

# PUNE 'CITY DIALOGUE' ON CLIMATE CHANGE

PATRAKAR BHAVAN  
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Organised by the Centre for Social Markets  
In partnership with ALERT and British Library

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## Event report by Ms Tanuja Rahane<sup>1</sup>

Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra is known as the Oxford of the East. Many national leaders and personalities have made the city their home. A few years back it was a pensioners' paradise; but now, it is rapidly changing to a metropolitan city. The current trend of rapid urbanization has brought a series of problems common to all developing metros in India. Pune City, though it has experienced tremendous growth in past two decades, still remains a place where the past meets the present.

**Centre for Social Markets**, a values-based organization working for sustainable development and human rights had organized a dialogue on a boiling issue - climate change at Pune in **Patrakar Bhavan**. Panelists were eminent personalities from Industry, Law, Political and Social sector:-

**Mr. Pramod Chaudhary** - The Chairman of Praj Industries Ltd., India. He runs a business that specializes in clean, green and renewable alternate fuel with a focus on ethanol and biodiesel technology.

**Mr. Shekhar Bonagiri** – A practicing lawyer for the past 18 years. He is a Legal and Human Resource Consultant for various companies in Pune and Bangalore. He is a co-coordinator of Citizens Initiatives against De-reservation, which campaigned against the Municipal Corporation's policy of allowing construction on hilltops in Pune. He is actively involved in social causes and supports NGOs.

**Mr. Madhur Bajaj** -- Director and Vice Chairman of Bajaj Auto Ltd., a leader in the motorized two and three wheelers sector.

**Mr. Praveen Singh Pardeshi** - The Municipal Commissioner of Pune. He has been associated with United Nations Development Program and Regional Program. He has been the Head of Post Conflict Recovery Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Ms Tanuja Rahane is a Pune-based writer. This is an independent account of the proceedings.

**Mrs. Vandana Chavan** - A practicing Advocate. She has been equally active in legal, social, political and academic arenas and has been recognized widely in Pune, State and National level for her exemplary work. She is involved in Cleanliness Drive for the city, involving youth and educated women in social activities in the city. She worked through an NGO- ALERT, a network initiative to bring about dialogue between Government, elected representatives and the citizens.

**Ms. Malini Mehra**, who is the founder and CEO of the Centre for Social Markets, interviewed all the panelists. She is a political scientist and gender specialist by training. Ms Malini has worked on sustainability issues in civil society, business and Government in leadership position for more than 20 years.

The attendees included students, experienced advisors from all walks of life and social activists. They all had gathered with a single common motive to understand climate change - global warming and develop a plan for the future of Pune.

After introducing and welcoming the guests, the program started with a short film. In the film, people from different walks of life and strata of society exchanged their views on climate change. A citizen expressed that the change in the climate is due to CO<sub>2</sub>, as we are dependent on fossil fuel, which generates CO<sub>2</sub>. We don't think about alternate energy sources, as they are expensive. An auto driver sincerely felt that there is a change in the monsoon pattern and said that Pune was much cooler before 1999. Another person added that due to cutting of trees there was a difference in the weather. A person from Vidarbha area felt Pune is far better than Vidarbha. A senior citizen expressed that Pune is no longer a pensioner's paradise. There was an increase in the respiratory diseases and population has been increasing for the last many years. There was late arrival of monsoon too. Students said that they didn't feel pleasant any more due to vehicular pollution and garbage. If we used fewer vehicles, we could see the good effects.

In the film everybody showed a concern for change in Pune's climate. Increases in pollution levels, cutting of trees, late arrivals of monsoon were the effects mentioned by them.

Ms Malini initiated the discussion on the problems put forth in the film. Ms. Vandana Chavan said the young generation has a power to change; so they should be made aware about this burning issue. Pune is the only city where the awareness about climate change has reached to the school and college level.

Shekhar Bonagiri opined that the issue of climate change should be de-academised. Not only students but everyone should be involved. Every citizen should be made aware about the seriousness of the issue. There should be coherence in policy and practice as there is a dichotomy - we talk about global warming and we cut forests at the same time.

Pardeshi felt that instead of just discussing about the climate change, we should go beyond it and act on it.

When asked about the role of industry in climate change, Madhur Bajaj felt that people did not yet understand the gravity of climate change. It had a combined disastrous effect of World War 1 & 2. He took the problem on macro level and suggested another word for climate change as global climate destruction to express the gravity of the issue. He agreed upon contribution of automobile industry and industrialization towards global warming and climate change.

