LOST OPPORTUNITY
Industrial Heritage of Mumbai’s Textile Mill District
POST INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE
DECLINE AND CLOSURE

Instead of modernizing the mills, profits were diversified. After the strike of 1982, owners outsourced production. Owners wanted to exploit the Real Estate market instead of running the mills.
MILLS AS BATTLEGROUND
GOVERNMENT OBLIGED: BUT WITH A CONDITION

Industrial to Commercial

\[(\text{FSI}): \quad 0.5 \text{ TO } 1.33\]
Total land under 58 mills 240 ha

If Mill Owner wants to close the mill
Each mill will divide into three parts

Development Control Regulation for 58 Mill Lands, 1991
Alternative II:

- If Mill Owner wants to run mill fully or partially
  - No need to surrender land for public purpose
  - No demolition • Sale can be only 15% at a time

As a result, the Mill Owners converted the existing structures into high-end commercial outlets. Phoenix was the first mill first to convert into an elite entertainment centre.
Phoenix Mill converted into entertainment Complex
CULTURAL RESISTANCE to GENTRIFICATION of Neighbourhood
Mill lands to Neighbourhood

Mac Donald in the name of workers canteen
Bowling Alley in the name of workers recreation

Source
Correa Committee Report

One Hundred Years One Hundred Voices
Oral History of Girangaon

Photo: Mrinal Desai

Local Artists
A bid to save Girangaoon’s cultural ethos

Suhas Pnadke
Bombay

THE CULTURAL conference planned tomorrow by the Band Girni Kamgar Sangh is another attempt of the Sangh to highlight the woes of millworkers and to create awareness among Marathi-speaking people of their reducing number in the metropolis.

Bombay, where textiles was the main industry around which every activity revolved, has seen in last decade or so mills either closing down or reducing their workforce. This has naturally affected the social and cultural life in the Girangaoon area.

Datta Isawalkar, the firebrand leader of the Sangh, has come out with a novel idea of bringing people together for the cause. In the last 10 years, he has led many agitation of millworkers, including a morcha of unemployed workers wearing just shorts and banning to highlight their problems. The morcha unfortunately ended with the workers subjected to lathi-charged. Isawalkar and the millworkers also forcibly entered the closed mills and even went on a prolonged hunger strike.

A freedom fighter, Isawalkar is now fighting another battle which seems to be a losing one. However, for the meeting tomorrow, he and his comrades like Meena Manon and Gajari Singh, have chalked out an elaborate programme in which leading writers, poets, bankers, ballad singers, sculptors, sportspersons, artists among others will participate and also discuss various ways of saving the cultural and social ethos of the Girangaoon area.

Among those participating in the meet are Shahir Sable, Shahir Shekh Jamnian, Narayan Surve, Narayan Pednakar, Ratnakar Motal, Daya Pawar, Pushpa Bhande, Dino Bandive, Kamalakar Sarang, Raghviv Talashkar, Vishal Kharel, Chandrakant Kadam, Waman Bhoskar, Madhukar Nairne, Gunwant Manjrekar, Charushila Sable-Vachchani, Ravindra Sarmalkar. Noted actors Nilu Phule will inaugurate the meet.

It must be noted that Shahir Sable, a famous ballad singer, played a crucial role during a movement for the demand for a separate state for Maharastria. In fact, many of these invitees had a history of doing their bit for society. Sable had much before the birth of the Shiv Sena had written and sung a song depicting the plight of Marathi-speaking people in their own state due to the evilous attitude of the government.

The day-long meet will have discussions, rendering of songs and bhajans, poetry-reading, speeches etc.

 Till the early '80s, the Girangaoon area was the centre of cultural and social activities in the city. The Ganesh festival organised there brought all artists together. Lecture series, drama festivals, sports competitions and other cultural activities entertained residents of the area throughout the year. Rangolis artist Gunwant Manjrekar, whose skill at making huge rangolis of famous personalities and scenes won accolades not only from local people but from outsiders. The area also gave sportmen like Eknath Solkar, Padmawat Shivasalkar and bhajan singers, the Kedams and the Khopkars, used to keep devotees spellbound throughout the night.

But slowly all vanished. The indefinite strike of millworkers called by Dr Datta Samant changed the entire scenario. Thousands of workers became pauper almost overnight. They sold their belongings and migrated to faraway suburbs or returned to their native places. Millowners found selling off their land much more lucrative than running the mills. The number of millhands in the city reduced from about 2.50 lakh in '82 to about 1.20 lakh in a decade.

