

‘Safety through education and propagation, rather than regulation’: Niranjan Hiranandani

MUMBAI, 09 JANUARY, 2015: The new Millennium has seen Mumbai’s skyline change, as the Metropolis morphed from being just the financial hub of the country to a global finance center. This has impacted the skyline of the city in the sense that high-rise towers have soared higher and higher. While this vertical-development is welcome, from the perspective of safety, it brings in the need to educate stake holders as regards safety precautions.

The need to understand different perspectives on handling fire safety issues was stressed on by National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO - Maharashtra) President Niranjan Hiranandani. He was addressing the audience at the Fire Safe Mumbai International Conclave which was held in Mumbai on 07 November 2015.

Lauding the Mumbai Fire Brigade for the manner in which it has always played a crucial role in providing safety to the citizens in various emergency situations including fire and building collapse, Niranjan Hiranandani pointed out that the Mumbai Fire Brigade attended 4,646 fire calls in 2014. This, he said, also underscored the lack of awareness regarding safety precautions among citizens of Mumbai. He stressed on the need to enhance the awareness programs which the Mumbai Fire Brigade carries out, including fire drills, communication to housing societies, seminars etc, so as to sensitise all stake holders. “This would help them take preventive measures, which in turn would minimize such incidents,” said Niranjan Hiranandani.

Presenting the real estate developers' perspective on handling safety and fire safety issues, Niranjan Hiranandani pointed out that around 50 per cent of the city’s population resides in slums. “This very simply translates as meaning half of the population lives under unsafe conditions,” he said. “We have the required technology, design ideas and the willingness to change this paradigm. What we are not able to do, however, is to document properly. From a real estate developers’ perspective, I would say that we have minimal idea about fire codes.”

It was not just Mumbai, but also other cities within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) where the need to improve safety consciousness was important, given that high-rise towers are making their presence felt across the MMR, Niranjan Hiranandani explained the importance of educating various stakeholders

related to aspects of safety, including fire safety. "There is a need to propagate and educate, instead of just regulate. All stake holders, including architects, interior decorators, developers and occupants should be educated with respect to fire safety," concluded Niranjan Hiranandani.

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Niranjan Hiranandani is Founder & MD, Hiranandani Group, his recent initiative is Hiranandani Communities. He is the Founder and First President (Maharashtra), National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO), which works under the aegis of Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.