

चौबीसवाँ दीक्षांत समारोह
XXIV Convocation

ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS

By

Professor Ravindra Bhan
Eminent Landscape Architect
Guest of Honour



योजना तथा वास्तुकला विद्यालय

4-बी, इन्द्रप्रस्थ एस्टेट, नई दिल्ली-110 002

School of Planning and Architecture

4-B, Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi-110002

**ADDRESS ON THE OCCASION OF THE TWENTY FORTH ANNUAL
CONVOCATION OF THE SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE,
NEW DELHI ON 20TH DECEMBER, 2007**

By

Professor Ravindra Bhan
Eminent Landscape Architecture

It is a momentous day for every one of you who is graduating from nation's prime institution School of Planning and Architecture New Delhi. I am sure you must have been eagerly awaiting for this great day. My congratulation to each and every one of you for your achievement and sincere, best wishes for your future successful career.

While practicing your profession you are invariably going to be involved with development works involving planning, architecture and various design disciplines.

It is a great task in itself which you as sensitive professional have to perform diligently for any planning process restructuring and intervention becomes necessary to find appropriate design solution to new demands of changing times demands of ever growing population, and existing and future market forces.

Any change is bound to alter the environment of the place. For a healthy and a sustainable environment there exists a subtle balance between natural and man made environment. A man is a part and parcel of nature, to separate him from nature is unconceivable.

Indian culture has developed in an environment where normal relationship with nature has been of harmony rather than of confrontation. Nature and man have been inspirable in Indian thought and philosophy our ancestors felt in peace and harmony with cosmic forces of nature and thought themselves a part of this greater whole. This traditional way of thinking has taken deep roots in our culture and day to day living.

It is a matter of great concern that in India we have forgotten our rich tradition of love and admiration of nature we have been treating nature as a commodity and exploiting it for our material gains. We have turned blind to beauty and joy which the nature is capable of providing us. We have become insensitive to the basic

senses of sight, sound smell and touch. It is only through these senses that we can comprehend a place or an environment, not a static entity, but an ever changing phenomenon.

It is obvious that we have to apply ourselves to understand the critical problems which face us while living on this planet earth.

Man nature relationship has been beautifully summed by up none other than J. Krishnamurthy the renowned philosopher "what is your relationship with trees, water, with the birds, with the living things that we call nature.

There is a tree by the river and we have been watching it day after day for several weeks. As the sun rises slowly over the horizon, over the trees, this particular tree becomes all of a sudden golden. All the leaves are bright with life. As you watch them as the hours pass by, an extraordinary quality seems to spread all over the land, over the river. Each hour seem to give the tree a different quality.

Before the sun rises, it has somber feeling, quite, far away, full of dignity. And as the day begins the leaves with the light on them dance and give it that peculiar feeling that one of has great beauty.

By midday its shadow has deepened and you can sit there protected from the sun, never feeling lonely, with the tree as your companion.

As you sit there, there is a relationship of deep abiding security and a freedom that only a tree can know towards the evening when the western skies are lit up by the setting sun, the tree gradually becomes somber, dark closing in on itself. The sky has become red, yellow, green, but the tree remains quite hidden, and resting for the night. If you establish a relationship with it mankind you are responsible for that tree and for the trees of the world. But if you have no relationship with the living things or this earth you may loose whatever relationship you have with humanity and with human beings".

It is hard to believe that Man who has a big head on his shoulders is the only organism on this earth who destroys its own environment ruthlessly.

The degradation caused by environmental deterioration results in tremendous social and economic costs to the community in the long run. Therefore it would be right to say that conservation of our natural and man-made resources is not a thing of luxury which only affluent countries can afford, but it is a vital investment into our own future on this planet earth.

Every thing around us is environment whether it a natural or man-made. For a healthy and sustainable environment there exists a subtle mutual balance between natural and man-made elements of environment.

Although this fact is well known, but still the very planning processes which have developed a sophisticated methodology for taking into account the man-made components of environment have either shown near disregard or have not been integrated in a meaningful way the components of natural environment into planning methodology which consequently resulted in degradation of environment and has affected the quality of life in our living and working habitats.

To understand the natural components of environment it is essential that the natural processes which are responsible for creating a particular environment should be understood.

The understanding of these processes can be comprehended by the help of natural sciences. Rock formation of a place would be understood by science of geology, soil structure by pedology, water quality by study of limnology, climate and microclimate by climatology, land forms by the science of geomorphology, vegetation by plant ecology mammals, birds and fish by the study of animal biology. Lastly the most important discipline of all that is science of ecology which establishes the interrelationship of all these processes with the environment.

Any development creates disturbance of natural system which ultimately leads to the change of environment if not handled with the understanding of ecological parameters. This ecological approach is a holistic approach to planning and ultimately to any design discipline.

The environment is flexible to the extent and can rejuvenate itself provided the man induced changes are such that the tolerance capacity of environment does not exceed its limiting capacity.

If this limiting capacity of the affected environment is predetermined and known then it is possible to induce man-made changes in the tolerant zones of the environment without altering the overall environment of the place for healthy and sustainable development.

It is matter of great pride that this very concept of planning was initiated by School of Planning and Architecture some thirty five years ago in the Department of Landscape Architecture.

I was responsible for establishing this department with the help of Ford Foundation.

This concept of ecology planning gained its relevance and popularity with the publication of the book called Design with Nature by Professor Ian Mc. Harg. This book is considered to be the bible of environmental planning. I was closely associated with the book while working with him at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia for number of years.

I think it would no exaggeration to state that Department of Landscape Architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi is the first Institution to start the concept of ecological planning at academic level in India and perhaps second in the world after University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia -
-- Congratulations once again and thank you.