International Journal of
Sustainable Building Technology

ISSN: 2583-3278
Volume 9, Issue 1, 2026
January–June
DOI (Journal): 10.37628/IJSBT

https://journalspub.com/journal/ijsbt/

Research IJSBT

Green Hubs in Working Spaces: A Case of Indian Habitat Center

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Abstract

The rapid urbanization of cities has turned them into high-pressure environments where environmental and social challenges are increased and need innovative design solutions. This paper considers the Indian Habitat Center in New Delhi as a model for biophilic design in working spaces focusing on how architectural and landscape features influence sensory experiences. IHC is integrated with natural light, extensive greenery and water features that provide aesthetic appeal and also help in maintaining good air quality and well-being of the occupants. By fostering a connection to nature, these design strategies helps to reduce stress and increase productivity in urban settings. These findings point to an urgent need for the incorporation of nature into working settings as a supportive strategy toward healthier working environment. With the rapid growth of cities, adopting biophilic design principles will yield more sustainable urban development that pays attention to ecological health along with human well-being. The IHC indeed serves as a model for future biophilic working space idea in the way it has thoughtfully integrated natural elements into functional, restorative and resilient spaces. This paper calls for a paradigm change in working space to emphasize the importance of nature in the ultimate endeavor of creating healthier communities and a more sustainable future workspace.

Keywords: Biophilic design, Indian Habitat Center, resilient, sustainability, urbanization

INTRODUCTION

The rapid and continuous growth of urban areas has awakened an urgent need for sustainable urban ecosystems [1]. Most of the cities around the world have environmental problems such as air pollution, the urban heat island effect and a tremendous loss of biodiversity. And all these issues are intensified by the ever-increasing demands for resources and infrastructure. In this context, the concept of biophilic design has begun to balance urban growth with ecological preservation through its application by architects and urban designers [2]. Biophilic design incorporates natural elements within the built environment ensuring spaces that would facilitates an interaction between humans and nature while responding to various social and environmental issues. A further new aspects of biophilic principles is the development of "green hubs" within urban areas.

These hubs integrates natural and man-made things making environmental sustainability meet human function in harmony. With integrated features such as greenery, water features, natural aeration and access to sunshine, green hubs contribute to enhancing human well-being and increasing work output while improving resilience in the built environment. Such places therefore play a paramount role as cities are increasing, consequently decreasing the effect on deterioration of environmental impacts, promoting urban working qualities. One great example for this is the Indian Habitat Center in New Delhi. The IHC is a very versatile space for cultural, professional and social events that is considered a shining illustration of the incorporation of the principles of biophilic design [3, 4].

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Received Date: October 22, 2025
Accepted Date: December 23, 2025
Published Date: January 20, 2026

Citation: Dipsikha Oli. Green Hubs in Working Spaces: A Case of Indian Habitat Center. International Journal of Sustainable Building Technology. 2026; 9(1): 1–12p.

The center flawlessly integrates some natural components like lush greenery, water bodies and open courtyards into the building structure. These elements not only enhance aesthetic and sensual pleasures but also provide critical environmental benefits including improved air quality, reduced heat and support for urban biodiversity. Hence, the IHC offers a model for sustainable urban design that illustrates the potential in the use of biophilic principles in the creation of functional and environmentally responsible public spaces. This research paper will explore the biophilic elements in the design of the Indian Habitat Center and their impacts on sensory experiences and climate resilience. It seeks to answer three important questions:

- Which biophilic elements are integrated into the design of the IHC?
- How do these elements impact sensory experiences and climate adaptation?

By examining this, this paper attempts to shed light on biophilic design in real application and its benefits besides its advantages in using the case of IHC. The given research has important implications for modern city development where every step taken in the direction of sustainability counts, both for the environment and human beings.

The result of these studies would be of importance in providing a deeper understanding of the urban planner, the architect and the policymaker as to how biophilic design helps alleviate employee stress problems. These successful research endeavors point at the transformative impacts that occur from the bringing of nature within the working landscape in line with the nature-embedding of cities concept for a highly sustainable, resilient, and livable future.