Naturally, the rapid changes adversely affected the social, cultural and economic fabric of the society of the area. Due to the government's lethargic attitude, the underworld started calling the shots and unemployed youths look to crime in the hope of instant wealth and clout. In the area where for long names of political leaders, social activists, sportmen and artists were uttered with reverence, names such as Gavils, Bawas and Naiks were mentioned with ease. The residents too had sold their accomodations for money and gone to the suburbs. Skyscrapers has replaced the chawls and mills chimneys were dwarfed by the new, posh apartments.

Now Isawalkar and others are trying to bring back the glory of Girangaoon, realising that the successive Congress governments had taken the millhands for a ride. But the task seems formidable because the movement does not have a sound financial backing. Marathi-speaking people are basically unwilling to take risks which is the hallmark of business or trading. They prefer to do regular searches for work and not indulge in business. For those handful of entrepreneurs willing to take risks, the government's red tapism has made their task impossible.

The Shiv Sena has talked of the rights of the local people, but it has mainly concentrated on launching a tirade against non-Marathi-speaking people and in demanding 80 per cent jobs in the private and government sectors. It was a justified demand and to some extent the party succeeded in its mission, but such kind of employment does not give a financial clout which business or trading gives.

Tomorrow's meet should not be just a nostalgic trip to the past glory of the area, but will serve its purpose better if it makes planned efforts to awaken the Marathi youths to the importance of earning money through business, industry and trading.
Mill Owners rejected Tripartite Formula.

• Only 3 mills surrendered land for Public Good
• Around 5 converted the structures for commercial use

DEADLOCK FOR 5 YEARS
In 1996, to resolve the deadlock, the Government appointed a committee under Urban Planner Charles Correa to make an integrated plan for all the mills. Private mill owners denied entry to the committee, and only public mills were documented.
CHARLES CORREA COMMITTEE

Addressed two main Issues:

1. URBAN PLANNING: By Pooling Mill Lands

2. INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE: For Adaptive Reuse

By Pooling Mill Lands

For Adaptive Reuse
• One Third formula by pooling the land of different mills (instead of individual mill land)
• A large continuous land for Open Space and Amenities
POOLING MILL LANDS:

Public amenities of Shopping arcades, Pedestrian plazas, near Railway Stations and Arterial Roads
INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

A. For adaptive reuse

B. For ensemble value

C. For demolition
Workers' Response to Correa Committee Plan was seen as Gentrification of Working Class Neighbourhood. But the Union also gave constructive suggestions.
A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE with consultations with architects, workers

A. 30% share of the mill owner should be for small industries to create jobs

B. 50% of public housing should be for workers.

Workers' Response to Correa Committee

For the first time in the history of Trade Unions that workers had claimed their share on the land of their workplace.
Architects draft revival of mills

Devising one-fourth principle to give workers equitable share of land; moot a monitoring body

NANDINI RAMNATH
APRIL 15

A blueprint for the development of mill land which has the mill worker as its focus has been devised with a view to resolving the dispute surrounding their land-grabbing suits while also ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

The draft plan, which covers the 600 acres of mill land on which the city's 58 mill (25 run by the National Textile Corporation and one by the Maharashtra State Textile Corporation) stand, suggests that it is possible to develop using mill land while protecting workers' rights, mill owners' interests and ensuring the city's planning and development benefits for the 50,000 mill workers on the industry's rooster. This plan has also been included in the plan, prepared by architects Neera Ashar, Arvind Ashar and P K Das.

Copies have been submitted to Industries Minister Lachhadra Desai, Urban Development Secretary P Nishan Khan, and municipal commissioner D M Shephalikar and Jumma Khan, while the blueprint has also been discussed with concerned groups like trade unions and elected representatives.

The draft proposes that the 600 acres, which should be divided and developed as a composite whole, should be divided into four quarters - with one quarter each going to the mill owner, the workers, the BMC (as per Development Control Rules, 1991) and the government. No TOR should be confirmed. Of the state government's share, 10 lakh sq m should be developed on a gross PSI of 60.4. Of the two processes, one generating 4.5 lakh sq m (which works out to Rs 1.25 crore) can be used to settle workers' liabilities. The remaining Rs 5.5 lakh sq m should be developed by financial housing agencies to provide funds for workers' housing.

