

**Minutes Of The Environmental Hearing For The Proposed Sugar Unit Expansion
From 6,000 TCD To 10,000 TCD of M/s. Bhimashankar Sahakari Sakhar
Karkhana Ltd., Dattatrayanagar, Post: Pargaon Tarfe Awasari Budruk, Taluka
Ambegaon, District Pune, on Friday, 22 August 2025, At 12:00 noon.**

Ref.:

1. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi's Notification dated 14-09-2006 and Amended Notification dated 01-12-2009
2. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi Office Memorandum dated 14/09/2020
3. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board's directives vide no., dated 07-05-2025

The public hearing for the sugar unit expansion from 6000 TCD to 10000 TCD proposed by Project Proponent M/s Bhimashankar Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., at Dattatrayanagar, At Post-Pargaon Tarfe Awasari, Tal-Ambegaon, Dist-Pune, was conducted on Friday, 22nd August 2025 at 12:00 noon at the Karkhana site.

Mr. Sandeep Motegaonkar, Field Officer, MPCB Pune-II, Convener of the Public Hearing Committee, welcomed all participants and informed them of the purpose of the discussion on environmental aspects, in the presence of Hon. Jyoti Kadam Madam, Chairperson of the -Public Hearing Committee and Resident Deputy District Magistrate, Pune, and Hon. Shri. Navnath Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee and Sub-Regional Officer, MPCB Pune-II.

All the citizens, esteemed public representatives, residents of local villages, organizations working on environmental issues, and representatives of news channels were warmly welcomed. With the permission of the Hon. Chairperson of the Committee, an introduction regarding the public hearing on environmental matters was elaborated.

Member Organizer stated that, as per the provisions of the notification dated 14th September 2006 and amended on 1st December 2009 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi, our office had received a proposal for a public hearing on environmental issues related to the proposed expansion of the existing sugar factory from 6000 TCD to 10000 TCD at Awasari Bk., Tal. Ambegaon, Dist. Pune by M/s. Bhimashankar Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., Dattatrayanagar, Pargaon. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were given by the Expert Appraisal Committee of MOEF on 11th January 2025 to the project proponent.

management were addressed positively by the factory advisors. All questions and responses will be recorded. The suggestions made by the Hon. Chairperson will be included in the minutes and submitted to the government for further action.

On behalf of the Hon. Chairperson, I express my gratitude to all those present for today's public hearing on environmental matters. The hearing was conducted in a very cordial atmosphere. I thank the factory administration for their cooperation, and with the permission of the Hon. Chairperson, I declare that today's hearing is concluded.

The hearing proceedings started at 12:00 noon and concluded at 1:45 pm.



(Navnath Awatade)
Member

Environmental Public Hearing Committee
Sub Regional Officer, Pune-II.
M.P.C. Board, Pune.



(Jyoti Kadam)
Chairman

and Add. District Magistrate, Pune.
Environmental Public Hearing Committee

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Accordingly, the project proponent submitted the proposal to the MPCB Head Office, Mumbai, for further public hearing, and the Hon. Joint Director, Water Pollution Prevention, MPCB Mumbai, ordered this office to conduct a public hearing on the environment of the said factory via letter dated 07/05/2025.

In accordance with this proposal, and as per the letter dated 11/06/2025 from the Hon'ble District Magistrate, Pune, the environmental public hearing of the project was conducted on Friday, 22/08/2025 at 12:00 noon by MPCB. A public hearing notice was published on 22/07/2025 in the newspapers Loksatta, Sakal, and Indian Express (in Marathi and English) inviting oral or written submissions of suggestions, views, criticisms, and objections regarding the proposed project.