Agreeing with Mr. Bajaj's opinion, Mr. Chaudhary said that industry had a major part to play. But through awareness and sensitivity, many problems could be solved. He further talked about bio-fuel and suggested the ways of generating the bio fuel through agro-waste, algae, and cellular biomass like grass. But the balance between agricultural and bio fuel had to be maintained was the point insisted by him. He also assured that by 2020, 20% bio fuel would be used worldwide.

- The second film screen was on degradation of the city's Twin Rivers viz. Mula and Mutha flowing through the city and surrounding area. The two rivers were the lifeline of Pune and had now become a channel for garbage, debris, sewage and chemical effluents. Mr. Pardeshi, with his role as an administrator was asked to explain the cause of degradation of rivers as shown in the film.

Mr. Pardeshi, on evaluating the numerous problems faced by the city, explained that variability of the rainfall have gone up; so there were changes in the flood pattern. Reconstruction and construction was also one of the major causes. Secondly, the changing skyline of Pune through new construction and demolition of old ones, the debris gets dumped into riverbank. They blocked the natural stream flow. He explained the majors taken by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). The PMC had mapped a hydrological drainage plan with the help of consultancy organization. By this plan, the PMC obtained an exact location and flow of natural streams and where they get blocked or obstructed by construction. Two steps taken by the PMC based on the hydrological mapping were the Mitigation plan and the Preparedness plan. Under Mitigation plan, to protect the stream, the steps taken were:

- a) Old construction of the stream are demolished
- b) Care is taken that no further construction should occur on the stream
- c) Unauthorized slums in the riverbank were another major issue that was handled by taking immediate action and resettling them.

Under preparedness plan advance preventive measures are taken if flood situation arises.

On the points and measures and action plan told by Mr. Pardeshi, Ms. Vandana Chavan promptly added that the plans remained on the paper and hardly implemented and that was the reason mistakes were repeated. There is lack of manpower to control, watch and protect the riverside. So time and again debris was poured on the riverside. Adding to her comments on the issues, she said that the PMC should identify a sight within the city where builders can officially throw their debris. But the PMC does not take the matter seriously. Explaining her point, she said due to parking problem, new constructions have underground parking of two floors. This cut down the natural aquifers. This may cause drying of dams in future. So there should be specific rules made and implemented considering the future problems.

Mr. Bajaj said it is a common scene in Pune to have flood and drought at the same time. He suggested linkages of rivers to balance the situation. Water pollution is another major issue for which industry is mainly blamed. There are hundreds of streams that meet the main stream; but a single polluted stream can pollute entire main stream. So, one has to be careful on a basic level. He suggested that consolidated efforts are required by industry and government to partner each other to solve the problems.

When Mr. Pardeshi was asked about to elaborate on the scale of issue, he said water pollution can be looked from the source and tackled by putting up a plan for which we need to change a mindset and habits of citizens throwing half eaten food and plastic should be avoided.

Mr. Bonagiri added that new construction was encroaching upon natural storm water drains present. The awareness among the people has to be created and pursued with missionary zeal. He talked about point and non-point pollutants. Under environment protection act i.e. EPA local body should monitor - total maximum daily load, that is the largest amount of pollutants a water body can take; but this is not done. So, we need to create an alarm in peoples' minds about source of pollutants and how it affects everybody.

Mr. Chaudhary agreed to it and suggested that Public Private partnership concept. There should be a centralized body to handle different issues and activities related to Pune city. Authorities need to leverage it. Many of the citizens are employees of industries. So, their participation in decision-making was also important. Industries on their part are saving on utilities like water, power etc. Third film was on solid waste in Pune. It raised questions about why Pune could not manage the huge amount of garbage it produced and how the city should set about doing so.

Mr. Bonagiri felt that there is something wrong in the planning procedure. We first build the house and then plan for road, garbage disposal etc. The process should be reversed. First we should think about the garbage disposal and then build the house. People should be made aware about the rubble. It could be used as the first layer for the road. So, it could be recycled. Some agency should work on it so that people won't throw it away; but get the money out of it.

When asked about it to Mr. Pardeshi, he said that there is no standard model about recycling in India. For debris, he agreed that there should be official land. But he felt that the solution is in the segregation of waste. Many housing societies in Pune are segregating organic waste and recycling it. In future, bio composting should be encouraged to avoid pollution. There are some townships where they convert organic waste collected by the society and recycle it. On this point, Mr. Bonagire suggested that rag pickers should be motivated to participate in this activity.

