



EDITOR'S CORNER

I happened to be at a conference, HASHTAG '19, at the SRM School of Environment Architecture and Design (SEAD) during mid-March. Addressing the future architects at the annual event at Chennai, I thought it is my responsibility to remind them of the huge role they have to perform in shaping up the economy, protecting environment and projecting a healthy image of our cities as a destination. I asked them a simple question, since I was facing them a little after the 2018 Kerala Floods: "What do disasters teach us?"

During my talk, I emphasised on the urgent need for architects to understand and value the indigenous building traditions, which make good use of locally available materials. I wanted them to be genuinely concerned about climate change and the impact of the built environment on the same.

It is the responsibility of architects to give workable ideas to the common man. For example, it is a matter of serious concern that the 150 million residential and three million commercial buildings in India are posing a serious threat to the environment. To take a case in point, about five billion litres of water per day are used to flush toilets by Indians. The architects should guide people on reusing grey water - which is the waste water from our daily domestic household activities like bathing, washing clothes, dish washing etc. They should also make a strong case for people and institutions to have rainwater harvesting in their premises. The architects should show various ways of preserving natural habitats and curbing contamination of air, soil, and water during construction. It is also important to find alternative solutions to depletion of non-renewable resources and to be considerate about the issues concerning environment, community and occupants.

Being an architect, after every disaster, I analyze the magnitude of the damage caused by a calamity and the ways by which it could have been avoided if the architects were more concerned in their work. Disasters don't kill people, but buildings do!



Warm regards,

G SHANKAR
FOUNDER AND CHAIRMAN
HABITAT TECHNOLOGY GROUP



WRC 2019: THE GENEVA TALK BY G SHANKAR

REBUILD KERALA BETTER:
UNDP SHELTER HUBS

LAURIE BAKER'S 12TH DEATH
ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED:



OVER 1 LAKH BUILDINGS IN 3 DECADES: MEET THE KERALA ARCHITECT'S PIONEERING AND SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE GOAL

From constructing the first township with green building technology in India in 1995 to the largest earth building in the world in Bangladesh in 2006, Architect Shankar has championed the cause of sustainable architecture with his blood, sweat and tears, battling hostile contractors, the establishment and naysayers.

by Rinchen Norbu Wangchuk
June 15, 2019

<https://www.thebetterindia.com/186048/kerala-sustainable-home-architect-plans-world-recovery-method-shankar/>

DISASTERS DON'T KILL PEOPLE, BUT BUILDINGS DO

WRC 2019:
THE GENEVA TALK BY G SHANKAR

"Disasters don't kill people, but buildings do," observed G Shankar while speaking on the importance of rebuilding Kerala that is more resilient to disasters, at the 4th World Reconstruction Congress (WRC) held at Geneva on 14th May, 2019. "Inclusion for Resilient Recovery" was the focal theme of the conference.

"The Chief Minister of Kerala spoke at the inaugural session with great clarity and conviction and the world listened to him! The UN dedicated a special session on 'Rebuilding Kerala'. Aster Care Homes, Chekkutty, and Kattakkada Watershed Management were among the projects that were touted as best practices in the international arena," he said while talking about the Kerala team that attended the WRC.

WRC4 was held in conjunction with the 6th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) from May 13-17. The conference brought together leaders, experts, policymakers and practitioners from government, international organisations, NGOs, academia and the private sector from both developing and developed countries.

A global forum that provides a platform to collect, assess, and share experiences in disaster recovery and reconstruction and take forward the policy dialogue, WRC4 was primarily aimed to build consensus and to renew and accelerate efforts towards realising inclusive recovery processes.



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COVER STORY

LET IT SHOWER

Monsoon, being a season that was once filled with joy and life, has now become a nightmare for most households. The problem of dripping roofs and leaking walls has become unavoidable. Moreover, the 2018 Kerala floods created a lasting impact in the minds of people. With each monsoon, the fear of living inside weak structures has increased. Despite undertaking multiple precautions and measures, there is no end to it.

Habitat is specialised in construction technologies. Its construction methods adopt ecological design based on the idea of sustainability while building residential and commercial structures. This will also not prevent the coming generations from achieving development. Proper research & analysis has helped in developing building technologies that make the products flawless and help tackle obstacles in the future.

