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ARCHITECT'S AND
THEIR CONTEMPORARY
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Heena Bhargava,
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ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION:

SUSTAINABLE, COLLABORATIVE, AND FUTURE TRENDS

"Prioritizing sustainability, our architectural focus combines functionality, energy efficiency, and inclusivity. Innovating with novel materials, like Glulam, and advanced tech, we craft eco-friendly structures. From Mohalla Clinics to AI-enhanced design, we create resilient, collaborative spaces, nurturing a harmonious future."

How do you envision the future of architecture?

I think the future of architecture has to be sustainable; there is no other way forward. To this end, functionality and conservation of energy are the foundations that should define the built environment of our future.

I also envision an inclusive future, with spaces that encourage collaborations rather than generate hierarchies. The levels of richness that can be achieved by understanding what a

building is and what it brings to the wider community are truly remarkable, and I hope we embrace this idea as we go forward.

Can you share any innovative or unconventional design concepts you have developed that reflect a futuristic approach to architecture?

At Architecture Discipline, we are always trying to innovate with new material and technology that can make our



buildings more efficient while reducing costs and impact on the environment. We have been extensively exploring unconventional sustainable materials such as Glulam from the mass-timber family and are also working on India's first residence in mass timber.

We are also exploring ways in which architecture can overcome typically long cycles of production with the use of prefabrication. The Mohalla Clinics, designed for the Government of Delhi and supported by Tata Power DDL, was a project designed to deliver primary healthcare to neighbourhoods during the Covid-19 pandemic. Easily deployable, pre-equipped solutions like these can hold great potential in responding to situations such as epidemics or environmental disasters that we may be faced with in the future.

What are some key trends or technologies that you believe will shape the field in the coming years?

I think new tools and software such as BIM and AI have immense potential in the field and that we must quickly learn to make the most of these tools in order to augment the process of design.

In your opinion, how will advancements in technology, such as artificial intelligence and automation, impact the design and construction processes of buildings in the future?

One interesting thing that we have experienced recently is how fast the AI is inspiring us. By generating a lot of variations, it has really speed up the various processes

involved in our designing. It does promise to be inspiring and at the same time contribute to the deeper discourses in the workflow. We must stay open and keep learning utilising new tools that bring high levels of efficiency into design.

How do you incorporate sustainable and eco-friendly practices into your futuristic designs?

There are many simple but potent ways in which we incorporate sustainability in our designs. Orientation plays a key role in optimizing the amount of daylight and fresh air entering a building. Strategic orientation can also limit the amount of solar radiation falling on a structure, thereby decreasing heat gain.

Another important way in which we ensure our designs endure beyond their period of conception is to design flexible frameworks that can lend themselves to multiple uses over time.

Choosing the right materials and sourcing local is also integral to building sustainably. We are also constantly exploring new ways of building using prefabrication and automation to make the process more efficient, reducing wastage, and limiting environmental damage during the construction process.

The award-winning project in detail? What were its unique features and design elements that set it apart from traditional architecture?

Made from upcycled shipping containers, the Mohalla Clinics are designed to bring affordable primary healthcare to every neighbourhood in Delhi. The clinics are a prefabricated, easily deployable and sustainable solution to the issue of inaccessible primary healthcare. A typical unit is made of two 20-foot-long containers joined by a central walkway and consists of a reception, a waiting lounge, an examination room, and a pharmacy, making it suitable for routine health checks, testing, and vaccinations. The units come equipped with services, essential interior finishes, and built-in furniture, making them suitable for plug-and-play installation. The interior finishes are chosen to create an optimistic and sterile environment for patients. In the first phase of deployment, two clinics were set up in the urban settlements of Shakur Basti and Rani Bagh in Delhi.

The Mohalla Clinics has won a number of awards, including a Certificate of Commendation from the Indian Building Congress, recognition from the INDE Awards, Asia Pacific, and an accolade by Fast Company, USA. ■