

How to Incorporate Vernacular Architecture into Practice for Sustainable Development: Case Studies from Kashmir and Kerala, India

Authors : Debanjana Chatterjee

Abstract : Vernacular settlements in India often take the form that is dictated by the climate they are in. India, with its vast cultural diversity and various climatic regions, offers a wide range of vernacular architecture. This paper focuses on two main geographical regions: Kashmir and Kerala. They bring together myriad challenges of climatic and social characteristics to incorporate into their vernacular architectures, which are still relevant despite the advent of globalization and modernization. Scholars like William Wurster and Catherine Bauer even claimed that all the traditional buildings in these places have the kind of urbanity, which is dignified and elegant but also lively and human that every architect would like to achieve if they knew how. With modernization, and with a greater ease of construction, a reduction in labor, and the apparent robustness of contemporary construction techniques, people have, however, become increasingly tentative in respect of vernacular architecture. And yet modern architecture has typically led to energize intensive structures without much consideration to the location and surroundings of the structure itself. In contrary, Laurie Baker, the British-born Indian architect, had shown us the way to integrate the knowledge of vernacular when he developed his designs based on the traditional architecture of Kerala, respecting the local climate and environment. This paper also explores his technical creativity in his design of Center for Development Studies (CDS) in Trivandrum. Hence, in order to protect and conserve our rich cultural and architectural heritage, the elements of vernacular should be incorporated into the contemporary planning and architecture for sustainable building design. The provision should be made to incorporate vernacular architecture and traditional knowledge in the policies. Ultimately, the policymakers, planners, and architects should consider this incorporation of traditional vernacular and contemporary sustainability in their work for the betterment of society now.

Keywords : vernacular, architecture, sustainable development, Kashmir and Kerala, climate, Laurie Baker

Conference Title : ICBAU 2020 : International Conference on Building, Architecture and Urbanism

Conference Location : Boston, United States

Conference Dates : April 23-24, 2020