

# GYPSUM:

## THE NEW AGE MATERIAL



**Sapna Kulshrestha**

The construction sector in India has witnessed a number of new trends, technology advancements and innovations across applications, all aimed at making construction faster and delivering higher performance. According to Architect Rupam Dey, "One such practice that has started catching on in India, has been the trend of gypsum plasterboard-based drywall construction."

Gypsum products have often been used in the construction space because of gypsum's unique properties. It has excellent thermal and acoustic insulation properties and can offer very good passive fire protection, moisture resistance, impact resistance and vapour control, when used in combination with the right systems. Drywall systems, as the name implies, employ water-free construction techniques and consist of a combination of steel framing and gypsum plasterboard wall surfaces. Given its advantages, drywall technology is fast becoming the norm, vis-à-vis interior wall construction. "Gypsum plasterboard systems are light weight, very fast to erect and provide huge labour saving and flexibility in construction," explains Venkat Subramanian, MD, Saint-Gobain India, a market leader in gypsum products.

As the buildings of the future will continue to be taller, more stringent fire safety requirements and acoustic comfort would be needed, thus making traditional construction materials obsolete. Gypsum plasterboard-based drywalls have the benefit of being eight to ten times lighter than masonry systems and allow three to four times faster construction. They also offer superior acoustics performance in terms of absorption and insulation and up to four hour fire

sum drywall solutions give architects the flexibility in terms of designing spaces of the future," says architect Suman Dua.

The acceptability of gypsum products has risen significantly over the years, as the Indian construction sector has gradually started adopting materials and methods used in the developing world. Initially, the trend started with large office spaces such as in the IT sector. However, in the recent past, this trend can also be



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rating. Moreover, since gypsum products are recyclable, they also contribute towards the green/sustainable building construction approach.

All over the world, reinforced gypsum wall panels are being used as a replacement for brick and mortar construction and are even used for floors. "Over 80 per cent of all interior construction in the developed nations use drywall techniques. Gyp-

seen in other sectors like hotels, hospitals, industrial units, etc., driven by the need for faster and light weight construction that provides high performance at the same time.

With an urgent need to reduce the huge carbon footprint generated by the construction of buildings, adoption of clean and energy-efficient systems, like drywalls, seems to be a step in the right direction.