DEMOCRACY, ARCHITECTURE & SOCIAL CHANGE

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`Public action can play a central role in economic development and in bringing social opportunities within the reach of the people as a whole. What the government ends up doing can be deeply influenced by the pressures that are put on the government by the public'

(Sen and Dreze, 1998: 38)

"Planning and architecture are an effective democratic tool of social change and instrument for mobilizing collective movements. Cities are not spaces for competition or for individual, disparate efforts. To me they are a fantastic opportunity for forging collective and co-operative effort. Larger public participation and engagement of people's organizations in the development process truly helps develop a city and planning and architecture should integrate with it for enabling social changes and achieving development justice."

-PK Das
Architect -Activist

1.Central Objective and Introduction to the two movements

The central objective of this paper is to suggest and submit that planning and architecture are an effective democratic tool of social change and an instrument for mobilizing social movements for equality and justice.

A city can truly be developed through larger public participation and the engagement of people's organization in the development process. Democracy and democratic movements are the means to achieve this objective. Thus Planning and Architecture must integrate with it for enabling social changes and for achieving development justice.

With the case of Mumbai, in India, I will explain how democratic planning and architecture in two significant movements have contributed substantially to social changes. My submission and the two examples are important in understanding of our cities' development, particularly in the context of neo-liberal globalization.

Examples
- **Slums redevelopment and the housing question**
  Over 55 – 60% of the city's population i.e., about 7 million people live in slums. Housing is undoubtedly one of the biggest issues challenging Mumbai's development. Interestingly there is no provision of land for housing of the working class and the urban poor in the Development/Land-Use Plan for the city nor there is any production of affordable housing for the poor. Therefore living in slums is a solution to the housing problem for the majority of people. Slums redevelopment is therefore extremely important not only in the interest of the slum-dwellers but also for the overall development of the city, particularly in bringing about changes in the quality of life in the city that is fast deteriorating.

- **Movement for re-claiming Mumbai's waterfronts and the open-spaces issue**
  The state of public-spaces is a direct reflection of the dignity of public life and the environmental quality of a city. In Mumbai, the state of public-spaces is in the pits– neglected, encroached and constantly abused including the destruction of natural environment. The proportion of open-space to population in Mumbai is a meager 0.25 acres per thousand people, compared to 6 acres in New York & 7.3 acres in London. Also the systematic depletion of these meager open-spaces is leading to serious socio-environmental consequences. Moreover, there is no plan for its protection and development. For these reasons the movement for reclaiming public spaces achieves significance.

A brief history of Mumbai and its demographic profile will help us understand the above issues comprehensively.

2. An Insight of Mumbai and India

• Mumbai:

Mumbai's distinction and strength lies in the organizations and movements of its people. Historically, the city has witnessed significant struggles and in fact was perceived as a zone of liberation, particularly by the working class. Few elements, which are significant to the role of the city in the country and the planning scenario, are listed below.

Mumbai's Movements:
- Ambedkar's Dalit Movement started in the early 19th century at a national level where the basic structures of the Indian caste and social system were challenged.
- Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India Movement against the British rule started in the city in 1942.
- Workers Union and Rights Movement was established in 1937 by the British which gained great significance post independence too.
- Slum Dwellers' Housing Rights Movements started in early 1990s, which aimed to rehabilitee slum population in new urban townships.
- Citizen's Civil Rights Movements is ongoing today and gaining popularity by the day.

Geography:
Mumbai is an island city with a land area of 467 sq. km, this vertical city has a very narrow southern tip and a broader northern, suburban region. Its population today is estimated to be around 15 million.

Informal Sector:
The city has a phenomenal growth rate, especially in the informal sector. As a result the employment patterns in the city have undergone a major shift. Today, over 70% people in Mumbai work in the informal sector, with no job guarantee, no minimum wages and no insurance.

Migration:
The city has a high migration rate as people from across the country come to earn a living in the country's financial capital.

Real Estate:
The most powerful influence in all spheres of life is the real-estate business, which has influenced the politics of the city too. Historically this has been the central phenomenon in the city's development.

Mumbai is considered to be a major global center. The city is a victim of expanding cities and shrinking public spaces phenomenon. This is a major concern. What's happening in Mumbai is consistent with the National Policies and Commitments. This is probably true for many cities across the world. But Mumbai and its crisis is a reflection of the state of the entire nation.

- **India:**

A socialist republic, India is the largest democracy in the world. There is no where else where we see the vastness, the complexity, diversity and the problems of democracy over such a sustained period as in India.

