to undertake self-management and development, without much dependence on political middlemen. It is possible to build communities of sharing and caring in the midst of concrete jungles, around the concept of resident welfare associations. Appropriate utilisation of information and communication technologies are creating situations which empower individuals, as never before and promote human development. Over-reach of the political structures and the mentality of obedience and dependence that they create in the minds of the citizens are the real obstacles and these can be over-come with the techniques of social engineering that are being experimented in Tarnaka. But, this decade-long experience cannot be considered as a complete success but is good enough to validate the present thesis.**

Quality of life in Tarnaka is greatly affected by the quality of delivery of the primary services like water, sanitation, roads, traffic, street lights, health services, education, pollution, etc., which remain, nevertheless, the major unfulfilled concerns of the Government and the decision-makers. With growing urban population and paucity of public resources, community care has often not been up to the expectation of the people at large. While there

are many attempts, there have not been any that have had a sustained impact over a large area, for large enough periods and affecting the lives of a large part of the population. The public community care systems, which have degenerated into non-functioning behemoths, have in general lent themselves largely to mis-use and abuse. Ironically, a huge majority of the people count upon the bureaucracy and the politicians to serve them and criticize them bitterly for not fulfilling their hopes. People, individually, feel frustrated and powerless before the delays and corruption in the Administration and in all its related institutions. It is in this context that some urban movements, propose different relationships among the citizens and their local, State and Central Governments. Among them, the Tarnaka experiment is reputed as a trendsetter in urban self-management with the instrumentality of the Resident Welfare Associations.

## **I. Some characteristics:**

1. Tarnaka is the 100<sup>th</sup> ward in the East of Hyderabad with nearly 65 to 80 thousand population, of which about 15% to 17% are of modest income, who earn, atleast Rs. 36,000 or more per year per family and who live in a very modest living. There are also another 20% who own individual houses worth more than half a million rupees by current prices. But

among them, 50% do not earn commensurate income and are also retired persons. Rest of them, live in apartments. Working young women would be about 30 to 35 percent of the women population.

2. The whole resident community is re-classified in terms of new associations of affinity and of common interests or purpose. It acts through multiple associations, which inter-act with each other for common activities for welfare of the whole community. Territorial associations are the resident welfare associations whether of a given area or of a multi-storied building; Functional associations like the Consumer Council proposes a Community Pact between the buyers and sellers; Legal cell over-see the protection of the public properties and legal aid; Forum of the Senior Citizens; Education cell; the Professional associations belong to the auto-drivers, washermen, watchmen, domestic helpers; and NGOs like IFHD, which have specific commitment for specific objectives, like AIDS-prevention, child-labour elimination, etc. These associations cut across the traditional affiliations of caste, region or religion to build new affinities, interests and cooperation among the residents.

3. It is, 1. purely, a community-based organisation, not prompted by any outside agency in any manner. No funding is, so far, received from any outside agency. All running expenditure is locally raised through the member welfare associations and its functional units. The International Foundation for Human Development (IFHD) and some of its trustees became first resident-members of the local community to provide some logistic support. It

is started with the firm conviction that people living in the urban context are more open for new ideas, new practices and new culture. They are also capable of self-governance if the current cynicism and the feeling of helplessness are dispelled from their minds.

4. Majority of the residents meet annually, as Ward Sabha to develop and adopt a micro-plan and choose the executives (office-bearers) to carry out the implementation. It is also an occasion for the residents to meet their political representatives, like the municipal corporator, administrative heads of the concerned departments like the Police Commissioner, the City Municipal Commissioner, as well as other private firms which produce goods and services for the area, to make them take commitments on the priority objectives of the residents in the implementation of the micro-plan.
5. In order to improve the quality of the services, the community seeks devolution and self-management of essential public services like electricity, water, issuing ration cards, electoral ID cards, security, etc. in cooperation with the officials of the concerned departments. This collaboration diminishes inefficiency, delay, falsification and room for corruption in the very process. The process is not execution of a given blue print of a previously-set plan. Initially, it consists of several phases of pleading, complaining, dialogue, negotiations, cooperation and collaboration with service-providing public establishments and finally, to self-management. Yet, so far, none of these services have reached the stage of full self-management. In the process, the residents are also mobilised and trained in the techniques of self-management. People are also to gradually

realize that the vision of a welfare state has failed and that we are living increasingly in self-governing state and nobody could be held responsible for our fate.

