

International Earth Day- April 23, 2016

#### Panel Discussion

This is a subject related to Planning and Management of Urban infrastructure. It is not related to construction of individual buildings in isolation.

As regards Greater Mumbai City, the issue is very complex. Total area of the city is more than 400 sq.km. And total population is about 12.44 millions. About 60% of the same, lives in informal housing i.e. Slums.

Ever increasing FSI, concession in open spaces around the building, huge parking requirements, basement depths not permitted beyond 10 m, even recreation grounds are proposed above parking podium but for court judgements, no open land left for Vermi composting etc. Shortage of space to accommodate Garbage is a grave difficulty faced while planning individual buildings.

Major portion of the city area is under redevelopment due to old buildings not being maintained leading to dilapidation. Existing plots are small and cluster development is physically or practically not happening due to conflicting interests.

Above is about formal developments. As regards informal development i.e. is slums there is a greater problem about the open spaces. Slums are not only residential in use but they also accommodate shops, commercial premises, restaurants, manufacturing units, processing units, generating lot of garbage.

We have worked on World Bank projects for rehabilitating about 8000 Project Affected Slum Dwellers within the vicinity to avoid major disturbance to their lifestyle and livelihood. As per World Bank norms we have submitted detailed report for Community Environment Management plan which was explained and implemented by involving NGOs, community based organizations which was much appreciated. However subsequently the system went on sliding down and it is not giving desired results.

Garbage is generated from Residential Colonies, Markets, Hawkers, Industries, even medical waste and also specialized provisions required for medical waste.

It is now time to think whether to permit even thin plastic bags and plastic water bottles because they appear to be major culprits all around. Around slums, storm water drains, Nallahs etc. are a major Garbage dumping area which involves huge cleaning expenditure every year before monsoon. Garbage sheds are accessible to animals like stray cats, dogs and even cows etc., this result in spreading the garbage outside the sheds and ultimately people start throwing their refuse bags from a distance.

Only Municipal Corporation or the Government authorities cannot ensure Swachh Bharat on themselves. All stakeholders will have to synchronize their activities in a very disciplined and committed manner. Segregation of the Garbage will have to be done at the source itself. Part of the treatment like composting etc will have to be handled at the nearest location; normally balanced part of the garbage is handed over to raddiwalas or refuse waste collectors.

We cannot forget 'E-Waste'. This has also become a major problem at many places, we see outdated gadgets dumped and the process of disposal or recycling the same is not established.

Here we can't forget human intervention in disposal of the garbage. Some time back there was workers strike at Delhi and ultimately various forces from CPWD & Government were required to be called when the situation started going out of control. Even in Mumbai we see though semi-automatic vehicles are moving around, there are atleast 4 to 6 persons including drivers are working on each vehicle. Hence mechanism to ensure 365 days smooth working is required to be established by considering all eventualities.

Unfortunately, human beings don't change until calamity hits or there is a force of compulsion. Surat suffered under the epidemic of plague and now we know how Surat is committed for 'Swachh Surat' and Garbage Disposal. They are already in a process of generating power from Garbage.

In Mumbai, let us try to commit ourselves for Swachh Mumbai without waiting for Surat like disaster to hit us. We may have to give more authorities to ALMs and responsibilities to Municipal Authorities and elected representatives. We all will have to commit ourselves for absolute discipline without any compromise under any eventualities. Only then it can be 'Swachh Mumbai'.

From IIA- BrihanMumbai Centre, we commit ourselves to participate in professional responsibilities in the Swachh Mumbai Resolution.