Post independence the Government has been committed to social welfare and it brought in:
- Neo liberal globalization in 1990 with privatization of all developments
- Withdrawal and Facilitation
- Commitment to Free Market & Market led development thrust
- Colonization of public assets - Back to company days
- 9% average annual growth
- But also 11% inflation

"On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of 'one man, one vote' and 'one vote, one value.' In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of 'one man, one value.' How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we do so only by putting our political democracy in peril," as quoted by B.R. Ambedkar, author of the Indian constitution.

Sadly, the present trend of development is similar to Dr. Ambedkar's observation, as neo-liberalization is caught in its own web of contradictions, leading to serious social conflicts and environmental crises with growing inequality and marginalization.

The two examples are based on three significant aspects of the current state of urbanization that have lead cities to crises particularly, in reference to Mumbai.
The three aspects of urbanization crises:
(1) Expanding City – Shrinking public spaces
(2) Slumming our city and the planning failures
(3) Exclusivity as the basis for development – The depletion of public assets.

Cities and Urban Development in India

3. Expanding Cities – Shrinking Public Space

Primary reasons for the growth of the city are:

- ### Free market led development

There is a euphoria and excitement amongst the upper and upper middle classes about the new market and the excitement over business turnovers. Today they have glossy super-markets and malls to buy goods from world over, multiplexes, international schools, mega hospitals and exclusive high-rise housing colonies. The State Government too is putting in all effort; by way of policies and other facilitation measures, to wipe the city clean of the past baggage of liability the elite considers: industries, manufacturing centers, workers settlements, heritage buildings etc. Conversion of land-use is a major engagement to promote the development of malls, multiplexes and exclusive commercial spaces including gated townships.

- ### Indomitable Real Estate

The real-estate business in Mumbai is booming, with a turnover and profit and property values amongst the highest in the world. Boom in the construction industry, real estate sector was pegged at $16 billion in 2006-07 and is likely to reach $60 billion by 2010, as published in a recent TOI article by Neelam Raj. The industry is growing at the rate of 30% according to Earnest & Young. Mumbai is undergoing massive expansion and significant transformation; as a result India's growth averaged 9% continuously for the past 4 to5 years, with contributions from trade, transport, finance and communications as well.

Unfortunately and tragically, development is believed in terms of Real Estate turnover and the volumes of cement and concrete use. As the city is expanding its public space is shrinking. Democratic space is maneuvered and controlled leading to weak civic infrastructure.

There are several reasons for this shrinking democratic space. In the words of Sunil Khilnani in his book 'The Idea of India', this phenomenon is explained well, 'what we have in this country is a façade of democracy that has disguised (masked) authoritarian governments since independence. How can democracy flourish in a society that is so deeply marked by profound inequalities in the distribution of incomes and wealth?"

Saskia Sassen observes, "The dynamics of city development today produces a political deficit. A politics of 'Rights to the City' is often the cry of the struggles challenging the

main stream. But sadly these movements are often restricted to local issues; a particular building and its use, sanitation, water supply etc. There is a need to connect this to a larger democratic struggle for equality and social justice."

Economic growth does not give the full picture, not even in the development context, because you need social equity and human development. It's quite clear that democracy is the best guarantor for the necessary checks and balances and conflict management that come with social disparities.

But democracy in India has several flaws and is perhaps restricted to selected elite. This **exclusive democracy** caters to the upper class interests, asserting parallel power and control. Its growing nexus with the corporations exercise arbitrary power, which makes one question the ethos of democracy.

There is restricted space and opportunity for **public participation**. In spite of formal announcements for participation, public involvement has only a reactionary approach. The nature of projects and development plans are relevant to the needs and aspirations of the selected few and public good is secondary.

Access to information is also limited in spite of the 'Right to Information Act.' On most occasions it has been seen that the selected information given to the masses is of little or no use. But RTI is celebrated as a victory by rights organizations. Due to limited access to information and restricted participation in decisions there is **lack of public dialogue**. The public sphere itself is being downsized.

Government's method of **privatization of developments** and corporatization is leading to the depletion of public assets and the pauperization of the state. The government is backing out to facilitate. Their central idea of globalization is privatization. In the words of S.I. Kahn, "privatization is both its method and its purpose." There is legitimization of depletion, colonization and violence by the government itself through new laws and development policies. **"People who profit from a policy set the policy. It's like the fox is guarding the hen's house,"** as S.I. Kahn puts it.

