

S K Das

Principal

SK Das Associated Architects, New Delhi

Few Indian architects claim to be urbanists, and even fewer have reason to. SK Das belongs to the latter. In the course of his career, he has gained renown as an award-winning architect, urban planner, and professor. To Mr. Das these are not entirely disparate fields, but disciplines that need to come into conversation with each other again if India is to meet its growing urban needs in a progressive yet socially responsible manner. To that end, he has devoted his career to reconciling the needs of aesthetics and accessibility, of citizen and market, and of growth and responsibility. His work spans a vast range of scales, including townships and urban master planning, cultural and institutional buildings, housing developments, mixed-use developments, private homes, urban development, and low cost housing for the poor. It also spans extremely diverse locales, as he has done projects in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the USA. Across all these scales and locations, his work is characterized by its innovative design, astonishing versatility and sensitivity to context.

He brings the same subtlety and depth to his consultancies and academic work. He has been a project consultant to many multilateral and international agencies, including UNDP/UN Habitat and the governments of Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. He has held several teaching positions, including that of Senior Staff Member, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (HIS), Rotterdam; Dean and Professor at the Sushant School of Art and Architecture, New Delhi; Visiting Professor at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi; and Visiting Professor at the University of Leuven, Belgium. He has also lectured and taught design studios at several universities, including MIT, Columbia, and Architectural Association, London.

In 1991 he won the National Award for Community Architecture in India, and his work on post-cyclone reconstruction in Orissa with CARE-India has been listed among the 100 Best Practices by UN Habitat. His works have been exhibited twice at the Aedes Gallery in Berlin.

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

USIS Exchange Visitor Fellowship, 1978

National Award for outstanding architectural work in settlements of India, Indian Institute of Architects, 1991

National Award for Community Architecture, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), Ministry of Urban Development, India, 1991

Eisenhower Fellowship in Urban Development, 1993

Chettle Fellowship, University of Sydney, 1995

'Architect of the Year' Award, Building Industries Bureau, 2011

EXHIBITIONS

Curated and featured in *The Mirrored Metropolis*, Aedes Gallery, Berlin, 2003.

Wrote the introductory essay, 'City, Multiplicity and Specificity', for the accompanying publication.

Featured in *How Urban Is India?*, Aedes Gallery, Berlin, 2008.

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Member, Board of Studies, Department of Housing, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, 1990-'95

Member, Board of Studies, Department of Physical Planning, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, 1996-'98

Member, Research Committee, Association of Metropolitan Development Authorities (AMDA), New Delhi, 1996-2001

Member, Selection Committee for faculty positions, Guru Gobind Singh University, Amritsar, 1997-2001

Member, Selection Committee, Indo-Canadian and CIDA Fellowships for doctoral and postdoctoral research and visiting lectureships, 2000-'01

Member, Selection Committee for faculty positions and career advancement programs, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, 2001 - present

Member, Selection Committee for Architecture, INLAKS Scholarships, India, 2004

Jury Member, National Awards for 'Excellence in Architectural Thesis', India, 2005 - present

External Examiner for graduate and undergraduate theses, and *External Juror* in Architectural Design, Housing and Urban Design studios at several schools of architecture in India and elsewhere.

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Board Member, Habitat International Council (HIC), now known as Habitat International Coalition, 1981-'86.

Member, International Jury, Union of International Architects (UIA), International Design Competition for Schools of Architecture, 1984

Advisor, Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Bombay, 1987-'89

Advisor, Design Development, Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), 1987-'92

Nominator, Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1993-'95

Vice-president, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISoCaRP), 1995-'98

Advisor, Delhi Urban Arts Commission (DUAC), 1998-present

Member, Expert Group on Housing, Urban Renewal and Densification for preparatory work for the Delhi Masterplan 2020

Urban Advisor on retainer, Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (IDFC), 2003-2005

Member, Board of Governors, Schumacher Center, New Delhi, 2003-2004

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Associate to John Turner at Development Planning Unit (DPU), London, 1976-'77

Helped John Turner set up the international housing network and case history files to support self-help and community managed housing as a follow-up of the Habitat Conference at Vancouver.

Partner, Desai Das Architects, Mumbai, 1977-'80

Designed and executed smaller architectural projects including a few projects in the social sector focusing on the urban poor, largely through NGOs.

Senior Faculty member, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, 1980-'85

Designed four- to six-month modular courses in Housing Design and Physical Planning as part of the post-graduate diploma offered by the Institute, targeting students mainly from Asia, Africa and Latin America; course director for the same. Provided regular lecture inputs into similar modules in Housing Policy, and upgrading and revitalising squatter areas and inner cities. Directly taught approximately 200 students and supervised theses/project works of approximately 50. Offered consultancies and research advisory services on behalf of the Institute to governmental and non-governmental institutions. Assisted in institution building exercises, formulation and execution of academic and training programs through associated regional institutions in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Colombia.

