

Making the Future Architects “Practice Ready” ... An Academic Challenge

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ABSTRACT

Architectural education and practice should go hand in hand and not treated as isolated entities. Future of Architectural practice for an individual should start right from the day one when student enters into Architectural education. Unfortunately, our curriculum is such that we do not prepare the students for practice as such. We do not make them “Practice ready product” in five years as we get indulged into theoretical part and the practical approach to our teaching is somewhere lost in the race of fulfilling the prescribed academic targets. Planning workshops, site visits, hands on experiences, guest lectures, study tours etc. is the general practice in almost every Architectural school, which is a necessary part of their training as an Architect. But these activities do not give them that necessary exposure in day to day practice in Architecture resulting in non-productive performance of young Architects in Architecture firms.

We can not deny the fact that whatever we teach in Architecture schools is not irrelevant, unnecessary or out of context. Syllabus in Architectural schools is a necessity as a base for students to understand the technicalities and evolve as a sensitive, creative and responsible Architect. As educators, we the academicians must work on outputs from the students during their entire education in such a way that they mandatorily grow as a practice ready product at the end of their formal education.

In this paper, I will be discussing about how assignments can be designed in a practical manner by taking example of the subject I teach.

Keywords: Academics, Outputs, Assignments, Practice ready approach

1. INTRODUCTION

The architectural education and profession is evolved as a set of rules and understanding over a period of time as the technology and science evolves. Looking at today’s scenario, Architecture is more influenced and dominated by AI and digitalization. But, we academicians are not preparing them to take up those challenges and changes that are happening worldwide in every stream. Along with the conventional training, we need to inculcate modern teaching techniques and models of teaching learning processes in our curriculum. Need of modification to be done in Architectural curriculum has become an over discussed topic at every platform. Even though, to become an educated Architect, one spends 5 years for degree course and another 2 years for specialization. Still our graduates are not sure whether they will be able to end up into a successful professional practice or not. Here the role of academicians matters a lot.

2. BRIDGING THE GAP: TODAY’S NEED

In Architectural education, right from the beginning we try to teach the students about practical knowledge and application in the field. In spite of doing so, we can see there is a huge gap between what students learn and what knowledge they require to enter in the practical field.

We teachers must understand that Architecture is not only the science but it is the way of living, which we need to pass on to the students. Architecture is all about the experiencing the space. So Architectural course should be designed in such a manner that an Architect should be able to understand the emotional as well as physical needs of the users and should be able to implement it in practice, unlike few superficial architects who literally raise 4 walls of bricks and call it as Architecture. It will create a great impact if this is accepted and appreciated by architectural fraternity and introduced it right in the curriculum.

Gap between the practice and the knowledge imparted is because of isolated approach in teaching. This not only creates difficulties for students to work in the

office after graduation but difficult for Architects also to train them each and every small thing in practice. A balance between practice and curriculum has become utmost necessary to implement. Now NEP is taking care of this important aspect in Architectural curriculum and this transition will take some time to fully implement the provisions. While we academicians should also come a step forward to contribute in this transition for better future of next generation Architects.

3. PRACTICE ORIENTED OUTPUTS

Theory subjects in Architectural education can be handled to get practice oriented results if the assignments given to the students are designed in that manner. For example, I am going to discuss a theory subject in Architectural curriculum, i.e. Professional Practice. This subject is taught in 10th semester in most of the universities. Even though the name of subject is Professional Practice, this subject is purely theoretical. How to handle the practice is taught in the theory paragraphs, no doubt all the syllabus is equally important to know by the students as far as practice is concerned. The content of syllabus can be made more practical by introducing the assignments which will force the students to explore, the practical aspects and give them more of practical knowledge along with the theory they are learning. Following are the assignments given to the students in Professional Practice subject.

3.1. ASSIGNMENT NO 1: CARRIER OPPORTUNITIES AFTER B-ARCH

Description: Make an interactive and self explanatory poster in A4 size showing future prospects and carrier opportunities after B-Arch. Stretch your imagination and explore different types of innovative fields where you can make your carrier after completing Architecture

3.1.1. OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT:

Main objective behind introducing this assignment was to make the students explore more and more about their carrier options after completing their degree. While doing this assignment, students actually learnt many details of different fields in which they can start their profession. Students prepared their base work and got channelized themselves in different avenues related to Architecture directly and indirectly. It was observed that students were very enthusiastic to do this assignment as it was not a stereo type question/answer or descriptive assignment. Students felt that many doors opened in front of them when they explored possibilities for the completion of assignment. Actual outcome of the assignment is shown in fig. no. 1



Fig 1. Carrier opportunities after B-Arch

3.2. ASSIGNMENT NO 2: COVERPAGE DESIGN OF YOUR PORTFOLIO

Description: Design a cover page of your portfolio. You are a Professional Architect and you are having your own Office. Every Architect makes his/her portfolio to showcase their specialties, concepts, mission, motto, ideologies, philosophies through the portfolio. In this assignment you have to design cover page of your Architectural Portfolio in a poster form in A3 size paper. Cover page will include all above and information about your firm.

3.2.1. OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT:

Objective of this assignment is to make the students think and be aware of their style and interest in Architecture. This study actually made them realize their own niche where they would like to go and practice further. They identified their interests and passions in Architecture. They also learnt the steps they need to take if they wish to establish their own identity and style in the world of Architectural practice. Students came across many such practicing architects and practices of their own interest, where they can approach after their degree. Outcome of this assignment is shown in fig. no. 2



Fig.2. Cover page design



Fig. 3. Architectural Competition (I)

3.3. ASSIGNMENT NO 3:

DESIGN AN ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

Description: Design International competition announcement for the project of Cultural Centre./ select the appropriate location. It should include Introduction , type of project, scale of project, owner/developer, Aim and objective, schedule of dates, awards, registration: early registration, standard registration, discount if any, regulations, terms and conditions, assessors, other important details such as website/ facebook/ instagram/ phone numbers/emails etc. Assume all other suitable information and prepare a public declaration for the competition.

3.3.1. OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT:

All the theory part regarding Architectural competitions is already taught in detail in the classroom of Professional Practice. But by doing this assignment, students had to actually go through the competitions floated by various bodies, authorities or by private sectors. They read it, tried to understand it and tried to understand the process of Architectural competitions and their details through this assignment. Now when they will come across real competitions in their practice, they are already ready to understand each and every stage in it in detail. Actual outcome of this assignment is shown in fig. no. 3(I), 3(II), 3(III).



Fig. 3. Architectural Competition (II)



Fig. 3. Architectural Competition (III)

4. CONCLUSION:

Architectural education is very vast. Syllabus given by the university is just a basic guide line to be followed by the educators so that some important part is not missed. We educators need to find out the ways and means to bring the students out side typical stereo type class room and the work, so that they will come out of the box and explore more and more on their own. So designing your assignments, specially for theory subjects is a very challenging job and one need to emphasis on it. Assignments given by you must be more practice oriented or more towards the gain of practical knowledge and not just copying the answers from each other or from the available material. As per the NEP, this aspect of Architectural education and practice is very much taken into consideration. It is an individual educator's responsibility also to bridge the gap between education and practice by all possible and appropriate means.

5. REFERENCES

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