6. The essential pre-requisite for this experiment is the awakening and mobilising of the residents, which require new techniques, on a trial and error basis, other than those that are adopted traditionally. Constant participatory research is being carried out to provoke change of attitudes and to find new methods of problem - solving. Different techniques of intra - resident communication and dialogue are being developed based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), SMS, virtual groups, etc. There is a local magazine, called Tarnaka Times, a monthly to serve this purpose. This serves equally to talk to the Administration and to the political representatives also.
7. New techniques of relations with the Administration: As said earlier, the people are mostly frustrated and feel powerless because they are unable to get things done from the departments. There are delays and corruption whether it is for the collective work or for individual work. The Standing Committee of Tarnaka Residents' Welfare Associations, (SCOTRWA), which is the executive organ of the annual Ward Sabha (Assembly of the Ward) is experimenting with different new ways of dealing with the Administration, such as, Dialogue Session in the offices of the concerned departments like the Municipal authorities or Commitment Sessions in which the higher officials, such as, the Police Commissioner or the managers of the Water Board come to the residents' meetings to discuss

the problems and to explore the solutions. No middlemen are encouraged and no political party preferences are expressed in dealing with the Administration. Correspondence and dialogue with local, state and central government officials and with political representatives of all the three levels is primarily done, at present, through letters, faxes and e-mail, apart from rare physical visits and also by consulting their websites

8. Empowering the citizen to solve his or her own individual problems by providing information and counselling as to where to complain and to do what if not satisfied. A practical guide is prepared for their direct use. This is to create confidence in the citizen that the Constitution has provided inherent in-built mechanisms of self-correction in each government department and it is left to the citizen to make them function to obtain satisfaction. There are several means to rectify a delay, an injustice, an omission or a commission by an officer: there are intra-departmental and inter-departmental disciplinary mechanisms; consumers tribunals and judicial channels; constitutional bodies; political channels; etc. The animators have to provide the right information and to facilitate the use of efficient means of communication.
9. Flat culture: It is our firm conviction that it is more easy than ever before to build Utopias in the urban context of to-day than in the isolated islands. A number of families living in an apartment- building have many things in common: their aspirations, pragmatism, communications skills, connections, interests and necessities. Their children form clubs to learn social skills, which are becoming increasingly vital in the modern society of communications. They make their parents meet



and know other parents. The women collectively purchase in bulk as if in a marketing cooperative society. They plan for the enjoyment of their leisure through social and cultural events. The resident welfare association serves as a basic school for social democracy, as they periodically meet, discuss, quarrel but, finally, come out with a solution at the end, since otherwise they cannot live in that building without decisions taken by consensus. They, concretely, help each other in times of need. Here also, a practical guide is prepared and made available to serve as model rules for better living in the apartment-buildings. These rules help avoid minor irritants in the day-to-day life and facilitate creating good-will among the neighbours.

10. These RWAs are increasingly being taken as valid interlocutors by the municipal authorities. For example, Sri. C.V.S.K. Sarma, the present Commissioner, GHMC has issued proceedings which stipulate that the Dy. Commissioners and the Zonal Commissioners should have monthly dialogue sessions with the RWAs. He also ordered that the maintenance contracts for sweeping streets, garbage lifting, street lights, parks, etc. be given to them, so that the RWAs could engage regularly paid managers and become financially self-sufficient institutions. So also the Water Board too, would be glad to entrust the water management and recovery of bills, Section by Section. The Chief Election Commissioners, since long time, have been asking their enumerators to sit with the RWAs to finalise the electoral rolls. A Protocol of Understanding is being discussed between the RWAs and the GHMC to concretize this collaboration, going beyond the facilities offered by the Citizens Charters and the RTI Act.

## II. New Instruments of Civil Concertation:

**Ward Sabha:** Under section 243 s of 74<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Indian constitution, ward committees can be formed at each ward comprising local residents by a legislation of the state Governments. But, the Government of A.P. has not legislated in favour of Ward Sabhas nor popular ward committees so far. But, in Tarnaka these two institutions are formed un-officially with no statutory rights, through a committee of the elected representatives of the resident welfare associations, which are statutory bodies.

This General Body, the Ward Sabha meeting is conducted in two sessions. The first session of the morning consists of six groups comprising local residents and experts for deliberations on various themes like water and sanitation, security, land issues (encroachments) etc. They also study the results of the questionnaire distributed earlier among the residents, soliciting their 3 collective priorities and 3 personal priorities. In these groups, local lower-level officials also participate to explain their own difficulties and suggest practical solutions. After discussing them, the leaders of the 6 groups develop a plan of action called the Micro-Plan. In the Second session, in the afternoon, an eminent urbanist then presents an integrated micro-plan for the area, based mostly on short-term goals. The same will be discussed with the concerned government higher officials, who will then take a decision on the possible and feasible solutions in the same forum or indicate the possibilities. The political representatives concerned with the area also are supposed to comment upon the Plan and indicate their degree of commitment to the goals set in the Plan to be implanted by SCOTRWA in due course.

On this occasion, a Souvenir is published with reports of various resident welfare associations,

SCOTRWA and the Micro-Plan. The commercial advertisements obtained locally to appear in the Souvenir leave a certain amount of surplus and this helps to cover partly the running expenditure of SCOTRWA during the year. There have been already four Souvenirs released so-far.

