ifj
the indian review of
world furniture,
interiors and design

79
volume 15 . issue 02 . march - april 2018

As years go by, one realises that in life, everything is design, and it cannot be isolated.

IFJ SALUTES AR. B.V. DOSHI, WINNER : PRITZKER PRIZE, 2018.

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cover courtesy: sangath

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available online at:
MAGZTER

published by
Printed and published by Sylvia Khan on behalf of Liyakat Ali Khan.
Printed at SAP Print Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
Published by Index Media Pvt. Ltd.
401, Sanskriti Park, Commercial Block, 50B,
Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400 093. India.
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IAFP international alliance of furnishing publications

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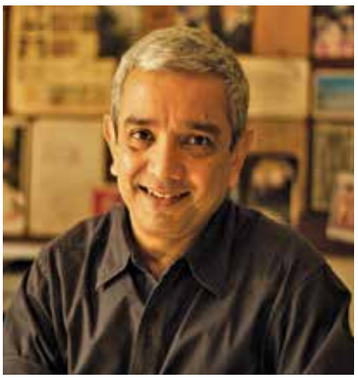
in this section, we share the views of thinking people, and throw them open for discussion, disection and analysis. in short, for you to think about and send in your own thoughts and responses.
in this conversation, we share dr. bimal patel's thoughts

THE ARCHITECTS REGULATIONS OF 1989 MUST EVOLVE TO MATCH PRESENT REALITIES



Dr. Bimal Patel,
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Professionals whether architects, doctors or lawyers, must inspire trust in their clients to be able to function. Without trust it is impossible to guide clients effectively; especially when the task at hand is novel and the solution unclear.

To inspire trust, professionals must build and maintain a reputation of being skilled at solving problems. They must also convince clients that they are acting in their best interests and that they are not influenced by commercial considerations.

For a profession as a whole to function effectively, it must enjoy a high social reputation. If it is not held in high esteem, it is not likely to be granted autonomy to control entry into its ranks. It is also not likely to be granted the power to adjudicate on professionals when issues pertaining to professional competence and judgment arise.

The Council of Architecture promulgated The Architects (Professional Conduct) Regulations of 1989 to bind architects to a manner of conduct that ensures trust between architects and clients, and raises the profession's social esteem. Unfortunately, most present day practitioners consider many of the regulations to be impractical and find it impossible to comply with them. The disputatious discourse that this has generated confuses clients and undermines regard for the profession.

When considering this situation one should keep Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's words in mind: "Rights are not protected by law but by social and moral conscience of society... if fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no Law, no Parliament, no Judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word". In our context, we can see that simply promulgating regulations and creating machinery for their enforcement cannot ensure compliance. To ensure high compliance, the regulations must reflect the ethical beliefs and aspirations of a majority of professionals that the regulations are meant to regulate.

This is where the key problem lies. There is a considerable difference between what the regulations propose as the right way of behaving and what practitioners believe is the right way of conducting themselves. A number of things need to be done to bring the two in sync.

First, **the regulations need to be modernized.** India's economic and social landscapes evolved rapidly post liberalization in the early 90s. Though the professional practice evolved to keep up with the changing scenario, the regulations did not. We may consider some codes of conduct to be rightfully immutable but we must recognize that others must evolve along with a changing society. It is high time that conduct regulations be reviewed and brought in sync with present realities.

Second, with commercialization and rapid increase in the number of colleges, **standards of architectural education** have fallen drastically. Earlier systems of professional apprenticeship – necessary for the training of any professional – are also in disarray now. Poorly trained architects with deficient skills are bringing disrepute to the profession. To remedy this, at least a few colleges need to set an example on how we can better train architects. Along with this, the Council of Architecture's present focus on educational inputs needs to be replaced by an exit test that measures what has been learned.

Third, professional organizations have to **strengthen the ethical fiber of the profession** by using all the means that they have at their command. Through lectures, seminars, continuing education programs and publications they need to address and help clarify the ethical confusion prevailing within their ranks. Bad practices need to be called out and penalized and good practices need to be encouraged and celebrated through awards and citation.

It will take a whole generation to bring the actual practice of the profession in sync with its formal code of conduct but I do not think that it is impossible. What is important is that we must start working on it soon. ifj