

Mumbai Meri Jaan



Forward This To All - And All Forward - Together

Editorial

2020 WORST YEAR EVER!

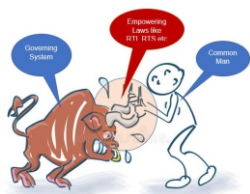
What a year 2020 was! A global pandemic, a ferocious cyclone, earthquakes, floods, fires, farmers' protests, CAA protests, protests over racial injustice and a contentious presidential election in the US have dominated the news this year. Education, the world over, has suffered.

The silver lining is that the pandemic has made the internet proactive and many learnt the use of the net for their education and work. Corporates began work from home which has helped both companies as well as their employees. To an extent, life has continued with elections being held in Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir etc.

The pandemic cost millions of lives. The global economy has also collapsed and unemployment has reached an unprecedented peak.

At the close of the year, we still cannot be complacent as it will take a while to vaccinate all our citizens. Thus even in 2021 we need to take utmost precautions and follow the SOPs that the government stipulates. We only pray that the pandemic does not spread but remains in control as it now is. In fact, the biggest slum in the world, Dharavi, reported zero infections on Christmas day. Probably Baby Jesus helped them and we hope it will continue like this.

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Take the Bull by the Horns How to make the Governing System work for Citizens - 3

Shrikant Soman

Taking the bull of the governing system by the horns means asserting our rights as a citizen within the system. This appears to be less impressive than the dramatic manner in which our filmi heroes in Bollywood films achieve quick justice. However, it is to be noted here that the only practical way which works in the long run is by working within the system, without having to use any muscle power. Every common man compels the system to work by using a citizen by using an array of legal weapons like RTI etc. There is a high level of illiteracy among the people about the full understanding of these legal avenues. We need to start a new 'literacy campaign' to educate the common man about his rights and the legal

measures he can take to enforce these rights.

AGNI is in the forefront of ensuring good governance through assertive citizen action, true to its name 'Action for Good Governance and Networking in India'. There are also other organisations like PRAJA, Mahiti Adhikar Manch, NAGAR, UDRI, ADR as well as RTI crusaders like Mr Shailesh Gandhi, Gaurang Vora, S.K.Nangia (AGNI coordinator) Krishnaraj Rao and many others who passionately work in this direction.

In our earlier notes we have seen the salient features of RTI Act. We have seen that even a deaf or blind person can enforce his rights under the Act. If a PIO (Public Information Officer) unreasonably denies information **Contd. on Page 4**

MIYAWAKI PLANTATIONS AT POWAI

Pamela Cheema

Mumbai has been identified by reliable sources as the least green metro in India whose green cover has declined precipitately by 42.5% over the last thirty years. This loss of green cover has led to an appreciable increase in land surface temperature and underscores the reason for the climate changes in the city and the fact that the city is growing hotter by the day. Some of the areas of the city which have witnessed a substantial reduction in its green cover are the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Aarey, Mulund, Bhandup and Powai besides various parts of the city in south and central Mumbai.

In 2019 the former Municipal Commissioner, Mr Pravin Pardeshi, floated the idea of



Saplings planted at Nature Park, Powai

planting urban forests according to the Miyawaki method on degraded land or limited urban spaces within the city. As AGNI's Coordinator in Powai I asked him to visit the suburb and include it in his plans for afforestation in Mumbai. Early on a grey rain-soaked morning in July 2019, Mr Pardeshi inspected the banks of Powai lake with its thinning vegetation (indiscriminate felling of trees due to the widening of the Jogeshwari Vikhroli Link Road) and agreed to **Contd. on Page 3**

Housing Society Wins State Energy Conservation Award

M K Pande, Chairman, Symphony CHS

The Symphony Cooperative Housing Society Ltd at Chandivali in L ward received the 14th State Level Award for Excellence in Energy Conservation and Management from the Maharashtra Energy Development Agency (MEDA) for 'Residential Complexes & Societies Sector' for the year 2018-19.

MEDA had invited applications for the award scheme to give "State Recognition to facilities/units who have taken extra efforts for efficient utilization, management and conservation of energy during the year 2018-19 in the State of Maharashtra."

The eligibility criteria for



societies was the "Consumption of 10,000 Units per annum as per the Electricity Bill". The society was required to submit a duly filled in 'Award Questionnaire' along with the Audited Financial Report for the year 2018-19.

