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Foreword

Architecture is a reflection of its client's dreams and wishes and is a manifestation of its creator—the architect—and their philosophy and power of visualisation and imagination. The portrayal of families of architects over generations threaded with architecture and design as a professional discipline is fascinating. Even before a future architect child is born, it is a mute spectator to the dialogues on the design of space in the context of time with a defined abstraction of content.

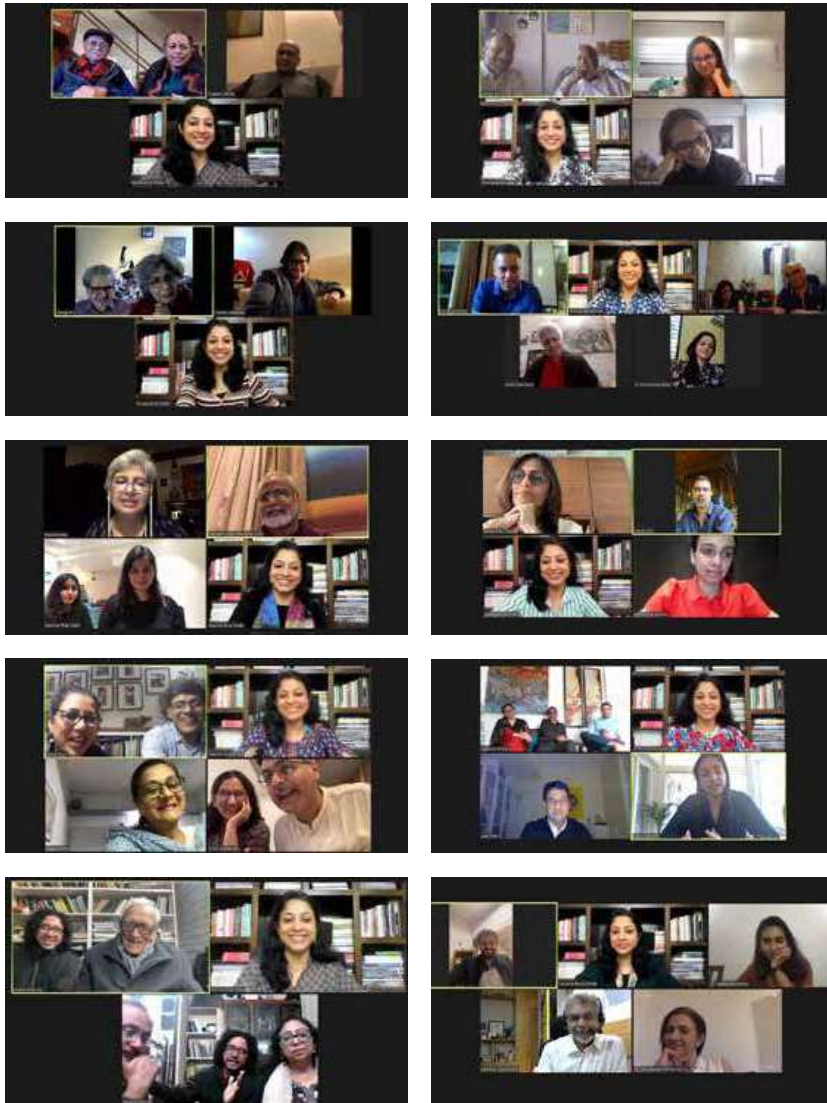
Catering to this unique theme, *Architectural Inheritance and Evolution in India* takes the readers on a journey of adventure focusing on ten architectural families in India, with their 44 architect family members spanning across generations. These families have significantly contributed to the built living space of other families and businesses with captivating and interactive realisations, which are stories in themselves. Designing by and for families is a task of phenomenal dialogue peppered with admiration, demonstration, and an agreement to realise the built space in time and budget.

To conduct conversations and interact with these families and their members is more than an adventure. It is a challenge, which Apurva has taken, a unique one, much like the meaning of her name. This book, in the form of a body of work, is a commendable contribution to the field of architecture, covering generations in time and space with clarity of context in content in every line of realisation.