The idea of 'citizens' and 'citizenship' is also not clear. The ruling elite file PILs to restrict citizenship rights to the poor and the working class. This **exclusive citizenship** curbs the fundamental rights of the poor and the working class. Slum-dwellers are not considered to be citizens.

Inequality too is growing on many fronts; gender, age, child abuse, caste, religion and so on leading to sharp social divisions and polarization of exclusive interests. Communal wars like the 1993 Mumbai riots and fundamentalism has torn the social fabric of the city. **Violence** is perpetuated both by the government through new laws and by the might of the private developers, undertaking new responsibility for developing the city. Tagore notably quoted, "Unity cannot be brought about by enacting a law that all shall be one."

The government in India is **undermining democracy**. The relationship between people and government is severed due to the above reasons. Rights are negotiated and concessions sought, like a financial transaction deal.

4. Slumming Our Cities And The Planning Failures

Manufacturing slums: The state of Mumbai

For Mumbai, in an area of 437 sq. kms, having a population of around 15 million, conservative estimates put over fifty-five percent as slum population. This slum population spreads over around 2,500 settlements, occupies 2,525 hectares, which constitutes merely 8% of city's total land area. This leads to a tragic housing situation in the city. Approximately 6 million live in slums in the most unhygienic and filthy conditions and approximately another half million live on the pavements. It is also estimated that nearly 7 million people live as tenants in rented premises, a large number of which are old and dilapidated structures, including what are popularly known as the `chawls' of Mumbai. As a result, we find that nearly 9 million of the city's population lives in sub-standard/unsafe housing conditions under abuse and continuous threat of displacement. About 82% of the population lives in one room abode (including slums). This housing situation blatantly exposes the continuing indifference, neglect and lack of will of the Government towards housing and living conditions in the city.

Causes for degeneration and growing slums:

- **No Planning** – Due to Government's commitment to facilitate the free market with its market led development policy, the government has given up planning for the city's development and stopped regulating its growth. It does not want to create any obstacles or restrictions for the private sector. "More than ever before, what we now get is governments of the markets, by the markets and for the markets." 'Markets,' as one poet puts it, "knows all about prices but nothing about values".

- **State of Underdevelopment** – There is no known attempt to improve amenities, infrastructure or social development programmes.

- **Irrelevant Development Plan and Land Use** – The latest DP for Mumbai was revised in 1991. It is irrelevant today and does not reflect needs of the people. Unfortunately, it is now considered unnecessary by the market leaders. The government too thinks in the same way in order to not impose restrictions on the free market and hinder 'progress'. Therefore 60% live in 8% land and that too illegally.

- **Housing Debacle** – Slums are proliferating as there isn't enough supply. Housing is seen as a commodity and not as a right. The gap is therefore increasing and the need to deregulate is the government's argument now.

- **Unavailability of Land** – The Urban Land Ceiling Act was recently repealed. The government is thus pauperized and cannot carry out projects in public interest and social welfare programmes.

- **Skewed SRA Policy** – The slum rehabilitation policy is biased towards developers. Often there are forced displacement programmes and trading in slums land. The planning standards are low and reduction of open-spaces leads to congestion trauma.

- **Forced Displacements** – There are sections of population, which do not come under the SRA scheme. They are sufferers of forced displacements with no rehabilitation policy. "The state itself has also come to threaten its own citizens, often as a direct consequence of its commitment to the project of development, which has regularly placed enormous burdens on those people least able to defend themselves," Khilnani.

- **Anarchic Growth** – there is economic growth but social inequality still persists and human development becomes challenging. The developments are disparate and usually conflicting. As real estate dominates city politics, disordered growth is on the rise.

- **Destruction of Environment** – Mumbai is known for reclamation of land but mangroves, mud-flats are dangerously being destroyed. Due to excessive land filling new townships are on the rise resulting in exclusive real estate. The sea levels and floorings in the city have gone up due to this.

- **Growth of the informal sector** – There is a steep rise in the growth of the informal, unrecognized sector. Their exclusion from city planning is deteriorating the quality of life in the city.

In protest of this slumming phenomenon, *Sangharsh Nagar* came into being. The above causes give one the reason to question the housing phenomenon in the city and give one the opportunity to organize the urban poor and mobilize the working class for their rights. The Housing Rights Movement and the struggles of the poor for housing should be considered as a part of a larger democratic rights movement. Housing is not and cannot be merely a real-estate issue but essentially a socio-environmental subject.

