

iDECORAMA

magazine.idecorama.com

FEB 2017 ₹200

DESIGN TALES

Ar. Rajeev Agarwal

REALTY ALERT

**Basant Bansal,
M3M Group**

COVER STORY

**Architecture
University Buildings**



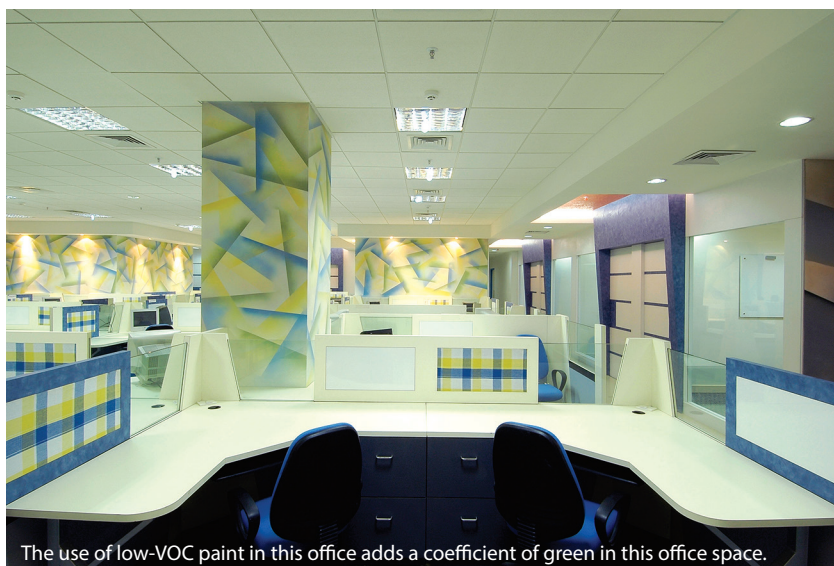


how **green** is my alley?

Ar Nilesh Gandhi, points out why green architecture and sustainability should be the norm and not an option

Are you a star fish thrower? Just in case to recollect the incident, as a man was throwing starfishes in the sea, a passerby asked him, "there are thousands of starfishes on the shore, can you possibly push all of them in the sea again, and can you not see that any amount you throw in, there isn't going to be any difference to the beach. Smilingly

picking up yet another star fish and flirting it right back into the sea the man said, "But, I did make a difference to that one!" Yes, we all are and can become good starfish throwers! In a landscape ruled by steel and concrete, imparting the quotient of green and sustainable architecture is a similar exercise. We may not be able to build a green utopia overnight, but our sustained



The use of low-VOC paint in this office adds a coefficient of green in this office space.

Ar. Nilesh Gandhi



“ We may not be able to build a green utopia overnight, but our sustained efforts will.”



Green spaces on the terrace space add an aesthetic value and provide necessary insulation in a natural way.

efforts will. As a professional and principle architect of Meta Design, I have always advocated this idea even when I am dealing with my clients. Today I wish to make a mention of the salient features which necessitates the factor of sustainable living and green architecture in our day to day lives.

Sustainability – A Grave Concern

It may seem school bookish but our planet has finite resources, and the population is growing infinitely, which obviously is stretching our resources to an irreversible breaking point. Our current lifestyles and aspirational growth of a large section of populous, is extracting natural resources, quantum times more than what we are giving back. Logically hence, our continual zest for exponential growth within fixed allotted resources will lead to our collapse.

A Better Future for our Forthcoming Progenies

As per statistics the natural resources of the earth would last for up to the next 4-5 decades, which is the life span left of an average Indian. However, shouldn't we be worried about our next generations? Do we leave behind a livable world or an over exploited earth where they have to fight even for basic survival. As a planted tree by someone



decades back, gives you shade today, couldn't you consider doing at least the same for your future.

Green Buildings: An Alliance with Nature

Buildings are the single largest consumers of energy and water. Further, total built volume in the country till date, is scheduled to be doubled within the next two decades. Solution to these issues lies in building green. A green building is simply defined as that structure which consumes lesser natural resources (majorly energy and water) as against any other conventional building. It is a building that causes less harm to the environment, while in some cases like a "Net Zero" building which is carbon positive and generates excess electricity than its consumption, feeding to the grid, and recycles entire water having marginal fresh water usage, and uses materials which have less embodied energy.

Green Building Economics

If planned judiciously during concept stage, a certified green building project need not be expensive than a conventional building. However, one can factor only 5% extra capex for a



The material palate too can up the ante by using certified green products



“ Every project is a starfish opportunity, and for the thousands of starfishes and our crusader on the shore, they just need a few more of us for company,”

green building, though considering opex, it would end up being cheaper, than conventional buildings. Not difficult too! While a client or an architect can do certification himself, like any other disciplines of MEP, structural or landscape design; technical support and co-ordination by Green Building Consultants are easily available, who guide us from concept stage till receipt of certification.

Criticism

Several practicing architects have imbibed sustainability practices into their designs and have never relied on certifications to prove their projects environmental quotient. However, for a major faction, green building certifications serve as a handy tool, which may seem superficial in nature, but in the end, turns out to be eco-friendly than conventional buildings. The criticism is about the means to go green and not the concept of environment friendliness. While every new concept succeeds only after

passing through rigorous contours of criticisms and adaptability, green buildings have found their way towards acceptability in architectural design practices.

To design environmentally friendly projects is an architect's social responsibility. One may choose the ways and means, but the thought of safeguarding our natural resources should be right at the forefront through the entire process of design and execution. This is because, “Every project is a starfish opportunity, and for the thousands of starfishes and our crusader on the shore, they just need a few more of us for company”.

Authored By:

Architect Nilesh Gandhi, PhD(H.S). M.Arch Project Management, LEED AP, TERI Evaluator Trainer, practicing @ Metadesign (India) Pvt. Ltd. The author can be reached on nilesh.g@metadesign.co.in