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REPORTER

WWW.SURFACES.IN

November 2016 • ₹ 125 • INDIA  
Published on 1st November 2016

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SURFACES REPORTER | TALK SERIES DELHI

# SPACE INNOVENTION

The evolution of shared & collaborative spaces.



From Left, Ar. Vikas Sabharwal & Ishvinder Kaur from ivpartners, Gurgaon, Ar. Manish Gulati M:OFA Studios, New Delhi & Dr. Anuradha Chaterjee, Academic at Shristi School of Art, Design and Technology Bangalore

Collaborative spaces or Co-working spaces are terms we heard of but probably couldn't ever realise how big & evolved these would be all of a sudden in India. The spark started with some startups venturing out on creating co-working plug & play offices. Today, this is no more limited to startups & offices. Big time businesses are foraying into this.

**Surfaces Reporter** is excited & glad to be the first magazine in the fraternity to hold the pulse of evolving space design punctuated by shared spaces and having a discussion on the same.

The way we are using Space is changing. This is an age of Shared office spaces and vacation Homes. For instance, **AirBnB** helps people to list, find, and then rent vacation homes. It has over 1,500,000 listings in 34,000 cities and 191 countries. **Awfis Space Solutions** aims at providing plug and play offices spaces, embedded with the latest technology solutions for 'just-in-time' space utilization. **Innov8** is also into co-working office solution. We already know how **OYO** rooms are coming up everywhere. **Bla Bla Car** is helping people to share space while travelling. More such ideas are mushrooming.

Surfaces Reporter feels Collaborative Spaces are the future of the evolving workforce. Starbucks coined the term '*third space*,' which became an alternative to a home office, or a place to relax which is different from home or an office. So if home is the '*first space*,' work is the '*second space*,' and coffee shops are the '*third space*,' then perhaps coworking is the '*fourth space*' for the evolving workforce.

Moderated by **Dr. Anuradha Chaterjee**, Academic at Shristi School of Art, Design and Technology (Bangalore), the Panelist of the sessions were **Ar. Manish Gulati**, Principal, M:OFA Studios Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, **Ar. Ishvinder Kaur** and **Ar. Vikas Sabharwal**, Principals, ivpartners, Gurgaon.

## Presenting the 1st ever discussion on Shared Spaces in India, by Surfaces Reporter magazine.

Speaking about Shared Economy of design, **Ar. Manish Gulati** touched upon the need of current emerging demographics and the major challenges that Designers would face due to the emergence of shared spaces.

"Shared spaces are more a virtue of financial management than space design. More than 50% of Indian population is below 35 years & more than 65% is below 25 years. It is interesting to note that country is witnessing at least 2-3% growth in GDP every year." A shared co-working space is about providing services to these demographics. Whether is Ola, Uber, AirBnB everything is catering to the same segment.

He stressed, "We need a model that works for all, i.e., from the least paid to the highest paid. The moment you talk about large singular office spaces or any space for a singular function, it doesn't really work for them. Designers are getting a major challenge of going beyond from singular design options to providing an actual 'Working Space'. People really want to invest wisely so they need a place where they can smartly invest their money, do the business and come back. In order to save money, you must have a proper financial planning, that's the call of the hour.

**The whole equation is changed from the area available for design to the budget available for design.** How to economize the whole design is a major challenge for any designer today. It's no longer about beautiful pictures downloaded from internet or selling a very flashy idea, but, it is all about having efficient spaces in limited budget and yet making the impossible possible."





“ I think the business of shared co-working spaces is going to be a big market and this is just a start and will further develop. ”

**Ar. Vikas Sabharwal** took our attention to the key elements to consider while designing shared spaces.

“We have been using shared spaces since time immemorial in the form of roads, transport, railways etc. There are two principles of Designing Shared Spaces. First this is **Equitable Use**; a design must be suitable & marketable for people from diverse ethnicities & abilities. Accessibility is the key to design. The shared spaces have to be accessible for all communities alike. The second principle is **Flexibility of use**. For instance, a place used by children as well as adults, the height of the furniture should be adjustable according to the user. The third one is **Ease of usage**. One must be able to understand a particular space and its usage just by looking at it. The user should be able to comprehend its functions properly.

We should be able to use the Shared spaces with the minimum level of fatigue be it a young or an old person. These spaces should be able to deal with the functions irrespective of the mobility or other issues.”

Agreeing with what Ar. Sabharwal said, **Ar. Ishvinder Kaur** said, “For designers, the shared spaces are very exciting opportunity. The spaces have to be functional, easy to use, **easy to maintain** etc. It is like integrating more functional spaces in one single space. It has to be comfortable for all age groups or the diverse range of people using them. Technology is also getting integrated in these shared spaces. It has changed the way people use these spaces and made it much more convenient.”

To this, **Ar. Gulati** added, “There are so many people coming from varied backgrounds so the companies have to create design accordingly which is comfortable & acceptable to all.”

## IS THERE A NEED FOR A STANDARDIZED MODEL OR MANUAL FOR DESIGNING SHARED SPACES?

**Ar. Manish Gulati:** Architects do know their job. However, **a standardized model is required** to put down certain by laws or parameters for creating a shared space design which could work as a manual. I believe the architects must have the dignity to step back and say ‘Let this whole phenomenon happen as the chain reaction.’

**Ar. Ishvinder kaur:** I think the business of shared co-working spaces is going to be a big market and this is just a start and will further develop. I believe there will be classification like Luxury Shared Spaces, Semi-luxury shared spaces, generic shared spaces etc. For instance, I stay close to Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon. All the OYO rooms in vicinity of the hospital have turned to medical stay facility for outdoor patients and their families. This is one instance which tells us that the bifurcation among the industry is slowly picking up and this is just the start. Going ahead, I think it’s going to be very exciting for designers.

**Ar. Vikas Sabharwal:** I would also support the fact that there is need to set up a manual for designing such shared spaces. I remember when McDonalds came to India in 90’s there was a set of manuals given to architecture firm to design the restaurants which resulted in quick escalation in number of McD outlets all across the country which initially the firms enjoyed but later on became like cookie cutting work for them. Similarly, for the young architects this is going to be exciting while for the matured 20-30 year old firms, this would be like cookie cutting business since much of creativity may not be involved.”

## FINALLY DR. CHATTERJEE ASKED ALL THE PANELISTS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF SHARED LIVING- 30 YEARS DOWN THE LINE.

“30 years is a long time,” smiled **Ar. Gulati**. “Have you seen Matrix and understood the concept of MAYA. **We won’t need a space more than 4x4 ft thirty years down the line.**”

“In 30 years, there will be people all around. You will be everywhere since you will be travelling around. So in the nutshell, you will be using the space but those spaces will not belong to you,” quipped **Ar. Kaur**.

**Ar. Vikas Sabharwal** feels **Technology Integration & Cybertecture is the future**. You may walk into a mall and there you are welcomed with your name. “Basically you carry your own space around and everything else is shared. This is what I see in future.”