**SCOTRWA:** The Standing Committee elected in 2006 is comprised of the following members:

Ex-Officio President : Smt. B.Latha, Municipal Corporator; Honourary President :Dr.M.Harichandra Prasad, Industrialist, Advisors: Dr.Pushpa Bhargava,Padma Bhushan; Prof.Bh.Krishna murti,Former Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Hyd; Prof Y.Vaikuntham, Former Vice Chancellor, Kakatiya University; Dr M.V.V.L .Narasimham, Addl .D.G.Health Services,GOI ; Sri. R. Advaiiah, Former Corporator; Sri R.K.Ragala, IPS(Rtd), Former D.G .P, Sri B. Jaya Jaya Rao, Former Chief Engineer, Railways.President: Dr. Rao V.B.J.Chelikani;Vice-Presidents: Sri M.V.Appa Rao; Smt. T.DhanaLakshmi; Sri V.Nageswara Rao, Sri P. Somasekhara Rao; Sri A.V.Subba Rao, General Secretary: Sri B.Om Prakash, Organising Secretaries: Mir Hamid Ali, Smt. C. Seetharamani; Sri K.Surender Reddy; Sri P.S.N.Kumar Yadav; Joint Secretaries: Sri Ashwin Kumar; Sri T.Balaswamy; Sri Y.L.Narasimha Rao; Treasurer: Sri G.Ramanuja Rao; Joint Treasurer: Sri K.L.N.Uday Kumar Auditor: Sri K.V.R.Anjaneyulu; Ex-Officio Nominees of the RWA: Sri.M.Bhaskar Reddy; Sri.Kalyan Ram; Sri.Lakshman Rao; Sri.G.Narsing Rao; Sri.M.S.V.Prabhakar; Sri.Rajesh Kota; Sri.Ram Narayan; Sri.Rami Reddy; Sri.Satyanarayana; Sri.Md.Shabuddin; Sri T.SriHari Swamy, Sri Syed Khaled Shaw; Smt.Udaya Lakshmi; Smt.K.Vijayalakshmi Reddy; Sri. E. Yadagiri Chary; Sri Bhaskar; Sri.K.L.V.S.Raju.

**Senior Citizens' Forum:** This is one of the key organs of SCOTRWA comprising of very eminent senior citizens of Tarnaka who are retired from various professions and who are willing to work for the development of this area along with other functional units of the Standing Committee. Apart from taking care of themselves as a category of population, they take part in other developmental activities like monitoring the construction of drainage system, laying of roads, etc. They also formed a sports club to keep themselves fit and fine. They have their own membership and activities.

**The Technical Quality Control committee:** Consisting of highly qualified engineers who held important positions in the departments while working, these retired persons watch over the quality of road, drainage and other works carried out by the contractors in the area. Since the contractors, in advance know that they have to do quality work, they bargain for lesser commissions to the engineering staff of the municipality and lesser amounts money to the local politicians. Former Hyderabad district collector, Mr. R.V. Chandravadan had on several occasions invited the members of the Committee to make spot visits and Third Party Observations in case of conflictual reports by his various departments on many events or incidents in the district.

**Tarnaka Consumer Council:** The Tarnaka Consumer Council launched an innovative programme in order to promote better cooperation between the consumers and commercial and professional establishments in Tarnaka. The first phase of this programme consisted of organizing a campaign to educate the commercial establishments that provide services and goods to the residents of Tarnaka, that we are all like members of a family, living in a common community and that we should be fair in our dealings and protect the interests of

each other. Only, at a later stage that we would undertake punitive measures, if necessary, by calling into action the inspecting agencies. In order to promote a better and healthy economic activity, the Tarnaka Consumer Council has drafted a Community Pact between the commercial establishments and the local consumers. This Pact highlights the importance of the fair trade practices and commits the local residents to make their regular purchases and transactions largely in the commercial establishments available in this area. It cooperates with the department of metrology, which supervises the weights and measures. Consumers Days are observed trying to sensitise people about the quality of the products, especially, about the food items. In two weekly markets in the area, the Council has stalls to offer free measuring and weighing of the products sold in those markets. In case of doubt, any buyer can come and weigh for herself the exactitude of the weight. The Council has its own membership.

#### **Police Maithri & Security Committee:**

Any society needs peace and security. In Tarnaka we have developed a method of policing called the community policing. i.e., some of the members of the Standing Committee do carry out night patrolling, traffic regulation, and also provide training to watchmen working in this area, in association with the local Police and Fire station personnel. Our seniors, going on morning and evening walks, notice all that is happening in the streets. The residents have gained expertise in training our watchmen to suit our needs and add to their efficiency. We failed in our plans to engage security personnel for the whole area. This committee is working hand in hand with the Education & Cultural Cell to provide training to students on traffic management. Several Open House sessions are held where the police station is

open to visits by women, children, watchmen, so that they learn that it is a service station, just as any service provider. Local police personnel have made some special arrangements to look into the security needs of the senior citizens in the area and the same method is being adopted at the level of the whole city.

