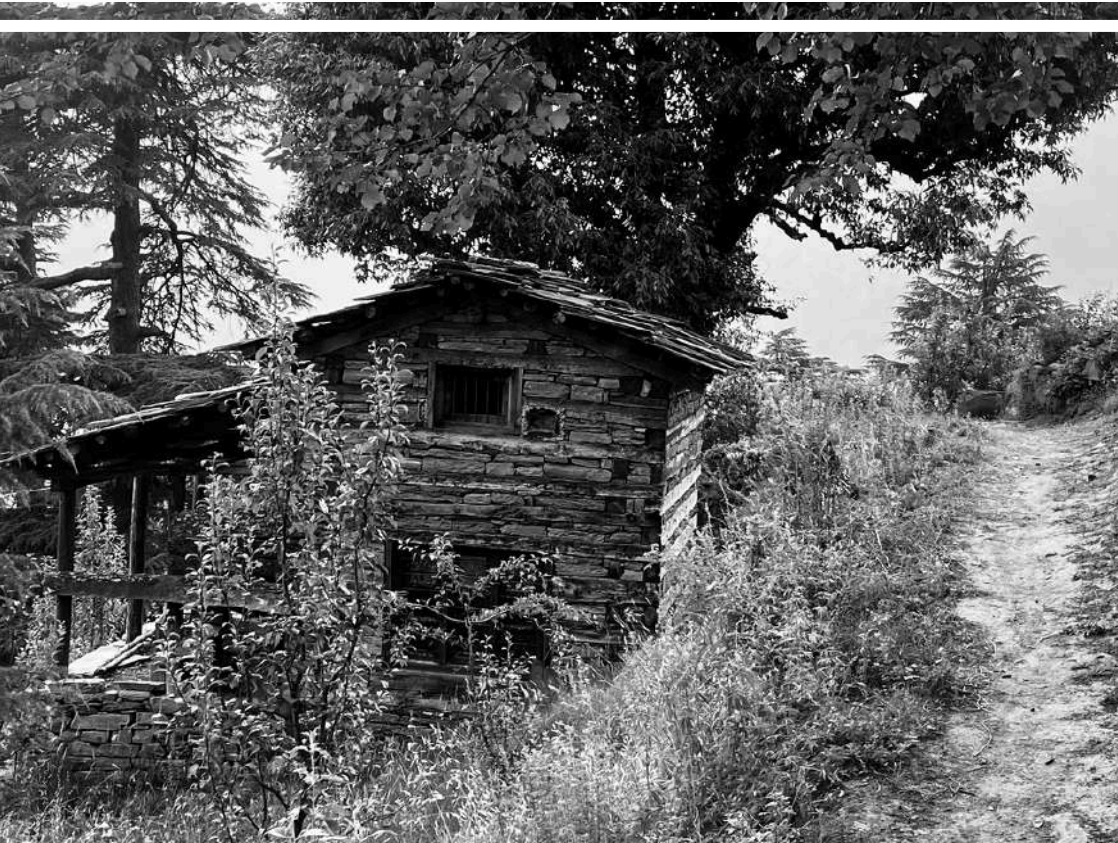


ARCHITECT DIALOGUES

In conversation with Gur Rehmat Majithia





THE BOOKLET

This booklet is a curated compilation of insightful and thought-provoking interviews that I had the privilege to conduct. Within these pages are conversations that delve into the minds of some of India's most respected architects and design innovators—visionaries who continuously shape the landscape of contemporary architecture and design. Their reflections, ideas, and experiences offer a glimpse into the philosophies that guide their work and the creative processes that define their practice. This collection seeks not only to document their voices but also to inspire new ways of thinking about design, space, and the built environment.

THE INTERVIEWEES

**JASPREET
TAKKAR**

Founder coVeda
Education: BArch

**AKSHAT
BHATT**

Founder, Architecture Discipline

Education: TVB School of Habitat Studies
& The University of East London under Peter Salter
& Michelle Roelofsma

SONALI RASTOGI

Founder Partner, Co- Founder Morphogenesis

Education: BArch SPA, Delhi, GradDipl (AA),
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ARUN REWAL

Lead Architect and Urbanist, Arun Rewal Associates

Education: BArch SPA, Delhi,
MSc in Architecture Studies & MA in City Planning MIT.
Academic course work in Chandigarh College of
Architecture and GSD, Harvard University.

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JASPREET TAKKAR

Founder coVeda

Education: BArch

Architect, Author, Educationist - Published Catalogue for the conference “Celebrating Chandigarh” marking the 50th anniversary of the conception of Chandigarh, a modernist city in India designed by the legendary architect Le Corbusier. Focuses on the achievements and flaws of the city’s design and its relevance to modern urban planning.

