

FOCUS



THE INDIAN INSTITUTE
OF
ARCHITECTS

STUDENTS e-NEWSLETTER

Vol. 01- Issue 02 - 2022

FOCUS

e-Newsletter of The Indian Institute of Architects brought out by IASA, with focus on activities and interests of students of architecture.

Contents

1. Letter from President IIA	03
2. IASA Committee and Members	04
3. Editor's page	06
4. Urban Regeneration of Egmore - SEAD, SRMIST Chennai	07
5. An open letter to Students of Architecture – Ar. Anjan Mitra	10
6. The City of Dreams - Vinya V, RR SoA, Bengaluru	12
7. List of Affiliated Institutions - Additions	14
8. I was a student once ! – Ar. Gita Balakrishnan	16

Letter from President IIA

Dear Students,

Greetings!

Student days are the best in one's journey and I hope all of you are experiencing that.



IIA organizes programmes at the National, Chapter, Centre levels for its members across the country. Students are also given an opportunity to participate in these programmes by the organizers. This will be beneficial for the students as they experience the developments in the profession and academics from eminent architects who make presentations and share their works and experiences.

I invite each one of you to become a Student member of IIA to be able to participate in these programmes.

Improving one's knowledge and experience is a continuous process and I hope each one of you is striving hard to utilize your time to get best out of your academic and training period.

Writing and documenting your work, articles and expressing your skills will stand you in good stead in the long run. You can all contribute to the Newsletter, in coordination with your faculty, to the editor of our Newsletter. Selected items shall be published in the "Focus", the soft copy students newsletter of IIA, which is sent to all Institutions affiliated to IIA.

Good Wishes to all of you.

Ar. C. R. Raju
President, IIA

IASA Committee and Members



Prof. (Dr.) Ranee K Vedamuthu, is the former Registrar, Anna University and former Dean, School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University. Currently she is Director, Mohd.Sathak Academy of Architecture, Chennai.

She has an academic and professional career spanning 39 years and has a number of publications to her credit in peer reviewed indexed journals and has guided several Ph D Researches.

As an Executive Committee member of the Indian Institute of Architects, she chairs the Affiliation of Architectural Institutions Board.



Ar. K. Senthil Kumar has a B.Arch. (1989) from School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University. & Masters in Landscape Architecture (1991) from S.P.A..Delhi He is Principal Architect of his Firm Senthilkumar & Associates, Chennai, and has won many awards.

He is the immediate Past Chairman of IIA TN Chapter & ISOLA TN & Pondicherry Chapter; He is now Vice Chairman of Institutional Affiliation and Students Affairs Committee (IASA), IIA. & President - SAPAA, School of Architecture & Planning Alumni Association, Anna University.



Ar. Geetanjali Kapoor is Professor & Researcher at the Institute of Architecture, Chandigarh University, Mohali, Punjab and also a Practicing Architect. She has an overall experience of around 18 years in the field of Architecture, Profession and Academics.

An Associate member of Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Fellow of Indian Institute of Valuers (FIOV) & General Secretary of Ludhiana Architects Association (LAA), Punjab, she has been awarded for her contributions in integrated upliftment of the Architecture fraternity and continuously playing an active role in conducting meetings, events and other field related activities for strengthening and general awareness in the field of Architecture with the "Certificate of Appreciation 2019" - IIANATCON 2020.

IASA Committee and Members



Prof. (Dr.) Rama R Subrahmanian is professor and Dean, Dayananda Sagar College of Architecture, Bangalore.

With 38 years of professional and academic experience, she has presented number of papers in Conferences, has published number of papers in reputed journals, and has contributed to international publications.

She has undertaken research projects for Govt. agencies and is research guide and mentor.



Dr. Sanjib Nag is B.Arch. (1989) from Jadavpur University (J.U.), Kolkata, & M. Arch. (1991) from S.P.A., Delhi and Ph.D. (2012) from J.U., Kolkata.

He is Professor & former Head, Dept. of Architecture, Jadavpur University- Kolkata

He has more than 10 years of Industrial Experience, in India & abroad; and 21 years of Teaching Experience, in best universities of the region. He has presented number of papers in Conferences, has published number of papers in reputed journals, and has contributed to a couple of books.



