# SPATIAL DIALOGUE AS CULTURAL PRACTICE

## ANALYZING METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT BY EXPERIMENTAL INDIAN DESIGN PRACTICES BEYOND THE CONVENTIONAL DISCIPLINARY REALM

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# ABSTRACT

The mainstream media perception of an Indian architectural practice engaged only in the design and construction of buildings presents a very insular view of the discipline to the general public. This exploratory thesis thus intends to examine practises which are engaged in disseminating architectural knowledge **not just as a spatial product but rather as a socio- cultural process** also to a broader audience. It is imperative to critically analyse the work, methods and outreach of these practices to comprehend how they **foster spatial practice as a collaborative dialogue with society**.

In a quest to become global, a trend of borrowing and learning from the west and integrating local elements was a significant part of the post-colonial Indian architecture discourse. The contemporary Indian architect often assumed the role of a master-builder and worked with the state to build institutions and cities as a part of the nation-building process. Coming to the present-day scenario, the Indian city now is a representation of how contradictions of formal and ephemeral spatial forms co-exist as a congruous system. The current challenge is that for a country where various socio-economic worlds and cultural ideologies constantly live together in delicate mediation - how can such a singular banal definition of architectural practice be enough to respond to the plurality of the urban space challenges? How are the architectural vision and the image of an architect portrayed to the general public? Which practices are involved in fostering a collaborative dialogue in disseminating spatial knowledge beyond the domain of portraying architecture as a container that is created by a few star architects?

It is thus imperative to take into account the spatial knowledge co-produced with allied fields and also with the public to broaden the discussion of architectural culture beyond writings and images which are invariably produced by architects and for the architects. It stresses the key point that the discussion on the built environment should extend beyond the typical disciplinary bubble and analyse frameworks wherein the public is rather a participant in the dialogue also instead of just being a consumer of fragmented information. This hypothesis is explored through a theoretical framework of architecture as a socio-cultural process, a brief overlook at the evolution of architecture discipline under colonial influences and last ponder upon what would be a decolonial view of the agency of an architect in today's time. This reflects the constantly evolving idea of practice. It is through these explorations that the need becomes apparent to analyse practices which engage in a more multi-disciplinary manner in their approach.

The research thus aims to explore a critical reinterpretation of the perception of an architect(ural practise), the idea of practice and how architectural knowledge is generated as a dialogue with the wider audience through the varying frameworks of these initiatives

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