Q.1 What is your design philosophy?

I don't see my philosophy, my design philosophy different from myself, from my state of being at this point of time. I am an architect and so its my philosophy in life and in existence, its that life in existence is what I apply in my design. My particular philosophy is to be whole and to think in context to everything. I like to become wide and to be able to see so much wider to find answers in context. Now what it actually means is to know yourself well, as to who you are.

When I came back from the US I really had to explore myself, in terms of my identity. I began questioning my identity. I am not Western. I am not Indian. Who am I? I am not Indian. India is a big vast country. I don't associate with that so much. I am brought up very westernized in my ways, yet I'm not western enough to be called a Westerner. I would say I am a coming together of the east and west, of a whole bunch of values existing in a certain environment and I'm a contemporary architect. Contemporary to myself. Progressive thinking yet connected to the context. I am not running away from the past also. So that is who I am. My design is originating from me in context to my state of mind and the whole environment around me.

Q.2 What are the changes you have seen in the built environment and what are your views on that?

The environment is actually all connected to society. There have been huge social shifts. We ourselves as societies have become very external to ourselves. We move a lot in material and form. And there is a huge shift in society related to material and form. Initially we were all really connected to ourselves in an idea and we were expressing ourselves and our ideas. But now a lot of it is just external. It's an expression of another's form and using certain materials. So first the material and form came out of an inner need. But now the architecture comes out of the use of that form. That's a huge shift that has happened and that is a social shift. When I was growing up I wore what I felt totally connected to and I made it the way I wanted to and I still do that.

Currently there's a lot of things going on out there, it is what you see on others that you find nice. You just see the form of others and you like it, so you leave yourself outside of that. You say that will look very nice on me. It doesn't come from your want of that form. You just adopt an existing Form as that is the done thing. So it's a complete opposite direction/flip-over.

But have I started practicing like that? No. I haven't changed because I have my own philosophy. I don't agree with that external form because I kind of define architecture a certain way. For me architecture is an experience in space. Now if I am imbedding an experience in space, the Form should come out of that. So it's not that a form is made and then experience is embedded in it. I have to understand the users and then embed that experience in space. It's a different way of looking at it. It's like vernacular architecture that you must have seen in the rural regions. And you can practice it as contemporary because that's the only thing that feels connected to you. That's who I am.

Q.3 What is the role of sustainability and technology in architectural practices?

Sustainability and technology are both absolutely critical in architecture. But for me as an architect sustainability can only happen if it originates from me. I cannot put sustainability into a form. Sustainability is of the people who are going to live in it, the experience of those people and it's the whole thing that you're creating for them. I am talking about this holistic thing in context. If you are looking at the whole in context then it's sustainable because you are looking at this individual being a part of this whole system, it must be everything, it must be sustainable. If we design/ create in isolation, not as a whole, then it's non-sustainable. Technology is any technique to do something. Technology can be high or low tech. Generally technology is conceived to be the Western high tech model. Low tech can also be great technology, like making bamboo places is also technology. Sustainable technology in a context then becomes critical.

talking about these gadgets and computer technology, I consciously don't use it ,my team uses it. They use it as a tool. Technology is amazing as a tool as long as you are controlling it because you can do so much more with it. But if you get overly dependent on it, it replaces you as a designer. It takes you away. The form takes over the space. You can't allow technology to take away your imagination. I believe that you visualize the home and then detail the parts.

For me I prefer that image in my head and I like to experience space in that form.

With technology that image is taken away and you start believing that you are not good enough to generate that form. You know the 3D will work it out and then you'll work on the 3D and take it forward, which is ridiculous because you're the designer! Technology is only a tool. It should not become the design basis and limit your creativity in any way.

Q.4 How do you see architecture evolving in India?

There are a couple of things. Everything will evolve based philosophically on where we are as a nation. None of us have one philosophy, but largely, there's a social, economic and cultural agenda based on which architecture evolves. If you look at the economic base of India, it's capitalist. So that'll influence architecture to a great extent. The capitalist model as dictated by the world is going to be more prevalent in form and material.

But the reality also is that there is a larger number of people here than in the West. People are working in varied pockets. Because people here are securer and based in remote corners, they are able to see design more centrally and regionally. And philosophically, if as a nation, if we do not change over, it's not going to be to our advantage- we are 70% rural. Even the urban people are coming full circle now. There has been a shift in the last 70 years. There are a larger number of people than in my time who are thinking of stationing themselves within the Indian ethos. The educated lot of India who were into a western external mode, are now looking internally, mindful of their being, finding their identity and appreciating the pros of the region. The change is coming about faster than ever. Design is moving in the direction that is more contextual.