Ar. Vibha Shrivastava has a B.Arch. (1993) from NIT Raipur & M. UP (1995) from S.P.A., Delhi. She is Principal Architect of Vibha Shrivastava & Associates, Bhopal since the year 2000.

She is Vice Chairperson of IIA M.P Chapter; and has been Executive Member (2015-2017) & Treasurer (2011-2013) too. She has also been Treasurer (2013-15) of IIA Bhopal Chapter. She was awarded the Best Dream Home Award by Ultra Tech Cement in 2014, and the IIA Recognition Award for services rendered to the fraternity

Editor's note

The second step of the journey cements the path

We are privileged to share the second Issue of FOCUS, the Students e-Newsletter of IIA, featuring stalwarts and activities!

This bimonthly committee e-newsletter is brought out by IASA-IIA, the Affiliation of Institutions and Student Affairs wing of the Indian Institute of Architects, and is meant to connect academia and profession through communication of news and information of mutual interest.

The committee for IASA was formed in 2021 with the following as members:

Chairperson	-	Ar. Ranee Vedomuthu
Vice Chairman	-	Ar. Senthilkumar K.
Members	-	Ar. Vibha Saxena
	-	Ar. Rama R. Subrahmanian
	-	Prof. Sanjib Nag
	-	Ar. Gitanjali Kapoor

This committee was instituted in 2021 to expand the activities of IIA to students and Schools of Architecture and integrate Education & Profession, while making the IIA more visible to the architectural Institutions and its students.

It's heartening to note that the number of Schools of Architecture affiliated to IIA has increased to 104, with more applications to affiliate in the pipeline.

This e-Newsletter features student centric write ups on activities in Schools of Architecture, talks, outstanding students and alumni, etc. We look forward to disseminating news from affiliated Institutions, and hope to connect the two Universes.

Sharing the words of motivational speaker Jim Rohn here
'Whatever good things we build end up building us'!

Rama R Subrahmanian

URBAN REGENERATION OF EGMORE

THE URBAN CONTINUUM OF EGMORE: MAPPED AND REGENERATED

The IV year B. Arch students of School of Environment Architecture and Design (SEAD), SRMIST Ramapuram, conducted an Urban Study of Egmore, Chennai under the supervision of Prof. P. Venkatesh Babu, Prof. M. Shanthini, Prof. Sankeerani Shrinivasan, Prof. S. Pongomathi, and Prof. S. Sanchana.

Towns, cities, streets, and public areas are all part of urban design. The art of making places is the collaborative, multidisciplinary process of sculpting the natural environment for life.

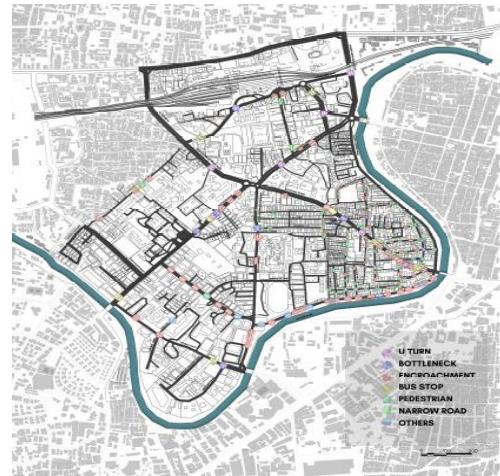


Figure 1 NODES AND LINKAGES -EGMORE

The creation of frameworks and procedures that will enable successful development by various people over time, as well as the design of structures, groups of buildings, spaces, and landscapes, are all part of urban design. Urban Design Studio is one of the most interesting and intriguing programmes of architecture where students learn the aspects of livability and planning on a practical ground.

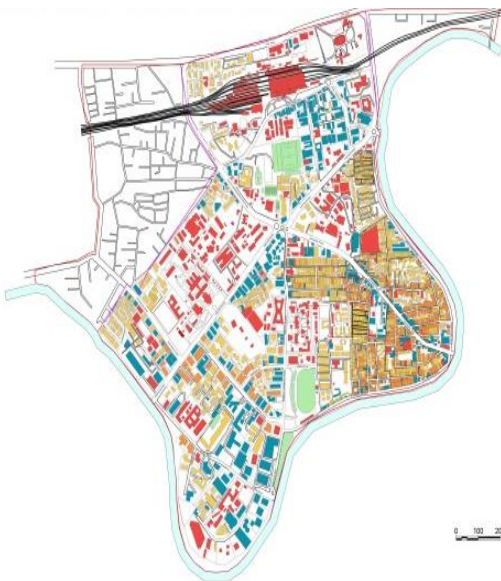


Figure 2 CURRENT LANDUSE-2022 EGMORE

INTRODUCTION TO URBAN REGENERATION

The thematic focus of the studio was Urban Regeneration. Urban regeneration is a tool to transform and repair the physical, environmental socio-economic and cultural aspects of the neighborhood into a sustainable community for the future. The theme's significance was explained to the students through case studies, lectures, discussions, and brainstorming sessions.

