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Towards Green Architecture

Indian architecture is experiencing a green renovation with the country having the distinction of maximum number of prestigious LEED Certifications from US Green Building Council. And now 'going green' is the new mantra for residential homes.

Over the past few decades, there has been a tremendous spurt of real estate activity and the market is expected to reach USD102 billion in the next 10 years, creating a huge potential for architectural up-scaling to compliment the growth in realty. Clearly, there would be a need to create a distinction in designs and layouts so as to create a unique position. One plausible way is to go green. Indian architecture is experiencing a green renovation. It's worth mentioning that India today has the maximum number of prestigious LEED certification from US Green Building Council. The interest in green residential home has really taken off in Indian Realty.

In recent years, India has also seen an emergence of architects that has brought global accolades for the country. The reach and talent of these architects go beyond the borders. Many of these creations are in field of green buildings. This currently puts India ahead of many other Asian countries in the area of environment-friendly sustainable buildings.

Moving ahead, once can say that 2010 will be the year of green developments. The year will see an era of innovations. Usage of glass in buildings will further fade and metal facades will be in vogue. Development of insulated buildings will also become popular as these have qualities to reduce the induction of heat

in the building thereby leading to lesser use of air conditioning and saving on the electricity costs. The range available in sustainable construction is enormous. From Metal Jalis to sun-shading devices, emphasis will be on designing the green building along orientation designing as per the sun path, an airy design which maximizes the inflow of natural light and air.

From designing aspect, recycled materials to non-toxic paints and low-VOC adhesives, energy efficient electricals and water saving water fixtures and certified woods will be on agenda of the Indian architects. In short, architects will tend to change their architectural design to the increasing needs for an energy saving building i.e. Green Buildings. These buildings are lifetime money savers. Although the development costs of such buildings is 4-5% higher but this is recovered within two years of its operation through savings in energy, water and other resources.

With rising demand for affordable houses, it is evident to use the material which has a long life yet it is not costly. The demands for affordable houses have taken precedence over larger number of rooms as compared to big apartments.

With rising land prices and development costs, affordability has become a challenge to the trend architects. Space utilization has

become the mantra today. The trend is more towards the usage of plywood and tiles and to minimize the woodwork in order to keep the costs low. Chip floor has taken over marble. Usage of raw compressed bricks provides a feeling of village style urban living. Moreover such materials are cost effective and sustainable. Usage of such materials in architectural design will definitely boost the affordable housing segment.

Vertical Landscaping will be the name of the game, as many architects are expected to follow this unique concept that not only beautifies the

buildings, gives it a soothing look but also provide a cooler environment around the buildings. Tensile structures will be the new fashion statement outlined for elegant appearance of the building.

We also foresee 2010 as the year of innovation in and technology advancement. Some major real estate players are introducing a host of new technologies like buildings with Net Zero Energy and Geo Thermal Technology. The Net Zero energy technology will enable low energy demand through energy efficient design and will also take care of its own electricity demand through clean renewable sources like solar power. Geo Thermal Technology will balance the outside temperature fluctuations.

ations to passively provide comfortable conditions inside through geo-exchange systems. When mechanical conditioning will be required, geo-exchange systems will transfer energy from the ground into building's air conditioning system using the ground as a heat sink.

As in the yester years, the trend towards townships and group housing would see further growth. The Integrated Building design will pave the way for experimentation and developing a design which will provide comfort and facilities that are reachable and affordable. We further expect that FSI norms are relaxed, which will provide a fillip to number of high-rise buildings in the country.

In office segment, the focus will be on creating low panels, reducing the cubicle environment to incorporate more flexibility. Courtyard designing will dominate the scene. Square foot area will be kept low, and huge private office cubicles may give way to a more open environment.

Buildings of today are the amalgamation of an architect's vision and dreams who design landmarks which are accepted by the society at large, however the biggest challenge for these architects will be to create structures which are easy to maintain apart from its functionality and affordability.

With so much on the platter, architecture as a field will dominate the Indian Realty in year 2010 and will become a vital part of project planning. Today architecture has gained a position where it is more than just a need, a balancing effort, to deliver as per the needs of individuals and with best design option. These design innovations will indeed shape the future of realty in India. **RP**