

NAVARA
Textile Mills Cords
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The last State Govt. of the Congress party and the then ruling party in the Greater Bombay Municipal Corporation, Shiv Sena formulated the Development Control Rules for Greater Bombay in nineties.

The D.C.rules in the draft stage contained measures for the sick mills however in the approved D.C.rules all the mills (textile) were given the benefit of these new D.C.rules.

The first of the development plan was formulated in 1966 for which the earlier D.C.rules were formulated and were changed for the implementation of the successive development plan.

There has been a definite design and objectives on the part of the Govt. It can be noted that it is intended to convert the island city of Greater Bombay in to a giant commercial centre.

It is now a well known fact that wards A,B,C,D, have shown a shift of middle class population. This happened in the course of earlier development plan.

Though Bombay Metropolitan Regional development Authority had insisted that there be no further commercial activity the Govt. chose to turn a blind eye and in fact encouraged promotion of commercial activity.

Around the same time the Congress encouraged the formation and rapid growth of Shiv Sena which demolished the left parties and broke the backbone of the powerful labour movement in the Central Bombay.

This has paved a way for opening up of the F and G wards which form the Central Bombay, which contain the maximum number of textile mills and where a strong labour unions called the shots in the recent past.

Those who extend the same logic will also see the sinister design behind the attacks on Beheram-pada which is a hindrance in the growth of Bandra which is a focal point in the Singaporial growth of Bombay city. The Diamond Bourse, the textile markets and the sprawling commercial complexes

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will catapult Bandra in to the Central place in the intended commercial beehive. Shiv Sena and Shri Sharad Pawar have been playing their roles to the hilt.

The policies of Shiv Sena hardly do any justice to their proclaimed theory of 'Sons and Soils' and have over last 25 years watched, helped throwing out of sons of soil who are predominantly part of 'Girangaon'. This will mean a disaster and spell the destruction of culture which brought to fore many artists, poets and playwrights.

New D.C.rules will enable the closure of all textiles mills and will facilitate the commercial growth, even of five star hotels and the growth of kind of ancilliary and service industry which is expected to boost the 'Globalisation' of Bombay city. This will cut down the job opportunities of the population of 'Girangaon'. e.g. even the youngsters in the courier services will have to be necessarily speaking English language.

If one understands this whole scenario in proper perspective it will become very obvious that we are now witnessing the displacement of million people and therefore a successful Girangaon Bachao Andolan has to be launched.

The agitation will have to consider therefore two aspects namely -

1. Stop the sale of mill lands OR
Effective use of mill lands which will give justice to the mill hands.
2. Steps necessary to preserve Girangaon, maintain and further the present cultural ethos.

Following are the stray thoughts which are intended to generate further discussion and the ideas .

In order that the mill lands be saved they should become unattractive proposition for builders :-

Therefore

1. Present urban land ceiling act should be strictly implemented as a social measure in its original form discontinuing

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all the exemption that have been granted from time to time making it a failure.

OR

2. Present urban land ceiling act should be abolished totally. In either case the available housing stock will go up and therefore should ease the pressure presently felt by Central Bombay. Though either of the arguments supported will achieve the same result, the acceptance of any one arguments needs to be discussed, pondered over and debated as it will send different signals.

No idle investment in housing should be allowed.

All the tenements to be put up by the builders must be registered on the date of commencement of building and all the sales be registered with the Govt. within two months of the sales and stamp duties be paid. It must be made compulsory on the part of builders to complete the sale within stipulated time. The stamp duties for the flats must be made payable by builders if the sales are not registered within six months of the commencement of building construction. This will eliminate the class of investors and cut down the idle investment in the flats / tenements. It will show immediate effect on prices and will bring them down considerably. It will also increase the housing stock. This will also help promote housing in the co-operative sector.

(As aside to this which is also important an agency also must be appointed to take up the task of doing survey and computing the total mill land.)

It is also known that the present D.C.rules have adopted new policies for slum housing. It is essential that analogous demands similar such policies for housing in the island city of Bombay. It is known that the housing stock in Girangaon is single or two room tenements. In order to give boost to housing and also to give stake to the workers in Central Bombay.

1. Govt. should allow the ownership of such chawls to the co-operative of residents by payment of 100 times monthly rent to the original landlords.

2. The Govt should allow the use of FSI of 2.5 in such cases; developement of tenements by selling excess FSI for residential and commercial use to other willing buyers. A scheme on the lines of slum developement should be drawn considering all thepros and cons of the issue. The tenements need not be given to 'MHADA' instead the sell proceeds must go to the co-operative society of residents.

3. From the excess funds a corpus may be formed which will ensure regular payments towards the outgoings, maintainence sinking fund etc.

This if implemented in slum housing as well as labour housing will go a long way in augmenting Municipal Corporations fund and will make money available for city's infrastructure.

4. Large areas where the municipal reservations are there and developement of such plots is envisaged by allowing Transfer of Developement rights (T.D/R), the developement must also include compulsory construction of tenements which should be given to the above mentioned co-operatives for the use as a transit accomodation.

The present policy of Govt. also needs to be debated. The Govt. in the D.C. rules allows 33% of the mill land to develop by the millowner, 33% land to be retained open as recreational space and has left the remainder developement of 33% to MHADA. There is no mention of kind of developement MHADA will be asked to do.

Should this land be at all given to MHADA?

Why not the developement rights of such land be given to the labour co-operative? Why not allow the labour co-operative to make a decesion whether

1. They will have a housing for their own by subsidy. Selling some housing in the open market.
2. Whether they will develop the entire lot, sell it in the open market and share the profits.
3. Whether on gurantee of a job in the same unit for the worker or for his child, to accept the housing developed by the millowner on the 33% of the plot.