

THE SEARCH  
FOR IDENTITY –  
INDIA  
1880 TO 1980

# Architecture & Independence



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Hasmukh Patel (b.1933), another member of the first generation, took over Atmaram Gajjar's practice in Ahmedabad in 1961. Patel's work is known for its meticulous planning and crisp detailing. He was less influenced by Gropius than his contemporaries perhaps because his American education was at Cornell, away from Gropius' direct influence. His work has certainly stood up to the Indian elements in a manner rare amongst the early Modernist work in the country. While much of it — e.g., **Newman Hall** at St Xavier's College (1970), the **Dena Bank** (1974-82), **Reserve Bank** and **Patel House** (1969) — was executed well after Le Corbusier's arrival in India, it seems to have been much more influenced by the precision of Mies van der Rohe and Harry Seidler than that of many of Patel's contemporaries was (Desai and Desai 1985, Bhatt and Scriver 1990, Bahga, Bahga and Bahga 1993).



The Reserve Bank of India, Ahmedabad

By the mid-1970s, a small group of Indian architects started to replace outsiders as a source of inspiration for younger architects. This observation does not deny the continuing power of international architectural journals on Indian architecture, but rather suggests that ideas about architecture in India had begun to be formed on the modern Indian experience and exemplars. The square grid and column structure of Correa's **Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya** (1956) has been suggestive to a number of more recent architectural thinkers. It was developed, for instance, in Hasamukh Patel's extension to **St Xavier's Primary School** a decade later.



St Xavier's School, Ahmedabad

It would be difficult for an architect growing up in Ahmedabad not to be influenced by Kahn's and by Raje's work (G. Bhatia 1994b). The **Entrepreneurship Development Institute** (1985-7) designed by Bimal Patel outside Ahmedabad is a case in point, but it has a character of its own. The complex consists of a training centre, library, administrative and residential areas as well as an auditorium. It is organized around a major courtyard and some minor spaces. In keeping with the era, considerable effort has been spent on making the brick buildings energy efficient through the use of verandahs, recessed windows and thick walls (Bahga, Bahga and Bahga 1993).



Entrepreneurship Development Institute, Ahmedabad