SOMEBEHERE TO WALK, TO DREAM, TO BREATHE, TO LIVE A LITTLE.

INSIDE:
THE IFJ SPECIAL EDITION ON URBAN PUBLIC SPACES
BUILDING THE SUSTAINABLE CITY OF THE FUTURE
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Buildings contribute to 40 per cent of all carbon emissions in the world. To counter global warming, we need to step up to more sustainable design. But, we think green principles need to be embraced by everyone today, from the highest levels of government, planners, and education to the grass roots levels of the consumer man. Given that our cities occupy a mere 0.02 per cent of the surface of the earth, and yet human consumption is set to grow in percentages of the earth’s resources: UN Report on world population projections. There is an inherent need to begin to explore the possibilities of a new green typology of architecture. Assuming there is no energy, no water, no waste disposal, how does one approach design?

There have always been two schools of thought on how to design green buildings: some believe that buildings should be designed like a machine—highly engineered and hierarchically scaled, to achieve a high degree of efficiency. The alternate view is that it is imperative to take advantage of local climate conditions and social-cultural contexts into consideration before designing a building. I believe that architecture and urban planning play key roles in integrating a better environment and their surroundings. While projects break new ground in technology, their response needs to be deeply rooted in the locale.

In India, a large number of buildings are designed and built without consideration for energy consumption. The result is that buildings consume more energy than they would otherwise. In a bid to eliminate waste, the goal should be to design buildings in such a way that they are self-sufficient in terms of energy, water, and resources. This approach is not only beneficial for the environment but also for the economy. A sustainable approach to building design can lead to significant savings in the long run, as well as contribute to a more sustainable future.

The idea of sustainability should now move from buildings to cities as well. Our cities are in a state of environmental emergency, with an assortment of problems: population, traffic, and pollution, water, electricity, sewage, governance, and global warming. Last, but not least, we need to address the issue of waste, which is a major problem in many cities. The solution is to design buildings and cities that are not only environmentally sustainable but also economically viable. This can be achieved through the implementation of efficient energy systems, which can help reduce energy consumption and improve the overall sustainability of the city.

A new sustainable, urban blueprint needs to be derived from the opportunities that lie within. The approach has to be multi-pronged and bottom-up, gradually making small positive changes that lead to a larger impact.

The importance of sustainability cannot be overstated, and it is crucial that we take action now to ensure a sustainable future for our cities. By implementing sustainable practices in our buildings and cities, we can create a better environment for ourselves and future generations.