Mr. Bajaj suggested projecting success stories about how societies created wealth from waste.

Mr. Chaudhary remarked that segregation is the key where segregated organic matter can be used for power generation. He said that it should be made mandatory for every housing society to have dumping yard to which Mr. Bajaj added that unless and until PMC made the provision for dumping the solid waste, people will dump it anywhere. So, if the provision was made, you could punish them.

Vandana Chavan suggested that vermiculture should be made compulsory for every society. Because though PMC has popularized dry and wet garbage disposal concept and people are implementing it, still at the end, PMC mixed it. So, PMC has failed to create confidence amongst people.

Mr. Bonagiri pointed out the logical side. He opined that there should be calculated provision of garbage cans and incinerators as per the number of society. So, piling up of garbage will be avoided.

Ms. Vandana Chavan remarked that people should have protested about the issue of garbage disposal. In Pune, they could save the hills with the

tremendous support of the people and politicians have to give way to people's demand.

The fourth film focused on urban growth where the changing face of Pune city was shown. The commercial complexes built in the city recently have lost touch with traditional architecture of Pune. This kind of architecture feeds the market demand.

Mr. Bonagiri commented that nowadays glass is largely used in construction which was highly energy consuming whereas bricks and stones normally used earlier were more energy efficient. He commented that glass was not the material required for tropical city like Pune. This was architecturally incorrect and costly too.

Mr. Pardeshi agreed that traditional houses are natural resource based. He added that eco-housing norms should be followed for maintaining heritage of the city. Eco-housing norms can utilize maximum light and ventilation. The PMC is evaluating eco housing for future development of Pune.

Mr. Bajaj informed about Green Business Centre at Hyderabad. This eco-friendly complex has won the prestigious Platinum award. He said that people don't prefer eco-housing because it was costly and secondly, it was not trendy. As shown in the film, modern Pune has everything that is trendy and commercial.

Mr. Bonagiri objected saying if it is demand driven, then we should not allow it. PMC should intervene to prevent Energy Intensive Housing.

Mr. Pardeshi said that corrections could be made at every step and stage. People go for immediate benefit; but fail to sense the ill effects. Citing the example of Switzerland, he said that, their fuel cost is so high that people are using more and more public transport.

Mr. Bajaj said that in automobile industry people look only at the manufacturers; but two wheelers in India are the cleanest in the world because they are required to meet very high standards. Taking proper care of vehicles is more important. Adulteration of petrol should be avoided as that creates more pollution. Government should regulate the pollution and encourage electric vehicles.

Mr. Chaudhary said that one should not confuse climate change and air pollution. He further suggested that it should be made mandatory to have Green Index for every building and taxes should be charged accordingly. Higher the index, lesser the taxes. This will definitely improve matters. There should be committee of Senior Citizens in PMC. PMC before implementing any decision should take their advice.

Mr. Pardeshi talked about contribution of Mohalla Samiti in cleanliness drives. There are groups working for better disposal of garbage, popularizing of vermiculture, planting of trees and PMC is supporting them

Mr. Bonagiri asked Mr. Pardeshi why there was a political opposition on dedicated and sincere efforts on various ecological issues and why the Government is allowing development on green belts and hill slopes. Mr. Pardeshi agreed to protect the hills.

Ms. Vandana Chavan said that role of PMC is a service provider; but now it should act as a facilitator. A particular officer should be appointed in the area and he should be held responsible for unauthorized construction or piling of debris in that area. With the help of NGOs, PMC can definitely create a positive picture. Due to time constraints, Malini concluded the panel session and began an interactive session with the audience through an open forum.

Some of the points raised in the open forum were:

- 1) Recycling water
- 2) Public Transport should be more efficient
- 3) Population increase has caused many problems.
- 4) Alternate sources of energy like solar and wind energy can minimize the climate change.
- 5) Total lack of political will to safeguard the environment.
- 6) Blockage of rivers due to dumping of waste.
- 7) No provision of solid waste incinerator.
- 8) Management of e-waste.

To conclude the session, Ms Mehra asked panelists to focus on what they could do themselves to reduce global warming at a personal level and to create awareness about climate change.

Mr. Praveensingh Pardeshi said that people including himself could move away from motorized to non motorized transport e.g.; bicycles.