Egmore is a fully formed neighborhood on the verge of transformation as a result of new development agendas and regulations. It is a diverse collection of businesses, residences, schools, entertainment venues, heritage neighborhoods, and multicultural communities. It

also houses the city's largest multimodal hub. Additionally, it is also a place where heritage meets modernity. The aim of the studio was to conduct a detailed analysis of the way these two factors relate to one another and how they affect the growth and development of this multimodal hub.

The studio conducted a comprehensive study of specific elements of the contemporary urban environment in the neighborhood of Egmore, Chennai. The specific study was based the

following urban planning parameters:

Masterplan, Standards & Legal Frameworks

- Physical Mapping
- Transport & Infrastructure
- Socio-Economic
- History & Urban Imagery
- Heritage & Conservation
- Environment & Ecology

The study focused mostly on historical, current, and potential future changes in this area. The students transformed the data they had gathered into understandable maps, sketches, pie charts, models, and video and photo documentation. In addition to visual observations, surveys, interviews they were also encouraged to use equipment like data loggers to record temperature and humidity readings as well as android applications to record noise levels.



Figure 3 EVOLUTION OF BLUE GREEN MAP- EGMORE

The study helped identify opportunities and challenges in the planning criteria previously mentioned.

Morphological studies, walkability, connectivity, pedestrian studies, accident and crime studies, intersection studies, cultural practices and patterns, public space behavior, economic patterns and enterprise trajectories, physical character and imageability, environmental impact studies, climate analysis, identification of violations of laws and ordinances, and so on were all performed on the data collected.

These opportunities and challenges were then turned into proposals, such as the regeneration of cotton alley using container architecture, Pedestrian bridge across Gandhi Irwin Road for easy access from the Egmore station, WASHroom-SEating-BOoth (WA-SE-BO), which is a compact unifying capsule for the comfort and safety of the police officers, alternate heritage trail and an Urban Eco Park with a focus on sustainable development goals.

THE EXHIBITION

The outcome of the studio culminated into an Urban Studio Exhibition in the form of panels,

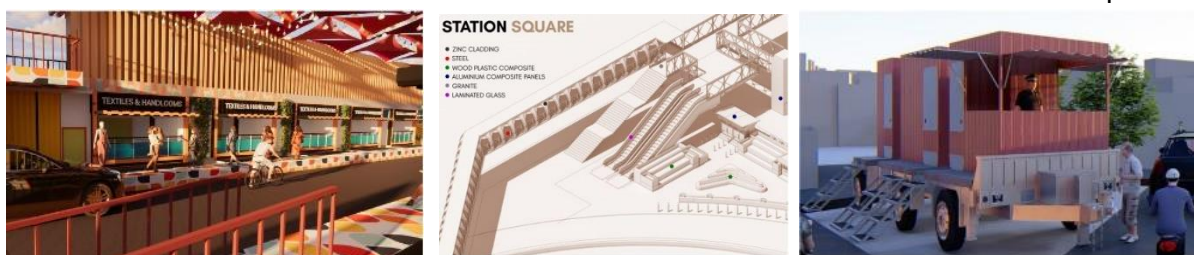


Figure 4 URBAN DESIGN PROPOSALS

physical model and video presentation at 'The Plaza', Egmore Museum Complex from 12th to 16th of May 2022 which was inaugurated by The Director of Museums Dr. S. A. Raman, IAS along with Dr. Jaffer A A Khan, Dean, SEAD, SRMIST, Ramapuram.