**Education & Cultural Cell:** There are many educational institutions in Tarnaka from Kinder garden level to post-doctoral research institutions. We have found many schools and colleges having no laboratories and play grounds. In order to overcome this difficulty, we liaised sharing of facilities among the institutions, without remaining exclusive. Our experts in the Cell vary from former teachers to former Vice-Chancellors. Their valuable suggestions and recommendations have helped in many cases to solve many educational problems. Also, SCOTRWA has put in its best efforts in bringing the managements of all the schools and colleges onto one single platform to discuss their traffic problems and to find the possible solutions. The members of this Cell are: Prof .Bh. Krishnamurti F. R S. (Ed.), Former Vice Chancellor of Hyderabad Central University; Prof. Y. Vaikuntham, Former Vice Chancellor of Nagarjuna University; Prof . Veeranagaiah, Former Professor, Osmania University; Dr. Rao Chelikani, Former President, UNESCO-NGO Standing Committee, Paris & President, SCOTRWA; Dr. Pushpa. M. Bhargava, former Vice-President, National Knowledge Commission and Former Director of CCMB; Sri. R.K. Ragala, IPS, Former Director General of Police. The Cell is fighting a legal battle to recover a site meant for the library from the clutches of a land grabber who is a resident himself.

**Games & Sports Cell:** Through this Cell, SCOTRWA tries to promote a sound mind body in a sound body. Regularly, the Games & Sports Cell conducts events for children, women, senior citizens and between the local police station personnel and the residents of Tarnaka. These activities made various sections of the society come to a common platform, meet and know each other, enjoy the spirit of togetherness, irrespective of their economic and social status.

**Legal Cell:** This is one of the key functional units of SCOTRWA. It comprises of retired judges and senior advocates from civil and criminal law background. Individuals approach this cell for legal help or guidance. They provide free counseling for the economically weak classes in any legal disputes. Apart from this, the Cell also takes up cases and contests in the courts of justice, if the issue is of collective interest. The Cell is the protector of the public lands meant for parks, schools and river-bodies against the encroachment by powerful land grabbers. The protection of a local lake is mired in legal procedures. They carried out extensive discussions on the draft bills on Police, on maintenance of senior citizens and on domestic violence and submitted the same to the national Parliament.

**Tarnaka Times:** The voice of the people of Tarnaka can be heard through the monthly news letter, which was originally meant for information on the happenings in and around Tarnaka. Later, in addition to the minutes of the monthly meetings of SCOTRWA, it started also carrying the news and views of other state level federations of the senior citizens and of the RWAs. It is being published in 3,000 copies for the past four years, without RNI recognition. This is sent to all the

concerned departmental heads of local, State and Central governments and non-government organisations. This is being viewed electronically on Website: [www.tarnakatimes.tripod.com](http://www.tarnakatimes.tripod.com) Further, SCOTRWA is hoping to set up an urban community radio for better interaction among the local residents.

**International Foundation for Human Development (IFHD):** It is a private, voluntary non-profit-making organization working for promoting a holistic approach to human development in all its dimensions. Founded in 1993 in India by Dr. Rao V.B.J. Chelikani who retired from UNESCO, after being the President of the Standing Committee of UNESCO-NGOs, the Foundation has been laying stress, since 1997 upon working with voluntary local efforts. Apart from direct action in limited areas, the Foundation has, as its mission, to support and collaborate with individuals, institutions and organizations at local, national, and international levels for excellence in all human endeavors.

In conclusion, we can say that even after a decade of efforts, there are many in the area who are indifferent; only a few are active. Some are active for some time only. Some are in public activities till their private interests are served. All of them want somebody else to do the dirty job. Not many see the long-term link between the public good and their private interest. Almost all of them, refuse to search for what is innately good in each human being. Politicians see this as a source of counter-power. That is why, this Experiment is not a complete success story but a saga of concepts and attempts to change human attitudes and institutional practices. There are many miles to go.

# GANESHJI'S TRANSFORMATION from POP TO CLAY!!!

By Dr C Kulsum Reddy  
[With inputs from Sanghamitra Malik & O M Debara]

## It all began this way:-

The Forum members had a long meeting with the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Immersion Committee way back on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001, in the Police Control Room in the old city. Several top level police officials from the city were also present. The Forum appealed that the size of the Ganesh idols may be reduced and the use of toxic chemicals may be substituted by eco-friendly vegetable oils so that the pollution in the Hussainsagar lake can be reduced in course of time. The talks were deadlocked. The issue would have to be pursued in future!!!

Lord Ganesha, the remover of all obstacles would be pleased with small size idols of his, painted with natural dyes, which a person can carry with love and devotion for the immersion ceremony. The view expressed by many concerned citizens of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad has been to restrict the number of idols and reduce the size of the idols to a more reasonable height.

**The Hon'ble AP High Court in it's order dated 15-6-2001 in W.P. no. 21495 of 1998 and others have made the following observations:-**

**. The State and other Salutatory Authorities have not acted upon the report of the one man Commission headed by Hon'ble Sri Justice M. Krishna Rao, constituted in 1985-namely "Hence a notification should be issued by the Government that no idol should be prepared, which is more than 3 feet in height."**



**The lakes in and around the twin cities and Hussainsagar in particular are being polluted. The duty of the State would be to see that the immersion of Ganesh Idols installed at several localities in the twin cities might conveniently be immersed in other lakes".**

**G.O. Rt. No. 233 of 27-7-2001 of E.F.S. & T.**

- \* Vegetable-based natural colours only must be used on Ganesh Idols, instead of metallic colours to prevent pollution.
- \* All Ganesh idols shall preferably be made of clay.
- \* Reduce the size of the idols.
- \* Shall persuade the local associations and Samithis to immerse the idols in local lakes other than Hussain Sagar.



