

# **Techno Economic Feasibility Study of Sanitation and Sewage Management for Pandharpur Town**

Pandharpur town – a prosperous 'B' class Municipal Council in Solapur district – is famous for ancient temple of Lord Vitthal and has become one of the most important pilgrimage towns in India. Millions of devotees 'warkari's' take great efforts to visit the town. Annually about 1.5 crore devotees visit Pandharpur. Maximum pilgrims visit Pandharpur during four wari periods whereas daily visitors' influx exceeds 20'000 per day.

The counter side of the medal is the alarming local sanitary and hygienic conditions originated by the sheer amount of activities of devotees mostly due to inadequate facilities and management failure. Major areas of concern for Pollution Control Board are polluted river, high dust suspension containing pathogens, indiscriminate & unscientific collection, treatment & disposal of Sewage & Solid waste in the town & adjoining areas particularly at the places of halt including the river bed. – in short the overall hygienic and ecological situation is turning the darshan in a rather stressful than pleasant experience.

The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) has taken up the issue of improving the situation on place on its 139th Board meeting initiating the Programme called "Environmental Improvement Programme at Religious Places in Maharashtra" in which Pandharpur has been selected as one of the places of the programme. On the basis of a primary rapid assessment of the issue in May 2006, by MPCB team under the leadership of Dr. Supate, Project Leader, MPCB decided to conduct the in depth study of the issues through M/s. Ecosan Services Foundation (ESF), Pune, and has been assigned task to prepare "Techno Economic Feasibility Study for the Sanitation and Sewage Management for Pandharpur and the adjoining areas".

The study considered essential in the planning of the future evolvement of Pandharpur as a town as well as important pilgrimage place. The study aimed at improving the sanitary situation by offering a sufficient and properly maintained number of sanitary facilities alongside with an effective and sustainable treatment of the wastewater. In order to achieve the objectives the overall management of the pilgrims has to be addressed, such as to decongest the core area of the city, to offer adequate staying facilities, decentralizing the pilgrims and the according businesses and waste production – hence actually breaking down the challenge into more controllable units. The participatory approach with the stakeholders and future beneficiaries of the outlined strategy, especially the Pandharpur Municipal Council and its staff and other local stakeholder representatives under the guidance of MPCB Zoning Atlas team enabled the Team and Partners of Ecosan Services Foundation to carry out the study, taking into consideration all the essential facts, figures and numbers that shall lead the way to the bright future of Pandharpur Town.

The project findings are forwarded to the concerned stake holder for further implementation. MPCB is keen to ensure that the projects proposed are implemented in time bound & systematic manner.

