Godrej | LOCKING SOLUTIONS AND SYSTEMS

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One for Nature

Trupti Doshi, Architect, elucidates the art of designing eco-friendly raw materials.

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Empowering Planet Earth

Dear Readers,

In this edition of Click!, we've put our Greenest foot forward to bring you stories of professionals who are doing their bit to conserve and protect Mother Nature.

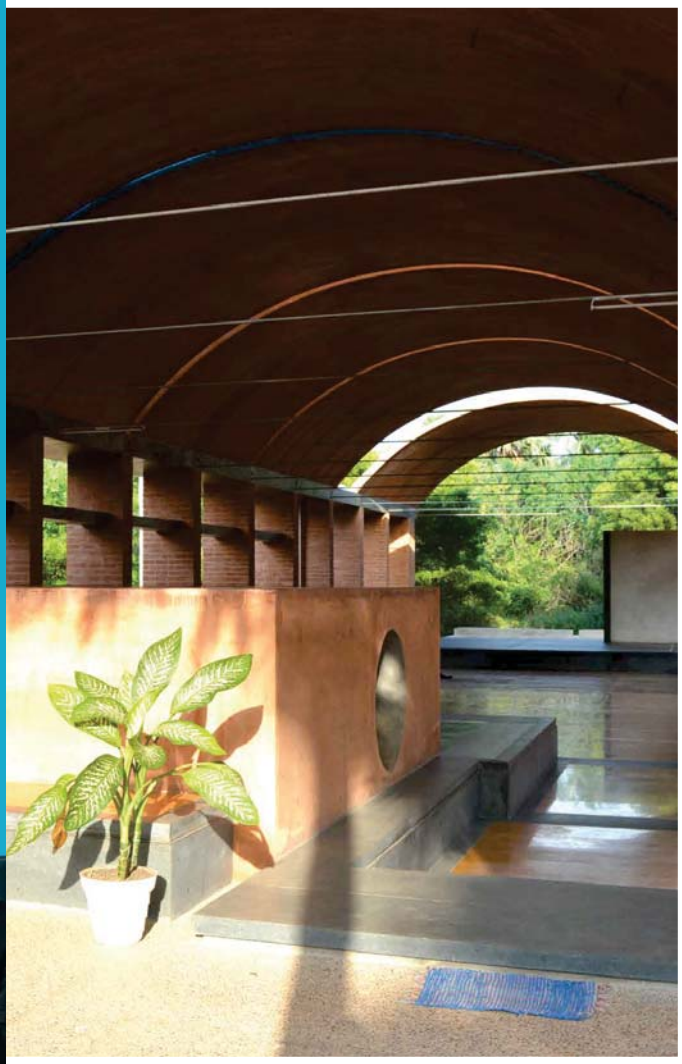
We owe a green and clean tomorrow to posterity. At Godrej, it has been our legacy to respect the environment while enabling life to be enriched along with it, rather than by destroying it. Godrej has initiated the Good and Green initiative, which aims to create a more employable workforce, build a Greener India, and innovate for Green products by 2020. The conservation of our mangroves in Vikhroli, Mumbai, is another example of our sentiment towards preserving the environment.

Our cover story is about an eco-friendly architect who has given the landscape of Puducherry a true gem in form of Sharanam, a Centre for Rural Transformation. Closer to home, read about our factory in Goa that is preserving its coastal divinity by paying respect to its surroundings.

We hope this edition of Click! makes you think about the footprint we are leaving behind on our Planet.

Happy reading!

Shyam Motwani
Executive Vice President
and Business Head
Godrej Locking Solutions and Systems



One of the most prestigious projects of Sri Aurobindo Society, Sharanam—Rural Development Centre, was started in Puducherry in south India in 2007.

One For Nature

Trupti Doshi defines sustainability as doing more with less. Her work mirrors her ideology of recognizing that Earth is a finite resource and worthy of immense respect. She talks to us about building with a heart and soul.