Symphony was short listed in the first round of selection and asked to submit a power point presentation by e-mail. Thereafter **Contd. on Page 4**

SWACHATA - IN WARD 69 K(W)

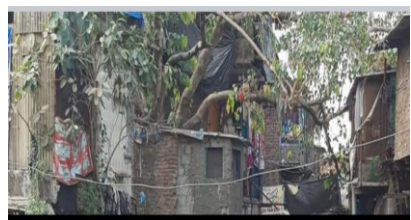
 Zahida Banatwala

As soon as our Councillor, Ms Renu Hansraj, won the mandate of the people her first project was to declare the ward 'Zero Garbage'. The PM's Swach Abhiyaan scheme gave her a shot in the arm and she started creating awareness



about the same. Overflowing open community bins were an ugly sight plaguing the ward. Her first step was to close these and rearrange clearing schedules i.e. restaurant and hotel waste to be cleared at midnight as also the gaothan areas. Result—an ugly sight did not greet citizens in the morning. Hence Juhu Church road, A. B. Nair Road and Juhu Police station bins to name a few are now practically non-existent.

Schools were roped in to create awareness about the protection of the environment, saving marine life and controlling pollution. Students of Jamnabai Narsee school came up with brilliant solutions. Vendors were invited to showcase various environment friendly waste disposal methods. The children of St. Joseph's school displayed immense knowledge and willingness to practice



segregation in school and at



home. A visit to the Irla pumping station was a complete shock as it was choking with floating garbage and untreated sewage was being dumped into it by the slum dwellers residing on the banks of the nallah. It was not surprising then to see all the garbage washed on to Juhu beach during the monsoon. After much deliberation and research and by bringing in a private player, it was decided to put trash booms to harness the floating garbage and prevent it from entering the sea.

The ban on the use of plastic was another important scheme. The "Plastic bhagao Dharti bachao " andolan was launched, 10,000 cloth bags sponsored by DE 'Decor were freely distributed and many more people came on board to sponsor such bags. The segregation of garbage, the wet and dry waste scheme were taken-door-to door with the help of Solid Waste Management department even in the slums and gaothans. Citizens were encouraged to compost wet waste and demonstrations of the same were given by Shri Subhash



Dalvi Officer On Special duty. He manages the Cooper Hospital nursery where flowers, fruits and vegetables are cultivated using compost from kitchen waste. It was observed that commercial establishments like gymkhanas and clubs generate a huge quantity of waste, hence an

UNDP appreciates Mario Fishery

Mario Fishery, a volunteer from the H (West) of AGNI received a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of his commitment towards source segregation and the responsible disposal of plastic



waste under the UNDP-HUL-MCGM's Plastic Waste Management initiative.

Mario wishes to share with citizens how this success can be replicated across all the wards of Mumbai:

Step 1 - Creat a Video to educate everyone Education is

organic waste converter was installed. This was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Juhu and inaugurated by actress Hema Malini, MP, on a BMC owned plot of land.

Pursuant to the Zero Garbage mission, the 'Adopt a Street' scheme was introduced where local residents could monitor garbage collection, street sweeping and cleaning and other aspects of the area. On a regular basis SWM meetings are held along with citizens and this has created a healthy working relationship. Today roads are not only swept but brushed clean and debris cleared giving way to clear footpaths for pedestrian space. The BMC does have the facility of brushing streets both manually as well as mechanically. It must be mentioned here that the SWM department has been working tirelessly to achieve these results. Dry waste is cleared thrice a week even through the lockdown. This is a success story for every ward to emulate.

Zahida Banatwala is AGNI's coordinator in K(W)

MMJ



program so here is the Video I created for segregation with feedback for those already doing segregation: <https://bit.ly/MumbaiWasteSegregation> (More information shared in the description of the video).

Step 2 - Data driven decisions to create an impact

Connect with the BMC and its



vendors and collect data on the collection points and visualize the data so people can see the impact. The MAP will show people the FREE services in the locations provided by the BMC



team.

H/W MAP Collection Points with BMC Contact and Timings: Here is the link to all Dry Waste collection points with approximate timings in H/West ward <https://bit.ly/HWDryWasteCollectionMAP>

Here is the Data Sheet with collection points and contacts details: <https://bit.ly/HWDryWasteCollection>

STEP 3 - Is repeat step 1 and 2 to



bring in continuous changes and updates on what works best for the community.

