13th Oct'22 - Minutes of Meeting – Natural Homes and Architecture Committee

1) Problem - The biggest problem on this planet has been created by building concrete cities by damming rivers and creating reservoirs (stagnant water) and then piping unhealthy chlorinated water to people living in these control matrixes that negatively impacts their health and to add to the problem toxic food, toxic medicine, toxic living conditions and damaging jobs that destroy health, the environment and non-renewable resources of the planet, have become a standard feature of such living ecosystems.

2) Problem - The separation of town (where people live) from country (where food is grown) by the TCP Dept. created long distances and unnecessary daily food miles. Now the daily work of getting food from farms to people's mouths is the highest cause of pollution of air and water by food manufacturing industries from mining metals to construct vehicles for daily food transport, boring more holes in the Earth for crude oil to create petrol and diesel to fuel these vehicles, the entire processed and packaged food industry that causes sickness, depletion of our resources of trees for packing materials, sand for glass containers, metal for tins, and oil for plastic containers and all the garbage created from all these food containers.

3) Problem – A lot of the city's garbage chokes our rivers and finally finds its way to our seas, with unending garbage collection drives going on. The entire sewage system of these cities goes into huge pipes that empty out into our rivers or seas damaging the coral reefs and marine plankton that make more than 70% of the world's oxygen. These cities are slowly going to literally choke all of us to death, even those who do not live in the cities because of the depleting oxygen levels across the globe. The further construction of these cities must be stopped if we want our children to have any future.

4) Problem – All of this was done by capitalists so they could get control of the daily supplies people needed, to make their money and empires, instead of just leaving people alone to create all these products and services in their own localities that would have not created any of these problems.

5) Solution – We now need to build only local self-sufficient living communities, which do not cause all of these problems anymore and also use only natural building materials that do not cause/make more massive holes in the Earth, which come from making cement and iron beams & rods and hundreds of other unnatural building materials for construction. Case in point – a stone and mud house could last for 300 years, whereas modern concrete flats do not even last for 30 years.

6) Solution - This move helps decongest an overpopulated city.

7) Solution – When building natural homes in the countryside, we need to use the native knowledge of building materials and techniques and if possible improvise on them rather than starting from scratch with wrong ideas that are not sustainable for that area. Local materials and local talent must be used to the maximum to minimize labor, energy spent and material miles.

8) Solution – When we build such communities, they must also have all the jobs possible, so that people do not have to travel outside in search of work. Therefore multiple local assets based products and services must be created in the community. Majority of the products can be local plant based. Such details are given in the Eco Village Goa design document.

9) Solution – We need to build more of these living spaces in countries that receive more sunlight than others, where food can be grown almost all year round to reduce food miles that cause the highest damage to this plant.

10) In the community we need to space out the different utility areas like education centers, wellness centers, natural product manufacturing centers, farming and food forest areas, evenly as detailed in the Making New Earth video, so that people hardly need transport vehicles in the community.

11) Solution - If we can build even one self-sustaining eco village as detailed in our video 'Making New Earth' over 1000-2000 acres in every state in India, it would set a very good example for all in our country. It uses local fuel and electricity production and causes no pollution to any of the water bodies and a minimum pollution in the air.

12) Solution – Water from dams need to be released so that downstream river communities can get water and then grow food and other plant based products.

13) Problems in mitigating the damage being done in cities:

14) Problems faced by TCP or Municipalities of cities in giving shop licensees only for scarce products around a living community:

15) Problems in getting people to give up living in concrete jungles in favor of living in the country side:
    a) Separation from relatives
    b) Lower income in countryside balanced by better life there.

16) Problems in creating eco-friendly self-sustaining communities in the countryside:

Arch. Anuradha Guglani - We need to observe traditional systems being used by the locals in a particular region where we want to address the issues of building, we need to check the local resources, local expertise and technologies, and learn from it and apply it to build further on for the future. If it's Uttrakhand or Ahmednagar or any other part of the country, using fixed modern systems of pre-fabricated concrete slabs etc. will not be sustainable as it will require resources & expertise from outside, all this will not only feel and look alien to that climate but will also not involve locals and hence will not be sustainable. So using local expertise of the region, and local talents and materials first is a must and then using the expertise, creativity and knowledge of professionals who believe in sustainability to build further. So building should always be for and by the people of the place. An eco village model will set a good example as people only believe what and when they see, that model can then be replicated in any other part of the country at various scales.