A brief Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report with detailed information about the project was made available at the following locations for public study. The concerned departments were informed to receive written suggestions from citizens. The report was kept at:

- Hon. District Collector's Office—Pune District Industrial Centre—Pune
- Zillah Parishad Office—Pune
- Regional Office—MPCB Pune
- Sub-Regional Office—MPCB Pune II, Jog Centre, Wakdewadi
- Hon. Member Secretary—MPCB Head Office, Mumbai
- Zonal Office—Western Zone, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Nagpur
- Environment Department—New Administration Building, Madam Cama Marg, Mantralaya, Mumbai
- Hon. Tehsildar—Ambegaon, Tal. Ambegaon, Dist. Pune
- Hon. Tehsildar—Tal. Shirur, Dist. Pune
- Hon. Sub-Divisional Officer—Junnar-Ambegaon-Manchar
- Hon. Sub-Divisional Officer—Pune City-Shirur
- Gram Panchayat Offices – Khadki, Thorandale, Ranjani, Nagapur, Valti, Bhagdi, Shingave, Pimpalgaon, Mahalunge, Awasari Kh., Wayalmala, Bharadi, Jawale, Nirgudsar, Awasari Bk., Gavdewadi, Mengdewadi, Pargaon Tarfe Awasari Bk., Jarkarwadi, Kathapur Bk., Devgaon, Lakhangaon, Pondewadi, Pahadara, Khadakwadi, Dhamani, Ranmala, Loni, Vadgaonpeer (Tal. Ambegaon, Dist. Pune), Kathapur Kh., Pimparkhed, Chandoh, Kavathe, Ichakewadi, Savindane, Pabal, Futanewadi, Akhirmala (Tal. Shirur, Dist. Pune)

No objections, suggestions, criticisms, or comments regarding this project were received by the Board till date. As per the notification dated 14/09/2006 of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, the following committee was constituted for today's hearing with the approval of the Hon'ble Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai, vide letter dated 28-07-2025:

1. Hon. District Magistrate, Pune.	—	Chairman
(or his representative not below the rank of Additional District Magistrate)		
2. Regional Officer, MPCB Pune.	—	Member
(Representative of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board)		
3. Sub-Regional Officer, MPCB Pune-II.	—	Convener

With the approval of the Hon. Chairman, the project was presented, and attendees were requested to submit their objections, suggestions, and comments regarding the project in oral or written form. The project promoter and technical advisor of the project made a statement addressing the questions raised.

The hearing was conducted to receive environmental suggestions, comments, and objections regarding the proposed project. Final permission is not granted by this committee. The minutes of today's hearing will be prepared in Marathi and English, along with video recordings, photographs, written and oral statements, and relevant documents, and submitted to the Central Government for further action.

With the permission of the Hon. Chairman, the project owner was requested to present the project. The environmental consultant made a presentation on the entire environmental management plan of the proposed project. The consultant stated that the project promoters will invest ₹52 crores for the proposed expansion from 6000 to 10000 TCD. An amount of ₹39 lakhs has been reserved for environmental management plans.

After the presentation, the Member Coordinator of the Environmental Public Hearing Committee appealed to attendees to register their objections and suggestions, if any.

The following people participated in the discussion and the responses provided by the project promoter, environmental consultant, and public hearing committee are as follows:

“Is any effort being made by the factory to reduce smoke, like road vehicles using CNG and EV?”

Ans:

The project consultant replied that an electrostatic precipitator (ESP) is installed for the factory's 80 TPH boiler. Its efficiency is 99.99%, and only 0.01% of the smoke is released. Additionally, wet scrubbers have been installed for the remaining two boilers. Therefore, care has been taken to ensure that no dust or particles escape from the factory chimney.

Mr. Navnath Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee, reiterated Mr. Walunj's question and asked whether CNG or biogas is planned for boiler use.

Ans:

The project consultant stated that bagasse is currently being used, and if new technology becomes available in the future, the factory will definitely adopt it.

2) Mr. Ashok Malhari Karande—Resident of Kathapur Bk., Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: The factory has been operating well for the past 25 years. Employment has been provided to local residents. If it is expanded, more employment may be generated. The factory has started a school and college and has done commendable work for environmental protection.

