UNTRAVERSED

ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION IN INDIA – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the past 10 years, the Council of Architecture has approved more than 250 schools of architecture. One can safely assume that more than 10,000 architects thus graduate each year in India. This situation raises some critical questions:

1. What is the nature of infrastructure and faculty in these schools?
2. Where will these students be employed once they graduate?
3. How will the intellectual and vocational standard be upheld?

Apart from the qualitative questions, there are also statistical paradoxes. While one may proclaim that a nation of more than a billion can use more architects per capita, how can we ensure that this statistical justification can hold ground in more qualitative realms?

Since the time of Charles and Ray Eames' India Report, design education in India has largely occupied itself with a system that depends heavily on apprenticeship – the students learn the nuances of the trade from the teacher through a gruelling process of improvement by repetition. This approach seemed valid in an environment where the masters of Indian modernism were teachers as well and the students grew up within their shadows in the studio often working in their offices after

graduating. This system worked when there were limited numbers of students in a typical studio. Our present intakes would not allow such close associations.

Another critical issue plaguing institutions that impart design education is that of content. The present curriculum structure set by the Council clearly defines the frameworks of the studio and subject matter but does not describe the desired variation / contextualisation. Therefore, we see heaps of generic studio projects – hotels, hospitals, schools, houses, residential colonies, airports, museums and so on being churned year after year! Institutions have largely stopped engaging with the alternate contexts – especially the sub-urban and the rural realms where the majority of India lives and where our peoples will continue to live for the coming 50 years! Our intense urban focus is producing myopic designers trying to work in saturated territories completely blind of the immense opportunity and urgency for work that the other India offers. Ideas in the civic realm too are largely absent.

Lastly, in a culture of diversity and secular values (if one so desires to uphold those foundational values), how can design education truly inculcate a sense of historic continuity all the while being avant-garde and progressive in its ambition? Can there be a design education that is truly 'Indian'? Six decades after independence, we must think critically of what design and design learning means in our context. There must be a way to articulate the content within the larger framework of the curriculum to better resemble our landscape, our people, our problems and our opportunities!

The challenge of this years' Writing Architecture Trophy thus is to critically analyse the present landscape of architecture and design education in India and to write about a better or more effective way of teaching, thinking and making architecture and design in our context. The participants may argue in favour of or against the status quo and support the arguments with relevant data / evidence / analysis. The participants can also seek to propose – through the essay – new ways of teaching architecture in India. One may choose to discuss strategies that are subversive or disruptive to the formal systems and that may aid our imagination with fresh and exciting alternatives. It is time that the students of architecture question the system that educates them – not with a view of merely criticising the system but with a hope that in the process of questioning, one will start seeking better answers for oneself. The essay can be illustrated.

Prize Money

Prize money of 1 lakh Rupees is allotted to the trophy and it will be divided according to the number of the Citations and Special Mentions

Rules of the Competition

- Each Unit can send in a total of three (3) entries.
- A maximum of three students can work on each entry.
- The entry should be submitted in the format specified so that the identity of the team members, the team or the institution they belong to is not revealed to the Judges.
- The essay must be the sole creation and original work of the team. No previously published work will be accepted. Any form of plagiarism will result in immediate disqualification. All essays submitted will be closely checked for plagiarism.
- In case matter is sourced from anywhere due credit to the original writer should be given.

Submission Deadline

9th December 2018 17:00 hours

Submission Format

- The entry code should be used as per the entry code list provided. The entry code should be placed in bottom left of all pages of the entry.
- Soft copy is to be uploaded on NASA India website on the link (www.nasaindia.co/trophies) > Group C > Writing Architecture > Submissions
- All submissions automated in Ms Word format only.
- The entry should be accompanied by a letter from the HOD / Principal on the college letterhead with the name(s) of the authors and the institution.
- Margins: 10mm on top, bottom and right;15mm on the left.
- Font: Simple and Readable Sans-Serif typeface. Font size 12, spacing between the lines 1.5
- NASA logo shall be at bottom right of all the pages of the entry in accordance with the NASA logo guidelines. A template shall be provided if required.
- In any manner at any time, during or after the NASA WRITING ARCHITECTURE TROPHY competition period the original author will have no claim on the same after the entry is sent for the said competition.
- The essay shall be approximately 1000 words.
- The Decision of the jury shall be final and binding.

Checklist for Submission

- Soft copy of submission in PDF to be uploaded on NASA India website - https://nasaindia.co/trophy/writingarchitecture
- Authenticating letter from college HoD for each entry the work submitted is genuine and they have endorsed copyrights for the same and with the name of Participant(s) and stating the unit shall abide by whatever may be the final results and also agree that this entry is property of both the institute and NASA India.
- Declaration by the participant(s) stating the work submitted is genuine and they have endorsed copyrights for the same and to adhere by all the rules and regulations, Jury process and the results.
- The author(s) will also send a written declaration stating that the work is the original Intellectual property of the respective author(s) and will be solely responsible and liable in case the work has violated any copyrighted material, and if any matter is sourced from anywhere, and credit has not been given.
- The number of words should be indicated in the declaration by the author.
- Authenticating letter from college HoD/Principal/Director (on College Letterhead with Sign and Stamp of HoD/Principal/Director of the college), specifying the Account Details (Account Name, Account Number, Bank Name, ISFC Code) in which the Prize Money is to be awarded.

Other Information

- Submissions should be done by the Unit Secretary in NASA India website before the deadline failing which the submission shall be considered incomplete.

- All entries will be the property of NASA INDIA, which will be free to utilize the same.
- The shortlisted Entries will be published in NASA India annual magazine and Think Matter magazine with the author's name.

Any Kind of Queries need to be submitted through website at
https://nasaindia.co/trophy/writingarchitecture

To
Yatharth Gupta
National Secretary | 2018 – 19
NASA India