OVERVIEW OF THE INDIAN HABITAT CENTER

Location and Significance

Indian Habitat Center is located on Lodhi Road, New Delhi which is quite a sensitive area in view of its cultural and historic environment. Essentially, Lodhi Road lies at the very heart of the city surrounded by iconic landmarks such as Lodhi Gardens, Safdarjung's Tomb and several cultural institutions. In this location, it would be easier to access IHC, thus making it a very feasible destination both for locals and for international visitors.

The rich cultural heritage of the area supplements the ethos of IHC which is supportive of sustainable urban development while it nurtures a strong bonding with the surrounding natural environment. The balance on Lodhi Road between greenery and urban infrastructure befits the mission of IHC with regard to integrating biophilic principles into its design. Thus, the center becomes not a functional space but a cultural hub reflecting the coexistence of nature and urbanization.

Besides, the IHC becomes a meeting point for different audiences in numerous events, conferences and discussions on habitat-related issues for professionals, academics and policymakers from all over the world. Being set in an eloquent urban setting amplifies its role as a thought leader in sustainable development and places it as a landmark feature within the landscape of New Delhi.

Architectural Layout

The Indian Habitat Center has been built on a plot measuring 9 acres and represents functionality combined with aesthetics. IHC is designed to become a hub for cultural, professional and social activities: five interconnected blocks that can be used for any purpose from conferences and seminars to cultural exhibitions and performances. This is one of the best examples of modern architecture with environmental principles.

The architectural configuration of the IHC is focused on connectivity and openness. It has several courtyards throughout the complex. Courtyards bring in much natural light indoors and lead to more natural ventilation, creating an environment that is visually appealing and energy-efficient. This design allows for openness which promotes the interaction among the different organizations and individuals that use the space, epitomizing collaboration and exchange of ideas [5].

Regarding Scale and Size

The scale and size of the IHC further undergird its reputation as one of India's frontline convention centers. Its sprawling layout allows the center to hold up to 20 concurrent sessions, thus offering a very versatile venue for events ranging from academic conferences to international cultural festivals. This makes it one of the finest institutions to hold dialogues on habitat-related issues, drawing audiences from all over the world [6].

Orientation

It is the one of the most important aspects in the architectural designing of the IHC; buildings are oriented in ways to maximize natural sunlight for reduced heat gain. As a result, the facilities would be energy-efficient. Further, this thoughtfulness helps to reduce artificial lighting or cooling systems making it one among the models of sustainable urban design. Advanced architectural layout with eco-friendly features was the reflection of IHC towards sustainable and climate-resilient development [7].

Overall, the architecture at the Indian Habitat Center merges scale, functionality and sustainability in a way that makes this building a benchmark in both biophilic and energy-efficient design. Its design allows the IHC to create community through innovative layout while fostering larger concerns of urban sustainability and environmental stewardship.

BIOPHILIC DESIGN ELEMENTS AT THE IHC

Biophilic design incorporates elements of nature into the built environment to create a closer relationship between humans and nature for increased well-being and sustainability. The Indian Habitat Center at New Delhi is an illustration of biophilic design in its sensitive use of natural features in its architecture. By prioritizing natural light, ventilation, greenery, water features, and sustainable materials, the IHC indeed has become an exemplary case of sustainable urban architecture. Below, key biophilic design elements that are integrated into the IHC are discussed in detail.

Specific Central Courtyards

Central courtyards (Figure 1) were one of the signature statements of the IHC's design, which embraced the very heart of the biophilic philosophy [2, 6]. These open spaces have the following functions:

Figure 1. Central courtyard with relaxation area.

- *Natural Light:* The design allows the courtyards to naturally enable sunlight deep into the surrounding building space, reducing the need for artificial lighting during the daytime. This use of natural light reduces energy consumption while visually creating a more dynamic environment for users to enjoy.