In my mind it'll be a good combination of the sustainable, modern and the vernacular.

Q.5 What do you think are important attributes and skills required to become a good architect?

In my opinion the study of philosophy to help you become a thinker. Thinking skills are very necessary to know who you are, to find your identity. It is important to find yourself as a human being and to centre yourself.

That way you will not be swayed by the cacophony of ample styles and designs, colonial, postmodernism structuralism and so on. You may be modernist, vernacular, contemporary, whatever..... that's who you are, that's how you think because you're the one who is actually translating space into built environment. The role of an architect is to translate people's needs, their wants and their desires into form. You are giving that form. If you are merely replicating a form then you're an engineer, not an architect, there's a difference!

All building is not architecture. Building is only an object of art. Architecture is a building which raises your mood, raises you to another level. Just like all writing is not poetry. Poetry is what takes you to into another realm. So the experience of architecture, as opposed to a building, is that what takes the experiencer into another realm. This raises them above into another experience. That is what is architecture. Its only people who are connected to themselves who can create architecture because the spaces they create will be so in tune and so in sync and so in harmony.

Without an architect, there can be no architecture. An architect is a person who has to have the knowledge of subjects like history, geography, building material sciences, their application and above all the vision to integrate all that knowledge and put it out. An architect has to have the ability to create an experience like an artist: a dancer so to say, who has the ability to make the spectator/experiencer experience that 'rasa' in space!



AKSHAT BHATT

Founder, Architecture Discipline

Education: TVB School of Habitat Studies
& The University of East London under Peter Salter
& Michelle Roelofsma

Featured in Forbes Bold Club: Top 30 under 45 Indian Architects and Designers (2023), Akshat Bhatt is among India's most influential contemporary architects. His work has received global recognition, including commendations from Fast Company's Innovation by Design Awards (USA), the Architecture MasterPrize (USA), and the INDE Awards (Asia Pacific).

He has also been honoured with the Elle Deco International Design Award (EDIDA) India, Kyoorius Design Awards (for social impact), a commendation from the Indian Buildings Congress, the NDTV DAA Architect of the Year Award, seven listings on AD100, thirteen IIID Awards, and citations from the National Gallery of Modern Art, Alliance Française, and the Government of India.

An accomplished photographer and musician, Akshat brings a multidisciplinary perspective to his architecture, blending art, design, and cultural insight in every project.

Q.1 What is your design philosophy?

What got me started into architecture was the colourful stationary and what got me hooked were these buildings in England around the turn of the millenium. I got the opportunity- like they say to meet your idols when you are young if you can- to meet these enthusiastic designers like Norman and Foster Rogers. I backpacked to cities in Europe alone for years, just see great buildings, sit in them, vegetate in them- that opened the whole domain of design also product design to me. I saw that good design doesn't have anything to do with the size or how much you spend. It has to do with how people's mind interacts with things and how finally, then how their bodies react.

My design philosophy is rooted in contextuality, clarity, and craft. Architecture, for me, is not about imposing a style but about responding to the specificities of place, climate, and culture. Every project is an opportunity to create spaces that are meaningful, humane, and enduring—spaces that engage the senses and foster a dialogue between the built and the unbuilt. I believe in simplicity with depth, where material honesty and spatial experience take precedence over superficial ornamentation.

Q.2 What are the changes you have seen in the built environment and what are your views on that?

You know a lot has changed and that's the thing about cities and countries and places. So the last 25 to 30 years of the world have been dictated by concerns on economy and business that allows you to do things. Money has been an enabler for many things worldwide. But the strange thing is that money is also not the enabler in many ways. Presently our challenge is to create spaces/cities that give you something for your mind and for your spirit.

I see the future in optimist ways and believe that we can change things and show them in their old glory as well. The greatness of cities shines through their histories which cannot be overlooked. Delhi has buildings that were built 100 years ago and they were cutting edge and modern at the time when they were built.

Over the last two decades, the built environment in India has undergone rapid urbanization and commercialization, often at the cost of longevity, quality, craft, proportion, and environmental sensitivity.

While technology and global exposure have expanded possibilities, they have also led to a certain homogenization of design language. The challenge today is to balance aspiration with authenticity—to create architecture that is contemporary yet rooted, and that addresses social and ecological responsibilities rather than being driven purely by market forces. We should stay at it and to retain/incorporate the indigenous creativity is the greatest future that we have.