Sangharsh Nagar Rehabilitation, Goregaon

The slum dwellers of Sanjay Gandhi Nagar, Cuffe Parade, with the help and leadership of the Nivara Hakk Sangharsh Samiti had to wage a protracted and bitter fight against the demolition of and eviction from their settlement. The government, finally, conceded to their demands and provided alternate land at Goregaon. Sangharsh Nagar is what they decided to call their housing colony (sargharsh meaning to fight)

As architects and active members of the NHSS, our proximity to the people was a crucial factor in developing relevant housing models for their rehabilitation. Detailed discussions, presentations and models formed the basis of the design.

As the site, once was a quarry with excavations to depths of 10 to 12 metres, it had to be filled and dressed. The Municipality helped by dumping garbage and debris. First, the people constructed a common toilet for immediate use and then attempts were made immediately to get water connection.

Housing Programme: It was decided that activists connected with the NHSS and the elected representatives of Sangharsh Nagar take the lead in these matters, and monitor the housing programme. Institutional loans and donations to the society were not to be accepted, as these tend to become a burden and a tool for further oppression, exploitation and interference. It was also decided that they build their own houses like they built their slum with individual, financial arrangements.

We, as architects-activists associated with the NHSS, prepared a layout plan outlining the position of common toilets, water taps, community centre, society office, accesses and open spaces.

Planning principles - The plan proposed plots larger than the plinth area of every house in order to create a compulsory, open-to-sky space - a place to cook, sit out, wash clothes and sleep. Common, open spaces were along the accesses forming chowks for get-togethers and spaces for the children to play. Most importantly, it was proposed that every house be built independently and extended as and when they manage some savings. Thus, subsequent repairs and maintenance, too, becomes simple, and one does not need to depend on professional help. Besides any repair or extension was not linked to the status or consent of neighbouring houses, and could be carried out independently. An open space in the north, along the hill, acted as a buffer and protected the house from possible landslides. A fairly large space was to be used for common facilities such as toilets and water taps. Also, an extensive tree plantation was planned in the area. A large, common space required for get-togethers, festivals, and for the children to play was provided along with the welfare centre as the common space.

With architectural advice, simple design layouts and informative posters from experts, the project was a learning experience for all. With cent percent voluntary participation from the slum dwellers and management workshops from the NGOs, a new settlement came into being which was truly for the people, by the people and of the people.

With a mechanism like the above, social and cultural needs of the people were simultaneously taken care of. The community spirit took a boost and the relationship between various society members became firmer. With enough open space for community affairs and sufficient health and educational facilities, the social fabric of the settlement strengthened. Party politics was at bay and the relationship between the government and the people took a step forward.

<u>**Sanjay Gandhi National Park Slum Rehabilitation, Chandivali**</u>

The project involved the rehabilitation of the evicted slum-dwellers at a Chandivali site measuring about 34 hectares and constituted a comprehensive and all-inclusive, new town. The town with 6500 houses included a large, 1.6-hectare 'maidan' as its central, social space. Two more playgrounds and over 60 community open spaces enriched its outdoors. More than 14 schools, medical facilities including two hospitals and two large community halls and religious institutions constituted its social infrastructure. Schools and community halls were annexed to these open spaces and playgrounds.

The above housing projects underline the relationship of social movements, democracy, architecture and urban planning. With a long fight against forced evictions and active participation in rehabilitation planning, the residents of the area successfully exercised their fundamental right of living in the location of their choice in their own country.

5. Exclusivity And The State Of Underdevelopment

The real estate industry is witnessing a boom and huge volumes of concrete are in use to 'build' Mumbai. However these developments are exclusive, promoting the concept of gated communities and leaving the city underdeveloped.

The retail sector too is corporatised with the endorsement of mega malls and recreational clubs for the elite. The health department is encouraging huge hospitals with luxurious facilities at high prices and even the education sector is bringing in new international academic institutes, meant primarily for the rich. The approval of new townships and precincts developments too is leading to displacements due to mega projects concepts. Redevelopment is given a go and core areas of the city are therefore neglected, aggravating the dilapidation of buildings and leading to faster deterioration of quality of life in vast areas of the city. There is depletion of public assets for private and exclusive interests and appropriation is at the cost of public good. Thus there is more opportunity for the elite but less and less space for the public.

This phenomenon has taken us back to the company days. Private laws prevail in direct contradiction to the constitutional provisions and rights. "It hurts the bottom line to pay people to deal with people," S.I. Kahn. New laws, policies back exclusive developments. Even the courts subscribe to exclusivity for allowing 'developmental' works. Exclusions and dispossessions are high as opposed to inclusiveness.