Crafting products with perfection is an invaluable quality possessed by Habitat and delivering it at a low cost is an unbroken promise. The green and humane architecture not only protects the families

from leakage, but also tackles flooding through elevated base, a system that allows the flood water to flow under the house. The materials used for construction are simple. These vary from bamboo to recycled wood and compressed mud blocks to coconut shells and recycled tiles. Taking the Mother Nature into account while building structures in order to tackle nature's vagaries, Habitat Technology Group makes monsoon a time for families to live joyously and create memories the way it used to be earlier.

Apart from constructing disaster-resistant buildings, Habitat has an expertise in creating efficient water harvesting & management system, which meets our idea of sustainability. Water is a basic need and depriving one from such a need is tantamount to a crime. Habitat Technology Group aims at building water harvesting structures for a better tomorrow. Creation of proper water harvesting structures helps people conserve water, which can be diverted for future purposes. This method is helpful in addressing water shortage, one of the worst situations mankind is facing and has resulted in millions of deaths. The major goal of setting up a water harvesting system is to forestall a scenario where availability of water is at risk and Habitat Technology Group believes in that.

Celebrate this monsoon with right knowledge. Let it shower, filling us with joy instead of fear and problems, as it was like before.

GOVERNMENT STILL STUCK IN TERMS OF NUMBER: G.SHANKAR

The Kerala Government is yet to make a head start in rebuilding the houses damaged during the devastating floods that hit the state last year, said G Shankar.

The government is still stuck in terms of the number of houses destroyed in the floods, whereas Habitat Group has already completed construction of 1,000 houses in association with various organisations, he pointed out.

Shankar was addressing the National Conclave on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Thiruvananthapuram. The two-day event was organised by the Institute of Sustainable Development and Governance (ISDG) on June 15-16, in association with Plan India, Action Aid India and Bodhigram.



Noting that it was time that architects involved in rebuilding initiatives started exploring options such as "retrofitting", he said the concept has not yet made its way to the vocabulary of many of them. Elaborating on the idea, he said the houses which suffered minor damages could be quickly restored through the retrofitting route. In this way, a large number of houses in flood-affected districts like Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Wayanad had been repaired by Habitat Group under the Shelter Hub Project, implemented in partnership with the UNDP. As part of this, nearly 3,000 families have been instructed on the methods renovate the houses that suffered minor damages. The aim of the Shelter Hub project was to provide one-stop solutions to all shelter-related problems. They completed the project in eight months. It was wound up on June 24.

REBUILD KERALA BETTER: UNDP SHELTER HUBS



The UN partnered with Habitat to launch the UNDP-Habitat Shelter Hubs to resurrect the flood-hit Kerala. With a vision of sustainable construction practices as well as advocating disaster-resilient practices, a total of ten UNDP shelter hubs were set up. These are working as storehouses of knowledge and as a pivotal centre to promote cost-effective and environment-friendly construction practices.

KERALA FLOODS
DISASTER AT
A GLANCE

COMPLETELY DAMAGED
HOUSES OVER 13,000

PARTIALLY DAMAGED HOUSES
OVER 2, 45,000

Our shelter hubs have addressed the need for immediate reconstruction and repair of houses, benefiting 3,597 people. Mason training was a major thrust area and 932 masons got trained in techniques of disaster-resilient construction methods and low cost construction techniques. Day-long workshops saw 60 contractors and 373 civil diploma / ITI students getting benefitted.

Research and survey was yet another major area of work by the Shelter Hub teams. The engineers there mapped 61 Public Lifeline Buildings in the three districts covering hospitals and government schools. The mapping played a vital role in both post- and during disasters,

aiding the local and state authorities to take the necessary steps to strengthen and repair the lifeline buildings.

As many as 100 schools participated in our quiz programme organised in the three districts on 'environmental science and disaster'. Moreover, as part of our community outreach and advocacy initiative, dignitaries like Deputy Magistrates and officers from ANERT and Suchitwa Mission joined our team to voice out to the future and present generations the concerns of our current lifestyle and need for change.