This exhibition was successful in drawing the attention of the public and in creating a network of local and national urban designers and experts in the built environment. This occasion was intended to be a turning point, the start of a future tradition of information sharing through open displays of student work. The exhibition hosted around 500 visitors. Honourable Tamilnadu school education minister Thiru Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi graciously accepted the invitation and visited the exhibition on 14th of May 2022. He appreciated the effort and work the team of students and faculty had put into documenting a part of the city and displaying for public understanding. This exhibition, the first



Figure 5 SCHOOL EXHIBITION

of the many more in the anvil from the institution has definitely kindled the thoughts of young minds and future torch bearers of the society and has also brought positive and encouraging feedback. The 5 day exhibition was concluded with a valedictory ceremony which was presided by Ar. Sujatha Shankar, Convenor INTACH Chennai Chapter and Dr. N. Sethuraman, Chief Director, SRM group of Institutions, Trichy and Ramapuram campuses.



Figure 6 TN SCHOOL EDUCATION MINISTER'S VISIT

THE TEAM



Figure 7 Ar. SUJATHA SHANKAR AT THE VALEDICTORY EVENT



Figure 8 IV YEAR B. ARCH STUDENTS & FACULTY TEAM OF SEAD, SRM IST RAMAPURAM

An open letter to Students of Architecture

My dear students and the future Master Builders ...

“Strong minds discuss ideas, Average minds discuss events, Weak minds discuss people”
Socrates

I invoke this word of wisdom in this special letter to you all with lots of expectations and hope. It is you, who will be shaping the future and charting out memorable paths to experience life in its totality by shaping engaging built forms. This is a huge responsibility and a challenge, and I can only share my experience of what to look at and to figure out how it can be .

Up until now, we, as architects, have become the conduits of development. We have let others decide on the overall pattern, the form, and even the expression. The conventional pedagogy and practice of architecture has become very limited. It has almost become like providing a service - ultimately creating ecologically disturbing, environmentally unsustainable, socially disconnected and incompatible built envelopes. For the sake of professional dignity and effectiveness, we need to challenge this limited understanding of architecture. We need to change the perception of the profession and reclaim our place in it - a form more similar to the earlier role of Sthapati or the Indian Master Builder. In this role, architecture becomes a process of engagement, an elaboration of the traditions of building - holistic, sensible, and responsible.

Yes, you have guessed it right. We need to rethink architecture, and the way you all practice is critical to this recasting. We must believe and develop concepts that go beyond the limited conventional forms of architecture and make the best use of both creative thinking as well as existing assets. In a way, our work is comparable to that of a master composer of an orchestra, who tunes all the notes, harmony and varied soundscape into a soulful, beautiful, meaningful experience. It was the role of the Sthapati, and moving forward, this must be the role you take. Our present practice in architecture emphasises development of a physical package utilising the maximum allowable footprint to suit a particular purpose for a predefined target group. We are to coordinate with various service professionals (as we are increasingly dependent on the artificial environment) for our spaces to perform and meet functional requirements. In the process we have completely by-passed our design obligation to its larger context(s) - natural, social, or environmental. We now concentrate on visual aesthetics, facilities, carpet area and internal comfort. Most of all, we focus on the presentation. Moving away from a discipline that at its core encapsulated the ethos of making livable, convivial spaces - the Architect's task now focuses on obtaining the necessary approval and clearances from municipalities and competent authorities. Unfortunately, the Architect is therefore paid accordingly, varying from 05% -1.5%. of the project cost. The percentage gets reduced proportionately to the size of the real estate projects, larger the size lesser is the percentage. This is a further detriment, preventing us from spending time on a project, thinking through its various design agendas. We become passive spectators, not active agents in helping the actual manifestation of this idea.

In metropolitan cities, architects are often compelled to provide their services on square feet of built-up area, thus ensuring maximum utilization of FAR. The contractors take up the maximum responsibility of implementation and can generate a minimum profit of 30% of the project cost. New intrusion in this field are the project managers, who monitor the overall construction management. They are in-charge in most of the medium to large greenfield projects.

Mired in this world where multiple professions operate and share the process of shaping the built environment, design often takes a backseat. Even interior design projects are now primarily product driven. New concepts, such as the concept of a Green Building that has been promoted as a model of sustainability, but in reality, it is only interested in selling certain kinds of products, thus negating the very essence of sustainability. In all of this, the fun and value of design loses its purpose, and architects lose their agency and role in shaping the built environment. We must change this process of Architecture.

