

INTRODUCTION TO HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

The attempt to holistic development is to integrate an alternative building process, various appropriate building technologies and renewable energy sources, so as to promote eco-friendly and sustainable development.



Vikas community

In this field earth, as a raw building material, plays a major role, but other appropriate technologies such as ferrocement, biological wastewater treatment, solar lighting, wind and solar pumping are also extensively used.

[Vikas community](#) near the centre of Auroville has been our main achievement. The implementation of the project was based on appropriate architectural design, on which people collaborated with the architect of the Auroville Earth Institute, formerly named AVBC/Earth Unit.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

World Commission on Environment and Development

A few key words

- Respect of Nature but also people
- Needs of people, from most basics ones to economic, social and spiritual growth
- Interdependency, between people and between Nature and people
- Limits of the environment, as the earth resources are limited

Dimensions of sustainability

- Environmental
It requires first a proper management of resources, but also: waste reduction, proper wastewater treatment, low emissions, use of renewable energy and eco-friendly materials, etc.
- Social
It integrates all group categories and levels (ethnic, religious, economic, health, etc.). Quality of life, uplifting local skills, impacts on local communities, etc, should also be taken into account.
- Economic
It promotes endogenous growth, which is linked with the creation of new market opportunities, cost reduction through efficiency improvements, creation of additional added value, etc.

Earth building and sustainable development

Buildings made of earth require a lot of raw materials and this may seem antagonistic to sustainable development. This can be true when there is no care for the management of resources, as it is the common trend all over the world.

The development done at Auroville shows the opposite:

That building with earth can be synonymous with sustainable development and a harmonious integration of buildings in the physical and social environment.

Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children.

Kenyan Proverb

Sustainable habitat

A habitat is much wider than simply the built environment, whether a house, a hospital, a school, or any urban facility. It includes the totality of the environment – not only the physical surrounding but also the social one, our neighbourhood. It takes into account a proper management of resources and development such as drainage and wastewater management

systems, water and energy supply, transportation, appropriate building technologies, renewable energy sources such as sun and wind energy, use of locally available materials and skills, etc.

Sustainable habitat requires a holistic approach. This needs to integrate first the human aspect, which implies a different process, where people's participation is essential for its success. Secondly, only a sustainable habitat needs to integrate various technical parameters, such as:

- Appropriate urban planning – the population in its environment and technical means
- Appropriate architecture design – adapted to the environment (physical, social and technical)
- Renewable energy sources and appropriate building materials
- Management of resources and use of environmentally sound building materials
- Water management – drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting and wastewater treatment
- Earth management when people are using earth extensively as a building material

One should not forget that materials and techniques are just tools to achieve sustainable habitats. It goes further than just structures and urban development, as it deals with social relations and patterns. Habitat and especially sustainable habitat cannot be understood just as a finished product. It is a constantly evolving system and the process to develop it is always essential.

Therefore, the matter is not only to create eco-friendly facilities for everyone's wealth but also to imagine different relations among people – to create a synergy going towards respect on all levels and towards a different lifestyle based on harmony, friendship, disinterestedness and compassion rather than the usual egoistic behaviours of indifference, competition or strife.