MMJ

MIYAWAKI PLANTATIONS AT POWAI

Contd. from Page 1 include Powai in his plans for afforestation of the city.

In March 2020 before Covid-19 ravaged the world on an unprecedented scale, the BMC planted a small urban forest according to Miyawaki's methods in a municipal garden at the Hiranandani Gardens complex in Powai. After Covid-19 struck the country, doubts arose about the financial strength of the state to afford such urban forests.

However, the BMC has decided to pursue its original plans and an urban forest has been planted on 700 sq.mts in the Nature Park on the banks of Powai lake. The consultant of the project is Prabhat Raman, Director, Kesari Infrabuild



Plantations at Bhakti Park, Wadala

Private Ltd, an environmental consultancy and engineering firm, which has successfully developed an urban forest in Colaba Woods in south Mumbai. Apart from Powai, the company will be a consultant for such forests in Mulund, Kurla, Chandivali, Wadala, Ghatkopar, Govandi and Mahul. Kesari Infrabuild has also been deeply involved in such projects in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Chhatishgarh, Assam, Odisha and Kerala.

The expert of the firm is R K Nair who contacted Akira Miyawaki in 2014 in Japan and was personally trained by his team to build his knowledge of the subject.

The vendor of the project is Dhruvish Madhani who mentioned that he had "five years' experience in garden development and upgradation of various plots in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

We will be responsible for executing the Miyawaki method of tree plantation over the entire eastern suburbs by planting 2,25,000 native and indigenous species of trees." His firm, Madhani Corporation,



Plantations at Powai lake

has collaborated with Essbee Enterprises for the project. Some of the suburbs in which they have worked are Bhakti Park, Wadala, where saplings have been planted on 13,500 sq. mtrs of land, the Wadhwa plot at N ward and the Abdul Kalam garden at T ward where 2700 sq.mtrs and 3800 sq. mtrs respectively have been greened.

AGNI and other activists of Powai have suggested other significant areas on the banks of Powai lake which could have similar green cover including parcels of land close to a municipal school.

Despite some skepticism about such urban forests, I urge the city to take a fresh and unprejudiced look at these projects which could vastly improve the biodiversity and consequently, the health and quality of life of its citizens.

Pamela Cheema is AGNI's Coordinator in Sward MMJ

An appeal for donations

AGNI is a movement managed and run by volunteers. Being a voluntary movement, AGNI needs the support and contribution of every citizen to continue its work. Citizens are invited to contribute their indispensable ideas, time, effort and financial support. Send Cheque / DD in favour of "AGNI" to any of our Ward Coordinators as listed on Page 4 or to AGNI Office: Chadha

Corporator collaborates with citizens in Wadala

Ameey Gole, the corporator of ward 178 in Wadala has formed a 'Team Corporator' to solve various civic issues in the ward. Mr Gole is known to promptly solve problems that have been put forth by the whatsapp group of the Wadala West Citizens Forum of his ward. The objective of 'Team Corporator' is to take part actively in the civic and social Issues of the ward to help citizens in coordination with the corporator. In response to his appeal in the WhatsApp group, over 150 members have already joined the team.

Gole said civic problems like drainage, water supply, illegal parking, poor roads etc. can easily be solved by participatory governance, where the citizen too will feel a sense of responsibility. He added that even suggestions for improvement are welcome which he would forward to the appropriate ward, thus increasing the efficiency of the ward. Mr Gole is living the concept of the ALM, a favoured project of the BMC. MMJ



Winter delights

When in harmony with nature's abundant supply of seasonally grown food, one can maintain a sustainable diet and an improved healthy lifestyle. Winter provides a storehouse of the most varied, vibrant and nutrient rich fruits and vegetables for that extra burst of energy, warmth and nourishment.

Plenty of Vitamin C enriched fruits like **Strawberries, Oranges, Guava, Gooseberries** are available at this time. These provide antioxidants to ward off infections to make the immune system stronger and help in production of collagen



 **Komal Lala, Nutritionist**

to keep the skin supple as winter is synonymous with dry skin and allergies.

Team up strawberries, yoghurt and soaked chia seeds or add strawberries to your oatmeal. Toss up a salad with greens, avocados and orange slices.