Most appropriate Idea always evolves out of the constraint. We must incorporate value in the way we design and build. We must regain the dignity of architecture through a role reversal and assume the role of Master Designer / Builder. It is our task to assume the overall responsibility of developing a socially connected, cost optimized, environmentally conscious and ecologically sensitive built environment. Future architects need, foremost, to be responsible human beings - compassionate and conscious in their acts, skilful and resourceful. We need to create our own destiny, develop our own projects and truly practice being responsible.

Let us see how this changed perception can add value to our profession. We have inherited a huge building stock but all we can think of is its displacement. Most of these buildings have fulfilled a purpose and is now in need of maintenance and repair. However, we are not trained in maintenance, or for that matter, upgrading of this old stock. With intelligent design intervention we can make them appropriate for a suitable habitation and thereby convert possible waste / liability to valuable assets. Conservation, Restoration, Retrofitting is thus a new arena where sensitive architectural interventions can prove to be sustainable as well as effective. Interior projects provide exciting opportunity to design and build. We don't change the buildings, but we can always change the way we engage them. Commercial interiors pose complicated design challenges. One needs to have a good understanding of visual communication, concepts of lifestyle, fashion trends, contemporary aspirations, and the intangible aspects of life. It is the ambience that matters. Here we can put our design thinking to identify appropriate solutions that work. Performance and useability should be the benchmark of a good design. Then there are opportunities for new additions, infills within a given context. Residential architecture is always challenging. Here, we are responsible for improving someone's life, meeting their aspirations. Design is always an evolving process and a collaborative one. When practiced as such, it is also sustainable. The fees may come in many forms - trust, respect, money, and joy. All of these are valid and should be acknowledged as such. We can share our knowledge, our consciousness towards nature and everything natural and enjoy building a sustainable future for our clients/users.

This is a rigorous process. To become a Good Architect – a Sthapati, one needs to first be a sensitive human being, a keen observer. We need to exercise both our creativity and our rational mind. After all, design is thinking rationally, it's about making the right choice that creatively resolves to establish an order - socially connected, environmentally inclusive and critical in generating an immersion in the joys of life. There are architects who have travelled this path, we can look to them for inspiration. At the end of the day, every architect has a right to decide on their destiny, one should be passionate enough to try. After all, Design is, and should remain, a fun process.

Good luck, happy designing. You all have a unique future; I wish that you make it bright!

Anjan Mitra / The Appropriate Alternative

The City of Dreams

Vinya V – RR SoA Bengaluru

This work 'The City of Dreams' is to give a clear understanding of Utopian cities and the need for change in city planning. It describes various Utopian Architects and their visions using few examples. The work also describes Utopian cities and the current change required in city planning.

"Could Utopia be a whole New World or is it the future of this World?" A lot of authors and scientists claim to say, "Utopia is a dream." One such author was Sir Thomas More. He was the first person to write about utopia in 1516. The word is used to describe a perfect imaginary world. More's book imagines a self-contained community set on an island journey, in which people share a common culture and way of life. He coined the word 'utopia' from the Greek Ou-topos meaning 'no place' or 'nowhere'. It was a pun - the almost identical Greek word EU-topos means 'a good place'.

Inspired by More's theory, Sir Ebenezer Howard was the first to publish about the Utopian Cities. "Garden cities of to-morrow," was the concept proposed. The proposal describes a utopian city where people live harmoniously together with nature. He also shared his visions of the garden village, urban design, and suburbs dealing with gardens. It is considered one of the most influential urban planning ideas of all time. The result of this publication gave birth to an era of utopian thinkers.

Paolo Soleri was one such extreme utopian architect who spent all his life in Arizona designing utopian cities. He designed a city for about 900,000 inhabitants. The design had huge structures that would house a large population at a time. The city was named Arcosanti, which is located in the middle of the Sonoran Desert. The designs were radical and extreme in planning. The city was incomplete, but we must agree for it to be a good start. In this evolving system, "are the algorithms today more than mere technology?"

Well, Wright knew that only when values are put first will technology become a tool rather than a master. Frank Lloyd Wright had a belief that structure and space could create, cultural values that led to creating entirely new types of architecture. He designed a city called "Broad Acre City." The key principles remained simple and his concern was towards harmony within built and unbuilt spaces. The design was used in a lot of suburban areas. Although the plans were made efficient enough, the design suffered a lot of criticism. They said, "Design being made for the machine era, had no inclusion of railroads, streetcars, major or minor roads and no traffic movement allowed within the city?" Wright always believed that a city is not an arrangement of roads, buildings, and spaces. It is a society in action. He believed his cities provide the space, freedom, and beauty necessary for the growth of the individual.