Q.3 What is the role of sustainability and technology in architectural practices?

Sustainability is no longer optional—it is fundamental to the survival of our cities and communities.

There is a staggering number of people on this planet . Nobody could have imagined the sustenance of eight billion people. It will eventually go up before stagnating. The only way to sustain these numbers is through technology by becoming technocrats and by the way that's what architects are! Architecture and design is not about expensive fancy things. Its about knowing how to do things with the means you have to create an endearing, robust habitat for human beings. If you have your heart and head in the right place you will use that know-how and translate your learning experiences into making viable sustainable projects.

Sustainability begins with passive design strategies, understanding climate, orientation, and materiality before resorting to technological fixes.

Technology, on the other hand, is a powerful enabler—it allows us to simulate performance, optimize resources, and fabricate with precision. Tools and technology will continue to grow. But technology should serve design intent and human experience, not dictate it. The real goal is to create buildings that are energy-efficient, adaptable, and resilient, without compromising on spatial quality.

Q.4 How do you see architecture evolving in India?

The future of architecture in India will be shaped by urban density, resource scarcity, and cultural continuity. We see a shift towards adaptive reuse, modular construction, and material innovation, driven by both necessity and environmental imperatives.

At the same time, there is a growing awareness of craft and local identity. This is because what will never change is human beings' need for inspiration for progress and to do something that allows continuity- continuity of yourself, your family, your thought process. The objective of architecture similarly is to create a continuity of the system and culture of a particular region or culture.

I believe the future will lead to a more nuanced, hybrid approach—where global technologies meet regional wisdom. Also the architects of tomorrow will need to be collaborators and problem-solvers, working across disciplines to address complex urban and ecological challenges.

Q.5 What do you think are important attributes and skills required to become a good architect?

Of course, if you want to pursue architecture, you need to do it with passion, integrity and have your own uniqueness and clarity of your own thought process.

A good architect needs a triad of qualities:

- Empathy – to understand the needs of people and the spirit of place.
- Curiosity – to constantly learn, question, and innovate.
- Rigor – to translate ideas into reality with precision and responsibility.

Beyond design skills, an architect must be a good listener, a critical thinker, and an effective communicator. Technical proficiency is important, but so is the ability to synthesize diverse inputs into coherent, meaningful spaces. Ultimately, architecture is a discipline of patience and persistence, where the smallest decisions can have the most profound impact.

That way you will not be swayed by the cacophony of ample styles and designs, colonial, postmodernism structuralism and so on. You may be modernist, vernacular, contemporary, whatever..... that's who you are, that's how you think because you're the one who is actually translating space into built environment. The role of an architect is to translate people's needs, their wants and their desires into form. You are giving that form. If you are merely replicating a form then you're an engineer, not an architect, there's a difference!

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SONALI RASTOGI

Founder Partner, Co- Founder Morphogenesis

Education: BArch SPA, Delhi, GradDipl (AA),
GradDiplDes (AA) (London), FRSA, FIIA



Sonali Rastogi is the Founder Partner of Morphogenesis, one of India's leading and most awarded Architecture and Urban Design practices. Under her leadership, the firm has been ranked among the Top 100 Architectural Design Firms worldwide by Building Design Magazine, UK (WA100 2017), for the sixth consecutive year.

Morphogenesis has received over 80 awards, including being India's first WAF Award winners, five IIA Awards, and the 2014 Laureates of the Singapore Institute of Architects Getz Award. The firm's work has been widely recognized, featuring in over 600 publications, both in India and internationally.

In Conversation: Perspectives on Design, Sustainability and the Future of Architecture

Q.1 What is your design philosophy?

Our work is guided by a philosophy we call SOUL, an acronym for Sustainability, Optimisation, Uniqueness and Liveability. It's a way of thinking that reminds us that architecture is both a responsibility and a privilege.

Sustainability sits at the heart of everything we do. We design for efficiency across a building's entire life cycle, not just for its construction. The goal is to reduce energy needs, optimise material use, and make buildings that give back more than they take. Optimisation, for us, is both pragmatic and poetic. It's about finding the balance between economy and expression, between what's essential and what's generous.

Every project is unique because it belongs to its place. We spend time understanding the culture, climate and community that shape it, so that what we create feels like it has grown from the land itself. And at the core of it all lies liveability. A space must function beautifully. It must feel effortless to inhabit.

We often say that good design doesn't shout. It helps without being noticed but rewards you when you pause to look closer. There's a story behind every line we draw, every structure we raise, and every material we choose.

Q.2 What are the changes you have seen in the built environment and what are your views on that?

