

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Architecture: An Inevitable Change

*Amrutha Valli<sup>1\*</sup>, Farah Wahaj<sup>2</sup>*

*<sup>1</sup>Final Year Student, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor*

*Department of Architecture, Maestro School of Planning and Architecture, Hyderabad,  
Telangana, India.*

*\*Corresponding Author*

*E-mail Id:-amrutha.space@gmail.com*

### ABSTRACT

*On the rise is an alarming pandemic that has been influencing the lives of countless strangers across the world. It's prime perpetuator: the physical realm. The infamous COVID-19 scenario is slowly but surely impacting the general architecture clientele in ways unimagined before.*

**Keywords:-***Pandemic, covid-'19, architecture, urban spaces, study, economy.*



**Fig.1:-***Construction of a 1,000-bed hospital in Wuhan, China.*

### INTRODUCING 2020'S PRIME ANTAGONIST: THE COVID-19

The year 2020 has unquestionably introduced humanity to a relentless imprisonment in built environments, causing one to inevitably regulate physical interaction. The ability of a space to psychologically nurture our well-being has never been more evident than it is at this point in history. What seemed to be mindless navigation through public spaces has now become a task that requires utmost calculation and strategy to maintain a high degree of physical separation. The need of the hour demands a fine tuning into the study of proxemics and its physiological and mental implications, powerful enough to cause mass hysteria and panic.

### ARCHITECTURAL PRIVACY: THE OPEN OFFICE SCENARIO

There has been constant debate around the concept of open offices. Designers advocate the eradication of open offices that deprive workers of visual and acoustic privacy, two cognitive elements known to impact productivity and efficiency. Survey reveals that open offices reduced face-to-face interactions by about 70 percent.

The open architecture seemed to trigger a withdrawal response, where co-workers craved less social contact and chose instead to send emails and instant messages. The concept of "Deep-work chambers" acquires hope that workplace leaders will take the best of what they've learned from virtual working to help create office spaces that allow for a balance of isolated concentration and productive, meaningful collaboration.

### THE ECONOMY OF ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

Monetary unrest is a byproduct of the standstill architectural scene in India. The lockdown rightly imposed by the governments has affected the timeline of on-going and future projects. Due to the enormous pressure of the growing

population, the value of land as a commodity is sky-rocketing.

Since the government's lenient statement permitting certain constructions, architects and contractors haven't been on a pause with the work dynamic. However, in the absence of manual labourers due to widespread interstate migration and strictly exercised quarantines, the pace of construction projects is retarding. Uncertainty looms in the air, and work schedules are drastically altered to suit the present conditions. On the other hand, the construction industry sees a massive hike in cement prices and labour costs, given the immense demand and limited supply in the economy.

### **THE EDUCATION AND OCCUPATION SCENE**

Shifting focus from working professionals to young aspirants, we are faced with an entirely different take on education. As of April 8, 2020, schools have been suspended nationwide in 188 countries, according to UNESCO. There are some undeniable privileges about working in the comfort of one's home and having a flexible schedule, but survey suggests an alternate reality. As many students grapple with the negative impacts of the surrounding panic, they are also faced with the mounting self-pressure of performing academically well. This remark isn't exclusive of practicing architects.

### **AN ARCHITECT IN CONVERSATION: AN IMPACT STUDY**

In the light of the psychological impact of Covid-19 on practicing architects, the following conversation with revered architect Ajit Sharma of AS-Design Atelier uncovers the true work experience.

*Amrutha:* Good Morning, Ajit. How has the pandemic been for your overall work etiquette? Is this period a provision to slow

the usual architect schedule a bit? Or has it caused more harm than good?

*Ajit:* Good morning, Amrutha. Initially, as you must be aware, we always have that pile of work that does not exhaust itself as days pass. I was excited at the prospect of so much spare time to finally attend to all the pending work. With more lenient pressure, I allowed myself the forbidden freedom that in turn cost me more time and resulted in less work. By the end of the second lockdown, I had worked only 40% of my pre-quarantine work.

*Amrutha:* How has the teamwork side been going? Is there any shift in the teamwork dynamic, now that everyone's isolated?

*Ajit:* The office premises would allow me to constantly check-up on my subordinates. That's the only factor missing. Thanks to the internet, I find no issues in communicating the technical data with her and receiving the needed drawings.

*Amrutha:* What's the status on your ongoing projects?

*Ajit:* All of my sites are on halt. I regularly am in touch with the clients to be updated about any changes in the schedule.

### **THE PANDEMIC'S ROLE IN URBAN DESIGN AND PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE**

The ability of masses to dissect the pitfalls of present architecture has always become evident right after a severe pandemic takes place. The 14th century's ghastly plague gave rise to radical improvements in the renaissance urbanscape. One cannot deny the 2020 pandemic's impact on architecture. The need for modular construction and public hygiene is on the rise. The concept of assembling manufactured parts together off-site

referred to as modular construction in architecture finds itself suitable given the consequences of the pandemic. Time-conscious architecture is highly-demanded, in order to cater to the construction of temporary structures such as hospitals and shelters.

The architectural reaction to the tactile-based COVID-19 is looking at the inclusion and normalization of sanitizing chambers as a typical element of public building entrances.

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter in the tale of humanity is a challenge to both the practicing architects and the students who aspire to get there. The effect is on a macro-level, stretching years ahead of its time to influence the way architecture is globally perceived. Henceforth, a new facet to architecture would be to ensure user hygiene and make

the time consumed from conceptualization to execution a top priority during these challenging times.

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