In contrast to Wright's thinking, was another utopian architect who shared a vision of the rapid movement potential of automobiles. Le Corbusier, the Swiss-French architect said, "a city built for speed, is built for success." Chandigarh is the first city in India designed with automobiles in mind. Chandigarh continues the tradition of alternative cities. Le Corbusier conceived the master plan of Chandigarh as analogous to the human body, with a clearly defined head (the capital complex), the heart (the city center), lungs (the open spaces), the body and limbs (housing categories), and the arteries (networks which flow through the city connecting to bring

people into). Today Chandigarh's population has risen to 1.2 million, more than twice the number it was originally planned to hold. The city serves as the regional center for cultural, economic, and social activities.

"Did Le Corbusier even understand the religious contexts of India? Was the city just built for the rich?" were a few criticisms made by people. The fact that Corbusier had ignored around 56 villages around Chandigarh had hurt the emotions of the people living there. Few also added the city was a perfect grid with chaos. Corbusier's ideas have failed in the city's airport design. They said it was simply too big. The wide avenues are remarkable but the distance to travel between places is long. Deep down the truth is that no one was ready for the change.

As mentioned earlier, utopian cities bring a new change. Most cities built over time are concerned with the needs of humans. Urban Utopian cities are built quickly based on the architect's vision. Sometimes the architects get it right, but in a few cases, we get architectural splendors although it serves no function for the people. The world needs Utopian architects and planners. The idea of Utopia does not lie just within architecture it is seen everywhere.

There are five types of Utopia; moral or ethics, political or social, ecological, religious, and science or technology. The Utopian city has no fear of death, any hierarchy, babies being genetically engineered and drugs being legal to gain a euphoric feeling, were a few conjectures made by historians. It is not considered normal at present. The journey in accepting the Utopian beliefs is long. "Would society be ready for these changes shortly in the future? Or would it stick on to the traditional methods? Is it Utopia or Dystopia?" Well, the New Age of Wonderment is upon us!

REFERENCES:

<https://youtu.be/MgwSOVN0NiM>

<https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item126618.html>

<https://youtu.be/n20ZbRJyKPM>

<https://youtu.be/NJKgkvlaXeM>

LE CORBUSIER Chandigarh and the Modern City -

Publisher : Mapin Publishing Gp Pty Ltd (May 16, 2010)

About the Author:

I am a student, pursuing my bachelor's degree in RR School of Architecture. Currently, I am in my fourth year. I enjoy reading a lot of journals and novels. This was my first ever writing experience. The context of Utopia has caught my mind, and I simply couldn't stop myself from doing more research about it. With the help of my lecturer Sir Nikhil, I have tried sharing my knowledge as simply as possible through the article. I hope you all enjoy reading it.

List of Affiliated Institutions - Additions

Department of Architecture and Planning, Birla Institute of Technology (BIT), Mesra, Ranchi

The Department of Architecture & Planning was established at BIT Mesra in the year 1993, in keeping with the multifarious scope of Architecture & Planning as the art and science of designing spaces and adding value to a meaningful, built environment. It is a subject which is a combination of faculties of engineering, science as well as arts. The programme is a balanced combination of all these streams, yet follows a unique pedagogical methodology that is its hallmark.

School of Planning and Architecture (SPAV), Vijayawada

School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, (in short SPAV), was established on July 7, 2008 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoE), Government of India, as an autonomous institution. SPAV is a premier Centrally Funded Technical Institution (CFTI) directly under the MoE, for excellence in the fields of Planning and Architecture. Although in its nascent stage, with experienced faculty and guest lectures by eminent visiting faculty and industry experts from all over the country, the quality of education imparted and its focus on research puts SPAV in the league of leading institutes in the country.

SPA Vijayawada is one of the three institutes of national importance, under the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, offering education in the fields of Planning and Architecture. The School has distinguished itself and has grown as a role model in the professional education offering undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral programmes in the fields of planning and architecture, while at the same time fostering quality research in these domains. SPA Vijayawada is ranked one of the best technical institutes in the country by National Survey and Ranking, India Today Group, as well as holds the **8th Position in NIRF Ranking nationwide for Architecture**. The campus is green rated and is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure such as hostels, central library, ICT enabled teaching atmosphere, high end digital surveillance systems, modern laboratories, spacious studios, classrooms, open air theatres, auditorium, cafeteria, outdoor sports facilities, etc.