- *Ventilation:* Since the courtyards are open, this allows for cross-ventilation, which enhances indoor air quality and maintains thermal comfort in the buildings. Facilitating natural air circulation inside, the courtyards minimize the need for air conditioning, adding to IHC's energy efficiency.
- *Relaxation Areas:* Landscaping of courtyards with native plants also includes quiet areas for users to retire from daily activity. Such areas allow for casual interaction and relaxation among occupants, promoting a sense of community and general well-being.

The central courtyards show how the IHC is committed to developing other functional and restorative spaces that will provide complete interaction between architecture and nature.

Green Spaces

Greenery space is considered a crucial part of biophilic design in IHC, which includes landscaped gardens and rooftop terraces (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Green spaces with seating areas.

- *Native Plantings:* Gardens and roof spaces are planted with species native to the area, greatly reducing maintenance and water demand. Being resistant to local climatic and soil conditions, native plants hence provide a more feasible answer for being non-destructive to the environment. It reduces the environmental impact of the greens while providing corridors for urban wildlife.
- *Leisure Areas:* The gardens, being landscaped, and also terraces, serve users in recreational activities. They go to rest and socialize while building social bonds, reducing tension, and improving mental conditions; thus, a very healthy and pleasant environment was achieved for visitors and employees altogether.

It has been designed to incorporate much greenery, and the IHC contributes not only to beautification but also to serious ecological and social needs.

Water Features

Water features are another integral component of the biophilic design at the IHC. These elements enhance the sensory experience of visitors while providing functional benefits (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Water body.

- *Aesthetic Appeal:* Inclusion of fountains and ponds adds to the beauty of the IHC. One looks forward to the sight and sound of running water as it provides an environmental atmosphere with moments of serenity amidst a busy metropolitan city.
- *Microclimatic Control:* Water features play a functional role in regulating the microclimate of the local area. In cooling the air around them, they help to maintain thermal comfort, especially in hot cities like New Delhi. This attribute of the IHC reveals a commitment to spaces that uphold the comfort of users, even as it prioritizes the environment [5].

Through integrating water elements, the IHC exemplifies how biophilic design can meld aesthetic beauty with functional use.

Natural Materials

Material choices in the construction of the IHC reflect concern for sustainability and regional identity (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Materials used in pavement and buildings.

- *Local Stone:* For example, the use of indigenous materials such as local stone reduces the carbon footprint from transportation and supports regional economies. These materials are environmentally responsible and give the IHC an architectural character both distinctive and in tune with its Indian context [8].
- *Sustainable Resources:* The long-lasting, eco-friendly building materials used give the structures durability without affecting their aesthetic value. This is a responsible use of material selection and also part of wider principles of sustainable urban design.

The employment of natural and renewable materials allows IHC to express resource conservation as an important ingredient in modern architecture.

Natural Light and Ventilation

The IHC's design emphasizes the use of natural light and ventilation, enhancing energy efficiency and user comfort (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Natural lights through courtyard.

- *Energy Efficiency:* Large windows and strategically placed openings throughout the buildings maximize the utilization of natural light. This reduces the dependence on artificial lighting, significantly lowering energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- *User Comfort:* It is a fact that natural light enhances one's mood, productivity, and well-being. These thoughtfully placed openings let indoor spaces be well-lit and ventilated, hence keeping the atmosphere comfortable and healthy to stay in.

The emphasis on natural lighting and ventilation shows how much IHC cares about environmental sustainability and human health and productivity.

SENSORY IMPACT OF BIOPHILIC ELEMENTS

Biophilic design allows for an enhanced sensory experience by making spaces engaging, amiable, and affable according to human nature. At the Indian Habitat Center in New Delhi, certain specific biophilic elements are applied throughout, such as natural light, greenery, water features, and organic material, in a way that will create a multi-sensory experience encouraging well-being and productivity [2, 4]. This section discusses the sensory effects of these biophilic features on vision, hearing, smell, and touch.

