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**Point for discussion this month** **Spirituality and Industrial Development**

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## Eternal Words

If you want to see an endangered species, get up and look in the mirror.

- John Young, former Apollo astronaut

We have overwhelmed the natural systems from which we emerged and created the dangerous illusion that we no longer depend on a healthy environment. As a result, humanity now faces a challenge that rivals any in its history: restoring balance with nature while expanding economic opportunities for the billions of people whose basic needs--for food and clean water, for example--are still not being met.

- World Watch Institute in its 1998 State of the World

Dear Readers,

Cover photo is of Pushkar – a religious Hindu place where the only one of its kind temple of Bramha, the God of Creation is built on the shoreline of beautiful lake. The lake is a mix of landscape and waterscape of water scarce state of Rajasthan. Pushkar Lake is beautiful manifestation of surface-subsurface water streams. But this lentic-lotic system is under stress due to encroaching population and engineering interventions which awaits ecological revival.

Recently SERI worked on impact of developments especially line infrastructure in the sensitive areas and Sandeep Joshi has written on integrative policy of development-environment action for the sustainable growth with having cordial link between infrastructure and ecology instead of posing them opponents.

An issue of Niyamgiri Hills is classic example of confrontation of Spirituality, Ecology and Economy. All these spheres touch upon livelihood of the people. Coordination between these spheres brings the social and environmental harmony for long period.

Thank you,  
Chief Editor

## Seeds for City Policy of Road Development and Traffic Management

- Sandeep Joshi

Development in the eco-sensitive area is always disputable. Pune's entire environmental set-up is under threat due to unplanned infrastructural growth and unauthorized settlements (means without complying the UDPFI guidelines or town planning principles or environmental clearance directives). Presently in Pune, it is well-documented in public domain that land-holders are not willing to spare even an inch of space for common cause. Rather most of townships are denying freeway to commuters reducing "right of way" space in the city and peri-urban areas.

The very first brunt of "no-planning development" being faced by citizens is the horrible city traffic directions and management. Rivers are being straightened up and meandering roads run through the city. Not a single road in the city is straight for 1 km having uniform width. "Where, how, when it went wrong"? is an issue of research for interested scholars from various academic backgrounds. Impacts of poor road development lead to frequent traffic congestions almost on major arterial roads losing valuable business time and golden moments of rushing to hospitals. These losses are taking toll on patients' health and city's economy. Traffic signals at approximately every 100 – 200 m distance are again an issue of research. They have become "temporary dams" breaking away every minute releasing huge deluge of vehicles! Self-initiators of ecological economics can compare the costs of natural environment and human environment processes in the city for long term policy and action plans to provide livable and sustainable city for generations.

Now, the time has come to evolve a comprehensive city policy of traffic management which may involve pre-conceived design of road network considering the topography, ecology, waterways, travel desires, social unrests, health, economy of fuel and time for travel.

There are some sensitive issues cropped up in the last decade such as Paud Road – Bal Bharati Link Road, Mutha River Bank Road etc. These are being city roads; there is no provision in the law to conduct environment impact assessment of such small roads as per EIA Rules, 2006.

In 2011, draft guidelines are developed comprehensively by NBW, MoEF which provides decision makers to integrate the road development with protection of ecology. Finally, it's time for the supporters and opponents of development and ecology should come to agreement on need-based eco-friendliness of development for equitable sharing of healthy ambience of urban growth. Such initiatives lead the City of Pune to the most coveted path of smart, sustainable, livable, adorable eco-city!



Any transport system (motorized or non-motorized, individualistic or group or mass) in the city needs roads of appropriate lengths and carriage widths to cater the requirements of increasing population. Nobody can lock the city. So, the demand for roads goes on increasing. But ineffective implementation of town planning guidelines leads to chaos of traffic making the commuters fight for moving space. This anarchy generally results from weak policies, non-inclusive guidelines, and

inept permissions procured or given to residential and commercial complexes under any sort of pressures.