When we started our practice back in 1996, architecture in India was still largely about individual buildings, stand-alone objects with their own identities. Over the years, the conversation has shifted towards systems, towards how buildings fit within a larger urban and ecological framework. Today, we are designing for connectivity, for networks of mobility, energy and community.

What's equally striking is the change in awareness. Clients, users, and even policymakers are far more conscious of sustainability, comfort and inclusivity. There's a growing understanding that design isn't just about aesthetics, it's about performance: How a building breathes, how it ages, how it gives back to its context.

At the same time, our cities have expanded faster than our ability to plan them. The built environment has grown more vertical, more compressed, and sometimes more disconnected from the natural environment. That tension, between the need for growth and the need for balance, is perhaps the defining challenge of our time.

Yet, I see optimism in that too. The profession is evolving. We're seeing new materials, digital tools and technologies that allow us to design with greater precision and responsibility. There's a genuine effort to bring nature back into our cities, to make density liveable, and to redefine what modern Indian urbanism can be.

So yes, the built environment has changed dramatically, but what excites me most is that our values as designers are also evolving from building more, to building better, and hopefully, building with a deeper sense of empathy and foresight.

Q.3 What is the role of sustainability and technology in architectural practices?

Sustainability is no longer a choice; it's a necessity. For a country like India, where we add millions of square feet of new development every year, it's the only responsible way forward. Architecture has to rise to the scale of this challenge, ensuring that growth does not come at the cost of the environment or human well-being.

Technology, in that sense, is an ally. It has transformed how we design, communicate, and build. From early concept models to post-occupancy analysis, our processes are deeply integrated with digital tools. Artificial intelligence and advanced software allow us to simulate, test and refine at incredible speed, improving efficiency without compromising creativity. The more seamlessly technology works behind the scenes, the more space it gives us to think, to imagine, and to design meaningfully.

Q.4 How do you see architecture evolving in India?

Architecture in India is at a very interesting crossroads. We're no longer catching up with global narratives; we're contributing to them. I think the future lies in creating systems rather than standalone objects; buildings that are part of larger networks of ecology, infrastructure and community.

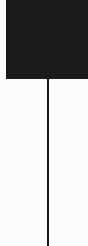
We'll see more integration between disciplines, more fluidity between the built and the natural, more attention to how buildings adapt rather than just how they look. Architects will become curators of environments rather than simply creators of form. India's pace of change gives us the opportunity to set new benchmarks for inclusive and sustainable urbanism, and that's both exciting and humbling.

Q.5 What do you think are important attributes and skills required to become a good architect?

One definitely needs more than design skill. You need a way of thinking. The first thing is to stay curious. Architecture is a dialogue between imagination and reality, and curiosity keeps that dialogue alive.

You also have to learn to work as a collective. No building is made in isolation. Collaboration teaches humility, patience and the ability to see from someone else's perspective. And then there's resilience. The process is long, sometimes frustrating, often unpredictable. But resilience helps you stay grounded, to keep refining, to keep learning from the work itself.

Practice is everything. The more you draw, detail and build, the more you understand what architecture really means. It's not about creating perfect images but about shaping experiences that endure. And above all, integrity matters. Design has an impact. It touches lives. You have to approach that responsibility with care and consciousness.





ARUN REWAL

Lead Architect and Urbanist, Arun Rewal Associates

Education: BArch SPA, Delhi,

MSc in Architecture Studies & MA in City Planning MIT.

Academic course work in Chandigarh College of
Architecture and GSD, Harvard University.

A University topper, Arun Rewal received the Wallace Floyd Award in Design and Leadership at MIT. His work experiences spread across studios in design firms in India, France, Canada and the US. Widely published, is the author of cutting-edge value adding designs. Before leading his design practice, he has worked with Raj Rewal in New Delhi, Jourda Perraudin in Paris and Lyon, Arcop Associates in Montreal Canada, Wallace Floyd Associates and later City Design Collaborative in Boston and Chan Kreiger Associates in Cambridge. He also worked with the Planning and Development Department of the City of Dallas in Dallas Texas.

Arun Rewal has taught in the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi; Boston Architectural Centre in Boston and the AHO in Oslo, Norway. He is also the Chairman of the Laboratory of Urban Systems and Techniques, a research group involved in studying and designing urban patterns. Arun Rewal is extensively published and writes on Architecture and Planning.

An experienced and celebrated star Architect, Urban Designer and Urban Planner. He leads Arun Rewal Associates (established in 2000), a boutique practice that enables him to work on all projects in the studio. He is personally involved in all design, its development, creation of construction details, supporting the sanction process and periodic supervision at site.