Visual Sensory Impact

Incorporating natural light, greenery, and water features at the IHC impacts visual perception. Taken together, these elements present a visually dynamic yet calm environment, which contrasts to the stark and uninteresting vistas common in urban environments.

- *Natural Light:* The architectural design of the IHC ensures that it has maximum utilization of natural light through courtyards and large windows that allow daylight to flood indoor spaces. The abundance of daylight eliminates the discomfort and strain associated with artificial lighting (Figure 6). The dynamic interplay of sunlight and shadow throughout the day creates a visually engaging environment that adapts to natural rhythms, fostering a sense of harmony and connection to the outdoors.

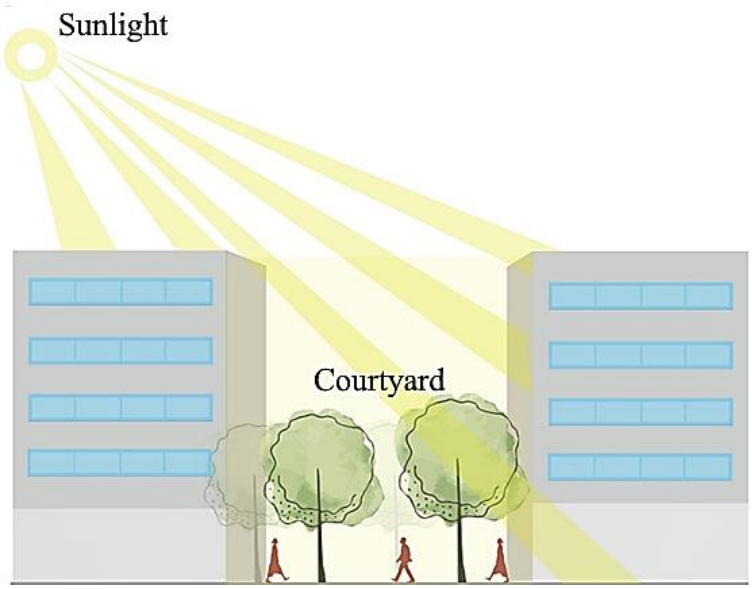

Figure 6. Natural light coming from courtyard.

- *Greenery:* Green landscapes in courtyards, gardens, and rooftop terraces offer visual relief from the tight, concrete jungle of cities. These natural elements have a soothing visual effect on an individual, which in turn reduces stress and promotes mental clarity. The diversity in texture, color, and form of plants excites visual interest and thereby generates a dynamic and constantly changing environment (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Greenery.

- *Water Features:* Water features add visual interest due to the changing reflected surface as lighting conditions change. Riffles in the water create engaging patterns in a pool of water, bringing dynamic aesthetic elements to foster mindfulness and relaxation (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Water features.

By integrating all these visual elements, IHC creates an environment not only functional but also visually restorative to work in and enjoy.

Auditory Sensory Impact

Biophilic design at IHC extends the benefits, even though auditory experiences mitigate the adverse impacts of urban noise pollution. The presence of natural soundscapes offers a calm auditory experience by enhancing one's concentration and relaxation abilities.

- *Soundscapes:* Water features certainly make the acoustic environment a better place. The soft rustling of running or gurgling water dampens out invasive city noises, like those from transport and construction, therefore generating a much more pleasant environment. Natural sounds have also been reported to reduce stress and promote good concentration, which becomes crucial in workplaces (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Soundscape.

- *Natural Ventilation:* Open spaces and courtyards allow for the free flow of air, carrying soft natural sounds of rustling leaves, chirping birds, or the hum of activity somewhere in the distance. Such sounds create an ambient aural backdrop to the sensory experience linking people with nature (Figure 10).

