

Sustainable Interiors in Schools

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Abstract

Sustainable Development is the need of the present times. The greed with which humans have used our natural resources has fast changed the scenario around us. In order to create a beautiful modern world we have compromised on so many issues. Schools are the basic blocks on which we lay the foundation of our future generations. We need to ascertain that our young ones should be given a child friendly and environment friendly spaces.

There is a strong need to create awareness on assessing the design features and arrangement of furniture and classroom environment. This awareness has to be generated in the parents as well as all the stakeholders of teaching community. Also a common belief that the Eco-friendly interiors is very expensive is also to be addressed. The study was done in various Play Schools of Delhi and NCR to analyze the role of various design features on the physical and emotional growth of children in play schools by studying the various ergonomic and eco-friendly considerations specific to kid's furniture as well as to gain insight into the awareness levels of parents, teachers and stakeholders of the play schools regarding the same. This research focuses on the spaces such as classroom or learning area, activity area, dining area.

Keywords: Sustainable interiors, ergonomics, environment, pre-school, design features.

1. Introduction

A sustainable interior is an emerging new concept in the wake of sustainable development initiatives taking place worldwide. Children's spaces that are environment friendly and reflective of their physical size and abilities. This not only

heightens their sense of confidence in their ability to perform simple tasks independently but they also grow to become responsible citizens.

In relation with that, there has been a growing interest in furniture design specially ergonomically designed furniture. It is more so important when it comes to children learning and playing in play schools. Young children spent on an average 3-4 hours per day in play schools for playing and studying. If the furniture is not child-friendly, children experience significant musculoskeletal discomfort, incorrect ergonomics and improper posture when using the facilities provided. This makes them loose interest in school life at a very early stage.

Educationists worldwide are raising concern about the child- friendly classrooms, in particular about the study and design of school furniture fitting the student's needs. Children **are** full of adventure and bubbling energy. When we are able to use their energy for creative purpose than they become an asset to the country.

Doors and windows offer a promise of adventure beyond, and are vehicles by which the children may explore and extend their life experiences. A childcare centre without windows and doors would be very dreary and uninteresting, offering little in the way of exploration and adventure.

All doors and windows must open in a way that will not cause injury, using safety covers on doors to prevent little fingers getting caught in a closing door. Providing vision panels in doors allows a person entering a room to see if a child is within range of the opening door. Fire doors must never be locked and must be fitted with an overhead door closer. The use of half doors can be of value where ventilation or supervision, combined with a degree of containment, is required.

Windows ideally should offer views to the outside for all children. Consideration need to be given to security from children's view point and their adventures and innocence. Opening sections must be of safe height to prevent children falling or climbing out.

All the material should be made of environment friendly and nontoxic products.

1.1 Floor Surfaces

Young children spend most of their normal activity on the floor area. The use of natural materials here is preferable for both atmosphere and comfort. Surfaces need to be easily cleaned and maintained. The floor space will generally be subdivided into areas of designated activity. There should be use of logical and appropriate surfaces such as waterproof anti-slip material in the water play/messy, toilet and bathroom areas. Rugs and carpet are appropriate in the rest area.

The use of natural material in carpets is not practical in a childcare setting. Traditional floor materials such as jute and choir should be used for floor coverings. Care must be taken to seal their edges properly to prevent tripping.

1.2 Walls

Great consideration needs to be given to the wall surface, as it is exposed to a lot of activity. Having wall papers which are bright and non toxic should be used. Also the

adhesives used should be non toxic. Walls should have low VOC paints and also they can have spaces to write on them. Designate a pin-up area; otherwise the wall will very quickly look dirty and tatty. Display areas need to be at an appropriate level for the child. Avoid, where possible, the use of a hardboard.

Ideally the floor covering should be brought up to skirting level to maintain a smooth seam. This will also help to give the illusion of space. Where possible, all internal wall corners should be constructed with curved edges. Wall surfaces need to be durable, washable and of a non-toxic material.

Children love to have spaces where they can express their thoughts . All these spaces should be at a comfortable height so that they can easily reach and work on them.

Our traditional methods of whitewashing were highly sustainable and cost effective. The schools should be encouraged to use them with some modern techniques.

Children love bright colours and want changes to happen fast as they are easily bored by the interiors easily.

2. Conclusion

There is an inadequate match between the design process and the imaginative furniture needs of the young child. The study is important to critically look into various aspects related to ergonomic considerations and design of furniture and in play schools as there is gap between the three aspects of design that are comfort, function and practicality. All these three aspects have to go hand in hand to create a This study has once laid the importance of eco-friendly materials as a pre-requisite for kid's interiors. Also, it lays the importance on ergonomically designed furniture befitting the children's standards as per their needs and activities. **Awareness regarding the importance of Sustainable interiors for children** has to be generated at every level. The government must initiate strict rules to ensure the usage of environment friendly products to be used in interiors of classrooms.

It is vital for every parent, teacher, and stakeholder who establishes the child and the school to know about the ergonomic and eco-friendly consideration in terms of interior designing in schools. Hence, it is important for the parents, teachers and stakeholders of the play schools to have awareness and the usage of eco-friendly designed furniture for children.

Manufacturers should be given incentives to encourage the usage of eco-friendly material like jute, bamboo, coir, coconut fibres, rice husk boards in school interiors and making it mandatory for schools to use them

