

Modern Architecture of India (Post Independence)

For M.A Sem – 2
By

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- The post independence period saw the emergence of two schools of thought in architecture – the Revivalist and the Modernist. The Revivalist, who advocated “continuity with the past”, could not break the shackles of the colonial legacy and left no significant impact on the neo-Indian architecture. The Modernists too depended heavily on the European and American models and tried to adopt them in India without taking into consideration the regional aspirations, diversities and requirements.

- ◎ **Jawahar Lal Nehru** the first prime minister of India, had called for an **open architectural competition** for the design of Ashoka Hotel in 1956, which was won by **B.E. Doctor**, an architect from Bombay. Using technology to create large pillar – less spaces, Doctor created façade that borrowed from Islamic, Hindu, British and modern architecture.

- Indian architecture witnessed a revolution when the Punjab government engaged **Le Corbusier** to design the new city of **Chandigarh**. Built in three stages, Corbusier divided the city into three sections. The **'head'** consisted of political, bureaucratic and judicial residential complexes in the heart of the city. The **'body'** housed the university and the residential complexes in the heart of the city. The **'feet'** consisted of industrial sectors and the railway station. Apart from the initial layout of the city, Corbusier also designed several buildings in Chandigarh. **The High Court** building has a sloping roof, supported by concrete walls, which allow air to pass through them. The Assembly is a squarish structure topped with a huge industrial chimney while the **Secretariat** is made up of hundreds of rooms with an airy exterior.

- Taking inspiration from **Le Corbusier's** creativity, a young Indian architect **D V Joshi** designed the **Institute of Indoogy** in Ahmedabad. **Charles Mark Correa**, **Doshi's** contemporary, designed the **Hindustan Lever pavilion** for the India International Trade Fair in 1961. The pavilion was an exposed concrete structure resembling a crumpled packing case made of concrete with a zigzag ramp to walk along. Correa also designed the **Gandhi Sanghralaya** in Ahmedabad as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.

- ◎ **The Asiad Village** in New Delhi, designed by **Raj Rewell** and built as a colossal complex with more than 800 residential units, landscaped courts, streets, restaurants and shops, all catering to sports persons who had assembled for 1982 Asian Games, is one of the architectural landmarks of modern india.
- ◎ **The Lotus shaped Bahai Temple** in New Delhi designed by **Fariburz Sabha** in 1980 and completed in in December 1986 is an awe - inspiring example of the the ingenuity of the Indian Architects.

- However the fact remains that the the contemporary architecture in India has failed to inspire. **Even after 50 years of independence our cities are still symbolized by pre - Independence buildings.** For instance Calcutta is symbolized by the **Victoria Memorial**, New Delhi by **Rashtrapati Bhavan**, Mumbai by the **Victoria Terminus** and the **Gateway of India** and Chennai by the **Victoria Memorial Hall**. The post independence buildings such as the **New Secretariat building** in Kolkata and the **Vigyan Bhawan** in New Delhi has nothing much to offer in terms of architectural style.

- ◎ In contrast most major cities in the world have splendid modern buildings to boast off, like Sydney has its **Sydney Opera House**, Paris has **New Grand Arch** and the **Georges Pompidos Centre**, New York had its **World Trade Centre**, Chicago has **The Sears tower** and Toronto has the **C.N. Tower**. Even cities in other third world countries have several buildings to feel proud about like Kuala Lumpur has its **Petronas Tower**, Shanghai has the **TV Tower** Hong Kong has its **Hong kong and Shanghai Corporation building** and the **Bank of China building** and even Colombo has its new **Parliament building**.

- ⦿ In November 1998 the **media reported** that the foundation stone of **World Centre of Vedic Learning**, the world's tallest building would be laid at karondi village in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.
- ⦿ Madhya Pradesh seems to be the only state in India, which has several grand public buildings and international award winning projects. The **New assembly building** in Bhopal and the Madhya Pradesh **State Electricity Board office** in Jabalpur, the **Judicial Academy** in Bhopal and the **Rajiv Gandhi Jal Grahana Mission** in Raipur and the proposed **'White House'** in **Bhopal** are some fascinating examples which show that global aesthetics is moving very fast into the smaller Indian cities.a

- ◉ Paradoxically it is the smaller cities and towns like Indore, Raipur, Rajkot, Baroda and Bhopal with no greatly visible architectural traditions like that of Jaipur, Hyderabad or Lucknow that are displaying unprecedented alacrity in adapting to 'International styles'.
- ◉ There is a growing brand of young and dynamic Architects which include **Charles Correa, Prashant divyakirti, Ajay Kataria, Anjum Gupta, Vineet Chadha, Nikhil Sompura** and others who do not shy away from experimentation. Most often, these architects employ a hybrid style that is free mix of Roman, English, Gothic, Rajasthani and Mughal styles. The new age architectural aesthetics has redefined the idea of space. The emphasis is now seems to be on having more Open Spaces, green spaces and natural lighting. It is, however not possible to turn this new trend as a representative of architecture of our times as it is highly restricted in geography terms and also confined to the affluent lot.

Thank You

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