Mr. Madhur Bajaj suggested that there should be creation of a standalone Ministry for climate change, which could be more effective in dealing with the problem. From his side he said that he would sponsor the translation and "Indianisation" of the film on global warming 'An Inconvenient Truth', which

could be then distributed to schools and colleges all over the country in order to create mass awareness about climate change in the country.

Mrs. Vandana Chavan said that the issue of global warming has been talked about only recently in India. She said that she has formed a society called ALERT and through ALERT, she'll reach out to colleges and corporations to help bring about some sort of consensus about climate change. She said that dialogue was necessary to prevent incidents like faulty channeling of the Mula Mutha rivers.

Mr. Pramod Chaudhry said that he was confident that Pune could lead the country in climate change awareness. From his side, his corporation has committed to reach out to 1,00,000 children. PRAJ had held an essay competition to encourage ideas about how they could reduce climate change. He has formed a group called 'Green Ideas' to pursue the ideas put forth by the children in order to mitigate climate change.

Mr. Bonagiri suggested that whenever new villages are included under the area of the city, they should be planned so that there should be plenty of open spaces and green areas. On a personal level he said that he would commit himself not to allow any construction on the hills of Pune.

There was a general consensus that global warming and climate change are sensitive issues. Behind this, a very crude form of business and politics is played. Unless and until there is mass public protest and demand for stern action against climate change, the Government will not take action. It is not only important for people of the city to be against it; but also the International societies as we all are interlinked. It is important to understand that there should not be a crusader to do this. Doing simple things regularly like using public transport, segregation of household waste, vermiculture, maintaining our vehicles properly etc can help control global warming

The seminar concluded on a note of positive change. Ms Mehra thanked panelists, partners and participants alike and said that CSM would return to Pune in six months to a year to run a similar programme to find out what steps had been taken as a result of this gathering.

The event would be broadcast locally and nationally as part of CSM's **City Dialogues** series and a notice regarding transmission dates would be issued.

CSM would also work with ALERT, British Library and other interested partners on a structured local plan for follow-up to this event.

# 'Pune Dialogue' raises concerns

**REPORTER**

reporters@saksherald.com

**NAVI PETH:** The 'Pune City Dialogue' that included five eminent personalities from the city on Thursday, witnessed a healthy discussion on various issues.

Apart from concerns of illegal construction, poor transport system, urbanisation and global warming the discussion also highlighted a need for alteration of Development Control (DC) rules wherever necessary, people's initiative to save the city from environment hazards, overhaul in people's mindset and the need for public-private partnership.

The discussion was organised by the Centre for Social Markets (CSM) in col-



## Petty politics

Pardeshi said, "The civic administration wanted to initiate a system in the city to monitor the segregation of dry and wet garbage in houses. We had even forwarded a proposal to this effect, but the General Body of the PMC, which comprises the elected representatives, scrapped the proposal. Likewise, two other proposals of environment-friendly initiatives were turned down by the GB."

laboration with city-based NGOs like 'ALERT', among others. Malini Mehra, founder of CSM interviewed Municipal Commissioner Pravinsinh Pardeshi, Bajaj Auto Ltd Director and Vice Chairman Madhur Bajaj, former city mayor Vandana Chavan, Chairman of Praj Industries Ltd Pramod Chaudhari, and a law expert Shekhar Bonagiri.

Bajaj opined, "The term 'climate change' does not signify much and it should be replaced with 'Global Climate Disruption'."

Pardeshi said, "The impact of climate change is visible since the variability of rainfall in Pune has gone up. This year, heavy rains posed problems to the encroachments along the river, after which we started

removing them."

Chavan said, "Plans fall during implementation. Even the construction debris is being dumped into the rivers. There is a need to change the DC rules."

However, Chaudhari said, "The builders should be taxed heavily for giving fancy-glass facades to their buildings, or people buying second-hand cars."

# Constructions hindering rivers, nallas will go, says Pardeshi

21 SEPT 2007

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
SEPTEMBER 20

**PUNE** Municipal Commissioner Praveensinh Pardeshi today said that constructions obstructing the natural flow of rivers and nallas and which have been permitted wrongly needed to be demolished. He was speaking at a "Dialogue on climate change" organised by Kolkata-based Centre for Social Markets (CSM) along with Pune's British Council Library and ALERT at Patrakar Bhavan.

Referring to the controversy over illegal constructions on the banks of the Ram Nadi, which led

to unnatural flooding of the surrounding areas this monsoon, Pardeshi said the PMC was taking steps to prevent such eventualities. "PMC has mapped the hydrological pattern of the catchment area and noted where the natural flow of rivers and nallas has been blocked by construction activity," he said.