HABITAT'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN 8 MONTHS TO THE PROJECT

ESTABLISHED
10 SHELTER
HUBS ACROSS

- Pathanamthitta
- Idukki
- Wayanad

RECONSTRUCTION &
REPAIR OF HOUSES

- Total of 3597 beneficiaries

TRAINING IN
SUSTAINABLE BUILDING
CONSTRUCTION

- 932 masons
- 219 beneficiaries
- 60 contractors
- 373 civil diploma / ITI students

AWARENESS IN
SUSTAINABLE BUILDING
CONSTRUCTION

- 100 school student
- MAPPED
61 Public Lifeline Buildings
17 hospitals and
44 government schools
- Documented the local practices that have stood the test of time

OUR PROJECTS

ACCEL IT BLOCK: FOUNDATION STONE LAID



Habitat Technology Group was entrusted with the construction of a new block for Accel IT Academy, Kochi in early March. A division of Accel Academy Limited and a member of the illustrious Accel Group, Accel was founded in March 1991 by five first generation technopreneurs under the leadership of N.R. Panicker who had worked together in one of India's Premier IT companies. Today, the group has three independent companies operating in the domains of IT Infrastructure Services, Application Management, Technology Solutions, Digital Media Technologies and Training.

VELLINEZHLY GETS AN OVERHAUL



Vellinezhy Kalagramam near Shornur was opened on 5th March 2019.

A small hamlet on the banks of Kunthipuzha in Palakkad, Vellinezhi is unique for the sheer number of art forms that thrive here. Kutiyattam, Ottanthullal, Krishnanattom, Tholpavakoothu, and Pulluvanpattu are among the 46 art forms (including ritual art forms) which find presence here. With an aim to preserve these art forms, Vellinezhi was declared a Kalagramam in 2012. It is also said to be the village where Kalluvazhichira, the most refined form of Kathakali, originated.

HABITAT HOUSE FEATURED IN MATHRUBHUMI ONLINE



Melethil, a simple yet majestic house in Pattambi, was built under the supervision of engineer Sreejith of Habitat Technology. Designed and owned by Nabeel, an NRI, Melethil stretches over an area of 1875 sq. ft. at Koottanadu. It is built on the four-door concept, allowing light and air to enter the house. Moreover, a higher number of windows have been placed in every room to allow light to enter, which helps in reducing the usage of electric lights during daytime. Due to downsized application of wood and employing sunshades at the very important spots, it required mere Rs 30 lakh to construct Melethil.

PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE SECTION



CENTRE OF TRAVANCORE STUDIES



IDINJAR RESORT, TRIVANDRUM



LANDSCAPING AND REVITALISATION OF IISER, TRIVANDRUM



AIRCRAFT HANGAR - AT AIRFORCE BASE, TRIVANDRUM



NEWS IN BRIEF

HONORARY DOCTORATE FOR G SHANKAR:

Padma Shri G Shankar receives honorary Doctorate from the University of Asia, which is graded as a Tier 1 university in international ranking. He was invited to the Kathmandu campus for the function held on 8th April 2019.



HAB MUSINGS

A new series of weekly conversation sessions initiated by Habitat Technology Group, Hab Musings is held mostly on Friday evenings, at 4'o clock, at Habitat Centre. Anyone who loves architecture is most welcome to join the sessions. The inaugural round was held on 28th June 2019 where two young Thiruvananthapuram-based architects - Jinoj Mathidharan and Thomas Oomen - shared some interesting thoughts based on Alain de Botton's book "The Architecture of Happiness". The book set the tone for the entire evening. The discussion centred on stories woven with architecture. The round table explored this concept within the context of Thiruvananthapuram and an interaction ensued on how to read buildings and the role the architect plays in setting stories in stone.



TALK AT HABITAT:

Jayant Sahasrabudhe, National Organising Secretary of Vijnana Bharathi, addressed the architects and engineers of Habitat on the relevance of Sir Patrick Geddes' planning in Contemporary Indian Design at the Habitat Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.

PUNARJANI TALK:



"The social mobilisation that was witnessed during the 2018 Kerala floods was epic," said G. Shankar at the Punarjani Talks, organised by Janam TV, a leading Malayalam media house. A popular programme, Punarjani is a series of talks for raising awareness on social, cultural and ethical issues conducted by experts.