Life is an impact, and Apurva expresses these impacts through the architecture of these families, as individual and collective contributions by the family members. Through their diverse contributions, she further highlights the concept of *Diversity in Unity* rather than *Unity in Diversity*, where a family encourages competition within rather than being pushed about by external influences and provides an opportunity without fear of financial failure. Netaji Subash Chandra Bose was acclaimed for his fearless way of exploring and expressing these ideas into reality and accordingly desired to create a political philosophy for this subcontinent. I sometimes wonder whether Apurva has a tie to his lineage. Makes sense by how her writing in this book has united and still articulated the diversity of these families.

Braving challenges and expressing the profession of architects run by families is a herculean task in itself, given that the families differ in several aspects— size, locations, set-ups, core values and mediums to engage with architecture and each other, either by sharing a practice, having multiple practices, or working outside family practices. Even within a family, the family members differ! The Epilogue has diligently detailed multiple dimensions of potential diversity in these families and individuals. These dimensions include the varying context, circumstances and time when the individuals started studying or working, their educational backgrounds, locations, influences, philosophies, working methodologies, personalities, interests, gender dynamics, and the magnitude and nature of architectural engagements. Reflecting these multiple dimensions of potential diversity and unifying them under a family umbrella, the book is quite a read.

Further, writing them as a narrative with history and heritage from past, present to future and making them comprehensible essays invites much admiration. Apurva explores this with a clear and deep understanding of the limitations while writing about families. It requires sensitivity or could cause



Online conversations with the featured families (L to R): Ghoshes, Jains, Kanvindes, Kembhavis, Khans, Puris, Shahs & Gores, Shahs & Khannas, Sharmas, Zacharias & Bhyrav.

Introduction

A few years ago, a mainstream Bollywood actress spelt out the *n-word* on a television show; *nepotism*, since then, has witnessed unprecedented euphoria and abuse. It has been painted with different brush strokes and is a debate familiar to all families who follow one profession or business. Privileges, entitlement, legacy, reflected glory, and reputation preceding you...all stand aloud today. This book is not a measure to judge, clarify, or glorify them; it is, I hope, one that looks beyond to observe how families bond over disciplines and contribute towards it collectively.

My foray into architecture

This book is immersed in architecture, but so is it in families. For me, a family has always been the buzzword, the epicentre of my existence– the ultimate blessing and destiny one receives on this earth. I was born to a celebrated father from the medical industry and was overwhelmed by the love and respect he garnered from all sections of society. I knew early on that I wanted to emulate him and become a surgeon. Knowing the immense challenges, one had to face to reach where he was, he veered me away from opting for medicine. Destiny shifted my gaze to architecture, and I became the first person in my immediate and extended family to embrace it. I then got lured towards architectural writing, an undiscovered field in India, when I plunged into it in 2005. Hailing from a non-architectural background and adopting the unconventional path of architectural writing, curation and communications, my career path has been full of invigorating navigations.

Though neither my sisters nor I went into medicine, we remain mini doctors, mindful of our health and those around us. My foray into architecture and the discipline seeping into my life wholeheartedly and reflecting in my thoughts, and responses in the past 17+ years, made me realise that growing up in a medical environment, medicine did not engulf my life the way architecture did. Personal experiences and growth always inform professional decisions; I believe it is in this personal story of my life that the genesis of this book lies.

The pandemic and lockdown– the real impetus

Authoring and curating a book on architectural families in India was a part of my conscience for a few years; however, the pandemic and lockdown were the real impetus. Whether the blessed ones who spent additional time with their families or those separated from their families during the pandemic– both developed an increased awareness of the relevance of families. The circumstances forced everyone to work out of home, and the boundaries between home and work vanished, additionally for those family members working together. The family members spent adequate time with each other, thus being more aware of their professional dynamics.

This book was also destined to be conceptualised when we started relying on digital interactions. A book on families required that I interact with the members of every family together, and since they were based in different cities and countries, logistically, it would have been impossible to plan offline meetings. Interacting with the members of a family together was crucial because their emotions, reactions and synergies would be at their peak when they came together.