Pardeshi said from now on, constructions would not be permitted if they obstruct river flow. "Wrongly permitted constructions will also have to be demolished. This is a massive task, as this would require undoing of 30 years of con-

struction activity," he said.

"Efforts are now on to convert so far undeveloped sections of the Ram Nadi river bank into green belts. Rehabilitating economically weaker housing societies to areas away from the river banks is also being planned," said Pardeshi.



The discussion, moderated by CSM founder-CEO Malini Mehra, was attended by former mayor Vandana Chavan, Bajaj Auto Limited Director Madhur Bajaj, Praj Industries Chairman Pramod Chaudhuri, and lawyer-activist Shekhar Bonagiri.

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# Civic chief calls for greater transparency in PPP pacts

## 'Lack Of Trust Prime Factor Behind Slow Progress In PPPs'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Pune:** Municipal commissioner Pravinsh Pardeshi has called for greater transparency in framing of rules and agreements that facilitate public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives in addressing issues of civic concern.

"Lack of trust remains a key factor behind the PPP initiatives not taking off the way they are expected to," Pardeshi said at a panel discussion titled "The City Dialogues" that focused on the implication of climate change on Indian cities.

Organised by the Centre for Social Markets, a Kolkata-based non-profit organisation, the dialogue featured leaders from different walks of life, including industry, politics, administration and law, extending their views on efforts to check the impact of climate change.

Madhur Bajaj (president of the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture), Pramod Chaudhari (chairman of Praj Industries), Sekhar Bonagiri (legal consultant) and Vandana Chavan (former mayor) were the other panelists for the discussion moderated by CMS founder and CEO Malini Mehra.

Pune is the seventh largest urban centre in the country with a population close to 45 lakh and a booming economy that is manifested in the large scale construction activity, thriving automotive sector and a burgeoning section of people with disposable income. However, the growth has put an extra-ordinary burden on the civic infrastructure as well



Development control rules need to be changed to ensure that underground construction activity for facilitating basement parkings do not result in drying up of lands

Vandana Chavan | EX-MAYOR

It was up to the government to ensure that measures like pollution under control were implemented scrupulously. The private sector can be involved in such measures in a big way

Madhur Bajaj | MCCIA PRESIDENT



as natural resources like hill-top, hill-slopes and river beds that are getting affected by the construction activity.

This has led to problems like vehicle pollution, traffic chaos, encroachment of river beds and contamination of water bodies on account of large-scale dumping of construction debris, absence of an apt dumping site for garbage and debris, and lack of efficient solid waste management system, among others. These problems are seen as the contributory factors to climate change issues.

The panel discussion was the third in a series planned by the CSM across 12 major cities in the country to generate awareness about issues of local concern vis-a-vis climate change.

Pardeshi spoke about the administration's focus on ensuring that new constructions

do not come in the way of natural flow of rivers. "We have mapped the hydrological pattern of drainage along the catchment areas of the rivers flowing through the city. The idea is to remove obstructions like encroachments along the river beds and keeping the natural flow intact."

Vandana Chavan referred to the dumping of construction debris into river beds while stressing the need for identifying an apt dumping site for debris. She called for change in the development control rules to ensure that underground construction activity for facilitating basement parkings do not result in drying up of lands.

Similarly, she called for efforts to make people aware about the serious consequences of landfill sites and harmful gases like carbon di-oxide and

methane emanating from them. "This makes the search for suitable dumping site all the more crucial," she said.

Sekhar Bonagiri pointed out that not just Pune but cities across India have failed to adhere to the rule of publishing the total maximum daily load (TMDL) factor for rivers on a daily basis to develop public consciousness about pollution of rivers. The TMDL specifies the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and allocates pollutant loadings among point and non-point pollutant sources.

Chaudhari said corporate social responsibility had become a very important element but the civic authorities were not leveraging the same by promoting PPPs. He suggested introduction of 'green index' wherein the architects voluntarily declare an index for a particular construction handled by them. Subsequently, a professional agency on the lines of CRISIL be established for rating constructions and extending tax incentives against the same, he said.

Bajaj conceded that automotive industry was one of the main polluters and hence had a greater responsibility for promoting initiatives to mitigate climate change. However, he said, the homologation standards in India, especially for two-wheelers, were most stringent and it was up to the government to ensure that measures like pollution under control were implemented scrupulously. "The private sector can be involved in such measures in a big way."