A large part of most of our cities are unimaginative concrete jungles. More often than not, buildings are designed as ends in themselves - stacked boxes of copious amounts of concrete, steel, brick and facades of glass to enclose interiors, which are ubiquitous and dull, powered by artificial lighting and air conditioners.

Most people living and working in these spaces have no idea about the movement of the Sun or where the breeze comes from. If architects working in these surroundings do not take the effort of reconnecting themselves back to Nature, it will be difficult for them to think outside the box and understand buildings and cities as parts of the larger cyclical loops of Nature. The incorporation of sustainable building materials in construction is not easy or difficult to follow. A sustainable practice is my soul's calling. I cannot create another way.

India's ready for Green

I find tremendous amount of support and ample examples from India to urge me on this journey. There is a growing awareness among various stakeholders from the construction field such as sectors like agriculture, offices, manufacturing, institutes, etc. I see a wave of openness and rising mindfulness when it comes to eco-friendly building.

However, a small plot owner in a city suburb or town who wants to build their own house, would be able to go the sustainable way only if it's financially conducive. It is fair not to expect the incorporation of sustainability in such cases unless the person has an awareness and knowledge in the subject and has a highly developed conscience. However, when it comes to any public building such as offices or institutions, eco-friendly building and sustainable construction should be made the norm, not an option. And, I'm happy to report that from those areas, there's definitely a growing awareness.

Making Green building 'mainstream'

There is an old Native American saying which states, only when the last tree is cut down, the last fish dead and the last stream poisoned will man realize that money cannot be eaten. So when it is suggested that eco-friendly building be made 'mainstream', and more freely incorporated, the unspoken word beneath it is cheap. Sadly, whatever is cheaper will become mainstream. But in my understanding, cost should not be calculated only in terms of finance but with respect of environment also. This parallel system of costing is most important to consider. Thus, in terms of environmental cost, a sustainable building will cost much cheaper than a mainstream one. This is because it is much easier to procure standard raw materials and build a regular edifice.

Auroma French Villaments is a residential community of 24 French-styled villa apartments based on The Mother's symbol for grateful Seekers, by grateful Seekers.

5 ways to practicing sustainability

There are five ways in which we can practice and incorporate sustainable building in construction. These are explained here:

Planet: Let's give a long thought to how we can be more respectful towards the resources our Planet has to offer.

Prosperity: Think about how sustainable construction can be made profitable without compromising Nature or the comfort and convenience that we offer to people.

People: Our processes should focus on enriching social capital. For the second largest economy in our country after agriculture, not enough is being done to increase the skills of the people in the construction industry.

Progress: The only way to combine the earlier points is through innovation, which means progress. This progress will not come if old and outdated processes are followed in the industry.

Place: We have to construct by keeping the uniqueness of a place in mind. The one-size-fits-all approach in construction is not feasible and when the peculiarity and uniqueness of a place is ignored and blueprints of another place and geography are blindly replicated, this goes against sustainable construction.

Nurturing Nature

Eco-friendly construction is here to grow. If the knowledge and practice of sustainability doesn't keep growing, then we're surely heading for a disaster on the planet in the next few decades! Globally, people are really enthusiastically talking about the prospect of mainstream sustainable construction, so hopefully, the trend should catch on much sooner in India as well! ■

Sharanam Rural Development Centre on the outskirts of Puducherry houses perhaps the largest vault made of unfired earth in the country. As opposed to traditional arched vaults made of fired brick, Trupti designed and built the vault using bespoke unfired bricks. She brought down the thickness of the arch - which in the normal case would have been 5 feet - to a mere 4 inches at the keystone! The vault which would have otherwise consumed 10,000 bags of cement was built using a mere 33 bags of cement for stabilising the soil mortar. It has been recognized as a model for sustainable development by the United Nations Environmental Programme. Trupti is the youngest Indian woman architect to achieve this feat. She was able to truly innovate and make sustainable building a reality with this and her other projects.