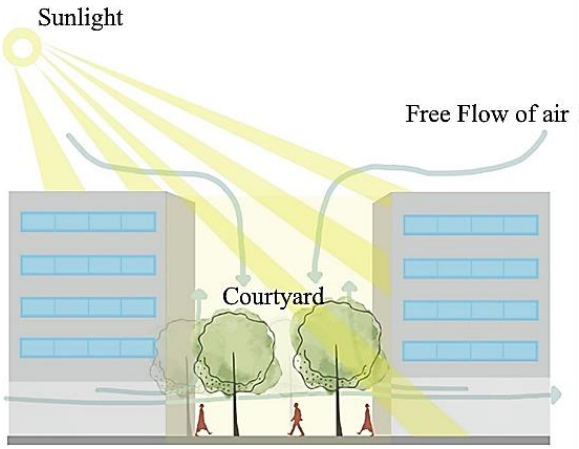

Figure 10. Natural ventilation.

With thoughtful inclusion, the IHC provides an audio environment to support its visual and tactile features into one complete sensory experience.

Olfactory Sensory Impact

While often negated in architectural design, the biophilic elements at the IHC would make sure that this sense is also stirred. From ensuring better air quality to letting in natural scents due to the incorporation of much plant life and water features at IHC, it creates an environment that is tranquil yet invigorating.

- *Plant Life:* The use of native plants in IHC introduces into space various natural fragrances throughout the seasons. Blooming seasons, aromatic vegetation such as jasmine or basil, create a pleasing olfactory atmosphere, giving rise to calm feelings and refreshing the senses. Natural infusion of scents is a way to reduce stress, enhancing the ambiance of this area (Figure 11).

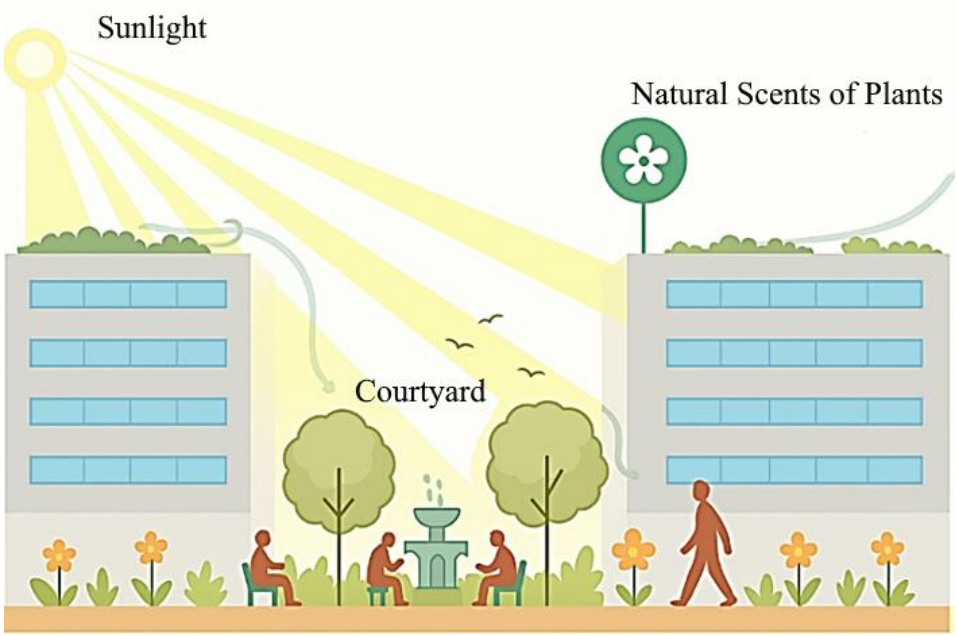

Figure 11. Plant life.

- *Hydro-Features:* Water features add to the olfactory environment by creating a subtle mist that improves air quality. This moisture carries the earthy scent of water and soil, adding freshness to the air. The combination of water and greenery creates a multisensory experience that fosters a deeper connection with nature (Figure 12).