Finding a symbol in a design is an easy route to a design solution. For my parents, that sense of symbolism is more prominent now.' Sumit silently listens to Sudipto's confession, and he asks him to share an example. Sudipto mentions the beginning of this symbolic architecture with the *Jindal Centre* in Delhi (15), in stone, which then followed in competitions entries, especially the *Congress Bhavan* in Delhi as well, where a symbolic dome and Sanchi elements were incorporated.

The pros and cons of an architect family

Launchpads are beneficial, but Sudipto asserts they could underplay the importance of what follows later. In retrospection, he mentions these disconcerting middle years when he was grappling with flashes of self-doubt trying to outline his contribution to SGA. Experiencing a sense of displacement, he divulges further on this inward journey, 'It plays on your psyche, and you start questioning whether you landed in the profession by default and not by your purpose; whether you just followed a path trodden and could have been better at other things.' The pressure, as he acknowledges, is never of performance of an internal weight and living up to your expectations. It is the pressure of standing out vs building on something existing— you want to stand out, but you are expected to build up something.

After a few years of practice, these uncertainties made Sudipto re-evaluate his decision and confess to his parents that he wanted to opt out of architecture. With time, age and wisdom allowed him to understand, realise, and confront the task ahead. The *Lucknow Airport Terminal* (11) is a milestone project which came about very easily and quickly for him. Sharing a private moment when he and Sumit, along with the civil engineers, contractors, and executive director of the Airports Authority of India, were on site, his father held him back and said, 'Look you made a quick sketch. All these people are building your dream. Let this project get built and all your doubts will be dispelled.' While the project did not work as a self-validation, Sudipto confesses he started enjoying architecture when he realised that architecture was not so much about buildings and spaces as it was about life and its enjoyment within these spaces. 'And how can one not love life? Architecture is perhaps the last profession that is not about slicing up the world further into specialisations.'

Changing perceptions of architecture with generations

The transitioning times in architecture demand a fresh approach. Both father and son acknowledge that with the growing impact of tools and software on design, increasing client expectations, the business of architecture overriding the creativity, the growing dominance of visual imagery, and the diminishing respect for architects who replicate vendors bidding for projects— the building industry has irretrievably altered.

Sudipto finds 9 out of 10 clients, today, are demanding. Though they might be better travelled, and more exposed to architecture in general than clients of a previous generation, their involvement in design must leave a space for the designers to explore ideas. 'As architects, we should stop trying to recklessly abandon our position in society. Fortunately, we at SGA are in a position now where we can choose our clients, which is the first step towards doing good work and not getting into a position where your thinking is divergent.' However, he ponders on today's growing demands of lifestyle, especially in metros, and the accompanying insecurity of losing it that drives several architects to agree blindly to their clients. These limitations, as he continues, have come with changing times and the luxury of choice. Such was not there during his parents' generation, where frugal lifestyles allowed them to overrule and convince their clients away from the latter's preconceived notions without any fear of losing the project.



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12. National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad
13. National Institute for Aviation Training and Management, Maharashtra

14. Macawber Beekay, Noida (©André Fanthome)
15. Jindal Centre, Delhi
16. 3D view of Jindal Cultural Centre Auditorium, Odisha



II. The Jains

Epitomising Morality, Humility, and Simplicity

(Based on a conversation with **Uttam C. Jain**, **Maya Shah**, **Chirag Jain**, **Shona Jain**)

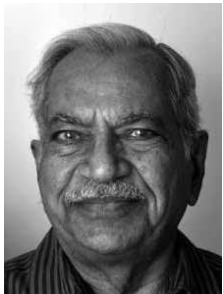
Architects cannot technically retire! Even when they formally announce their retirement, their commitment, curiosity, and zeal for architecture and design continue to manifest because of the way in which the discipline has seamlessly integrated into their thinking and lifestyle! The conversation with the Jain family headed by one of the revered masters of Indian architecture, **Uttam C. Jain**, founder, and principal partner of the award-winning architectural studio in Mumbai, **UCJ architecture & environment (UCJ)**, was a potent reminder of the above reality. Considering his age, the conversation had been designed as an initial talk with him over a shorter time frame, to be followed by an extensive conversation with his family of architects— his daughter **Maya**, son, **Chirag** and daughter-in-law, **Shona**, who have over the years taken over the mantle of UCJ.