The DC Rules peg PSI potential for mill owners at 1.35, which leaves 27.73 lakh sq m as a total potential area for development. Of this, 14 lakh sq m should be given to the government to pay off workers' financial liabilities while the rest can be left to the mill owners. However, it is safeguarded as well as possible employment. 50 per cent of this land should be developed in set up industry, while the rest can be commercially exploited to enable mill owners to modernise as well as raise finances for developing the mill.

Of the workers' share, ownership of 9.5 ac (worth Rs 4.5 lakh) should be handed over to each worker. This should be pledged with housing finance organisations.

These proposals, in particular the division of 600 acres into four quarters as opposed to the one-third principle under the existing DC rules, would require a rewriting of rules in both the DC rules as well as the BMC's Development Plan. The draft also suggests that a planning authority on the lines of the Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority be appointed for this purpose, and that the BMC be made the approving authority for any changes. It also suggests that a committee be appointed to ensure approval of schemes as per the blueprint. As of today, there is no monitoring body to ensure that mill owners plough back the proceeds of surplus land sale into modernisation of the mill.

Satya Neera Ashar: "We have kept in mind the workers' contribution to development of the industry. In that sense, they definitely have a right over the land."

Comments Shephalikar: "The proposal to give one-fourth of the land to workers will set a hard precedent in all industries. Workers, however, have absolutely no right to land. "What they do have is a right to post-retirement or retirement does," he adds. But, he agrees, there should be a monitoring body to ensure that mill owners don't spend the money meant for modernisation as they like.

Counter K D Das: "Mumbai's textile industry cannot be compared to any other industry." It was one of the first industries in the city. Also, mills and the workers constitute Central Mumbai, or Goregaon, which is now history. Thus, it cannot be compared to any other industry.

When a chemical or electrical industry shuts down, he points out, VRS runs into lakhs of rupees, but textile workers get just Rs 1.5 lakh. Mill workers should be adequately compensated as well, he says.

The draft proposal will be presented at a public meeting on 'PSI and Mumbai's Development' at Momin Mills Bhavan on Saturday. After it is thrashed out, it will be formally submitted to the government.
Mill Owners' Response to Correa Committee Plan

Created nexus with State Government to change Development Control Regulations through

through
2003
Modification in the Rules:
Land for Public Housing and Public Amenities were reduced drastically
From 166 Ha to 16 Ha

Original 58 (1991)

Modified DCR 58 (2001)
As per the Original 58, the land of existing structures, was distributed between the Mill Owner, MHADA (for low cost housing) and BMC (city amenities and open space) after demolition in three more or less equal parts. The amended 58 in 2001, introduced a “minor modification” where the Mill owner was entitled to the area and the vacant lands would then be distributed between the owner, MHADA and BMC. This however allowed the mill owner to claim almost 78% to all of the land leaving minuscule or no land for affordable housing.

The implications were shocking not only to the mill workers but to the city as a whole.

Source: Correa Committee Report

**Diagrams Explaining the Modification Made to Original 58**

**CASE: VICTORIA MILL**

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<th>BMC</th>
<th>MHADA</th>
<th>MILL OWNER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original 58 (1991)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment to section 58 (2001)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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Jointly by the Union and Environmental Groups

Supreme Court over ruled High Court
And the city lost its public good

City to get a new skyline as SC clears mill land sale

SC CLEARS MILL LAND SALE

Winners: Owners, Developers. Losers: Greens. Relief For: Flat Buyers, CM

The Battle For Space

1991

Development Control Regulation (DCR) is introduced, allowing for a three-way division of land between industrial zone, BMC, and State. The mill area is zoned as "industrial"

1992

Mumbai's real estate prices zoom or stagnate?

Very Very Simply...

A mill with 30 acres of land, of which 6 acres have green areas on them, and 4 acres are vacant...

- The green zone, worth 10 acres, is to be divided equally for development, low-cost housing, and open spaces (total 3, 3.33 acres each)
- Total 25 acres (6 plus 19) will be divided equally for development, low-cost housing, and open spaces (total 7, 3.33 acres each)
- Total 12 acres (4 plus 8) will be divided equally for development, low-cost housing, and open spaces (total 4, 3 acres each

The Verdict And Its Implications

- SC ruling on October 26
- Bombay HC verdict ruling on October 10
- BMC and NCP agree to buy mill land
- BMC will develop low-cost housing
- NCP agrees to develop public spaces
- CM says "Not contrary to the principles governing environmental aspects"
‘MUMBAI PEOPLES’ ACTION COMMITTEE’

MILLS ➔ NEIGHBOURHOOD ➔ CITY
Rainbow coalition to protest mill land ruling

The Motley Group Will Comprise Elite Civic Activists, Unionists, Doctors, Architects

Mumbai: It’s not just the Greens who are unhappy with the supreme court’s recent ruling on mill land development in Mumbai. The mill land ruling, which upheld a 2001 amendment that reduced the amount of space that would be made available to the city for open spaces and public housing, has prompted an unprecedented and unusual alliance between diverse groups, all worried about the impact of unregulated development in Mumbai.

