

# CHALVA DE ATTITUDE MUST STOP

## ERVARD XERXES V. DASTUR

My elders, youth and friends,

The BPP today is disconnected with the happenings of the community. The Community is suffering from this **Chalva De** attitude where we have begun to accept injustices without questioning the Trustees on their actions. The BPP Trustees during their election speeches promised Transparency and Accountability. Instead our community has witnessed stagnation of policy, allegations of rampant favoritism and a constant sense of fear that the Trustees might use their power and authority to evict you from your home! I am aware, much of what is stated below may have been said in the past by Trustees and/or candidates. However, if elected **I intend to approach each of these ideas in a professional and transparent manner, making me fully accountable and answerable to the community.**

### FAMILY:

Having been raised in a small home at Forjett Street I have learnt it takes a lot of hard work, honesty and dedication to be successful. My parents Ervard Vispi and Dinoo Dastur Dastur have always believed and taught me to give back to the community. My wife, Meher hails from our holy town of Udwada. We have been married for the last 15 years and are blessed with two children Cyrus and Yohann.

### PROFESSIONAL:

I have been a practicing Chartered Accountant for the last 24 years and **Managing Partner for the last 15 years at V.S. Dastur & Co.** Chartered Accountants. **We are the auditors of over 75 Public and Private Charitable Trusts** including various Zoroastrian and cosmopolitan Trusts and corporate entities all over India.

### UNNECESSARY ATTACKS:

Unfortunately, in our BPP elections instead of judging a candidate based on his accomplishments and track record, we are used to candidates being run down and on the receiving end of vile articles published in print and now social media. Sadly, thanks to one candidate, this election is no different.

I am self-made, successful, professional, independent family man, hence the opposition have been unable to attack on any issue personally. This has led them to attacking me based on the individuals who support me.

Let me make it clear at the very start, it is my decision to contest the elections and it is me who is standing for elections as a true **INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE**. I am not connected to any family or group. I am supported by all and sundry including many of the aged, the young, the traditionalists and the orthodox, some forward thinking, some liberal as also ex-BPP and even current BPP Trustees. I believe that in community trusts such as the BPP it's important to take decisions free of political alliances or family ties.

**Opposition today is trying to create an image that if elected I will tow a line of a set of Trustees. People who know me can vouch that I am a strong headed person who makes his own decisions and cannot be bought or controlled by any person or group. Be rest assured all my decisions will be based on what I think is best for the community and not for any warring Trustee!**

## MY COMMITMENTS

### 1) COMMON TERM AS ALL TRUSTEES

I have learnt that every election held by the BPP costs the trust over Rs.40 lakhs. I commit, if elected I will ensure amendment of the BPP Scheme of Elections and **will step down along with the rest of the BPP Trustees in October 2022 having served just over four years out of my actual seven year term and then recontest the election with the other Trustees.**

This is my commitment to the community.

### 2) WILL RESIGN AS BPP'S INTERNAL AUDITOR.

Whilst my firm and I are internal auditors of BPP since decades, I hereby declare that if elected I will give up and surrender the BPP audit and request the Trustees to appoint another auditor in our place. I also promise to act upon the recommendations of the internal as well as statutory auditors.

### 3) ALL DECISIONS WILL BE ISSUE BASED

I commit that if elected, I will take decisions on matters solely based on what I believe to be correct and which is for the interest of our beneficiaries. For me, one thing is very simple - Community comes first. I will not indulge in petty boardroom politics nor will I associate myself with any kind of favoritism. I will in the true sense live up to the adage "KOMNO ANNE KAMNO MANAS"

## DOONGERWADI & THE SYSTEM OF DOKHMENISHINI

Being an Ervard, I have great devotion for our religion, its traditions, rituals and our customs. I am a firm believer of the system of Dokhmenashini and my family is aware of my wishes to be consigned to the Towers of Silence.

Whilst these are my views, I am no one to oppose the contrary views of others on this issue. Liberal Members of our community have set up a cremate-ni-bungli at the Worli crematorium. I respect their wishes as long as there is zero infringement on our holy sacred Doongerwadi. I believe that each faction whose differences arise from systems for disposal of the dead should not let their issues become personal on any level.

## HOUSING POLICY

The BPP is unable to provide new housing. This means the to-be married couples and the young are choosing to either marry late or simply remain un-married. This has also resulted in many of our youngsters marrying outside the community.

- The most affected are those who do well and earn well and because their income is beyond the joint income charity limit which makes them ineligible for a free charity flat and at same time their income is not enough for them to be able to purchase flats at today's market rate. **The BPP needs to address this issue and revise and redraft its housing policy on a war footing to restore the Refundable Deposit Scheme for such couples.**

- To ease the housing issue, it is my view that **the Refundable Security Scheme be immediately reintroduced for BPP houses** so that the alleged empty coffers of the BPP can be infused with funds, for construction of houses to be given to the beneficiaries free of cost to the poor.

I SPEAK MY MIND  
I WEAR YELLOW TIES  
I AM INDEPENDENT  
NOT RELATED TO ANY TRUSTEE  
I AM A PROFESSIONAL  
I BELIEVE IN TRANSPARENCY



CANDIDATE  
NO. 5

WAKE  
UP  
PARSI!  
VOTE  
XERXES  
DASTUR

Proposed by Mr. Cyrus Jamshed Guder

Seconded by: Mr. Keki Mistry

- Further, we need to offer ownership flats within colonies (Aderbad and Spenta) for sale and use the funds raised to construct/redevelop houses for the poor, free of cost.