The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board along with the Forum for A Better Hyderabad had organized full day workshops in order to introduce to the artisans and the members of the Ganesh Utsav Committee the merits of reducing the size of idols, use of clay to make idols as well as the use of eco friendly vegetable colours in place of chemical paints. Even methods to be adopted for extracting colours from flowers, leaves, barks etc was well demonstrated by a Professor from the Agricultural University.

Although it is heartening to know that the then Collector of Hyderabad, Mr Chandravan, the Pollution Control Board and the Ganesh Utsav Committee had been successful to some extent in persuading the idol makers to use ecofriendly vegetable dyes for painting their idols, much more needs to be done.

It was good to know that efforts were being made to use ecofriendly vegetable dyes to paint a number of idols by some of the artisans. With increased availability of these vegetable dyes, hopefully more number of artisans would use them to paint their idols in the coming years.

Handbills had been printed in English, Telugu & Hindi to promote consciousness in the making of eco friendly idols. Even children of various schools took out a rally on Necklace road to promote the making of eco friendly idols. The authorities also needed to take drastic steps to reduce the noise pollution caused by the playing of music in high volume, causing inconvenience especially to the old, the sick and the infants. Strict instructions would have to be given to maintain low volumes.

The then Police Commissioner of Hyderabad, Sri Balvinder Singh gave strict instructions about following the rules regarding noise pollution. Crackers consisting of loud noise producing bombs were virtually

banned. The rule to stop playing loud music after 10 pm was strictly implemented.

Right thinking persons were found to be actively promoting the immersion of Idols in local lakes instead of immersion of such a large number in Hussain Sagar and completely wanted to stop immersion in Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar.

In July/August 2007, the then District Collector Mr Chandravan had made the following arrangements for the people of the twin cities:-

To begin with, the **two places** where the Ganesh idols were made available for sale from **3 pm on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 to 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2007** were the **Exhibition grounds, Nampally** [more in number] and **Erragadda Rhythu Bazar** [less in number].

*The following items were made available:*

- \* Ganesh idols painted with eco friendly vegetable colours. [Size-small to medium]
- \* Clay Ganeshas for individual homes. Craftsmen would be available.
- \* Vegetable dyes.
- \* Reasonable priced idols.
- \* All other pooja related items like eco friendly agarbattis made by ISKCON.
- \* Bhakti material and moral literature.
- \* Related cassettes and CDs of T-Series and others.
- \* All green leafy items and fruits etc necessary for the pooja.
- \* Publicity was done by putting up **banners, through television scrolls, the FM Radio and the newspaper.**
- \* Security staff from private security agencies were posted at several places.

- \* The idol at Khairatabad they say was partly painted with eco friendly paints. The result was **excellent** as seen by the District Collector, staff of his office, the staff members of the APPCB, and some members of the FBH.

Small clay Ganeshas for homes could be supplied in small numbers and in bulk by **Mr Jayprakash [an artisan]**. He could be contacted on **9346328366**.

In addition to the above information, it could be mentioned that after searching for days and months or one could say years, a place in the old city of Hyderabad called Hussaini Alam [not far from Charminar] was located, where a group of artisans from West Bengal come and stay for a couple of months, every year and make idols of Ganesha, Vishwakarma, Durga, Lakshmi and Kali for their customers in Hyderabad, for all the festivals upto Kali pooja celebrated in Bengal on the occasion of Diwali and then return to their homes in West Bengal. These artisans deserve to get much more work particularly because they make the straw and clay idols and not idols made of plaster of paris.

The residents of Pinnacle Towers in Begumpet have been celebrating Vinayak Chaturthi since 2002 but it was in September, 2007 that the residents of Pinnacle Towers succeeded in installing a completely eco friendly Ganesh idol in their premises, brought all the way from Hussaini Alam. It was a straw and clay idol painted with non toxic colours and above all less than 3 feet in height. It was a matter of great satisfaction for all those actively participating in the Vinayak Chaturthi celebrations at Pinnacle Towers in Umanagar, Begumpet.

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# CASES FILED IN THE COURT DURING THE YEAR 2007-08

## *Omim Maneckshaw Debara*

1. Writ petition No. 17623 of 2007 was filed by Mr. O.M Debara and two others challenging the action of the Government (a) in allotting huge extents of Government land in prime areas in the city of Hyderabad and around Hyderabad city and other parts of Andhra Pradesh in favour of private companies, firms, organizations and individuals in the name of development, at negligible prices, without calling for tenders or auction, in violation of the Rule 10 (a) of the AP Telangana Area Revenue Rules, (b) to declare the Regulation 6 to 8 of the APIIC Regulations 1998 providing for allotment of land without calling for tenders and auction, as arbitrary, illegal, unconstitutional and in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution of India (c) and to further direct the respondents to review all the allotments made to various private individuals / companies / firms etc., during the last 12 years without auction or tenders and to collect market rate from the allottees and to cancel all the allotments made, where work has not yet been commenced or completed as per the terms and conditions of allotment within the prescribed period.