What astonished the family and me was that the doyen, young at 89 years, continued to sit silently, listen keenly, and engage intently till the fag end of 2.5 hours and until I finished the conversation with the other family members. His words might have been fewer than the others, but his enthusiasm and the desire to listen to his family members evidently overflowed. Equally exuberant was the family members' delight in his presence, which brought a tenderness to the conversation, difficult to illustrate in words.

This gesture was a strong echo of what Maya, Chirag, and Shona mentioned throughout the conversation— of their father being a powerful support, allowing them to bloom, with the assurance that he was always there if they solicited help. Uttam C. Jain started gradually withdrawing from the practice in 2012. He ensured that the children get so involved in the practice that after leading it for five decades, he could, naturally and effortlessly, carry out the transition involved in handover of the practice. What has transpired over the years and over two generations, is a firm and a family, both of which while securing their sense of morality and ethics, have succeeded to expand and evolve.

The fascination around architecture and design

Uttam C. Jain belonged to a family of textile merchants. His father encouraged his childhood interest in art and photography. Growing up, he spent hours marvelling at construction activities around his home in his native village Malwara, near Jodhpur, and how the built environment unexpectedly erupted in an empty space. 'I comprehended architecture as a profession, which impacted people, as people lived and survived in buildings. Its role was to serve humanity; construction became a medium to implement it,' he notes. Presuming architecture to be like engineering, he enrolled for a B.Arch. degree at the IIT Kharagpur, West Bengal. After graduating in 1958, he went to the National University of Tucuman, Argentina, on an advanced study scholarship. He established his studio in 1961 in Mumbai, a city where most of his family members and community resided. 'If you want to swim, you jump straightaway into the ocean. You might make mistakes, but you learn and gain more confidence,' he remarks. His architectural inspirations have been Louis I. Kahn, Le Corbusier, and additionally Oscar Niemeyer (2) and Lucio Costa, with whom he interacted during his advanced study in Argentina. Heavily inspired by context and region, he regarded them as resources from where one could learn, imbibe values, and grow.



Uttam C. Jain
Founder & Principal Partner,
UCJ architecture & environment (UCJ), Mumbai



Maya Shah
Director, UCJ



Chirag Jain
Partner, UCJ



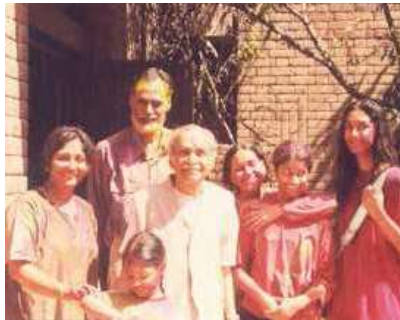
Shona Jain
Partner, UCJ



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4. The APK Family with close friends: front row (L to R): Saili, Pooja, Czaee, Sunita. Back Row (L to R): Kanvinde, Tanuja, Shirish, Vrinda, Mrs. Adhikari, Col.Hemu Adhikari

5. Sanjay and Tanuja with Vrinda at her graduation
6. Kanvinde playing Holi with family

more than two decades ago. Daily, Kanvinde used to narrate stories to Vrinda, and she specifically remembers the Mahabharata tales he narrated while designing the *Iskcon Temple* at Delhi, one of his masterpieces. Kanvinde had designed a temple for his thesis, but he had not explored this typology post that. A pro bono project that continues to be a landmark in temple architecture, saw Kanvinde spend considerable time reading the *Bhagvad Gita* during the designing to deepen his knowledge of scriptures and get a larger perspective to approach the design.

