



Confederation of Indian Industry

Summary

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• **Harish Hande** • **Amit Kapoor** • **Prasad R. Koneru**
• **Ajay Shankar** • **Kushal P. Singh**
Moderated by • **Shreekant Gupta**

Tuesday 18 November
12.15-13.30
building green

Building Green India

Moderator **Shreekant Gupta**, Associate Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore, said that, given the state of environment in the country, it is important to find out what efforts can be made by the construction and manufacturing industry to create a sustainable future, as well as what flaws within the system can be corrected to create green cities in India.

“We cannot ape buildings in the West. We have lost a great chance to create sustainable buildings,” said **Harish Hande**, Managing Director, SELCO Solar Light, India; a Social Entrepreneur. Hande cited the example of Gurgaon, a modern city which is today a nightmare for residents. He said that urban planners and estate developers have given little thought to environmental concerns in Gurgaon. Sharing his vision of sustainable cities, Hande said that the focus needs to be on creating a “green chain” and not merely building green structures. The green chain should help the labour force and even the place from where the labour comes. The key, according to Hande, is to use local material for construction, design buildings that use a lot of sunlight and not to eat into the already depleted natural resources of the country.

A joint effort of the government and private sector can make it happen, asserted **Amit Kapoor**, Professor of Strategy and Industrial Economics, Management Development Institute, India. So far, while the government has failed to define what kind of sustainable cities it envisions, the private sector has also not taken enough initiative in creating sustainable designs or promoting green structures. Cities like Delhi are “unlivable” because of poor civic facilities, traffic congestion and high levels of pollution. It is time to redefine urban development policies, urged Kapoor.

Despite the awry planning, India has an advantage, said **Ajay Shankar**, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India. India has managed to use less energy despite its rapid growth. “As we have been slow to urbanize, we have the opportunity to do things right.”

Green developers have to think of growth horizontally, not vertically, said **Prasad R. Koneru**, Managing Director, Rakindo Developers, India. Builders need to contribute to greening the area where they build. Urban planners also need to tap ways to create better communications networks, such as developing the coastal waterways in India.

The challenge for India is that there is no harmony between infrastructure development and private construction. While buildings come up, the basic facilities are not made available. “Gurgaon is total chaos,” admitted **Kushal P. Singh**, Chairman, DLF, India, precisely because of this gap. He suggested that more awareness about sustainability and incentives to build green structures will help. There is also need for an environment rating agency for buildings.

Panelists agreed that, while there are problems aplenty, a cohesive regulatory system and creation of a master plan for the entire country would help to make a start. While change in policy is urgently required, the private sector and civil society also have to take the initiative towards sustainable development.