GLASS AS A BUILDING MATERIAL
An Ecological View

by

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Abstract

Throughout the history of architecture, building materials define the character of the architecture, e.g., stones of the Pyramids, the steel trusses of the Eiffel Tower, the concrete of Corbusian architecture to the modern glass curtain wall buildings of today.

With the versatility of coating, tinting, tempering and laminating as well as the different details of structural cladding systems, the potential of glass building façade is limitless. However, in the tropics, a comprehensive analysis of the material's properties, human comfort factors and construction details play a significant role in the successful use of glass as a building skin which is a time responsive, variable quality skin system that can also be interactive, reflecting the media revolution brought about by the information age.

Glass makes the building hot! In addition, it adds to the cooling load. These are some of skeptical comments on using glass as a material. So is it psychological or factual? Greenhouse effect and problem with glare have been experienced. However, with the different technologies of glass e.g., the application of coatings (spectrum selective), heat reflective, double glazing etc, solar light and heat can now be regulated to achieve a desirable micro-climate in the workspace.

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