Beetroots: Rich in folate, nitrates. Make a beetroot hummus or add it to a salad. Beet, carrots, amla and ginger make a refreshing juice.



Carrots: Source of carotenoids. A good component for the immune system and eye health. One can use this versatile food right from pickles, to soup, as a vegetable, salad, a dessert or for juicing.

Greens: Spinach, Mustard leaves, Goosefoot (bathua) are good sources of Vitamins and Minerals. In season, sarson kaa saag makes a great nutrient



combination.

Thrive on nature's bounty and reap the benefits of empowered nourishment, well-being and good health!! MMJ

Bldg, 1st Floor, Plot no. 95, Wadala (West), Mumbai 400 031
Bank Details for donations transferred electronically:

Account Name: AGNI,
SB A/c No.: 000710210000005
Bank of India, Breach Candy Branch, Mumbai 400 026.
NEFT/IFSC: BKID0000007

AGNI is a Charitable Trust. Donations are eligible for exemption under 80G of the Income Tax Act. MMJ



Take the Bull by the Horns
How to make the Governing
System work for Citizens - 3

Contd. from Page 1 or purposely gives incorrect, incomplete or misleading information then the applicant can file a direct complaint to the Central or State Information Commission. There is also an elaborate system of filing an appeal against the order of the PIO to a specified higher authority and further appeals to still higher levels. If found guilty, the PIO is fined for his lapse.

The most devastating example of the power of RTI can be found in the Adarsh Housing Society scam. The information received through RTI (by RTI activists Simpreet Singh and Yogacharya Anandji) revealed that the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra approved the sale of 40 % of the houses to civilians even though the building was meant for army personnel. A shocked Bombay High Court called it “a clear-cut manipulation by the Collectorate, the Revenue Ministry and the Urban Development Ministry

Everyone who had cleared the file was gifted with a flat”. It finally led to the resignation of the Chief Minister.

Another shining success story of RTI impact is '2G Telecom Scam' related to the auctioning of the 2G Spectrum. Top Ministers and govt officials had colluded to undercharge certain mobile phone companies while allocating the frequencies. This had caused a loss of a whopping Rs 1.76 lakh crores to the exchequer. This massive abuse of power was revealed through the RTI application filed by activist Subhash Chandra Agrawal.

In the Commonwealth Games Scam, the Delhi Govt had diverted Rs 744 crores from funds earmarked for the welfare of the Dalit community. The diverted funds were spent on amenities that existed only on paper. This scam came to light through an RTI filed by the NGO Housing and Land Rights Network

The above cases are just a few of the many thousands of such

Housing Society Wins State Energy
Conservation Award

Contd. from Page 1 we were invited to make a presentation to the Judges Committee at the MEDA office in Pune.

Symphony had commissioned a grid connected solar system of 40.8 kWp capacity in April 2018 which generated 57,429 units in the year ending on 31st March 2019. This resulted in a saving of 60% of electrical energy consumption of common services of the society during the year and 49.4 Million kCal of Thermal Saving. Solar power generation also

success stories of RTI. However all said and done, there still exists a complete lack of knowledge of how to use RTI among the majority of the population. To educate and empower the ordinary man about the understanding and use of RTI is very essential for ensuring good governance. This is one of the many steps needed to bring in matured and informed citizenry as an important pillar of our democracy. AGNI is committed to do its little bit in this respect.

resulted in avoiding CO2 emissions of 66,917 Kgs. as compared to thermal generation.

The other energy conservation measures adopted by Symphony were replacing tube lights by CFL lamps and CFL by LED lamps. Symphony installed an Automatic Organic Waste Converter Machine to treat wet garbage in December 2017. The society also commissioned a 'Rain Water Harvesting System' in 2008. The rain water is directed to a bore well and this water is used for the society's garden, car washing and toilet flushing. Since then the society has never depended on tanker water, which was earlier required in the months of April to June.

Symphony CHS Ltd. has been given a rebate in Property Tax by BMC for processing waste and rain water harvesting for the year 2019-20. The inspection of these facilities was done by a team of BMC Officials.

M K Pande is an AGNI volunteer from L ward

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To volunteer in AGNI or to form Advanced Locality Management (ALM) contact your respective Ward Coordinators below

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