

INFRA CE | 2018 National Convention & Exhibition

Message to the National Convention on Sustainable Urbanisation (INFRA CE-2018)
Sustainable Urbanisation for Sustainable Development

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Sustainable urbanisation is inextricably connected with sustainable development. In fact, the two concepts go hand-in-hand. Sustainable development implies development in a manner that is well thought out, that does not harm the environment, that can be sustained without the need to radically alter the development strategy due to insufficient thought-input during the process of formulating the development strategy and that is marked by wisdom in chalking out all steps of the development process.

It is indubitably true that sustainable urbanisation is a key issue for the world today. With growing population, there is pressure to build taller structures for human habitation. Thus, it has come to pass that tall structures have occupied the centre-stage for quite some time in view of the shortage of land and the increase in the world's population which has tended to wean people away from their historical propensity for horizontal expansion. Indeed, the appearance and proliferation of tall structures can be said to be a defining characteristic of the modern era. However, tall structures come with their own sets of problems - for example tall structures are undoubtedly more vulnerable to seismic and cyclonic effects. Tackling these challenges effectively demands considerable engineering acumen - something that modern engineers need to possess. Appropriate design must be blended with appropriate construction technologies for tall structures to withstand the considerable demands placed on them. Design and construction practices are, metaphorically speaking, the two pillars on which a tall structure must stand. Both must be equally sound.

Making available drinking water, of adequate quantity and of acceptable quality, to the population is another major issue that must be addressed if urbanisation is to be sustainable. It is a fact that the piezometric level of groundwater is decreasing, sometimes at an alarming rate, under most, if not all, major cities. In large cities built on coastal alluvial soil, like Kolkata and Bangkok, this is causing soil-consolidation and land subsidence which in turn is resulting, in some cases, to distress in superstructures. Sometimes, the quality of the water being supplied to the residents of a city is in focus. Saline water intrusion plagues coastal areas and is a major problem in cities like Chennai. In certain other cases, presence of arsenic or fluoride or both in the water source necessitate extensive treatment of the water before it can be supplied to residents of a city.

Having green zones in a city, harvesting rainwater to augment water supply and using solar panels to generate electricity are all good practices that should be embedded in any city-planning plan.

In this context, the theme of this convention - National Convention on Sustainable Urbanisation (INFRA CE-2018) - is apt.

I wish the National Convention on Sustainable Urbanisation (INFRA CE-2018) all success.



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