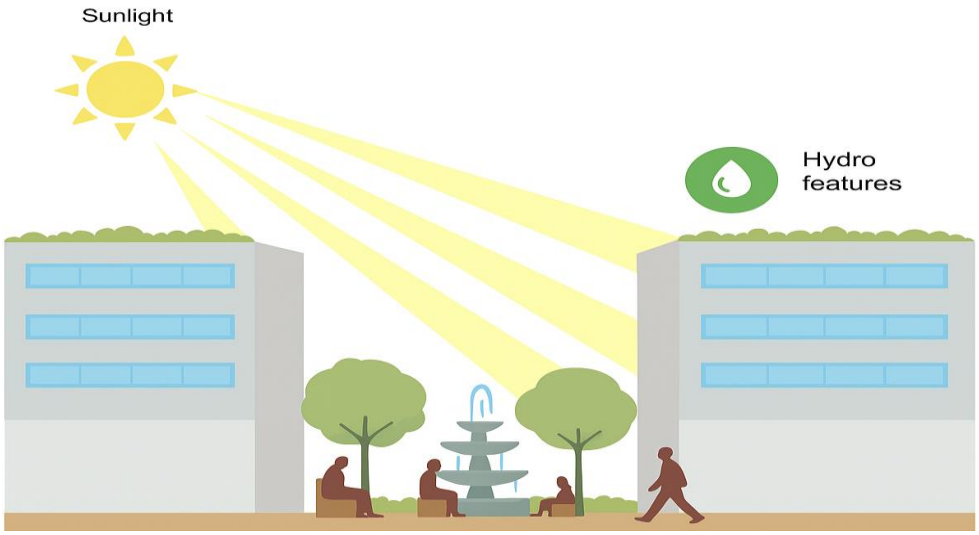

Figure 12. Hydro features.

Through these olfactory enhancements, the IHC ensures that visitors and occupants experience a space that is both refreshing and rejuvenating.

Tactile Sensory Impact

Biophilic design at the IHC also emphasizes tactile experiences, enriching the sense of touch through the thoughtful selection of materials and the inclusion of green spaces. These elements invite interaction and engagement, encouraging users to connect physically with their surroundings.

- *Natural Materials:* The use of organic materials such as wood, stone, introduces a variety of textures that stimulate the sense of touch. Wooden surfaces provide warmth, while the coolness of stone adds a grounding element. These materials not only contribute to the tactile experience but also enhance the aesthetic and sustainability of the design (Figure 13).

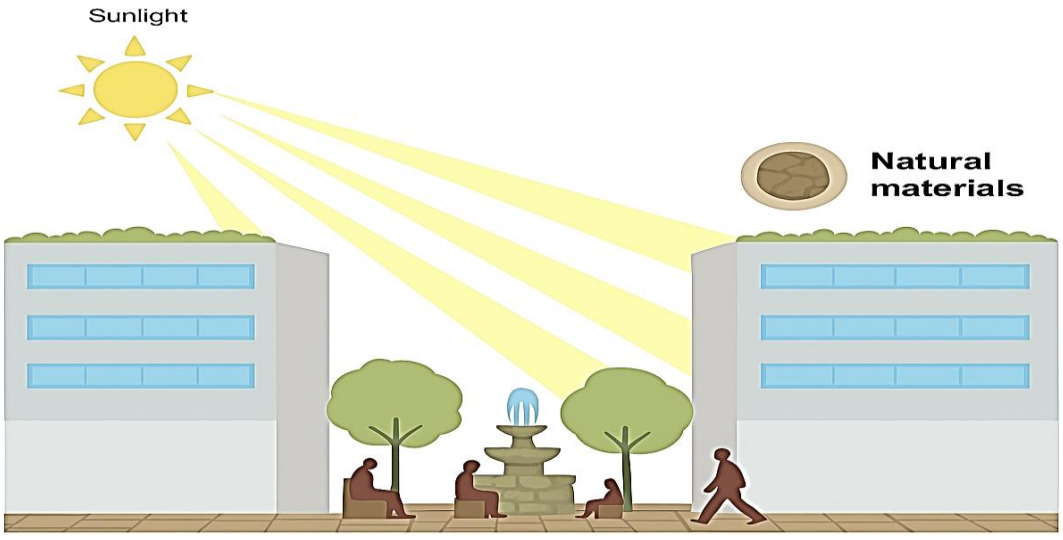

Figure 13. Natural materials.