The above writ petition was admitted and the Hon'ble High Court, by way of interim order, directed that all future allotments to the category of persons mentioned in the writ petition are subject to further orders in the writ petition. The Hon'ble High Court also directed to Government and APIIC to submit the list of all allottees, where the development has not commenced or completed within the time period prescribed in the allotment letters. The above writ petition is pending for final disposal.
2. Mr. O M Debara along with two others filed writ petition No. 13730 of 2006 challenging allotment of Government land admeasuring 245 acres to MLAs, MPs, All India Service Officers, Journalists and Hon'ble High Court Judges. The Hon'ble High Court by an order dt. 08.10.2007 allowed the writ petition and quashed G OMs No. 522, dt. 04.05.2006 allotting land to individuals for their house sites.

In March 2008 the Govt allotted land to Societies consisting of MLAs, MPs, All India Service Officers, Journalists and Hon'ble High Court Judges, contrary to the Judgment of the Hon'ble High Court in WP NO. 13730 of 2006. A Contempt Case bearing No. 476 of 2008 was filed for punishing the Revenue Secretary for allotting land contrary to the High Court Judgment. In the said contempt case, notice was ordered to the Revenue Secretary, and the same is pending for adjudication.
3. Mr. O M Debara filed WP No. 3258 of 2008 challenging the demand of the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad for an amount of Rs. 44,784/- for providing copy of the sanctioned plan of the Big Bazar, located at Ameerpet Hyderabad. The Hon'ble High Court by an interim order dt. 28.02.2008 directed the MCH to provide copy of the sanctioned plan and all other documents on actual cost basis and the same has been provided. The writ petition is pending for final disposal.
4. Building regularisation scheme or compulsory disclosure Scheme has been evolved by the State government seeking to realize large

amounts of money . This is not the first time BRS has been announced. In 1998 this was announced and a division bench of the A.P. High Court set aside the scheme as this was through a simple GO , which is a administrative order. Then an Act was brought in . Then the government had given undertaking to the court that there shall be no more such BRS schemes.

Forum for A Better Hyderabad through its secretary Mr.O.M Debara filed a writ petition No 8578 of 2008 in AP High Court along with citizens of Vishakhapatnam and Nellore.. Earlier, some petitions were already made. One petitioner wanted an order from the Court to the effect that the builders pay the fine amounts. Another petitioner wanted the fine amounts to be reduced. The case will be adjudicated along with a batch of writ petitions

Before filing this case discussions went on with citizen groups from Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur , Nellore and from the Municipalities around Hyderabad . There is an opinion that this scheme will once for all stop the harassment by the municipal authorities. 'What's wrong if we pay for permanent peace' is the theme. The writ petition filed by the Forum challenges the Ordinance passed by the government and the subsequent Act. The government cannot claim that it could not implement the Municipalities Act, Panchayat Raj Act, Urban Development Authorities Act, Municipal Corporations Act and various other acts and therefore it will regularize all the violations. If some concessions were given to small dwelling units ,etc., perhaps none would have objected to it. The major commercial non residential buildings, and high rise apartments builders are going to be benefited by this. The safety of the citizens is involved. The division bench of the A.P. High Court had said that if any further violations are taking place the authorities may act as per law for demolition. Have you heard of any officer acting against any of the new buildings constructed unlawfully, or new violations occurring in the old buildings, after 15.12.07, the cut-off date for the Ordinance? We have a duty to challenge the actions of the government as such atrocious

schemes shall not go unchallenged by the civil society.

5. Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar are the only two lakes in the state of Andhra Pradesh which have gone dry. All the lakes in the state with water. This in spite of GO MS 111 issued decade back. As this GO is not being given effect to, the environmental activists have striving hard to get this GO implemented. The Forum has been in the fore front of this fight. This GO prohibits all the polluting activities in 10 KM radius of the lakes.

Forum for better Hyderabad through its president Veda Kumar and its Secretary OM Debara filed WP NO 18896 when the government sought to dilute the GO and permit development down stream of the lakes. A division bench of the A.P. High Court has stayed the orders of the government dt 16-7-2007 which were intended to permit large scale constructions down stream of the Lakes.

It is unfortunate that a chief secretary of the state, while addressing the Forum's annual meeting, said that this is a useless GO. In WP No. 9386 of 2007 filed by Jeevananda Reddy, former secretary of the Forum the government was asked to file report about the encroachments in the catchment areas of the lakes. The then chief secretary was asked to file his response. He indicated that educational institutions , resorts may be exempted from the GO ms 111 in the name of regulating the activity for the sake of socio- economic aspirations of the local people!!. He forgot that the new master plan issued by his government prohibits all such activity in GO MS 111 area as its conservation zone. His own government said that no regularization could take place under new CDS scheme if it violated the GO Ms 111.

