

Interview with Dr Sridar Babu M N., Environmental Education and Awareness| Communication Outreach and Advocacy Unit (COA)
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1. What are your views about Green spaces?

Developing Green spaces is not something that requires additional efforts. It is what we should do. Sustainable practices- be it houses, buildings or factories- is what we have been doing traditionally. Earlier when we used to live in villages, we tended to build our house sustainably. We incorporated building structures made up of mud, roof made slanted to trap rainwater, ventilation to keep the temperature optimum, use of kitchen waste as manure and many more practices that did not require any additional cost or effort. We just need to go back into traditional practices to achieve the best utilization of resources while giving back to the mother earth.

2. What do you think are the barriers to Green buildings in India?

Modernization has posed a major threat to sustainability. As people now earn more, have better access to modern technology and are able to use to them with ease, people tend to overlook their byproducts. Just because a person can afford more number of Air conditioner, he tends to buy them as just to make an impression.

Talking about India, Indians have always been fascinated by practices of Europe and US. But they fail to understand there is a huge climatic difference between the countries. For example, installing glass structures in a building in US may seem a good idea since they have a cold climatic condition, but in India following same structure will not be advantageous since India already has a hot climate. India's growing population, depleting resources, land scarcity and export of resources in form of products is only making the situation worse.

Lack of awareness about green buildings and factories pose a major barrier to their development in India. There are more misconceptions than understanding about green structure. There is major "don't care" attitude prevailing among the masses which needs to be focused upon and their mindsets need to be changed.

Secondly, government support is also lacking. Although there are few incentives provided by the government, but people are not able to utilize it due to long procedure and flaws in the system.

3. How do you think these barriers can be overcome?

First of all, there is a need to create awareness about green building concept. you can easily design a green building, by integrating resource-efficient features into a building's design from the pre-design stage itself, and by ensuring that the architects, engineers and contractors follow

established environmental principles addressing local needs, designing a green building is easy and fun, and may cost lesser than a conventional building.

As soon people start utilizing the benefits of green buildings, following Government policies and making use of sustainable materials & resources, Government will start focusing more on this sector. New regulations will come and the cost of making sustainable structure will come down even further. When the market for materials like solar panels, efficient fixtures etc. will expand, the prices will go down and cost barrier will be eradicated.

4. How GRIHA certification is different from other certifications?

GRIHA certification has been by keeping in mind the situation and need of India. Certifications like LEED holds good for countries like US where their body structures are different, climatic conditions are different and so are their needs. These certifications are little modernized for the Indian scenario.

While GRIHA is trying to get back India's traditional method of sustainability by incorporating old yet efficient way of working.

5. What are your views about establishing Green garment factory in India?

Garment export is a major part of India's GDP and establishing a certified Green garment factory will be a major achievement. Garment sector, just like any other sector in India, needs to develop sustainable supply chain to be able to sustain their business.

As mentioned, Bangladesh is leading example for Green garment factories in the world. Through their sustainable practices, they are able to attract many international clients and capture the world market.

India's condition being similar to Bangladesh in terms climatic conditions, we can learn a lot and incorporate their best practices.

But, India is among the leading supplier of raw materials like cotton to other countries including Bangladesh. If we are able to manage to produce garments in India in sustainably from these raw materials, India can emerge as a leader.