A trained Visionary with a demonstrated history of designing and structuring cutting edge projects in Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, he leads an experienced team that offers expertise. Their focus includes Strategy Development, Site Planning, Sustainability, Mixed-use Development, Water Front and Ecological Development, Integrated Infrastructure, Typological Innovation and Settlement Patterns, Built Form and Development related Advisory Services. Arun Rewal is a committed and passionate professional who creates Design and Business Development strength to create value. He works with groups of technically qualified and experienced professionals to provide comprehensive architecture, planning, engineering and technical design expertise.

“Setting Structures Resetting the bigger picture with An Architecture defined by the Context Anchoring Frames of Freedom with Geometry and Memory”

Q.1 What is your design philosophy?

Architecture provides the agency to cultivate relationships between people, places and the planet in the process of promoting the creation of multiple progressive typological structures. The creation comes with a sense of responsibility rooted both in readings of the context and empathetic interventions to generate new opportunities that extend beyond an immediate purpose. The transformative ability of Architecture is anchored in multiplicities of ideas both structuring settings and setting structures.

In a world of limited resources that remains divided and coloured by boundaries of all kinds; aloofness and impatience perpetuate compromise. A preoccupation with Urbanism, empathy for People and awareness of Environmental Resources and Impacts provide opportunities to counter these compromises and challenges. They offer many directions manifest in the built form's spatial configuration to facilitate 'hope' and create 'value'. The direction permits us to provide for each design a unique set of multiple 'Frames of Freedom's' that define an underlying fluid order. In effect our designs provide an envelope to play and anchor 'Frames of Freedom' pinning 'hope' with geometry, memory, craft and technology.

Our works infuse a modern design aesthetic that plays an order that is structured with that of the fluid to build relationships between the part and whole. The aesthetic is a geometrical construct which provides for the eye a 'new', every time individual cognitive abilities reframe them. This emanates from the notion of an extended space in which the design maximizes opportunities to provide for more, create efficiencies and connect with other components and the outside. In employing the 'frames of freedom', our works allow freeing the aesthetic from encumbrances that create fixities.

Subconsciously and by design our work builds up on all these.

Q.2 What are the changes you have seen in the built environment and what are your views on that?

Our projects are a reaction to The Shifting Paradox – a recognition of traits of urbanization and the consequent built environment. These ‘understandings’ provide to us a direction to deal with issues integral to paradoxes integral to the world in which our architecture and we belong. The conditions include:

Speed of Urbanization: Identity and Change

I have lived --studied and worked in many cities across the globe. I have travelled to many more urban constructs and ruralscapes. Now, I live and work primarily in New Delhi – the city in which I was raised. In many ways it's different from the other New Delhi -- the city I grew up in. And at the same time in many ways other cities have started resembling and accommodating qualities of the city I grew up in. The world is also much smaller and ideas move very fast. There is at times pleasantness involved when one realizes and benefits from a world that is smaller and closer. I can't deny that there is some wicked pleasure in discovering a bit of another culture or construct within another enclosure. In an Alice in Wonderland kind of way, to move into another box and be surprised or discover a bit of the familiar or not so familiar is of interest. Yet an abundance of this trait is problematic. To find disfigured versions of the 7 wonders of the world assembled in Kota and multiple versions in Delhi creates an unpleasant feeling. It suggests a lack in creativity in the same way as ugly monstrosities that mushroom as housing blocks or other buildings creating sameness. So are finding other types of building blocks that should have been nowhere but are all around in every place.

Many more cities and differences provide for unique character. Small sections of a number of cities offer differences that make them attractive and unique. These places offer opportunities to see things differently, detach them from the familiar, borrow the new and innovate. Sometimes it helps discover and see the known in a different way. It is also about simply realizing the value of autonomous qualities that can be infused. However, there are other qualities that are quite bothersome.

And there is a lot of bad stuff that moves around. And the trouble is that it moves faster than ever before. The question is one of appropriateness, of balance and not losing ground. Today extremities, I must confess cause a shiver down my spine. It is the quality of sameness across the globe that is creeping in which is bothersome.

Relentless speed and scale of urbanization requires outcomes to be created even before the need is expressed. Mass models that can be quickly erected are being imported. Should we allow the ability to think and deal with specifics to be treated as the new luxury which is beyond practical limits?

There is a need to anchor while allowing for a sense of the new.

Form of Urbanization: Growing Pressure of Population and New Needs

There are also many more people. This is more visible in my part of the world. More people in a smaller world have also made differences more perceptible. Like the whole of Africa, almost 18% of the world's population is Indian. Together with the Chinese, in number terms we make up about 40 % of the world. In India about half are less than 25 years of age. The numbers however also provide the prerequisite basis for urbanity – proximity and intensity. Density has benefits.

