

Essay On 'When We Build, Let Us Think We Build Forever.' Give Your Views on Modern Architecture, Town Planning or Land Utilization

We live in an age of great changes. Never before in recorded history had man ever experienced such a furious rate of development. In less than a century, we discarded the cart for the automobile, the village for the city, the buffalo for the tractor and clean air for factory fumes.

Our country too is presently involved in an accelerated development program. Every day we see hills being flattened and forests being cut down to make way for highways, housing estates, and other projects. The ways in which the land is being utilized leave much to be desired.

Take for example the creation of a housing estate. Currently, the developers use bulldozers to summarily flatten out the land so as to build as many houses as possible. As a result, we get rows upon rows of similar houses standing like huge matchboxes lined up against one another. From afar the houses are an eyesore. There is no hint of individuality. Each house is the same. So the residents engage in renovations to give their houses some semblance of human identity. It is quite a strain to live with a sameness that is all around you. The self-cries out to express itself. Modern houses do not cater to such expressions.

Instead of indulging in continued drabness, developers could build houses with some sense of beauty in mind. They could, for instance, build houses in accordance with the contours of the land. Instead of ravaging the land with bulldozers to accommodate their houses, they could accommodate their houses to the land. Then we would have houses

as well as hills. Why do they have to destroy hills to create houses? Is it not more beautiful to preserve nature than to scar the land indiscriminately?

In cities, the trend is to build huge skyscrapers. The skyline of Kuala Lumpur is now punctured by 'these tall buildings, Whatever grey sky that is above the city is now obscured even more by these buildings. They rise like giant phallic symbols each trying to outdo the others in terms of beauty, design, and prestige. For a while when they are new, they do look majestic. However in a few short years, they inevitably become the victims of neglect and indifference, The once proud building becomes just another building, dull and lifeless,

Would it not be so much better to build smaller buildings that can be looked after easily? In addition to not blocking out the view, they at least retain some air of -friendliness. Huge buildings are unfriendly. Nobody wants to know the other person: Its very largeness makes it impersonal. Who knows what lurks in the basement, or the 24th story? Who cares?

What we build. depends on how we utilize the materials available to us.

We can utilize the land with loving care by not ravaging it. We are of the land and when we proceed to gouge out huge chunks of' earth we are also gouging out our heritage. By all means, build houses and highways. By no means treat the land with disrespect, Houses need not be lined up in straight lines. Highways can curl over mountains instead of cutting through them. We do not need skyscrapers to hide the sun. It is all a matter of choice.