

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

wrong structural design. We need a sea change in the current way of doing things. This requires overhauling of the entire system of granting permissions for new structures at the city/town level and in the long term, there needs to be a competency-based licensing of structural engineers. While it is not possible to legislate virtue, we could at least try to make structural engineers more responsible for their designs.

During my term as Seismic Advisor in Gujarat for GSDMA, we had introduced an Act for Professional Civil (Structural) Engineers (<http://www.lawsofindia.org/pdf/gujarat/2006/2006GUJARAT19.pdf>) for precisely such a licensing system and regulating the Structural Engineering profession. Unfortunately, the implementing agency did not do its job. We need a similar enabling ACT at the national level. I have been urging authorities at the Centre but we will see if it ever happens.

At SEFI we discuss in detail any building project failure. The role of SEFI is to look at such failures from a more academic, technical viewpoint, rather than play judge and jury to hang the errant designer. We see our role as encouraging good practices of technical design and also fostering an environment of ethics.

Apart from strong presence virtually how has been the advancement in holding frequent face to face meetings?

The beauty of SEFI is that people feel part of a strong community without meeting face-to-face. With over 21,000 members from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, it is perhaps the single largest structural engineering community in the country. In a world where face-to-face meetings are getting increasingly passé, especially in the professional environment, SEFI is not seized of an urgent need to hold such gatherings. SEFI is unique in that everybody in its management works quietly and anonymously. And we intend to keep it that way. The virtual interface is the best medium for the way we work.

How does the body guide designers and improve regarding the improvement of quality? What steps are being taken by the body to bridge the gap between experts and budding engineers in regard to the continuous learning process?

SEFI's greatest strength is the guidance that Senior members provide to young designers. There is a strong mentoring attitude in our Senior members which helps

young entrants in the field not only with technical problems but also in the selection of career, job and other advice.

Implicit in the discussions at SEFI is a culture of integrity and commitment to good structural engineering practices and values, a mission to share new knowledge and expose fellow engineers to latest in the field.

How SEFI as a body taking initiatives to enlighten engineers regarding disaster mitigation guidelines, building codes and other development control regimes?

We have been having e-conferences for over past 15 years on numerous issues of New Codes, Development Control Regulations, Professional Fees, Professional Conduct, Ethics and so on. They are well-archived on the site. You may go to our website to have a glimpse of the same. ■

Structural Engineering Forum of India

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