Like China, in India, the living conditions are clearly compromised. In India, the contrast and diversity is however more apparent. Because of the large numbers inequity and denial of social justice seems more apparent and striking. The majority are compromised by the lack of accommodation, inclusiveness and a denial of services and amenities. The majority of building designs in both places are clearly less than mediocre, poor in character and badly built. Unlike the nicer parts of Europe, we lack the benefits of integrated developments, humane environments, access to services and amenities and suffer from compromises in urban character.

Even buildings occupied and used by the rich and middle class appear as defective products. There are very few housing blocks, office buildings, social and cultural amenities, and public buildings that warrant a discussion. There is a misplaced understanding that use of rich materials alone creates the sense of 'good architecture'. In fact, an impatient capital and herd mentality defining the poor sensibilities in such settings appear compromised. In contrast, more often the rural settings and smaller towns in Rajasthan despite poor quality of construction have a sense of appeal. So do older developments like those in Chandigarh.

In India, the distinction between the people in terms of habitat settings is also quite diverse between those who live in big cities, smaller towns, agglomerations, rural areas, forests and deep interiors. The regions further reflect variety. Life and Habitat on the plains, mountains around the coast, in the hinterland and the desert areas are all so different.

People who both survive and flourish in the urban areas are acting almost independently of what is around them. Most people, incapacitated to act or oblivious to recognizing 'independent' interventions choose to ignore them. These processes are not models that form a part of a centralized organization and planning but isolated and often selfish pursuits by those who control capital and markets to capture the field left open. More often in my part of the world what is reflected in the urbanscape is an instinct of survival by people marginalized and left with no choice. Here our work is about stepping up to provide beyond the immediate. Some silent voices that form a part of the programme or site adjacencies are accommodated.

Demands on both constructs and space in between or beyond are even more. The architecture we create has a responsibility beyond the immediate purpose. The expectation from it is more than ever before. The silent voice requires accommodation. Diverse groupings require a shared sympathetic transition between them.

Character of Urbanization: Limited Resources and their Wise Use

Control over resources is also more apparent. Perhaps we are aware of all this more than ever because there is more information floating around. It also hurts more. Perhaps all because people in today's world know more, have more choices and a fairer chance to improve their state than ever before. The differences between the rich and poor are striking. Unfortunately, in today's times, most people have very little to draw from. They barely survive. Yet they are innovative. They have to be innovative to survive. And most often survival causes them to stress the environment. It may also not out of place to mention each needs the other to sustain their existence and therefore are tolerated.

The blame lies more with those who have control over the resources. They use more than their fair share. And they are often irresponsible. The constructs they create are novelty fuelled by dreams of difference. These islands are dominated by skin or gloss, and at times even over-sizing. On the other extreme, when tolerated or ignored in the urban landscape are interventions of defiance. Each works to occupy and use up what is available. Inefficiencies cause resources to be used badly and create further waste and burden. The impact on the environment is quite alarming.

Architecture has a responsibility to use resources wisely. In passive means it can set a stage where active methods can perform. We can not only provide for what we create but offset demands for what exists. Architecture must protect and provide avenues to replenish.

Production of Urbanization: Technology and Innovation

We can do much more with our environments than ever before. The spatial and formal dimensions have more freedom than ever before. The process of production and operation whether based on industrial or craft systems, both require an establishment of a system – an order so to speak where a lot of people can be involved and produce more at a faster pace. The system and order are essential to a basis of accommodation.

We also have more materials at hand than before. Other dimensions like light or incorporation of other technologies add spice to the perception of our works. All this comes with more responsibility than before. More so because we often find that elsewhere buildings that come around are quite flat and with little depth.

After all, it is not the richness of material or the singular purpose that stirs us when we move about in a spatial formation. We certainly don't judge great writing from the quality of ink or the binding that holds it. Shakespeare didn't need the finest of inks, nor the best of leather binding to hold his works. We also don't talk much about the frame of a Picasso painting or the pumpkin making Ravi Shankar's sitar to discuss the merits of their artistic endeavour. These if discussed are only secondary to artistic merit. It is the quality of the spatial formation drawn from our conception order, craft and material use that renders it timeless and eternal. And this is fine art worth exploring. The eternal questions still remain: How does the finest be defined and articulated? With all that can be, when is it just that when the construct no longer requires some addition or can be subtracted from? And all this while realizing that the local traditions give flavour and there is responsibility involved in keeping them alive.