School of Environmental Design and Architecture (SEDA), Vadodara

The School of Environmental Design and Architecture (SEDA) is at the forefront of cutting-edge innovative design education. Creativity and critical thinking are the bedrock around which teaching is organized. The unique features of SEDA are the intensive use of workshop for Studio, Construction and its History based courses.

SEDA's dynamic and challenging curriculum is led by the school's highly accomplished faculty and guest lecturers, who are also working professionals and experts in their field of specialization. Students' creativity and critical thinking capabilities are enriched through extensive design investigations and explorations, to not just expand their knowledge, but also to confront the complexities of the modern built environment.

Our students learn to respond to our natural environment and cater to spatial needs and aspirations of individuals and the society. SEDA has some of the most talented and passionate, internationally acclaimed faculty members, who not only teach but also practice architecture.

The School has been established to offer broad-based education in Architecture and Design keeping the future needs of the industry and the concerns of the society in mind.

School of Architecture, Dayananda Sagar Academy of Tech. & Management, Bengaluru

The School of Architecture, DSATM was established in the academic year 2011-2012 and imparts a five-year Bachelor of Architecture degree. We have a student capacity of 60 students. The course is affiliated to Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belgaum, Karnataka and also recognized by Council of Architecture, India.

The architecture course prepares students to see what architecture does for the built environment by proposing ideas that are innovative in their aesthetic and cultural contribution and that can inspire the social imagination. Our distinguished faculty pushes the boundaries of knowledge in our fields and promotes innovation in the practice of architecture and planning. Be it the classroom, the design studio or the community, the students will be immersed in new research related to concerns of the built and social environment, and in the midst of some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. The faculty members, highly qualified and experienced, are committed teachers who leverage on each other strengths to achieve the vision and mission statement of the School. The Faculty is specialized in various domain areas namely; Urban Planning, Habitat Design, Sustainable Architecture, Landscaping, Housing and Interior design. Eminent practicing architects visit the school to teach studio subjects like Architectural design, Basic design and Building construction.

The department has spacious studios and class rooms and equipped with state-of-the-art equipment like LCD projector and computers. The department also houses a well-equipped climatology lab, material museum and Exhibition Hall.

R V College of Architecture (RVSA), Bengaluru

Over the course of two and half decades RV College of Architecture (RVCA) has earned its reputation as an institution firmly ingrained in pedagogy revolving around academics, research and consultancy. At present it is globally recognized as a centre of excellence and quality education in the field of Architecture and Urban Design. With its devotion towards the cause of learning architecture, the institute has constantly strived towards bringing together academicians with diverse specializations, academic rigor, self-criticism and self-evaluation with a determined objective of shaping the attitude and work ethics of young minds.

The institute is also proud of its team of highly specialized faculties with diverse work and academic experience who constantly contribute to research and actively participate in the development and upgrading of teaching tools and education quality by instilling academic rigor in the study, critique and design of urban environs.

RVCA's uncompromising stance towards quality in architectural education sets our students apart, and has also earned our students and faculty several accolades over the years.

Sir M. V. School of Architecture (Sir MVSA), Bengaluru

Sir M V School of Architecture is located on the reputed Sir MVIT Campus, in Bangalore, in the state of Karnataka founded by Sri Krishnadevaraya Educational Trust. The institute offers 5-year B.Arch., Degree in Bachelor of Architecture, approved by Council of Architecture, (CoA), Govt. of Karnataka and is affiliated to Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belgaum. The Bachelor of Architecture professional degree program, aims at enabling students to develop an analytical and sensitive approach towards design to make them responsible future generation architects.

I was a student once!

Ar. Gita Balakrishnan



College life is probably the most enviable as well as the most challenging phase in life. Envable because of the excitement it brings with it – the excitement of discovering new frontiers, exploring yourself, walking new paths and forging new relationships. The world seems to be your oyster and yet that is what makes it so challenging – the surfeit of information, the responsibility of making decisions along with the distractions and uncertainty that accompany this age.

