

Conservation & Restoration at Doongerwadi

Large Pavilion Renovated in Honour of Roda & Noshir Pardiwala



The Conservation and Restoration of the Large Pavilion, officially known as the Jamshetji Rustomjee Sethna Mandap, constructed in 1938 has been undertaken by siblings Cyrus, Dinshaw and Rashneh Pardiwala in honour of their parents Roda and Noshir Pardiwala, who taught them the importance of their faith.

The project was inaugurated on 16 November 2023 amongst a large gathering of BPP Trustees, family and friends, having flown in from across the globe to commemorate the occasion.



The inauguration ceremony started with a Jashan followed by Trustee Anahita Desai thanking all donors having supported the improvement of Doongerwadi since the past many years and she also elaborated on the future plans of BPP to continue enhancing Doongerwadi.



Thereafter Dr. Rashneh N. Pardiwala spoke about the restoration project and described it as a “labour of love” in honour of her parents.



This project was the brainchild of Dr. Rashneh N. Pardiwala, Founder & Director of the Centre for Environmental Research and Education (CERE) who has been working on improving the forest diversity at Doongerwadi since 2015. She was extremely troubled and concerned every time she passed by the Pavilion since she saw it was deteriorating on many fronts and while the surrounding Bunglis were getting renovated one after the other, the Large Pavilion seemed to be left out.

It was then that Dr. Pardiwala decided to take up the comprehensive restoration of the Pavilion and approached the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP). The BPP was extremely supportive of the initiative and the Trustees immediately supported her endeavours, as did her own family who wholeheartedly contributed to the project.

Upon receiving the formal approval from the Mumbai Heritage Committee, Dr. Pardiwala commenced the project with Ar. Unwalla and her team of workers to bring this heritage structure back to its original grandeur and beauty. Work started with several strict deadlines in place and specialist teams were brought in to work on different facets of the structures like roofers from Kerala, masons and carpenters from Rajasthan while the antique lamps were handcrafted in Lucknow. This labour of love with attention to detail has resulted in a beautiful pavilion.

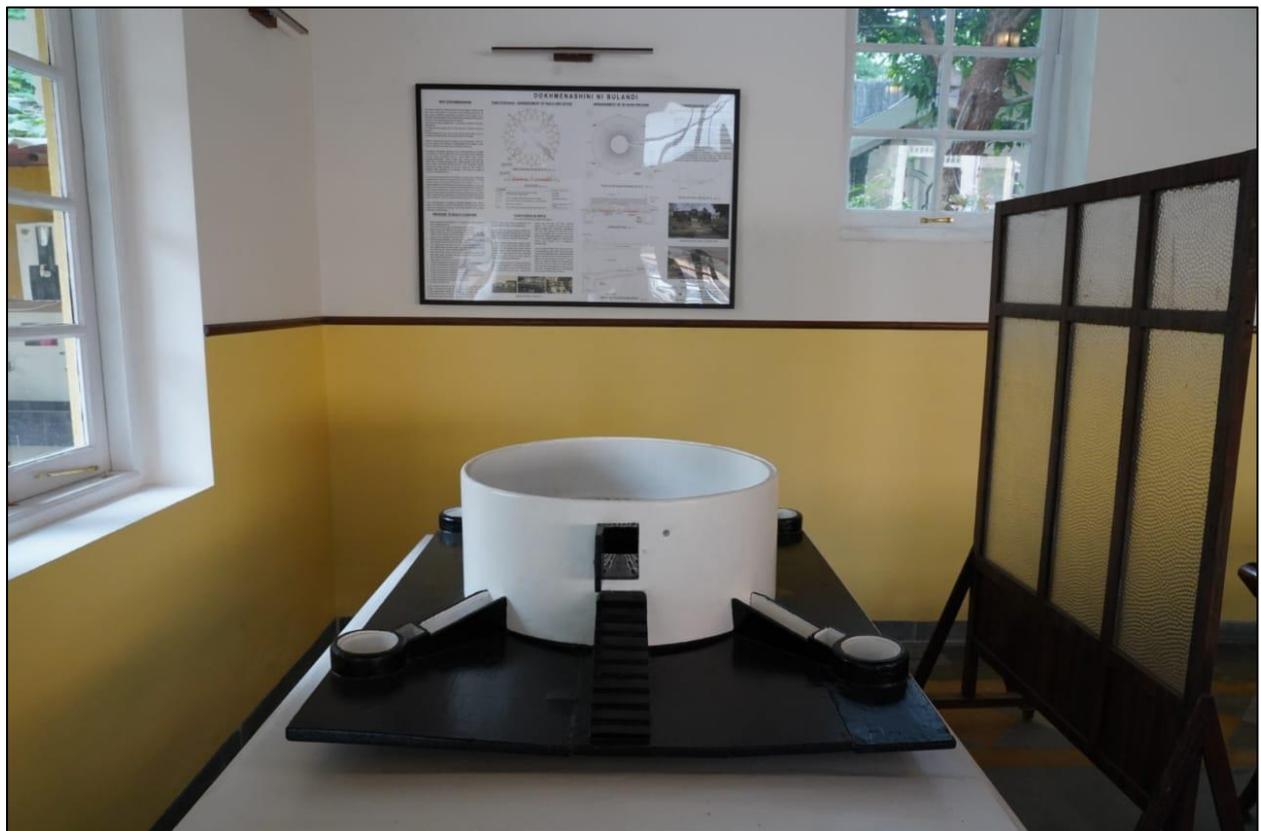


One of the most stunning aspects of the Pavilion are 3 stained glass panels. Dr. Pardiwala was keen that the mourners who come to pay their last respects to the departed souls should get an insight to the Zoroastrian beliefs surrounding last rites and evolution of the soul. She thought of conveying that message pictorially through with stained glass! A leading Singapore-based stained glass artist, Swati Chandgarkar was commissioned for the stained glass work. Extensive research was undertaken by the entire team by referring to ancient century old, consulting

prominent Avestan scholars and priests to learn more about the journey of the departed soul. After months of study, the visual imagery for the three stained glass windows was finalised.



A small Museum corner has also been developed at the far end of the Pavilion where a model of a dokhma and an information poster has been installed.



The BPP takes this opportunity to thank all supporters and donors who have given generously of their time, effort and resources to conserve community property.

Photo Credit: Farokh Mojia