Independence and self reliance is a bluff by the 'free markets.' Private developers use the term dependence to characterize people's relation to government. In particular, they call people "dependent on the state". 'But by 'independence' they mean having no rights to public goods and services and no governmental programs. Private developers praise self-reliance and consider it opposite to dependency. "In the language of privatization, we do not need and should not want government, laws or rights to establish and protect our freedom. And by free market they mean capitalism with no constraints. The 'welfare state' is scorned as too powerful as centralized government turns citizens into its dependents. Thus private developers equate democracy with unregulated capitalism and equate freedom with corporate license," S.I.Kahn

Open-Spaces Abuse

The dignity of public life is reflected in the condition of a city's open-spaces. Sadly in Mumbai public spaces have been long neglected and abused. Lack of vision and planning coupled with regular depletion of open-spaces, including those reserved in the D.P. for playgrounds, parks, gardens etc., is leading to a miserable socio-environmental condition. Developments in Mumbai are realized merely in terms of volume of construction and consumption of concrete to the extent of destruction of natural environments. Land filling in the sea, construction on mud flats and the destruction of mangroves have been a historical phenomenon in the expansion of our city.

In fact the very geneses of Mumbai's land mass and geography is significantly marked by no other activity but land filling, commonly referred to as 'reclamation'. The history of seven islands to a metro is about land filling, destruction of natural environment and real estate turnover.

Open-spaces obviously do not provide the turnover that our developers get from the construction and sale of buildings. Therefore open-spaces have been historically encroached, taken-over and abused both physically & metamorphically.

6. A Significant Intervention

Movement for Reclaiming Mumbai's Waterfronts

One of Mumbai'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 allegorically. The fact is that these thirty-four kilometers of the western coast have never been considered in the planning and development process as an integral part of the city's land mass. 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. 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. They are places for leisure, relaxation and entertainment. Unfortunately, unplanned commercialization and growth has largely destroyed the natural environment. The absence of master plan for development of the waterfronts has encouraged the powerful to manipulate and grab land, thus gradually starving the city of its most vital public space.

Bandstand, Carter Road, Land's End:

What was for several years the backyard with filth and violence is today a proud fore court of social and cultural activity. Bandra's waterfronts are public spaces where people from all sections of society flock. People visit Bandstand and Carter Road sea fronts to catch a breath of fresh air, to soak in the golden light of setting sun in the far horizon or to share a moment of togetherness with a loved one. They are places for leisure, relaxation and entertainment. A new sense of pride, dignity and sense of belonging is observed among the neighbourhood citizens, which is the hallmark of this development.

Development of the approximately 3 kms Bandstand and Carter Road promenades provided an alternative to the majority of the middle class and lower income groups who have very little opportunity otherwise for leisure and relaxation in this expensive city where more and more facilities are being privatized restricting their use to a few and the rich.

This project was a protest against the various forms of urban crime. It challenged the various attempts by developers for grabbing land for commercial interest; it opposed the growing nexus between anti socials, politicians, police and officials. The project had absolutely no grandiose ideas. In fact, no major construction on these waterfronts was to be allowed. The attempt was very humble; to protect the coastline, safeguard ecologically sensitive areas, protect mangroves, beds of rocks, sandy stretches, etc and simultaneously develop space along it as an effective public forum for social and environmental justice.

Comprehensive planning and design was a powerful instrument for mobilizing and sphere heading the movement for reclaiming public space. Initially designs and design presentations were used to attract attention and to bring people together, particularly the neighbourhood citizens. A public discussion of the design was invited which instigated participation. Citizens began to then realize the different dimensions of the project and found opportunity to express their views. Regular discussions of the design and other aspects relating to the implementation then became engaging whereby more and more people got attracted to the project and participated actively.

There was no approval from the Bombay Municipal Council initially as the plan was completely a people's plan. Only after significant work was completed, did the government grant permission! These developments were not barricaded and were freely accessible to all. People in the immediate neighbourhoods have come together to form neighbourhood Citizens Associations to maintain and manage these places and guard it too. The maintenance is of high standards and these citizen groups meet regularly to discuss on all matters that affects this space. This marked an important beginning in the movement for citizens' participation in decision-making and for control over development programmes that affects their neighbourhoods.

