**Climate Resilient Infrastructure**

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Premium residential societies even in the heart of metropolitans like Lahore; fail to give their residents the lifestyle they deserve despite the exorbitant charges these residents pay in the name of development and maintenance.
The claims of a lush green, clean, secure community are often punctuated by abandoned, ill-maintained swampy plots housing loads of insects. Most of these societies have green belts turning brown due to withered ornamental plants habituated by stray dogs. Sadly, the sense of community is also absent.
In contrast, some societies which boast of health and wellness clubs where one can go for swimming, dining and exercise require the residents to drive several kilometers in the bustling traffic to access these retreats, neglecting the concept of smart living. More troubling truths are revealed as one examines the house construction in societies which generally is about everything but sustainability and climate change resilience. The prevalent construction practices are not only poor but also energy inefficient, wasting massive resources and generating huge emissions.
Therefore, despite the exorbitantly high cost of construction in Pakistan, the end product falls short of meeting any international standard quality of construction and workmanship. The houses are generally cold during winter and hot during summer. They provide no refuge against external pollution, dust, and noise.
The architecture of these houses comes from famous tourist destinations across the globe. Most of the house designs are built just by copying fancy designs from Italy, Spain, England, and France. The problem with this is that the climate, atmosphere and culture of Europe is very different from our country, and this leads to further discomfort for the residents.
For instance, a few weeks ago a friend of mine visited a house in a posh society on the outskirts of Lahore. The houses, although small were built with ultra-fancy architecture including Spanish window designs, Italian kitchens, and French restrooms, and the exterior face comprised of four windows each eight feet high to give it a Mediterranean feel. The house had all the ‘aww’ factors, but everything seemed out of place because of the different weather conditions of Lahore compared to the cities from where the above-mentioned designs were copied. In the scorching summer heat when the temperature soars to fifty-degree centigrade these large panels of the window facing towards the south will not provide any insulation; rather will trap all the external heat coming from the burning sun – turning the house into a glass oven.
Consequently, excessive reliance on air conditioning compels the dwellers of the house to pay hefty bills for electricity. Furthermore, the houses’ interior does not qualify for the general safety of its residents as well. In several instances, the staircase railings are made up of large panels of glass which can break at the slightest hit by kids leading to severe injury. Fir alarms, security alarms, and fire extinguishers were missing.
Yet another eye-soaring factor is that some of the houses have very light external paints. These white-painted external walls do give a royal look, but they are always in need of continuous maintenance and a clean environment – both extinct in busy cities like Lahore, Karachi, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Multan etc. which are ranked with the worst air quality. While buying or constructing a new house, the residents must know that all that glitter is not gold.
In the wake of climate change, the preservation of the environment, achieving sustainable development goals and the assessment of our planet’s overall well-being have emerged as crucial societal concerns. The construction industry is one of the main contributors to energy consumption and pollution emissions consuming one-third of the world’s total energy.
Pakistan therefore needs to shift from convention to climate change resilient infrastructure to foster a harmonious integration among the environment, our landscapes, and human well-being in the construction industry.
Sustainable and climate-resilient house construction and smart communities will reduce the harmful effects of real estate development on the environment and human health while promoting sustainable life