To kickstart a campaign on the issue, these groups will assemble at the Azad Maidan at 3 pm on Tuesday. They will then hold a protest march to Mantralaya. The march will bring together a range of groups comprising elite civic activists, white and blue-collar unionists to resident doctors, architects and women’s groups. Forty city groups are expected to participate. The groups include Action for Good Governance and Networking in India (AGNI), mill union Girni Kamgar Sangharsh Samiti, Women’s Group Malls and the All-India Bank Employees Association among others.

“The protests will cut through all classes and all sections of the society,” said Neera Adarkar, architect and member of the Mumbai People’s Action Committee.

“Mumbai is a city with little space to breathe. Environmentalists are demanding low-cost housing for the poor. “Though the people taking part in the march come from diverse backgrounds, their interests meet somewhere along the line,” said Simipreet Singh from the National Alliance of People’s Movement, which has actively fought for dispossessed slum-dwellers during demolition drives. AGNI convenor Gerald da Cunha acknowledged that some of the organisations have not seen eye to eye in the past, but said they have now “buried one hatchet and raised a new one where all hands are on the handle”. He added that while the city has been robbed of its lungs, the silver lining is that it has brought all the organisations together on one platform.

Datta Iswalkar, head of Girni Kamgar Sangharsh Samiti, agreed. “It is now out of compulsion that various groups have joined hands to fight the cause,” he said. Iswalkar himself once a mill worker, said that after 25,000 mill workers have been dismissed and not paid their dues over 10 years, the state should either put the owners behind bars or take away their property. “But this is not just a fight between mill owners and workers. The SC judgment damages the entire city.”

The groups’ contention is that the 2001 amendment, in changing the formula on sharing mill land between the owners and the city, has aggravated urban problems including shortage of low-income housing. Neera Punj, convenor for Citispaces, a forum for protection of public spaces once perceived to be elitist, said that every citizen has the right to live with dignity in Mumbai, and low-cost housing is the need of the hour. “The land will now be used for high-income instead of low-income housing, putting further strain on the city’s infrastructure and resources,” she added.

Shanti Patel, president, Mumbai Port Trust and Dock Worker’s Union, who had also petitioned the high court to prevent the unfeathered sale of the lands two years ago, also lamented over the loss of an opportunity for planned development and improvement of infrastructure in the city. Advocate Mihir Desai, director, India Centre for Human Rights and Law, said the unplanned development that will result from the SC judgment will eventually lead to a disaster. The ruling has severely compromised housing for the poor, he added.
Heritage petition June 2005

Heritage petition June 2005

Writ Petition filed in HC by Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural heritage (INTACH) to include 170 structures in NTC mills identified by Correa Committee.

Oct 2005 Court passed interim order to get private mills surveyed but not legal protection to the existing structures. Only "hope and Expectation" till survey done.

March 2006 Meanwhile as SC judgement endorsed 75% land for Owners, most structures in 32 private mill lands were demolished.

April 2006 HC judgement and government notification for the revised list and grading of identified heritage structures came later City at large considered only medieval or colonial monuments as heritage. Industrial heritage never part of larger heritage discourse.

By the time the list was sanctioned and notified by the government, most of the heritage sites were no more.
In almost all such projects, developers demolished some of Mumbai's finest heritage of industrial architecture instead of integrating it in the new development. By the time the list was sanctioned by High Court and notified by the Government, most of the heritage sites were no more.
The struggle of the workers continued for their share of housing on the mill lands.

Rally on Azad Maida
Silver lining in the cloud
Workers Housing on New Hind Textile Mill

At present 8000 houses are ready.
Demand is 16000 houses on all the Mill Lands.
EPILOGUE

There are 5 mills still running, structures still standing. Most of the closed mills are at different stages of redevelopment. Neighbourhood still thriving.

AT THE LARGER CITY LEVEL

Provocation of the mill struggle created a larger awakening in Civil Society groups. Resulting into constructive interventions in the making of Mumbai's Development Plan.