

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: "MUMBAI WATERFRONTS DEVELOPMENT"

The project is drawn from our expertise in architecture and urban planning, sociology, conservation and environmental protection and, above all, our commitment to thousands of people who suffer the degradation of our environment and for whom Mumbai means noise, pollution and congestion. Under the garb of development, public spaces are increasingly colonized. One of the city's greatest assets is its extraordinary coastline and its series of unique and picturesque waterfronts. Tragically, these waterfronts are also the city's biggest dumping ground ---both literally and metaphorically. The 44 kilometers of the western coast have never been considered in the planning and development process as an integral part of the city's land. On the contrary, the waterfronts have been constantly abused by reclamation, sewage disposal and encroachment. The eastern coast has been put to restricted use for Defense and Docks and has been barred to public access.

Yet, for the millions who live in our crowded city, the waterfronts are the only major open spaces -- whether it is Marine Drive or Chowpatty, Haji Ali or Worli Seaface, Dadar Beach or Bandra Bandstand, Carter Road or Juhu Beach, or Versova. The waterfronts are Bombay's most significant and popular public spaces to which people from all sections of society flock, not only from the city and its suburbs but from elsewhere in India as well. It is a place for leisure, relaxation and entertainment. Unfortunately, ad hoc, unplanned commercialization, without a comprehensive vision, has destroyed the environment. The absence of a master plan for the waterfronts has encouraged the powerful to manipulate and grab land. A large part of the waterfronts has been under private and restricted use, thus gradually starving the city of its most vital public space. Instead these waterfronts must remain the collective asset of the city and all its citizens; and a vital, vibrant element in its environmental and social fabric.

Creating new partnerships and alliances: The four trustees of the "Mumbai Waterfronts Centre", which is under registration and is submitting the project, drawn on a wealth of know-how in creating alliances. The prime mover of the project is the architect and activist, P.K. Das, who in another capacity has gained tremendous experience in negotiating between the state, slum-dwellers and private builders to obtain decent housing for the poor. The genesis of the waterfronts concept, which has now matured into a full-fledged Centre, was a survey he conducted on the entire 44-km-long western coastline of the city in 1997. Das then presented his survey report and plan for waterfronts development to Mumbai Nagrik Vikas Manch, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Bandra Bandstand Residents' Association, Bandra West Residents' Association, Save Carter Road Committee, Save Versova Beach Association, Save Beach Committee, Shivaji Park, Nirbhay Pratishthan and Shivaji Park Dakshyata Committee in a meeting held in a public Hall in Bandra. This drew the attention of the various Associations who then decided to commit and undertake the development of their respective area waterfronts developments.

Mr. D'Monte, who is the President of the Bandra West Residents Association (BWRA, and is also the founder-President of the International Federation of Environmental Journalists) and Arup Sarbadhikary, who heads the Bandra Bandstand Residents Trust (BBRT), and is an eminent structural rehabilitation engineer (having worked on the restoration of historical buildings like the Town Hall, Kolkata and many other UNESCO award winning buildings in Mumbai like the J.J. School of Arts, Convocation Hall and other restoration projects elsewhere) and is a past member of the Mumbai Heritage Conservation Committee undertook the project since the Bandra coastline was in urgent need of rehabilitation. They initiated the development of public promenades along the waterfronts of their respective areas. Munshi, who is a professor in Bombay University's Sociology Department, has documented this collective experience in a manuscript she has written along with Das, which may be published by Marg.

Initially Shabana Azmi, the MP and activist, agreed to fund these projects from her Local Area Development Funds. Thereafter Hema Malini, MP; Dilip Kumar, MP & Priya Dutt MP have also contributed from their MPLAD fund for the developments of the various waterfronts projects. The construction was undertaken by the Maharashtra Housing & Area Development Department (MHADA) under the supervision of Das and Sarbadhikary. The associations allotted the maintenance of the green areas within the promenades and launched several collection drives to raise funds from local residents for the upkeep of the promenades. Later, Das and Sarbadhikary employed the same process to develop the Land's End garden and amphitheatre, an area which had been degraded by the builder of the adjoining five-star hotel. In Juhu, it was again with the residents' association, which required tortuous negotiations with the Municipal Corporation, the Collector, the Airport Authority and protracted litigation to relocate

the food stalls traditionally established at the most prized site on the beach itself. It also involved recovering parts of the beach encroached upon by individual properties. Das prepared the plans for the Juhu Beach redevelopment. Recognizing Das's plans and his past experience the Mumbai High Court ordered in a PIL filed by local residents for implementation of Das's plans and also appointed him as a member of the High Court Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the Juhu Beach redevelopment plan. Much the same pattern is likely to be repeated at Versova beach, whose residents have approached Das for assistance. Residents have also asked Das to extend the Carter Road promenade till the fishing village at the northernmost tip.

The modus operandi at the Gateway of India and Dadar-Prabhadevi beach was different. The Gateway precinct redevelopment was initiated by INTACH, which asked Das to design the area. Upon selection and approval of the INTACH proposal prepared by Das, the municipal corporation has taken over the development of the most iconic landmark of the city and is spending nearly Rs 5 crore (\$1.25 million) on it. D'Monte helped with public information regarding the prestigious project. Both Das and D'Monte serve on the Mumbai INTACH committee. The Dadar-Prabhadevi Beach Nourishment Plan prepared by Das is also being taken up for implementation by the Municipal Corporation for implementation. These projects, as an ensemble, demonstrate a unique four-way partnership: between citizens, design professionals, corporate interests and elected representatives. To the best of our knowledge, this pattern has not been adopted in any other regenerative project in India.