3) Mr. Nitin Dhoble—Gram Panchayat Member, Resident of Pargaon Shingave, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: The Gram Panchayat is receiving complaints from citizens that, due to the distillery, borewell water turns red. Animals cannot consume it, and it causes problems for crops. The factory has been requested to take concrete measures.

Ans:

The Managing Director of the project proponent replied that today's hearing is for the sugar factory expansion from 6000 to 10000 TCD. Regarding the villagers' question about distillery spent wash; a separate 22 TPH incineration boiler has been installed for spent wash disposal. Spent wash from the distillery is burned along with bagasse in the boiler.

Additional instructions, Mr. Navnath Avatade, Member, Public Hearing Committee:

Mr. Avatade informed the Gram Panchayat that the said complaints should be formally submitted to the Pollution Control Board. He mentioned that an independent investigation would be conducted through the MPCB and necessary directions would be given to the factory.

4) Mr. Kiran Shantaram Dhobale—Resident of Pargaon Shingave, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: The local villagers are facing the following problems:

1. The factory started in 2000, and initially there were no issues. Now, repercussions are beginning to appear.
2. A water pollution complaint was submitted to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board last year, but it received little attention. Where should villagers raise such complaints?
3. Last year, 15 to 20 bore wells were polluted with chemical-rich water

from the distillery. The factory was informed, but only temporary measures were taken, and the issue remains unresolved.

4. It is the factory's responsibility too per at the wet scrubber properly. Boiler ash stored near residential areas is carried by cyclonic winds, causing problems for locals.
5. Contaminated water is causing health issues for both animals and citizens.
6. Pollution is not zero percent—we can feel its effects.
7. The factory provides more funds and facilities to other villages than to the one where it is located. No significant steps have been taken to reduce health problems for local villagers.
8. There is no concession in school fees for local children in the school setup by the factory. Locals should benefit from this.
9. Receiving awards at the state and national level is commendable, but permanent pollution control measures should be taken instead of temporary ones.

Ans:

Mr. Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee, responded that the villagers' demands are valid. He will review the previous investigation conducted by the earlier officer. If issues persist, villagers should submit a fresh complaint through the Gram Panchayat. All concerns raised today will be recorded. Based on the request, the factory will be instructed to implement permanent solutions. Upon receiving the complaint, an independent investigation will be conducted, water samples from nearby areas will be analyzed, and necessary instructions will be issued to the factory to resolve health issues and fulfill social commitments.

5) Mr. Sameer Sudam Wavhal— Resident of Shingave, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: Expansion of the factory will help harvest sugarcane quickly. Therefore, farmers can plan for other suitable crops like onions. It will benefit farmers by increasing their agricultural income.

6) Shri. Ramdas Yashwant Thorat—Resident of Nirgudsar, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: For the past 4–5 years, sugarcane harvesting has been delayed. Due to this, laborers harvest by burning the crop and the ash spreads across villages within a 4 to 5 km radius, causing air pollution. After the expansion, sugarcane can be harvested earlier, and pollution will be reduced.

7) Shri. Anil Kisan Walunj—Resident of Pondewadi, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: The decision to expand is very good. Instead of harvesting sugarcane in 16–17 months, it will be done earlier, allowing farmers to grow onion crops.

He asked:

“What precautions will be taken during the expansion?”

Ans:

The project consultant replied that the existing 1350 m³/day capacity ETP plant is sufficient for the total effluent generated after the 10000 TCD expansions. A total of 1100 m³/day of waste water will be generated, and all of it will be treated. No new boiler will be installed. The existing boiler capacity and pollution control systems are sufficient. Excess bagasse will be sold to buyers or composted with press mud. All pollutants will be managed. A two-hectare green belt is proposed.

