



'Green buildings can sustain rapid urbanisation'

New Delhi, Bangalore, March 27 2012, DHNS:

Indian builders need to design "green buildings" to bridge the growing gap between energy demand and supply as resources are finite, said J M Mauskar, special secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

At a conference in New Delhi on Tuesday, he said this goal can be attained only if builders sustain the steady migration of people from rural to urban areas.

Mauskar suggested that corporates should use technology innovations taking into account developmental goals and environmental protection. The conference was organised by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India.

According to estimates, two-third of the people will live in urban areas by 2050. "The area occupied by environment-friendly buildings has increased from 20,000 square metres in 2004 to 2.3 crore square metres at present. Rapid industrialisation and infrastructure development coupled with population growth and urbanisation have put tremendous pressure on the environment," said Ajay Mathur, director general, Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

Experts suggest there should be optimum utilisation of finite resources, such as land and power, while constructing buildings with the least carbon footprint. "There is an increased need of infrastructure that can sustain the ever-increasing exodus from rural to urban areas.

Urbanisation must go hand-in-hand with environmental sustainability," said Mauskar. They also called for change in current practices in design and construction of buildings, besides spreading awareness on the subject. a

"Energy rating systems should be dynamic in nature," said Mathur. Others stressed on the need to fine-tune existing laws and implement them in a better way.

Assocham chairman (real estate council) Naveen Raheja said green buildings can save up to 80 per cent energy compared to conventional ones.

"The cost recovery happens within a year. Irresponsible development needs to be addressed soon as we have borrowed this planet from the future generation. We do not have the right to destroy it," he said.

Eco-friendly

* What: Green building refers to a structure that is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout its life-cycle

* How: Efficiently using energy, water, and other resources; protecting health and improving productivity; reducing waste, pollution and environmental degradation

* Alternative: A similar concept is 'natural building', which is usually on a smaller scale and tends to focus on the use of natural materials that are available locally

* Benefit: A 2009 report by the US General Services Administration found sustainably designed buildings cost less to operate and have excellent energy performance

* Where: Practices or technologies employed in green buildings are constantly evolving and may differ from region to region

* Example: To reduce energy use, high-efficiency windows and insulation in walls, ceilings and floors increase the efficiency of the building's performance