If you are a student in the first year, coping with the transition from school to college can be quite stressful, particularly in a field like architecture that not many can prepare you for. You have probably moved away from home for the first time and are also coping with a huge difference in lifestyle and academic pressures. But this is also a rather crucial time when you develop your love for the profession that you have chosen or that has chosen you. It is important for this love to be nurtured and you could do that by reading a variety of books, articles and magazines on architecture as well as allied fields to understand the different disciplines that architecture brings together. Knowledge is said to be power. Knowing more certainly helps build a confident you.

The habits and processes you build in college life will stand you in good stead as you grow into a professional. Study the work and the philosophies of different architects. Keep a journal and note down what appealed to you and what did not; what you agree with and what you do not; what you believe in and what you do not. Capture what you observe when you visit a building or your experience of a space through a verse, through sketches, with your lens. Go back to your ruminations in your journals, your sketchbook from time to time and you will see the trajectory of your growth. Do you like it? Are you at peace with where you are headed? No worries if you are not, you can always pivot and change direction. Find mentors who will encourage you in this process and those that create an environment for prolificacy.

Find yourself. You do not have to follow the herd. While the onus of good designed buildings lies on architects, the need to work on the aesthetic sensibilities of the public at large and efforts to make a difference to those who cannot afford design are equally important. The “power of one” cannot be demonstrated more than in the case of Laurie Baker who single-handedly, at least in the initial years of his life as an architect, demolished the myth that one architect cannot make a

difference. He believed strongly in what he did and did only what he believed in and that made all the difference.

If young professionals and to-be-professionals were to pause and reflect on the current scenario in our architectural world you will realise that you have not inherited a treasure trove at least in recent years and any attempt to resolve the situation will mean a lot of hard work. But there is hope, if you make a picture of what you would like to see a couple of decades from now when you will be at the professional prime of your lives and work with determination towards that healthy picture. Spread messages on that picture and influence more to join the bandwagon to bring in that change.

I was a student once and I am still a learner! Change being the only constant, I need to keep learning to adapt and align my thinking to the change. My thirst to evolve makes me open to receiving. Every one of us knows something that the other does not and hence we are teachers and learners all the time. Let me give you an example – our design problem for Transparence a few years ago was A Mother and Child Hospital and I asked Ar.Sanjay Mohe to be the curator for the same. His response was so revealing- he said, “We have done a few research institutions in healthcare but not a hospital ourselves and hence I would need to educate myself to be able to set a brief.” Someone who has close to 40 years of experience and is one of the finest architects of our country is still learning!

The stipulated practical training semester should be designed to garner an understanding of the profession and one’s role in it better; to grasp that every line drawn, every brick laid has implications not only for the building it defines but its surroundings, the community around it, the laborers who are building it, the factories from where the materials would be arriving, the trends, the market, the environment besides just the client one is designing for. We are fortunate to be in a profession where with every action we can bring about social change. It is a privilege and a power to be used with severe caution. Every line that you draw can mean a change in someone’s life – in the way they are to live; every material that you specify could influence the economy. A building has the power to influence the lifestyle of those not just using the interiors of that building but even those who interact with it from outside. Your design does not and should not end with your site boundary.

In case, you choose to move into ancillary fields such as construction or project management – even then you have an important role to play – in the way the site is managed, the construction force is educated on their tasks – is it just instructive or interactive or are they not in consideration at all? Do you think of the living conditions of the laborers? Do you think of their families? And if you choose to get into the teaching profession – you can make the biggest change there – by sculpting the change-makers you are training to understand the power that they wield.

We, most often do not comprehend our complete potential. It is like how I use my mobile phone. Many of the younger generation tell me that I use it only as a phone and have not understood all its features. And I, in turn tell them that they have not understood all their own features and are not using themselves to their fullest. My message to you is to explore yourself today and every day and you will find new things every time and you should use your different talents and skills not just to your advantage but also to make that difference.

You are at a stage in life when you want to soar, fly and run. However, I advise you to walk! Walk the city your college is in. Walk the town where your parents live. Walk the village where you go on a study tour. Walking helps you closely observe life, lifestyles and people. After all that is what your designs are supposed to address – better the quality of life of people after understanding how they live. Walk with your senses and you will grow in sensitivity, in intelligence, in knowledge. Walk and you will build the empathy you need to be a good architect.



IIA-IASA

FOCUS-Vol.01, Issue 02-2022