People's participation ensures sustainability to a project, but finance is important too. In this project the citizen's group successfully forged partnerships with private sector for their financial contribution for construction and subsequent maintenance. The appointment of the private sponsor was made directly by the citizens associations and not by the city administration. Agreements were drawn between the private sponsor and the citizens trust and the citizens' trust in turn entered into a legal agreement with the local administration for their rights and control of the development.

This project and its implementation have led to a new and meaningful relationship between the neighbourhood community and local government. The government is more responsive and supports these citizens' associations. Through this movement the basic rights of the people were realized.

The struggle for Bandra's waterfronts was not merely a ornamentation programme but became a part of a larger democratic struggle for Re-Visioning Mumbai and reclaiming public space, thus establishing rights to create space, where people meet, share with others and care about each other. The project also brought forth the concept of architect's engagement as an activist and his role in society. An architect should co-relate plans and designs with larger and more important determining factors of social and political importance.

The continuity of the movement:

The success of this movement is seen in its continuity in other parts of the city. After the triumph of retrieving Bandra's seafronts, the movement for beach nourishment spread further north to Juhu and down south to Dadar-Prabhadevi. Four kms of Juhu beach has

now been successfully redeveloped, whereas work is in progress on the 4 km stretch in Dadar-Prabhadevi and 1 km coastline in the fishing village of Chimbai in Bandra.

The struggle for reclaiming public space with focus on waterfronts has further expanded to larger issues pertaining to neighbourhood planning. PK Das along with Mumbai's Waterfronts Centre, Kamla Raheja (KRVIA) planning and architectural school and local citizens and activists have prepared a vision plan for approximately 4 sq. kms of the Juhu district. In a first of its kind for the city, the thrust of this Vision Plan is to re imagine public spaces in the area and ensure that its networking is the central idea of Area Development Plans.

Thus the various projects mentioned above have been a good example of learning to work together for public good. This effort with humane architecture and democratic functioning will underpin the struggle to revision, beautify and humanize the landscape of Mumbai. As Zillah Eisenstein, activist and Professor of Politics at Ithaca college observes, "Democracy thrives in the open public spaces where body and mind can be exercised."

Conclusion

7. Architecture and Democratic Practices

There is a need to integrate planning and architecture, with larger democratic movements and to use it as an instrument to mobilize communities for political action to bring about development justice. The engagement of an architect as an activist enriches the architects role and position in society to a much greater pedestal wherein he begins to co-relate design with larger and more important determining factors of social and political importance.

Citizen activism and movements have begun in 21st century Mumbai but are still at its initial stages and need to be popularized like a full-fledged campaign. Urban Planning and design brief can evolve from movements and public dialogue and hence publicity of the campaign is extremely important. The larger concerns related to urban living mould the process of designing, as well as the design itself, thus making the design relevant and acceptable. Designs for public projects play an important role in the development process. They become an instrument for mobilizing and sphere heading the movement. Initially designs are used to attract attention and to bring together interested people, particularly the neighbourhood citizens. A discussion of the design instigates participation. People begin to then realize the different dimensions of the project and chip-in their views. They also are able to then comprehend the physicality of the project and the important change that it would bring to their environment and their life in the neighbourhood. Regular discussions of the design and aspects of the implementation then becomes engaging whereby more and more people get attracted to the project. Besides designing, the architects need to therefore undertake a larger responsibility and promote not just the idea but also the project itself.

Through public dialogue people get to be an active part of the planning process. With the help of policies, legal interventions and pro-active governance, the democratic planning process must be included in legal framework for protection and successful implementation of equitable development. Conservation and redevelopment contribute to bettering quality of life and protection of natural environmental conditions can be effectively addressed through this participatory model.

It is absolutely necessary to evolve new methods, languages and forms of practice through the struggles and movements to sustain democratic interests. It should be reinforced that only the needs of the people and the concerned plan are the true commanding forces. All forms of violence can thus be challenged and social changes can be effectively brought about. With finance being arranged from the private and government organizations and maintenance in hands of interested citizens, the model has worked effectively in various parts of Mumbai and the city functioned successfully as a democratic workshop.

By the method of inclusiveness and totality, Mumbai can be Re-Visioned for its people and become a prominent symbol of the contemporary, democratic India. There is a need

for integration of architectural practices with democratic movements. We have to further our understanding of Architecture as a part of a larger Democratic Democracy. This will lead us; architects to develop close relationship with the needs and aspirations of the masses and public interest will be effectively reflected through such social democratic movements. This integration is our new challenge.