

## EDUCATE-BUILD-INTEGRATE



Satish Kumar Sharma

**Question 1: Compared to Global Initiatives, how would you benchmark the status of sustainability initiatives in India?**

**Answer:** India's increasing participation in Global sustainability initiatives and ratings is providing some impetus – however we have a long way to go. India's global sustainable competitiveness index rank of 127 and The Environmental Performance Index rank of 168 speaks much about it. With much of learning and experience readily available from sustainably better geographies, India needs to not only start contextualizing available solutions, but also aggressively start promoting local innovation. The Government of India is definitely taking initiatives in these directions. There is however a need to have an approach that integrates intellectual-natural-social capital with resource efficiency. Myopically or contextually addressing sustainability may lead to unanticipated challenges in the future. Hence, holistic integration is thus a key.

**Question 2: Are you seeing any sustainability trends impacting the construction business in India?**

**Answer:** Yes, as corporate organizations, we are moving towards integrated reporting at global level. As a nation, we have started implementing longer design life in some important projects. Few of the material manufacturers are progressing towards zero carbon emissions, the green building rating systems are taking roots. The use of supplementary cementitious materials and alternate materials is very slowly increasing.

**Question 3: As a leader, how do you view your organisation's obligations to sustainability?**

**Answer:** For any designer and engineering consultant, sustainability is the prime goal, even if it is getting fulfilled with additional resources i.e. cost and time. Until the product is perceived beyond the limited sustainability the essence of conceptualization and detailing can't excel. As a professional, as the obligation for safety, constructability, and durability, etc. is considered as a basic criteria similarly sustainability has to be treated as a skeleton.

**Question 4: What are some of the typical challenges that you foresee in India while implementing sustainable construction?**

**Answer:** Lack of awareness about sustainability is an important impeding factor. The know-how about sustainability in general and how to apply the principles to reap immediate and long-term benefits is seminal. While our educational institutions are gradually teaching the principles of sustainable living, there is an intense need to educate and train the promoters, clients, government organizations, designers and contractors about these principles. We need to spend good effort on knowledge-building and then derive utmost benefit by synchronized integration from all stakeholders.

**Question 5: What are some of the initiatives that the concrete construction fraternity needs to immediately implement for achieving sustainable development?**

**Answer:**

- Educate and train rigorously all the stakeholders
- Bring holistic approach: Always be considerate about the triple bottom line of sustainability viz. social-economic-environmental; rank, select and implement projects based on holistic long-term indices and not just on technical and/or financial considerations. It is vital to move the policy framework in these directions as well
- Integration: From concept to commissioning be involved in sustainability planning, implementation and monitoring
- Balanced flexibility: Introduce regulated flexibility in design and construction specifications while balancing increasing design life with available local construction materials
- Build, but maintain as well: Invest in maintenance of construction facilities and structures
- Reward and penalize for innovation based on sustainability

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