Course correction becomes very difficult once the decision is taken. Suppleness of Decision Support Systems (DSS) and Implementation Support Systems (ISS) is lost due to rigid frameworks without any scope for open review and corrective action mechanisms. Standard urban practice has been severely interspersed with repetitive, recurrent hostility towards the provisions or components of the projects not only in Pune but elsewhere also. Every time reasons might be different but the overall loss is a burden for the common who finally suffers the impacts.

Pune city is losing huge quantum of precious fuel due to use of large number of vehicles, congestions and at the same time, putting mammoth pressure on national exchequer for the import of crude oil and petroleum products. Prudent city policy for traffic management can reduce the "wasting of fuel" in the traffic snarls and save a lot. Pune is one of the 8 - 10 mega-cities in India, which together might be accounting for more than 80% of fuel in urban sector. Studies of environmental and traffic attributes of Law College Road might lead further in-depth assessment of economy of health impacts and atmospheric chemistry of Pune's ambience in issue-specific manner and holistically also. Such studies should be kept in public domain since it has direct relevance to the public health and economy.

These assessments are to be taken up during the entire project life cycle of 30 years including pre-project, construction, operational phases and post-project activities. Such studies establish the links of institutional memory and effectiveness of the project. Project specific Growth Realization of Allocated and Utilized funds' (GRAUF) technical and non-technical performance parameters can be developed and monitored by the respective teams of experts will ensure the comforts of urban development.

Eco-friendliness of the project will ensure the minimal damage to the ecological processes in urban environment and restoration of environmental losses caused due to developmental processes. Of course, the economics of the same is to be kept concurrent with the purse of the common man.

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*News views*

**Are Ecology & spirituality hurdles in the path of Economy?**

- Sayali Joshi

Ecology by definition is a science, arts & commerce of interactions and interrelationships of biotic factors. It is not only related to individuals but populations, communities also mean mainly co-existence of different species in time & space sharing the same set of resources. Similarly, spirituality is linked with co-existence of different individuals' creativity harmony in the interactions & interrelationships. Ecology and spirituality are not perceptions or observations but they are "experience" - the seeds of knowledge to be transmitted to other individuals for their enlightened stable livelihood, existence & its continuation through next generations.

Economy is all about individual's exchange & short termed control over resources for the comfort of life. Economic driver are market & policy which believe in regulation of resources for perceptive stability & sustainability. Economy stems from local to global through regional & national layers. It's game- charges play a very crucial role in development & growth of populations & communities. Therefore, there is always inhibitory rule imposed by the individuals or groups or regulatory mechanisms to deny the others rightful existence & sustenance.

In the ecosystems, symbiotic relationship - mutualism (dependent on each other for survival) & commensalism (one group is dependent on other for survival through the latter one is not benefitted by the relationship) are the key processes which lead to equilibrium through successions in the time scale. But in the economy, antagonistic relationships develop through amensalism, prey-predatorships, competition & urge to control over resources which lead to fear psychosis & doubt about survival.

Ecology, Spirituality & Economy are at loggerheads in case of Niyamgiri Hills in Orissa. A resolution by 12 Grampanchayats (village councils) to exclude all mining activity within a 150 km radius from Niyamraga - deity of the tribal's has created a brawl between staunch supporters of development ready to blame" religion" & worriers of livelihood. Ministry of Environment & Forest upheld the tribal's cause & views to propose the ban on mining in about 70,000 sq. km area surrounding the Niyam Raja. There is a need to relook at the stress, process & status parameters of "inclusive growth" by taking the concerns of tribals into consideration & by paying attention to ecologic time scale rather than to immediate & short term benefits. It's possible to inculcate harmony between development & environment without

compromising the Spirituality, Ecology & Economy (SEE) but a well informed policy need to be developed considering at least 100 years & corrective measures of every step , every time.



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