The real estate sharks , the contractors, who would make a killing if schemes for water from Godavari and Krishna are upgraded ( as these two lakes go dry), are striving to make these two lakes redundant and kill them. The GO 111 is being given neat burial. The civil society must protest and strive to save these lakes.



# Report of General Secretary

*Er. O.M. Debara*

It gives me great pleasure to present you a report of the Forum's activities during the year 2007 – 2008.

During the year, the various Committees of the Forum For A Better Hyderabad remained active. The activities of these committees have been reported in the Annual 2008. Hence I shall mention only a few highlights and the broad trend.

**G.O.111:** The Forum, in association with several civil NGOs, put up a strong fight against the proposed amendments to the GOMs 111, which would have impacted severely on the water bodies of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar lakes. The Forum objected to the High Rise real estate activity so close to the lakes and the permission proposed to the polluting industries.

**Right to Information Act:** The members of the Forum conducted a one day programme to educate the public about the RTI Act. They helped the persons to write out applications for information they needed under the RTI act.

The Forum had sought for information under RTI act from various departments. In cases where information sought for was not received, the Forum had filed their appeal with the State Commission.

In two cases where they were unhappy with the decision of the State Commissioner, the Forum has moved the A.P. High Court.

**Master Plan:** A Round Table Conference was held at Institution of Engineers Hyderabad with participants invited from the government, NGOs and citizens on 9th July, 2007. The conference demanded that the government come out with a single comprehensive draft Master Plan etc..., The Master Plan for Hyderabad has been notified and kept open for objections, suggestions and proposals for changes. These demands were presented to the government for consideration and also a copy was submitted to the honorable Chief Minister.

**Compulsory Disclosure Scheme(CDS):** The Forum was critical of the government's announcement of a new Compulsory Disclosure Scheme and even approached the Court to direct the government from bowing to the pressure of powerful builders' lobby and levying petty penalties.

**Heritage Conservation:** The Forum has been active in making efforts to prevent the destruction of the priceless heritage buildings due to road widening and from unscrupulous developers. The Forum has been instrumental in saving Heritage Buildings & Precincts

in the past and still continues to do so. The Forum is partly successful in protecting the Miti-ka-sheer. The GHMC was, however, not agreeable to protect any building other than the notified heritage buildings in the area, even though the area is declared as a precinct. Strangely, the Heritage Conservation Committee too has approved the approach of the GHMC and permitted them to widen the roads if only the notified heritage buildings are protected. We have contested this interpretation by representation to the Heritage Conservation Committee.

#### **International Water Conference at Berlin:**

Sri.M.Vedakumar and Dr.C.Ramachandraiah have attended the International Water Conference in Berlin, Germany held in September 2007 and presented a paper on water problems in urban areas and approach to solutions considering the aspects of sustainability. The paper highlighted the Forum's Musi Conservation Study Pilot Project also. The project report was submitted to the sponsors, Humboldt University, Germany as well. The paper was well received by the distinguished audience of water experts from around the world.

**Conservation of Trees:** The Forum in the past had consistently acted for the preservation of trees along the roads taken up for widening in different areas of the city. Despite discussions with us and some understanding for conservation of trees along the roads taken up for widening, the erstwhile MCH did not keep all their commitments. An example was the removal of trees at Begumpet road opposite the Hyderabad Public school. This year a major drive to save trees was triggered by the unwarranted cutting of a 200 years' old banyan tree in front of the Paiga Palace which has

been rented temporarily by the US Consulate. The tree was located on one side of the road. 32 Ashoka trees were also felled. We mobilized a campaign against this mutilation. Next, we resisted tree cutting, including cutting of old banyan trees along Rajendranagar highway. A movement against the felling of trees caused by lack of forward planning is building up and a forum of like minded persons and groups has emerged. The Forum is working out a strategy to carry on the campaign and has taken up the matter with various concerned government departments, builders' associations, residents' associations, etc. Our letter to the chief secretary who is the vice chairman of the Tree Authority and to the principal chief conservator of forests have been published in our annual number. We appeal to all to join this movement so that it snowballs into a Tsunami. The Forum is also taking an active part in the GHMC project for planting of one million saplings in this rainy season

**Traffic/ Transportation & Air Pollution:** The Forum along with likeminded people had several meetings to discuss problems on Traffic/ Transportation. Prof. C.Ramachandraiah formed a Citizens' Group for Better Transportation. A "Citizens' Declaration for a Better Public Transport in Hyderabad" was prepared and handed over to the Government. Several meetings have been organized to enlighten the public on the pros and cons of different alternatives that are available. Debates were organized in which senior Government officials of different departments gave a presentation.

The Forum is not in favor of elevated metro rail as planned, at an estimated cost of about Rs 8,760 crore

(Rs 132.72 crore per km), and strongly favours examining other alternatives.

