



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: MARRIAGE OF CONSCIENCE & INDUSTRY

Sujay Kalele is all for sustainable development if it can be done right

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Along with sustainable development becoming the number one priority these days, it is an undeniable fact that the housing or the real estate sector has probably the largest impact on the environment and society as a whole. Let's look at some hard-hitting facts about modern-day infrastructure development (*Source - [www.sumas.ch](http://www.sumas.ch)*)

- ◆ The built environment of urban constructions is responsible for half of all global energy use and half of all greenhouse gas emissions
- ◆ Buildings consume one-sixth of all freshwater, one-quarter of world wood harvests and four-tenths of all other raw materials
- ◆ Building occupants in high-performing, green-certified office environments "scored 26% higher on tests of cognitive function, had 30% fewer sickness syndromes, and had 6% higher sleep quality scores than those in high-performing but non-certified buildings.

If you search the term 'sustainable development' on Google, you will find the definition to be something on these lines - 'economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources'. But this explanation narrowly misses summing up various points. Sustainable development has seeped into the business philosophies of various companies worldwide but is rarely seen implemented on ground level. Many global organisations are calling out to businesses to adopt a systematic approach to inhibit sustainable development into their expansion strategy keeping in mind the long-term welfare of the environment and the society. But is sustainable development really the need of the hour as professed by conservationists?

Worrisome hampering of the environment and resources around us is a bane passed onto the 21st century. In order to make up for the blatant

ignorance of our earlier generation, the present generation has to develop ways to suffice for today's needs in such a manner that the future generation doesn't have to compromise on their ability to meet their respective needs. In the light of such global concern, the UN too prescribes Sustainable Development Goals for businesses and governments alike.

Witnessing measurable sustainable development in the field of construction is very rare. But reading about inspirational articles about some novel infrastructure projects in India and abroad really show how new methods of sustainability can be inculcated in real estate projects.

Bangkok's Thammasat University, one of the oldest in Thailand has built Asia's largest urban rooftop farm, a new milestone in the way universities approach creating the perfectly-inspiring learning space. The 75,000 sq-ft space imitates rice terrace farms from northern Thailand and they can help prevent some impacts of climate change, such as frequent flooding. Taking an example close to home, 'Building in Mud' is a Pune-based firm that has revolutionised the field of architecture in India by adopting innovative techniques of building homes from natural resources that nurture the environment furthermore.

One of the UN's Sustainable Development framework guidelines states - 'Actively engage to eliminate the duality of "sustainable" and "mainstream" institutions, at national and international levels'. All said and done, the need of the hour indeed is sustainable development but moreover, it is necessary to eradicate this immoral duality that excludes mainstream businesses from the requirement to adhere to the unified goal of making sustainable development the one overarching reality under which all institutions big or small, function in harmony with nature. **CW**