- *Green Spaces:* Landscaped areas with grass, textured pathways, and other natural features invite direct interaction. Walking barefoot on soft grass, touching the bark of a tree, or feeling the textures of plants are simple yet profound ways to connect with nature. These tactile experiences offer therapeutic benefits, promoting relaxation and reducing anxiety (Figure 14).

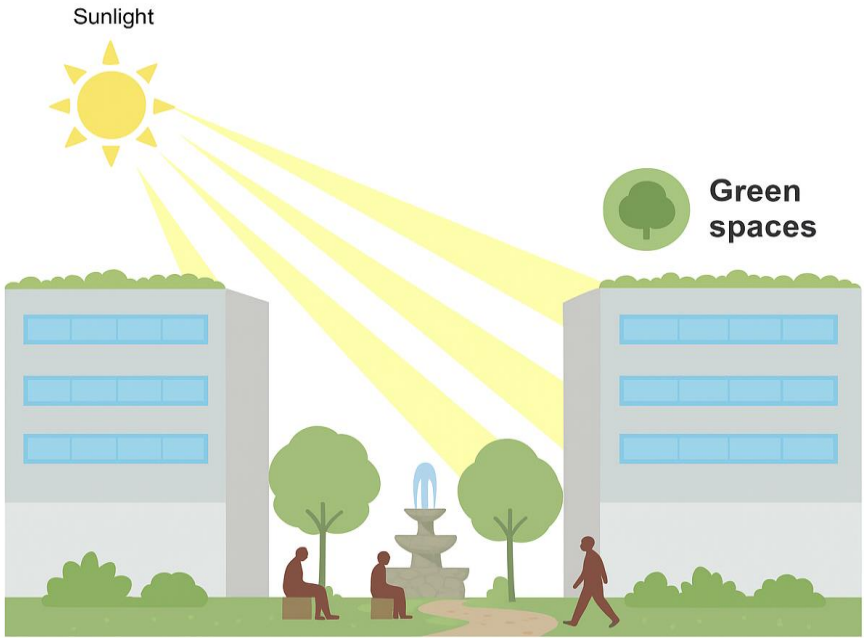

Figure 14. Green spaces.

The tactile elements at the IHC complement its visual and auditory features, creating a fully immersive sensory environment that engages users on multiple levels.

CLIMATE IMPACT OF BIOPHILIC ELEMENTS

Biophilic design at Indian Habitat Center is an active agent in overcoming challenges related to climate, instead of any aesthetic and sensory values. Energy efficiency, mitigating UHI, providing support to biodiversity, and the management of water-all such features facilitate IHC to epitomize the role architecture can and will play with respect to environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

Energy Efficiency

The design on IHC reduces artificial lighting and air conditioners, leading to low energy consumption.

- *Natural Light:* The courtyards, large windows, and optimal orientation of the buildings maximize the use of daylight, reducing the need for artificial lighting during the day [6, 7].
- *Natural Ventilation: Open* courtyards allow cross-ventilation, decreasing the need for air conditioning, especially during temperate weather conditions, which reduces the amount of greenhouse gas emissions.
- *Economic and Environmental Savings:* The energy-efficient measures reduce not only operational costs but also the carbon footprint, which shows the meeting of ecological and financial sustainability.

Mitigation of Urban Heat Islands

The IHC mitigates urban heat islands by incorporating green spaces within dense urbanization [1, 8].

- *Vegetation Cooling Effects:* The native plants in courtyards, gardens, and rooftop terraces evaporate moisture through the process of transpiration and thereby naturally cool the air moving through or near them.
- *Shading and Heat Reduction:* Trees and plants provide shade to buildings and outdoor spaces, reducing the amount of direct heat absorbed into surfaces.
- *Microclimatic Cooling:* These all combine to make for cooler microclimates both inside and outside the IHC, thereby ameliorating urban heat stress found within metropolitan areas.