Que: Mr. Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee, asked:

8) Shri. Kaluram Ramdas Lokhande—GramPanchayat, Member, Pargaon Tarfe Awasari Bk., Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

The factory has provided a domestic water pipeline worth ₹20 lakhs for the residents of Chichgai. A 3000-liter-per-hour capacity R.O. plant worth ₹10 lakhs has been given to Pargaon village for drinking purposes. ₹10 lakhs were provided for the development of the bullock cart ghat. Financial activities have increased in Pargaon village. The factory pays property tax of ₹9–10 lakhs every year without any delay, which contributes to the village's development.

9) Mr. Vilas Labade—Resident of Jarkarwadi, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: Due to increased irrigation facilities, it has become possible to expand sugarcane cultivation and obtain a good market price. After the expansion, we will be able to crush the cane within the required time. I support the expansion.

Mr. Daulatrao Lokhande—Resident of Pargaon, Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: He asked how much water will be required for the project?

He expressed his satisfaction with the funds and assistance consistently provided by the factory and suggested that if polluted water is being discharged, permanent and necessary steps should be taken. He stated that the factory has provided a few jobs to residents and has created excellent facilities for village children, such as schools. The living standard has improved.

Ans:

The factory replied that 70% of the water is reused in the sugar unit. Only river water

is used for boiler make up and laboratory purposes. An agreement has been made with the Kukadi Irrigation Department for 0.288 million cubic meters. The factory requires only 309 m³ of water per day.

Mr. Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee, stated that the sewage generated from the 10000 TCD operation should be processed and reused as much as possible, so that natural water sources are not contaminated. The factory should take measures to control this. The treated water must meet the standards of the Pollution Control Board and should be used for controlled irrigation.

The Managing Director explained that currently, 817 m³ of waste water is generated per day, and after expansion, it will increase to 1150 m³ per day. This will be treated in the existing 1350 m³/day capacity Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP). Treated effluent will be used for the factory's green belt and agricultural irrigation. For excess condensate treatment, a 1800 m³ capacity Condensate Polishing Unit (CPU) has been installed. All excess condensate is treated in the CPU and reused for the cogeneration cooling tower, machinery cooling, distillery fermentation, and the remaining portion is used for agricultural irrigation.

It was admitted that during the commissioning of the new distillery plant last year, due to incomplete waterproofing of the distillery tanks, gutters, and flooring—combined with heavy rainfall—the borewell water was contaminated. However, all waterproofing work has now been completed, and there is no effluent percolation.

10) Mr. Sachin Hinge—Resident of Awasari Bk., Taluka Ambegaon, District Pune

Que: Business activities in the surrounding villages have increased after the establishment of the Karkhana. If the factory's capacity is further expanded, farmers' sugarcane will be harvested on time. He supported the Karkhana expansion proposal.

Ans:

Mr. Awatade, Member of the Public Hearing Committee, stated:

"We organized a public hearing on environmental issues at the workplace of Bhimashankar S.S.K. Ltd. Today's hearing was attended by citizens, respected public representatives, media representatives, the Chairman of the factory, the Managing Director, all department heads, and the technical advisor of the factory.

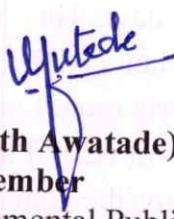
The presentation was made in a very simple and clear manner. The administrative and technical aspects of the factory were discussed in detail. Based on this comprehensive presentation, we conducted the public hearing.

The questions raised by us, including those in favor of the factory, and any suggestions, records, objections, or criticisms regarding the status of factory

management were addressed positively by the factory advisors. All questions and responses will be recorded. The suggestions made by the Hon. Chairperson will be included in the minutes and submitted to the government for further action.

On behalf of the Hon. Chairperson, I express my gratitude to all those present for today's public hearing on environmental matters. The hearing was conducted in a very cordial atmosphere. I thank the factory administration for their cooperation, and with the permission of the Hon. Chairperson, I declare that today's hearing is concluded.

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