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From sustainable architecture to creating culturally rich spaces, a look at key architectural trends for 2019

By SONALI and MANIT RASTOGI

India is developing rapidly today; our country's urban population is projected to grow from 30 per cent to 50 per cent over the next two decades. Our cities, however, are in the state of an "urban emergency," and face diverse challenges—from infrastructural inadequacies to pollution and climate change. If we are to create a sustainable future, architecture will need to address the following.

RESOURCE OPTIMISATION
It is imperative to understand that sustainable architecture can mitigate environmental impact only as long as it is affordable and widely accessible. Resource and energy optimization, therefore, are crucial to sensible design.

URBAN DILEMMA
With increasing urban density and paucity of land resources, there is a need to look for solutions that allow our cities to expand, not implode. High-rise developments are undoubtedly the way to go, but it is important to ensure that these new buildings ingrain themselves deeply into the existing city fabric, from an infrastructural as well as socio-cultural standpoint.

THE GREEN DREAM
The following simple steps can help create a net-zero footprint.

- Insulate walls and place openings on the north-facing side instead of the west to lower the need for ACs.
- Create an effortless flow of spaces with deep, generous verandahs.
- Encourage rainwater harvesting and reuse at the community level.
- Green roofs to reduce storm water runoff, minimise interior heat gain, and conserve energy.
- Plant trees to reduce dust levels and cool the surroundings.

Today, we can take what we have learnt from building with limited resources over centuries and from the mistakes of the "architecture of excess" of the West. We can then leapfrog into an architecture that is holistically sustainable, environment-friendly, and responsive to economic, technological, and socio-cultural contexts. An architecture that is global, yet rooted in the local.

Sonali Rastogi and Manit Rastogi are architects and founding partners of Morphogenesis, an award-winning architecture and urban design practice.

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