Much like her grandfather, whose initial challenging months at Harvard were made easier by his international peers, Vrinda had a similar experience with her peers several decades later. She felt emotional when she stood in the same surroundings and recollected the John W. Weeks bridge (1) and Robinson Hall (2), where her grandfather had been photographed all those decades ago. In 2020, she managed to dig out Kanvinde's student documents from the Harvard Archives— what a thread to have connected them two generations apart!

The family of architects goes beyond the four, with the extended family based in Delhi (4). Sunita's husband, **Shiriesh Malpani**, founder of **Shiriesh Malpani & Associates**, is widely recognised for his design for the Civic Centre, Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Shiriesh's elder daughter **Czaee** and son-in-law **Jaideep Chatterjee** are professors and integral members of the Jindal School of Art and Architecture core team. The younger daughter **Saili** is an architect with expertise in heritage conservation and adaptive reuse.

Waking up to a legacy

Embracing the dual role of living up to the magnitude of a legacy they had inherited and the responsibility of continuity that they were entrusted with, Tanuja divulges, 'There was no sense of entitlement or privileges when Sanjay joined the firm.' Co-authoring Kanvinde's monograph (9) allowed Sanjay and Tanuja to become even more aware of the far-reaching aspects of Kanvinde's contribution to architecture. Coincidentally, Kanvinde had spoken about wanting to publish a monograph when he was alive; Sanjay mentions the delay in publishing the monograph as a lasting regret.

Sanjay was subjected to high expectations, irrational presumptions, and accusations of passing off his father's work for studio assignments during his college days. However, his father's name and goodwill did open many doors. Tanuja, however, confides that post her marriage to Sanjay, the surname did not have an impact on her as she retained her maiden name. Working as a regular employee at the office implied that almost everyone around, and even a few people in the office, remained unaware of her association with the family. Conversely, she was not privy to the office discussions between Kanvinde and his partners. Moreover, office lunch hour was largely discussions on sports, politics, and friends. At home, Kanvinde would restrict speaking about his work only to his wife, who took complete responsibility of the household matters, while her husband focussed entirely on his profession.

Vrinda also had to confront these high expectations in college during her interactions with her faculty and peers. She narrates her teachers' amusing pauses after calling out her surname in the roll call. The pressure to live up to this legacy made Vrinda work doubly hard during her first year of bachelor's. Furthermore, her parents, back home, were brutally honest if her college assignments were not up to the mark.



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7. A proposal for wayside amenities for National Highways Authority of India, Srinagar
8. Priyadarshini Institute of Architecture and Design Studies (PIADS), Nagpur

9. A proposed Farm House at Mamtha, Nagpur
10. Family residence, Nagpur
11. Khemka Residence, Nagpur

Family teams

Siblings working together are confidantes who have a shared responsibility to carry forward their parents' dreams, is a sentiment that Sabrina and Samiha echo. 'I see my future with Samiha. In numerous ways, she is a companion for life. She has taught me patience and to stick to what exists and move forward with excitement,' explains Sabrina. The sisters share a mutual space where they enjoy site discussions, musings upon their future, the systemisation of the practice, supporting each other's radical views and giving each other confidence. Samiha, personally, has always looked up to her older sister, however, Sabrina is upfront that professionally, she does not want Samiha to feel the weight of Sabrina leading by example. There have been comparisons and pressures on Samiha during the initial years of school and college.

Elaborating on her progressive parents' influence, Sabrina states, 'My parents have taught me the openness of mind and the importance of not having a rigid structure to thought. Aai is more open to our ideas. Though Abu asks us to do what we believe in, there is an inertia to change. It is a beautiful contradiction.' Samiha is inspired by Sabrina's intangible quality of being calm yet energetic. While she has imbibed her Abu's strong sense of morals and principles, she respects how despite her malleability and openness to embracing another person, her Aai stands her ground and holds on to her identity.