## Merit Rating Scheme

Many have inquired on the 'Merit Rating Scheme'. To my knowledge the Merit Rating Scheme has been proposed to be modified back in 2015, however since then no changes have been done till date. **This means all allotments today are arbitrary, and on ad-hoc basis depending on how well you know certain of the Trustees or attend durbars.** I have an action plan to change the housing situation in the BPP:

### At the point of allotment:

- Have Legal Experts draft/modify the Merit Rating Scheme which is applicable to everyone. No exceptions to this rule whether you are a relative or strong supporter of any Trustee, a doctor etc.**
- All unsolicited meetings with select Trustees in private Durbars should be stopped.
- A housing sub-committee be revived to monitor the allotments made only on merit to the most deserving.**

### Facilities for existing beneficiaries:

- All Leave and License Agreements to be converted to Tenancies.** After research and legal advice, I am pleased to announce that there is a recent legal precedent wherein the Parsi Only Covenant has been upheld even against a Tenant.

Hence the Covenant can be protected even in the cases of tenancies. This protects the licensee from the whims of Trustees.

- Those given on Leave License under Refundable Deposit Scheme will need expert advice from Income Tax experts to avoid payment of 33% as tax.
- System for Online rent collection so that tenants can pay at their convenience.**
- Procedure for addition and deletion of legal heirs in a BPP allotted flat be clearly spelled out.
- Immediate automatic transfer of rent receipt to the legal heir of the deceased tenant, residing with the tenant at time of demise.
- Discourage arbitrary increase in rent at time of transfer of rent receipt.**

## Maintenance and upkeep of facilities with Powers to Baug Associations

- Provide independence to Baug/ Colony Associations.** Ensure they are given added responsibilities for looking after their respective colonies. If associations, with the approval of its residents believes the colony can earn added income, through film shooting or any other source then the BPP Trustees should not oppose such proposals. **The income earned can be shared with the baug and the BPP.**
- Assist tenants to carry out heavy repairs of old buildings by upfront contributing 50% share in the cost of repairs.**

### ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

The BPP needs to modernize its administration and functioning to that akin of a professional body. I propose:

- Code Of Ethics**, including not using the BPP office for personal work or carrying files home.
- Independent Election Commission.** How can the very people standing for elections oversee them?
- Annual meetings** with the community where the Accounts for the last year are made public.

## WELFARE FOR OUR SENIORS

In a recent survey it was startling to note that one third of the Parsis residing in Mumbai are over the age of 75 years. Yet not much is being done by the BPP to ensure adequate healthcare and safety to our needy seniors. I propose:

- Obtaining **A Group Medical Insurance** for not just seniors, but entire community. I am certain with the right attitude we will be able to find a donor who will be willing bear a portion of the costs for the Policy;
- Cashless cover** through smart cards to make hospital care relatively smooth.
- More senior citizen homes.**
- Parsi doctors to devote some of their time to the community.**

I alone cannot change the laid down present policy of giving flats only on Leave License as well as restoration of Refundable Security Deposit Scheme and encashment of tenancy value on surrender as well as other proactive changes but I have been assured the full support of Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz and Viraf Mehta to implement the above Electoral Promises. But that is not enough. We will need the support of still at least one more Trustee from the majority Trustees to implement the above 'beneficiary friendly proposals' for the larger good of our community, which I am hopeful will be supported by a reasonable Trustee..

## INDEPENDENT! INDEPENDENT!!

The BPP today needs like-minded yet independent thinking individuals as Trustees. Trustees who will stand for what they believe in and not what they are told to believe and/or say.

**At the time of elections, commitments are given by candidates regarding their independence, however one must take a moment to reflect on the recent past and see if the current board consists of 7 independent thinking Trustees or whether it consists of Yes Men.**

From the news we have seen that some of the decisions taken by the BPP recently are not in tune with the larger interest of the community:

- The allotment of a 4 room kitchen flat worth over RS. 3 Crores to a doctor whose disclosed income was above the permissible limits, besides having two ownership flats in his and his wives name
- Allotments being done on ad-hoc basis based on relationships with Trustees, without reference to the Merit Rating Scheme or any inquiry to their actual needs and requirements.**
- The taking away of powers of baug Associations to give their open spaces for means for baugs to earn income
- The shutting down of ZYNG
- Litigation among sitting Trustees.

Instead, the Trustees have stopped successful schemes such as the Refundable Security Deposit Scheme and Encashment of Tenancy value to a tenant on vacating which has led to a cash crunch in the BPP. The Cash Crutch has led to a:

- Delay in disbursal of Second and Third Child Incentives
- Delay in disbursal of Mobed Amelioration Incentives
- Delay in salaries to BPP staff

### Since the BPP is facing a cash crunch, the BPP have:

- Increased service charges for each flat by Rs. 750/ pm from February 2017, without reference to area or rooms in a flat or locality.
- Increased parking charges for cars and scooters in 2017 by more than double and further increase of 10% in 2018.
- Increase of service charges for waste disposal of Rs. 200/ pm albeit for a temporary period of 6 months
- The above has caused some serious burden upon our beneficiaries. Yet the BPP has funds to indulge in Senseless Litigation such as:**
- Wastage of Lakhs of charity funds on litigation before the Charity Commissioner and the High Court to keep Mr. Muncherji Cama out of the BPP and before the High Court for refusal to give Agenda, Minutes, documents, accounts, etc to their minority Trustees. **Lawyers fees in 2017 alone, cost the BPP over Rs. 150 Lakhs!**

**HAD WE 7 TRULY INDEPENDENT TRUSTEES WHO DEALT WITH EACH OF THE ABOVE ISSUES INDEPENDENTLY, WITHOUT INFLUENCE OR LOYALTIES, THE OUTCOME OF THE ABOVE DECISIONS WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFERENT.**