Hyacinth Pinto, 08669295652, hyacinthpinto@gmail.com - All villages were eco-villages before city dwellers brought their cityscapes into the pristine eco-scapes. I am happy to assist with compacted earth blocks and bamboo structures or any sustainable material.

Babs, 09836773276 – Seeking to connect with people who are interested in getting together and working on setting up a rustic & traditional home stay that is a sustainable living project on the mountains of Uttarakhand.

Darshana Muzumdar - It's ideal to develop the land for permaculture or natural farming first then the eco sustainable living home later.

There is a capitalistic and consumerist trap that we are all in, even the farmers today are caught up in this trap. A change in the mindset of a large number of people is what is needed. – Realistically there is no law that can stop anyone from leaving the city and coming to the village and engaging in an eco friendly business. Once that initiates an automatic exodus happens, so it is not that we are cutting down jobs but transitioning them to alternate sources of income, it is just that when we stop feeding one system and start feeding another system. The old systemic jobs automatically begins to reduce itself and those whose income begins to go down can be educated on how to transition to green eco friendly jobs. So the more we share about these alternative opportunities the faster we can get more people to transition to eco friendly alternative ways of living.

Working with farmers who are seeking to build shelters like a Gurukul for young children are finding issues receiving funds and are being forced to choose non sustainable or non eco friendly materials, so how does one guide them and convince them to opt for more eco friendly sustainable materials? – The emergency plan should be that which is a benefit for these farmers and for people from the city, creating a possibility for a better life for them in this village/country side where they can be taken there for a tour or a picnic and these villagers would have these people from the city as their customers where they would require to sell kilos of fruits and vegetables to them, providing the villagers with an alternative source of income and the people who visit this village may also donate to this infrastructure that the farmers wish to build for the young children. The villagers must also understand that there was a time they were all self sufficient, all real wealth in within the nature of the village in the form of natural water, natural food, labour.

Is there a central resource for sustainable housing, to know of what is possible & feasible to construct, to know of the materials involved? - For any help needed or queries to be answered in setting up sustainable eco friendly communities, we have a team of Ar. Tallulah, Ar. Rita Mody, Ar. Hyacinth Pinto and few others and as a group we can help facilitate this in any part of the country or the world to those who are keen on building such communities. One can put forth their queries and we can come up with a list of points or documents to help guide them.

Darryl – We need to address issues of transitioning from an old space to a new space and issues in constructing natural homes on land that we have.

There are certain TCP restrictions such as on orchard lands building of homes on more than 2.5% of the land is not allowed, even if it is a natural structure, so shouldn’t these laws change as we are in need of healthier living spaces.

We shouldn't have to recreate a concrete structure when the time comes to redevelop them owing to their short life span of about 25 to 30 yrs.

We need the committee to look into maintaining the beauty of Goa by preserving its natural homes and building more natural homes instead of concrete structures, we need to have certain laws and policies in place regarding this.

Mark Raj – From a realistic point of view in our current time scenario, if someone wishes to exit from the city/concrete jungle what should that person look at whether it be finances or something else, how would that person transition in today's time? – There are various green businesses one can develop the skills for which are based on healthy choices like water systems, natural homes, growing organic food, natural healing, alternative energy, etc. So an advice to people would be to look into these alternative opportunities, decide in which area they would like to build business lines and it would work out great to go back to one's own ancestral place as they would have their extended family members there and in case one has moved around a lot and do not have an ancestral place or an extended family somewhere, they could get together with their colleagues, close friends or neighbors and discuss with them about what are the destructive issues in today's societies and the solutions to a healthy future based on what is good for our health and that of the planet, show them the video 'Making New Earth' and videos alike, there will be likeminded people who will come forward and choose to take similar decisions. There is no law that would stop anyone from pursuing this.

Arun Bagla – Initially water dams were made to generate electricity first and then agriculture, if the priority is reversed where we put agriculture first and electricity second it will cause much less harm.