These waterfront development projects have led to various festivals and cultural events particularly the "Celebrate Bandra" and "Juhu Hamara" festivals in which, many more alliances have been forged with socially committed NGOs, artistes, commercial sponsors and design professionals. The physical space has generated a tremendous resurgence of local cultural talent. The entire raison d'être of Celebrate Bandra – which extends through the entire suburb, not just the waterfront which serves as the focal point -- is to discover talent in one's midst, and its slogan is "People coming together". Artistes now seek the promoters of these public spaces for their performances, which is a dynamic physical/cultural regenerative process. The other objective of Celebrate Bandra is to give back to the community: from the proceeds of the 2005 biennial festival, the Celebrate Bandra Trust donated a school bus worth Rs 10 lakh (\$25,000) to Aseema, an NGO which runs a school for slum children. In Juhu the proceeds are shared with various ALMs for neighbourhood development work.

The two promenades have won many international and national awards, the Clearwater Citizens Award in 2002 given by the Waterfronts Centre Washington D.C. for a quality waterfront project selected in a juried competition, with outstanding efforts of individuals or groups working for the betterment of the community in Mumbai. The Bandstand promenade won the Citizens' Award 2001 from the Indian Heritage Society – Mumbai for the collective effort in saving, protecting and revitalizing the Bandra Bandstand waterfront, thereby benefiting the quality of life in the city. The Land's End gardens have been nominated for the same award in 2007.

These projects have also received "The International Federation of Interiors, Architects and Designers Award" from Denmark for Restoration of Water Fronts in 2003. The Bandra project were one of ten recipients in Mumbai to be awarded the "Shramdan" award from *The Indian Architect and Builder* magazine for "Outstanding Contribution to Mumbai's Public Spaces" as part of the "People and Architecture" movement. In 2003, Carter Road won the award for the Best "Clean and Green Street" in Mumbai, in a competition held by the Mayor. In 2005, the Bandra promenades and the wider movement for reclaiming public space featured in the Waterfront Expo conference in Riga (Latvia)

Benefits to communities and local residents: In a city which is fragmented and people feel alienated from each other, these public spaces provide an opportunity for people to come together and form associations. These spaces are free of traffic and congestion and allow people enjoy the natural environment. Women in particular have formed friendships since this is one of the few spaces where they can come on their own. Local residents have developed a sense of identity and pride in belonging to the particular area.

Innovation and creativity : In these mostly citizen-led projects, the promoters have learned on the job. When Das designed an amphitheatre on the promenade, this was little more than a raised platform surrounded by seating and the sea. They did not realise that this would eventually become a focal point for cultural performances, lecture/demonstrations and the like. The space has led to a vast variety of social and cultural projects. Among the socially purposeful theatre projects on the two Bandra promenades were street plays like "Whose Mumbai is it anyway" by the NGO, Clean Air Island, which involves the audience and integrates their suggestions on improving life in Mumbai; street plays based on concerns of tribals performed by New Delhi college students; children's plays organized by CRY (NGO, Child Relief & You) and plays directed by a Bollywood actress, performed by former commercial sex workers. The Mumbai NGO, PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action & Research, headed by Arjun Appadorai the US-based social anthropologist) conducted a Gender & Space research project on the Bandstand & Carter Road promenades, where it elicited responses from young people to issues such as appropriate behaviour and dress in public.

The Land's End garden and amphitheatre has become a favourite venue for many national and international artists. Since 2004, Prithvi Theatre has chosen this venue to have their annual theatre festivals with a social purpose. The Maharashtra Government's annual Mumbai Festival of classical dance is held here, and also *The Times of India* -sponsored Mumbai Heritage Festival of music. The annual Mumbai Jazz festival has shifted from its traditional venue on South Mumbai to here. During a theatre festival organised by the Max Mueller Bhavan a few years ago, a German street band serenaded the citizens along the Carter Road promenade.

Innovative approaches have also been evident in raising funds for the day-to-day maintenance of these public spaces. Perhaps the most enterprising has been to literally hold the hat out for people walking on the promenades. Contributions could be as little as Rs 10 (25 cents) and well-to-do citizens have even contributed Rs 1 lakh (\$2500) during such collections. Das has designed entrances to the promenades, which allow commercial sponsors to erect boards, as a fund-raising device.

Sustainability: The very fact that the two promenades and garden with amphitheatre have been maintained since they were opened in 2001 speaks for itself. The BWRA raised additional funds (Rs 17 lakh or \$42,500) to redevelop the earlier stretch of promenade from the adjoining Otters Club, which maintains it. It spends around Rs 30,000 (\$650) a month on cleaning the promenade and its environs and on security. At Juhu too, the citizens raise funds from door to door and publish a monthly newsletter.

More importantly, citizens have developed a sense of ownership and help in maintaining the promenade and enforcing law and order. They mount a vigil virtually round the clock, since the residents of buildings across the road supervise activities.

Ability to convert shared visions into deliverable projects: The promoters are translating their vision in a highly technical beach "nourishment" project in Dadar-Prabhadevi, which has major environmental and social objectives. They are collaborating with Dutch geo-tech experts in conducting deep-sea surveys and hydrodynamic studies, including wave-modelling, to nourish the beach, which was badly eroded. This would also serve to bring back the lost public space which is one of the most significant in central Mumbai and also the site of a memorial to the author of India's constitution. The Gateway of India is a different project, where an ornamental barricaded garden was removed to recreate the original plaza. Black basalt has been reintroduced to pave what is Mumbai's only plaza on the waterfront, one where many Indians encounter the sea for the first and possibly last time. In future, we might provide technical expertise through Sarbadhikary and others to preserve the Gateway itself and consider developing the area in the neighbourhoods of the monument as a tourist precinct.