

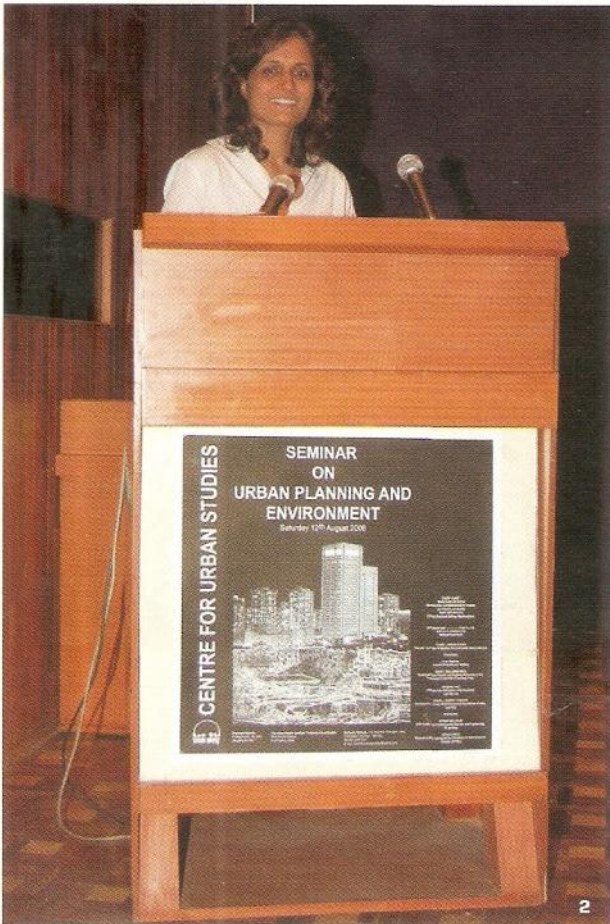
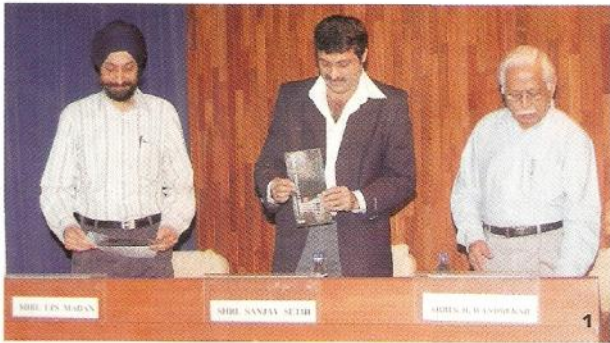
Indian Architect ^{27/10/06} & Builder

Scapes:
Courtyard Paintings from Bhelwara

Honours:
IAKS awards for sports facilities



The Seminar on Urban Planning and Environment



1. Chief Guest Sanjay Sethi, Thane Municipal Commissioner releasing the brochure on Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Studies. Along with him are UPS Madan, Chief Electoral Officer of Maharashtra and S H Wandrekar.
2. Pallavi Latkar, HOD of Centre for Urban Studies explaining about the need to explore alternative approaches towards urban planning.
3. The audience comprised architects, planners as well as students and professionals.

Rachana Sansad, an educational trust and registered society founded in the year 1960, has taken the initiative to establish a study centre which would effectively disseminate knowledge and offer a platform for concerned citizens to come learn and participate in informed debates and discussions on planning and development issues confronting the Mumbai City. The formal launch of the courses at the Centre was done through a seminar on 'Urban Planning and Environment' on Saturday 12th of August, 2006 at the Rachana Sansad Auditorium, Mumbai.

A brief on the conception of the Centre was presented by Pallavi Latkar (Head of the Department, Centre for Urban Studies). She threw light on the fact that over the years, citizens of Mumbai have come out strongly supporting the local authorities to solve the complex problems faced by this megalopolis. She stressed on the fact that an environmental view of the city is an essential component of urban planning that has long been ignored. There is an urgent need to explore alternative approaches towards urban planning and integrate environmental concerns with spatial planning which would involve long-term land use, planning and safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas and build sustainability criteria into all infrastructure planning. Computing the true value of the natural processes which are so intrinsically interconnected to all environmental issues is the need of the hour.

The chief guest Sanjay Sethi, the Thane Municipal Commissioner, spoke elaborately on the initiatives of the Thane Municipal Corporation towards sustainable development. He highlighted on the several failures of the Development Plan with respect to the infrastructure facilities particularly the sites for solid wastes and the sewerage disposal. He stressed on the need to elevate the status of all environmental issues, increase the budgetary provisions and prioritise all the basic utilities and include them in the zoning regulations. In the keynote address UPS Madan (Chief Electoral Officer of Maharashtra) said that the British planned

for the island city of Mumbai at an appropriate time, which remained good enough for decades to come. He emphasised on the fact that the job of an urban planner has become too complex and too difficult now and as in many other fields like engineering, medicine, management etc., the whole gamut of the planning process needs to be revisited to meet the challenges of time.

Other speakers included V. K. Phatak (Former Chief Planner, MMRDA), Bina Balakrishnan (Transportation Planner), Dr. Sheela Patel of SPARC, Dr. SHYAM Asolekar (HOD-CSES, IIT, Mumbai), Dr. Ajit Gokhale (Environmental Consultant). The seminar was well attended by architects, planners as well as students and professionals in large numbers from various backgrounds.

Centre will start a program beginning from September 2006 'POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN URBAN STUDIES'. The program will be on a part-time basis, extending through a period of one year aimed primarily at Professionals, NGOs and Concerned Citizens, aspiring to gain in-depth knowledge in various areas of Urban Planning. The schedule will permit students to continue with their occupation/profession while simultaneously expanding their horizons and acquiring new expertise. The course will be conducted on two evenings of weekdays and on Saturdays and Sundays. ■



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