**Ganesh Immersion:** The Pollution Control Board, the District Collector, Hyderabad district, Forum Members along with like minded NGO's, took up a drive of educating all those who matter regarding reducing the pollution level by using natural colors for the Ganesh Idols. This gave good results, as some of the artisans started using natural colors. School children and Residents' colony associations were educated in regard to pollution caused by using various materials in the manufacture of the Ganesh Idols and also FORUM organized a rally for awareness along with NGO's and School's at Necklace Road. This resulted in their purchasing eco-friendly idols. Members of the Forum met the Commissioner of Police and submitted a letter asking for instructions to be issued regarding the sound levels to be maintained at Ganesh pandals and the timings in which musical systems could be played. The Commissioner, while granting permission for these pandals, issued written orders to those applying for permission. This resulted in the sound level reducing over the last year. Finally, on the day of immersion, the vehicles carrying the idols were not allowed to have loudspeakers fitted on them.

**Resident's Welfare Association:**

Dr. Rao VBJ Chelikani, President of the United Federation of Resident Association has taken a lead in organizing a federation of all resident associations in the GHMC area.

The Forum has designated its member, Captain Manohar Sharma to assist him on behalf of the Forum.

The federation is doing an excellent job by highlighting the problems of residential associations to the government and finding a solution to them

**Plastic Bags / Tea cups:** The members of the Forum have been conducting awareness programme in their respective localities by visiting grocery shops / chemists' shops, / restaurants /vegetable sellers to enlighten them about the environmentally hazardous effect of using plastic bags. They also gave presentations at Housing Societies' meetings. They also circulated a copy of GO 25 dated 30-3-2001, restricting the manufacture and use of plastic bags. In spite of this the use of plastic bags / tea cups etc. are on the increase.

To set an example to others, the member have decided not to use plastic bags and not to accept tea / water served in plastic cups any more.

**WEBSITE:** The Forum's website [www.hyderabadgreen.org](http://www.hyderabadgreen.org) contains information about the Forum's activities and other topics of interest. The website is updated twice in a month. All interested persons are requested to send articles, information, to the Forum's **E-mail address:** [betterhyd@yahoo.co.in](mailto:betterhyd@yahoo.co.in)

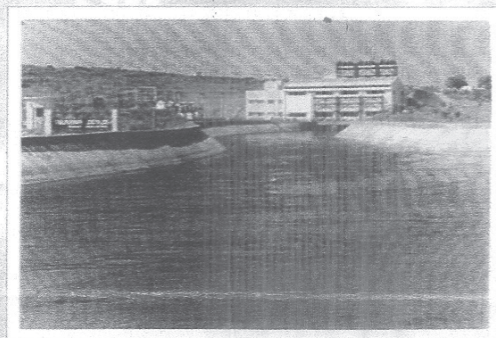
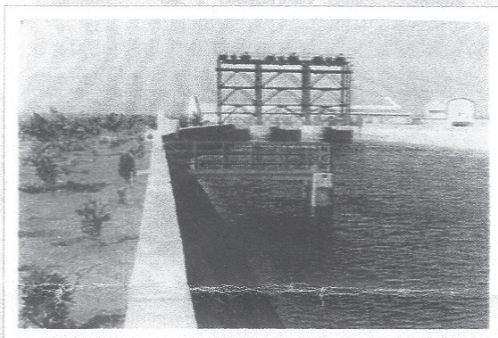
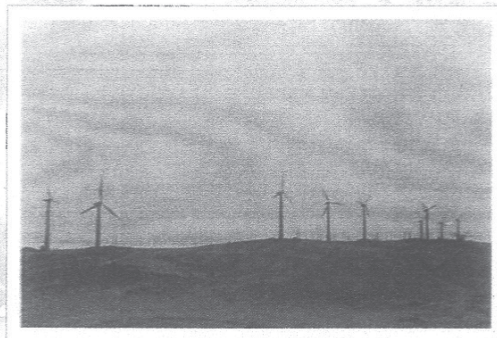
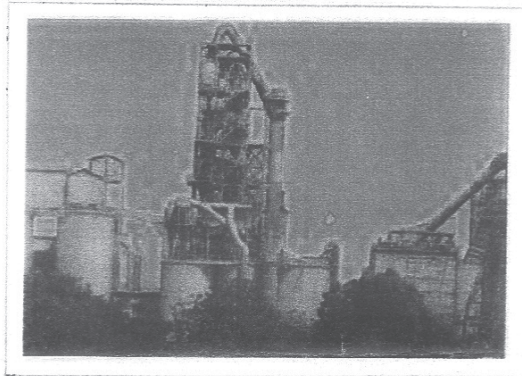
I take this opportunity of thanking the TV & Print Media who have always come forward to publish our views and activities.

I thank all present for sparing their valuable time and coming over for this function.

**//JAI HIND//**



# Creating a concrete base for **GROWTH**



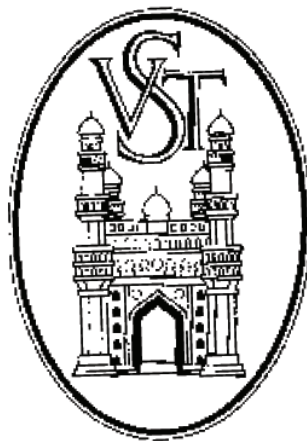
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