Biodiversity Support

The usual effects of urban development in disrupting ecosystems are reversed in the case of the IHC, which promotes biodiversity through sensitive landscaping [9, 10].

- *Native Flora and Fauna:* The use of local plants reduces water requirements while supporting wildlife habitats, attracting birds, insects, and small mammals.
- *Creation of Habitat:* Greenery and water bodies provide refuge for all kinds of species, helping to create ecological balance in an urban environment.
- *Ecosystems Preservation:* The IHC promotes ecological balance by preserving natural biodiversity and, in turn, reduces the ecological footprint of urbanization.

Water Management

Water scarcity and inefficient management are acute challenges of urbanization that the IHC addresses efficiently.

- *Rainwater Harvesting:* IHC harvests rainwater for irrigation and other uses, reducing the dependence on external water sources and stormwater runoff.
- *Permeable Surfaces:* The pathways and courtyards of permeable material allow rainwater to recharge the groundwater table, preventing waterlogging.
- *Sustainable Irrigation:* The collected rainwater is utilized for the maintenance of the landscaped areas, ensuring water efficiency with the preservation of greenery.
- *Water Features:* With recirculation systems, water features enhance sustainability while improving thermal comfort and air quality.

OBSERVATION

The tour to the Indian Habitat Center had been an experience of how biophilic design might incorporate nature with architecture harmoniously. The natural lighting, large courtyards and loads of greenery were some of the first things that caught my attention: airy, well-lit atmosphere, hence promoting wellbeing and productivity. Native plants and water features in the central courtyards create an oasis from the surrounding urban noise which is both a visual and auditory relief. This experience is further enhanced by walking on natural stone paths and touching organic materials.

I also observed how the design of the IHC contributes to climate resilience; for instance, greenery in the building helps to attenuate heat and cool the surroundings. Sustainable practices such as rainwater harvesting and native plant species were common throughout the center, touting its commitment to environmental sustainability.

Overall, the thoughtful integration of biophilic elements by IHC not only enhances the sensory experience but also serves as a model for sustainable urban design showing the positive impact of nature-inspired architecture on both human well-being and the environment.

CONCLUSION

The Indian Habitat Center is literally the definition of what is achievable with biophilic design marrying sensory stimulation to sustainability for a space that caters to human well-being and the environment. It effectively integrates natural light, greenery, water features and organic materials into its design to stimulate sight, sound, touch, and smell for an integrated sensory experience that elevates ambiance and encourages an affinity for nature. These elements contribute to aesthetic and sensual satisfaction for its users but also help in keeping the mind and body fit, thus enhancing productivity and satisfaction.

In addition, the biophilic elements at the IHC will be crucial in relation to climate resilience. It minimizes the environmental footprint through energy-efficient design, mitigation of the urban heat island effect, support of local biodiversity, and sustainable management of water resources. Such strategies are indicative of the role that biophilic design can play in aligning urban architecture with wider environmental agendas, and thus in supporting the delivery of key outcomes related to climate change.

The Indian Habitat Center shows the way architecture can harmoniously balance ecological responsibility with user-centered spaces through these design principles. It has been exemplary for urban development in

view of continuous climate change. IHC serves as an exemplary model that depicts ways cities can foster sustainability, resilience, and well-being by proving that environmental stewardship and human-centered design can coexist in meaningful ways.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Bhupesh Garg for his guidance, encouragement and helpful insights during this research. His expertise and support have been crucial in shaping this study.

I am also very grateful to my family, especially my parents (Mr. Opendra Oli & Mrs. Sushila Thapaliya), brother (Neeraj Oli), sister (Purnima Oli) and my friends (Sakshi Verma, Asif khan and Rishab Anand) for their unwavering support, patience and motivation which have been the backbone of my academic journey.

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