A judicious use of systems and building materials, appropriate to each location and context must contribute to integrated developments. Use of technology must lead to innovation in the creation process and the manifest construct.

Q.3 What is the role of sustainability and technology in architectural practices?

Technology provides opportunities for transactions as the means to achieve a responsibility in generating Sustainability. Together they provide avenues to impact experience.

Technology in Architecture practices are used by many in its most basic avatar - to create and communicate ideas. Many are subservient to the tool that generates for them in response to many parameters defined in a building.

Its greater and most popular application is the construction of edifices. Technology enables a scientific application of putting a building together. It provides the rigor to structure a building so that it is stable. In many ways it serves the space and form that it is applied to. It enables the functioning of lighting, HVAC, plumbing and automation systems etc.

Technology is also increasingly used to protect and replenish resources that impact the planet's existence. It provides for active methods to order how we use the planet's resources. In its basic configuration, Architecture defines the quantum and application of these resources to impact the building's performance. Lighting, Ventilation and Conditioning of Air, use of water, creation of waste, Automation etc. all impose costs on the building capital and operations. They pose heavier costs on the adjacent ambient environment and impact the planet. Technology at a cost has helped provide a platform providing for some needs and counterpoise the needs of the building which are ordinarily met by designs that demonstrate wisdom in their configuration. In passive means it can set a stage where active methods can perform. We can not only provide for what we create but meet the demands for what exists. Architecture must protect and provide avenues to replenish.

The viability of complete Sustainability to replenish resides in a defined by a truth that emanates from a regional perspective. At the local level the agenda, although not completely viable, offers protection against erosion of resources.

Q.4 How do you see architecture evolving in India?

In recent times Architecture in India appears compromised. An impatient capital, myopic patronage, flawed procurement processes, defective product definition, poor designs and approaches are conditions cited to describe causes that have resulted in substandard built form formulations that define urban form. Over the years, changes in the socio-political economy, culture and technology have caused arenas of institutions to assume different compromising forms. A number of built constructs are now appearing that erode patterns of development that may be considered as sensitive and sympathetic to the environment. This is a real possibility that must be avoided. We have rejected these compromises.

India is a large country with a large population with a variety of different settings that include geographical regions, landscapes and population environments that define the diverse needs of the built environment. It is apparent that no singular set of conditions would influence how architecture evolves. Although most building activity in the formal sector is controlled by the government, the private patrons have had significant influence. The objective is to search and create constructs, processes and conditions to influence improved changes.

An identity anchored in diversity: people and places

Our designs draw inspiration from a rich tradition of engagement that reflects association with a diverse set of people and places it anchors in. We propose designs that allow diverse groupings of people from different parts of the country to relate to. We hope to create an Indian building that stands to the highest standards in the world, and that conjures multiple memories and mnemonic metaphors of different places in the country. We propose structures that can provide readings that resonate inclusiveness in its association, yet collectively inspire a positive transformation. The future belongs to a modernity that provides for creating avenues improving the quality of life in more than one way without compromising the planet and the immediate surroundings.

Built form as an Iconic construct sensitive to the Urban Environment

There is a need for built form as a landmark that performs beyond its immediate functional needs and responsibly contributes and fits into the neighbourhood precinct and responds to the needs of the planet. Our architecture celebrates people and places of India. The forms are conjured as a multiple collage of geometrical constructs and the programme voices are pinned in a landscape to transform a new construct.

In response to the Urban Environment we tend to connect to the immediate setting and the legacy of traditional Indian city forms to generate a contemporary character. We have generated forms derived from a dual spirit of individual and shared engagement in which each part complete in its own right contributes to the definition and spirit of the larger whole – the building complex and city around.

Q.5 What do you think are important attributes and skills required to become a good architect?

To be a good architect requires one to be responsible, aware, have the ability to read, and demonstrate understandings of places, societal and environmental traits and be creative with form space and materials. For an architect, developing attitudes to 'care for', developing an empathy for the 'silent voice' and a larger idea, inculcating an ability to deliver defines the foundation of performance. A good architect must be able to articulate details and express the bigger picture. It requires one to be able to learn from travels, experiences, books and wisdom floating around. It requires persons to protect the public good and have the ability to search for ways to provide for society's progress. One has to be always learning and practicing being flexible to adapt and refine.

Architecture of hope

Honesty in expression, clarity of structure, simplicity, austerity in material terms, richness in character contributes to our Architecture of hope. It not only fits in or provides clues to others but establishes a reading for engagement. What it attempts is to establish is a commentary on the landscape. What it performs for is a hope for improvements in the lot of people and places.