▲ Photo courtesy: indiaeducationdiary.in



▲ Photo Courtesy: newstodaynet.com

G SHANKAR INAUGURATES HASHTAG '19

The SRM School of Environment Architecture and Design (SEAD) flagged off its annual conference in Chennai on 13th March 2019, titled "HASHTAG '19". The two-day conference showcased the latest developments in the field of architecture and was attended by more than 300 architects from all over the country besides eminent specialists, who talked about best practices, research and innovations in their respective fields. G. Shankar delivered a lecture on "What do disasters teach us?" by taking his architectural projects in disaster-struck environment as examples. Besides G. Shankar, Dr. V. Subbiah Bharathi, Director, SRM Group of Institution; Dr. Ar. N. Jothilakshmy, HOD, SEAD; and Ar. Lokesh, VP (Admin), SEAD also attended the function.

“ Architect Shankar has taken on the cause of sustainable architecture with his blood, sweat and tears, battling hostile contractors, the establishment and naysayers. - **The Better India, June 15, 2019**



LAURIE BAKER'S 12TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVED

The 12th death anniversary of renowned British-born Indian architect Laurie Baker was observed on 1st April 2019. Renowned for his initiatives in cost-effective, energy-efficient architecture and designs, Baker's creations offer maximised space, ventilation and light yet striking aesthetic sensibility.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY ACTIVITIES

G SHANKAR AT IISER: TALK ON "SENSITIZING BUILT-ENVIRONMENT"



▲ G Shankar planting saplings at IISER, Vidhura, Trivandrum.

On World Environment Day (5th June) 2019, G Shankar delivered a Talk on "Sensitizing Built-environment" at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER-TVM Tips), Vidhura, Thiruvananthapuram. He said that construction related operational impacts are causing huge damage to the environment.

Statistics reveal that 1/3rd of all energy consumption, 2/3rd of all electricity consumption, 1/2nd of greenhouse gases, and 35% of CO2 emission are results of operation impacts. Moreover, construction also disturbs natural habitats, contaminates air-water-soil resources, depletes non-renewable resources, and causes community/occupant issues.



WED TALK BY SRIDHAR RADHAKRISHNAN:

A talk on World Environment Day was organised at Habitat Centre on 5th June where some interesting thoughts were shared by Sridhar Radhakrishnan, Programme Director, Thanal and Coordinator (Policy & Campaign) of 'Save our Rice Campaign', and G Shankar. "We engineers and architects have a crucial role to play in the

correction work to protect our environment... If Indians and Chinese, who account for almost 50% of the world population, lived like Americans and Canadians and adopted their standards, then it will require 8 earths as there will be a huge amount of trash or waste thrown out.... About 90% of oceanic birds have micro-plastics in their intestines".

50
sapling
at
50 places



▲ Planting a sapling on World Environment Day at LBS Institute for Women at Poojapura Trivandrum

50 SAPLING AT 50 PLACES

Loknath Behra, DGP, took part in the planting saplings as part of the World Environment Day activities organised by Habitat at his official residence on 5th June. Saplings of guava, pomegranate, gooseberry etc. were planted at Mahilamandiram; LBS Institute of Technology for Women; and ADGP Bungalow, Bhaktivilasom Police Quarters in Thiruvananthapuram

GOOD WISHES



We wish every success to all our dear, hardworking and much-talented outgoing Intern batch.



Susan joined University of South Australia, Adelaide, for pursuing Masters in Urban and Regional Planning.



Amrutha Balan joined Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), Ahmadabad for pursuing her Masters in Urban Planning.



CONGRATS FOR SGPA 10 SCORE



Somdipa Basu
Amity University,
Kolkata



Ashish Supakar
Rachana Sansad Academy
of Architecture, Mumbai



Swapnil
Dehradun Institute of
Technology, Uttarakhand

SANGITA KAPOOR AT HABITAT

Sangita Kapoor, Mumbai-based Social Entrepreneur and Design Consultant, visited Habitat in June to give a talk on the need for sustainability in construction. She works for the sustainability cause by inspiring the influencers and sensitizing students, faculties and industry professionals in the field of design, architecture, engineering and management through workshops.



OBITUARIES

Girish Nair



GLOBAL AUTISM AWARENESS WALK 2019

Habitat joined HOPE - a centre for child development and therapies, to conduct a walkathon for autism awareness. Habitat team participated in the walk from Manaveeyam Veedhi to Museum that was organised in April, the autism awareness month.



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