Admired for his exceptional oratory skills, the father eloquently sums up the learnings from his daughters. 'Sabrina is the extrovert and is physically expressive, while Samiha never expresses herself; even in her introverted nature, you can feel the intensity. The difference in expression is quite marked, and their opposite ways of expressing love have taught me the two limits of love.' Though temperament-wise, the teams are pretty forthright: Habeeb-Sabrina, and Smita-Samiha; Sabrina candidly admits Samiha is Habeeb's favourite, while Sabrina started getting closer to Smita during her master's programme when they would travel together and discuss communities and culture. During several instances, the teams modify to 3S versus 1H (the three ladies against Habeeb). Habeeb discloses: 'Both my daughters mean the world to me, but they are definitely on their mother's side, personally and professionally. At times, when the three become a team, I just put my foot down, but then eventually give in.' This is quite a novel deviation from the conventional all-daughter families where daughters side with their fathers while the mothers feel isolated!

Habeeb acknowledges that as the boss at work, heading two institutions, and then COA President, he has never learnt to accept a no. But his family grounds him and has taught him meticulousness, pragmatism, and paying attention to details and services. 'They have taught me not to react or be outspoken. Though Smita thinks I am diplomatic, I am not,' surely an evident bone of contention between them, as Smita swiftly retorts, 'He is!'

The love for architecture that binds them

The family's residence in Nagpur (10), designed by Habeeb and Smita in 1996, is a favourite with the family. Whilst it is not a masterpiece and lacks functional requirements as per the daughters, that home is their universe. The daughters love the quality of space their parents brought in and see their reflection in every room. 'There was this wall in our room where as kids, we could colour with crayons, and as teenagers, we wrote the names of our crushes. It took three days to scrape off all of that,' recalls Sabrina.

The *PIADS* (8) and the *JD College of Engineering* (12) in Nagpur are the other favourites. These are institutional campuses where SHK shared a symbiotic relationship with the clients, and the projects



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1. Rahul and Sonal with Fumihiko Maki in his office, 1998
 2. The present team at Architecture Plus
 3. The present team at S+PSa
 4. The present team at _Opolis

5. Pinkish-Shilpa and Rahul-Sonal with their daughters on a visit to Greece, 2017
 6. Pinkish-Shilpa and Rahul-Sonal with their daughters and parents, Avinash and Geeta Gore, Diwali 2019

Architecture Plus deals in residential and office interiors; the firm's third partner, Rajesh Shah, Sagar's cousin brother, handles the architectural projects. The firm's simple and elegant design solutions demonstrate that they lend a patient ear to their clients' requirements and then, aesthetically, and seamlessly, they tie core design ideas formulated within the inclusive process.

S+PSa provides architecture, urban design, and interior architecture services and prides itself in being a design-driven and process-oriented practice, designing and revamping dwellings, office interiors, institutional and corporate projects. With Mumbai as an influence in their work, their award-winning designs aim to produce humane, unique, diverse, and desirable environments, highlighting aesthetics and functionality. Refraining from being typecast in a set architectural style, each design solution critically examines its programme and potential beyond stipulated boundaries and challenges rudimentary thinking. The practice enjoys the slowness of working on concepts to make every design solution count and believes in extensive research and inquiry and integrates the results with technicality and artistry to drive a design discourse. In their non-hierarchical office set-up, everyone is a 'generalist' and works on design, model-making, production, and execution, resulting in the team becoming one integrated family unit.

_Opolis, a multidisciplinary award-winning design practice, works on relatively larger-scale architectural projects and aims at timeless design solutions abandoning 'current trends.' The firm's intriguing name embodies its philosophy of showing reverence for a city and its design through unbounded ingenuity. The underscore signifies unrestrained creativity and thinking, the alphabet O is a prefix in the Japanese culture for respect, and polis translates to a city in Greek. Working across multiple scales and project typologies, the practice creates space and design elements as narratives of their design ideologies. They fiercely believe in the power of hand drafting, model making, competitions, and collaborations. Their award-winning collaborations include those with Maki and Associates, Tokyo, for the *Bihar Museum* (11) and the *Amaravati Capital City Complex* in Andhra Pradesh, and with Steven Holl Architects, New York, for the *Extension of the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum* in Mumbai.

