Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Challenging Redundancy in Institutions: An Attempt to Ameliorate Static Learning Environments

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• Abstract (300 words):
India with its impressive development trajectory is headed towards becoming a global superpower. Faced with urbanization, India is projected to host the largest urban population by 2050. However, this growth has led to organic and informal settlements creating complex urban centers that attract millions, while living conditions are deplorable, with inadequate social and physical infrastructure. There is thus, an ineluctable need for intervention and up-gradation of these settlements.

Amongst other challenges, India is also home to the world’s largest illiterate population. With less than 30% of the country privileged to afford private education, the onus for educating masses lies on government institutions. Despite these schools catering to large numbers, their condition is abysmal. Furthermore, unskilled teachers and obsolete learning methods leads to fabrication of adults lacking basic employability skills even after attaining education. While the government recognizes the pertinence for education and allocates large budgetary outlays - the effort is in vain.
This paper seeks to investigate a solution for these challenges in a rapidly advancing, resource-constrained setting in an urban village in New Delhi, India. The complexity of an urban village and functioning of schools in India presents an opportunity to create a prototype for a mixed-use, multi-user institution.

This is tackled by first, recognizing the redundancy of built environment of schools during after-hours, weekends, holidays and vacations. The resultant is an institution used for 18% of the hours in a year. Then the redundancy of the design of the learning environment is examined, which was established 150 years ago to emulate factory life. While pedagogical methods have adapted to changing times, learning environments have remained stagnant.

Thus, these institutions would enable multiple modes of teaching and learning for the 21st century, while functioning as an urban catalyst and facilitating a communal space in an otherwise dense urban fabric.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Ananya Sethi is an architect and a fresh graduate from Sushant School of Art and Architecture (SSAA) having acquired a degree in Bachelor’s of Architecture. A vital part of her education involved a year and a half long research on Institutional Buildings in the form of her Dissertation and Thesis. As the best academic research paper, her Dissertation was published in SSAA’s Degree Show 2018. It studied the design of community schools and their role as a catalyst for social upliftment through community participation and inclusion. Subsequently, her thesis which explored redefining the image of an institutional building was awarded the best thesis in the batch and she stood first in the final year. She was also awarded the first place in an intra-college competition of Urban Design and has gained substantial knowledge through the various inter-college design competitions she headed through the five years. Ananya has also interned at Vir.Mueller Architects for a period of seven months which further enhanced her knowledge and experience.

R.B. Thiruvengadam is an experienced architect & urban designer with 10+ years of experience translating ideas from scheme to reality. He is currently working as an Associate Professor at Sushant School of Art and Architecture testing waters in architectural design pedagogy. Thiruvengadam has worked with various government bodies to produce vision documents, development plans, lighting master plans amongst many other things. Presently, apart from being in charge of guiding selected students for Thesis & Dissertation, he is also administering college collaborations with various professional and academic bodies.

He has published and presented multiple papers in India. The critically acclaimed ones address issues of Urban Revitalization in and around Derelict Industrial Precinct presented at a university in Chennai and learning from Local Area Plan through Public Participation at Indo-Italian University collaboration at CPR Institute, Delhi.
He specializes in community rooted urban design and working with various government departments and resident welfare associate for development of Local Area Plan. Strengths include lighting design, master planning, vision documents, revitalization & renewal strategies, architectural design and detailing.