S+PSa and _Opolis gravitate towards trained architects in their team, forsaking interior designers and draughts-people. 'To us as architects, interiors are more about space and material than decoration and styling,' says Pinkish, further elaborating that they enjoy working with similar sensibilities that communicate in the same conduit of language, which comes easily to people with architectural training. Rahul agrees it has more to do with the rigour of the discipline, which they find in trained architects. As a comment to the above, Shilpa, a former National Executive Council member of the Institute of Indian Interior Designers (IIID), perceives the dire need for interior design education in India to be re-evaluated.

Documentation and media coverage have been tackled differently by the three practices. Architecture Plus has not been proactive and has kept an extremely low profile, whereas S+PSa has been documenting their works and regularly featuring in media publications since the late 1990s. 'Documentation is critical to have a certain sense of the history of what you have done. Besides being a medium to disseminate work, over time, it creates a reflective space for oneself,' remarks Pinkish. Yet, S+PSa hasn't been as adept as is required in today's demanding digital times, with websites and an active social media presence. On the contrary, _Opolis has been documenting its work, featuring in media publications, and maintaining a website and updated social media handles. The firms hope to formally collaborate on projects in the future.



Streetscape, Jaisalmer at the photographic exhibition "Through an Architect's Eye" by Uttam C. Jain and Chirag Jain (Mumbai, 1991)

Epilogue

Conceiving and writing the epilogue brings me to introspect the past year, which has singularly been committed to this book's genesis. The book features families connecting over architecture in numerous capacities: through **intergenerational** or **multigenerational practices** (family members across generations sharing a practice), **heterogeneous practices** (family members owning multiple practices), and what I call **concoctions** (a blend of intergenerational and heterogeneous practices, and family members working outside the family practice). The ten featured families in the book are positioned as case studies for discussing architectural families in India. The *Sharmas*, *Jains*, *Ghoshes*, *Kembhavis*, *Khans*, and *Puris* correspond to intergenerational practices, the *Shahs & Gores* and *Zacharias & Bhyrav* to heterogeneous practices, and the *Kanvindes* and *Shahs & Khannas* to concoction practices.

In all the families, the architectural inheritances were handled with utmost care and intellect, and the diverse ways to balance them with evolution assured that every family's narrative was distinct. In some, the inheritances were preserved, while in others, they were developed; in both cases, they signalled an evolution. There hasn't been a standard template for these families to follow, which marks the exclusivity of every family's journey towards adapting, evolving, and contributing to architecture.

The book features three generations of architects, classified as per their professional dive into architecture¹—the **senior generation**, which started practising architecture before the 1980s; the **mid-generation**, which began between the 1980s up to mid-2000; and the **millennials**, who entered mid-2000 onwards.

Considering the above classifications, this epilogue attempts to build a framework to reflect upon the *observations*, *interpretations*, and *realisations* of the ten case studies to generate the following *assertions*:

- Irrespective of the diverse foray of the family members into architecture and design—inadvertently or through passion or lineage—architecture manifested itself in their thoughts, actions, and lives.
- The professional dynamics in the families were subjected to various aspects, and the families manoeuvred these aspects to work collaboratively and contribute to the built environment cohesively. These dynamics differed for intergenerational, heterogeneous, and concoction practices. They were also impacted by the entry time of the first-generation architects in the families.
- Architecture has invariably been a function of time, changing values, societal beliefs, inspirations, and influences. Over time, even though pivotal shifts in the profession and discipline globally impacted the professional dynamics, architecture distinctively managed to become the professional anchor for these families. The pivotal shift across generations aligned with the following transformations in the profession and the discipline.
 - Architecture beyond design: With architecture becoming more collaborative with its allied industries of art, construction, and building, the architect's role of steering a project was diluted and shifted to the periphery with the other stakeholders.
 - Effects of globalisation: Globalisation led to the scaling up of architecture and its resources and shrunk the world through increasing communication channels. The internet and social media

1. These are based on the featured families in the book and are not scientific givens