Project Leader, Indian Human Settlements Program, IHS, Rotterdam, 1985-'86

Seconded by the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) Rotterdam as Netherlands Technical Expert, helped set up the Human Settlements Management Institute (HSMI) and the Indian Human Settlements Program (IHSP) as a collaborative venture between IHS, the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). The program provided training to architects and planning professionals from Asia and Africa in Settlement Planning and Design, Slum Upgrading, Housing Project Finance, Low-cost Infrastructure and Project Management. The program also commissioned and supervised short-term research in these areas. Also provided advisory services to Housing agencies in upgrading on-the-job technical skills.

Proprietor, S K Das Associated Architects, New Delhi, 1987-present

Established a private practice in architecture, planning, and urban design. Detailed information on projects and clientele available online at www.skdas.org.

Director and Professor (Design Chair), Sushant School of Art and Architecture, New Delhi, 2000-'02

As Head of the school, provided overall management and academic administration and directed design studios in Housing and Urban Design. Also designated as the academic coordinator for three colleges of architecture under Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Responsibilities included design and execution of a coordinated academic program, curriculum development, and examination systems. Also instituted an exchange program with the department of Architecture at Aristotle University, Thessaloniki.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Professor, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, 1990-'93 and 1997-'99

Conducted Housing and Urban Design studios, and delivered occasional lectures in departments of Planning, Architecture, Urban Design, and Housing.

Visiting Professor, Postgraduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS), University of Leuven, Belgium, 1994

Taught and supervised graduate students' work for a semester in the international course *Housing and Development*, co-sponsored by UN Habitat.

Visiting Lecturer, Academy of Architecture, Bombay, 1977-'79

Studio supervision and occasional lectures in architectural design for undergraduate students.

Member of International Faculty and Studio Team, UN Habitat Workshop, Bandung, Indonesia, 1990, 1992

Workshop on "Urban Coherence and Housing Strategies" jointly organized by UN Habitat, Catholic University at Leuven, Belgium, and the Institute of Human Settlements.

Member of International Faculty and Studio Team, UN Habitat Housing Workshop for African (SADEC) Region, Nairobi, 1991

Jointly organized by United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN Habitat) and Housing Research Development Unit (HRDU), University of Nairobi.

Co-ordinator, Summer Workshop on "Housing in Development", Centre for Alternatives in Urban Development, Swindon, UK, 1976

As associate to Prof. John F C Turner, implemented a two-week workshop.

GUEST LECTURES

Development Planning Unit, London, 1978-'79

School of Architecture, University of Arizona at Phoenix, 1978

University of California at Berkeley, 1978

School of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, MA, 1978, 1984, 2001, 2002

Department of Architecture and Urban Design, Oxford Polytechnic, London, 1976

Architectural Association Graduate School, London, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983

Department of Architecture, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983

PGCHS, University of Leuven, 1976, 1979, 1980, 1984, 1988-1992

Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, 1976-'78 and 1987-'90

Malaysian Institute of Public Administration (INTAN,) Kuala Lumpur, 1983

Centre for Planning and Architecture Studies (CPAS), Cairo, 1984

School of Architecture, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT), Ahmedabad, 1980, 1981, 1988, 1989

Centre for Development Studies and Activities (CDSA), Pune, 1980

Human Settlements Division, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, 1981, 1982

Department of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 1984

Center for Housing and Human Settlements Studies (CHSS),
Bangkok, 1983, 1984

Human Settlements Management Institute, New Delhi, 1989-'95

Indonesian Institute of Architects, Jakarta, 1992

Housing and Research Development Unit (HRDU), University of
Nairobi, 1992

Catholic University, Bandung, 1992

Plan Group, Planners & Architects, Bangkok, 1992

TVB School of Habitat Studies, New Delhi, 1992, 1993

Sushant School of Art & Architecture, Gurgaon, 1993, 1994

Department of Architecture, University of Sydney, Australia,
1995

Department of Political Science, (inter-departmental centre),
University of Delhi, 1997

School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation, Columbia
University, New York, 2003

RESEARCH

Conceived, designed and implemented several long-term research programs with UN Habitat, the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (HIS), Rotterdam, and the Human Settlements Management Institute (HSMI), India, related to housing policy, strategy, design and technology. Carried out commissioned research for a number of international institutions. For details, refer to the sections on *Consultancies* and *Publications*.

PUBLICATIONS

'Housing the Poor'. In *The Onlooker*, Mumbai, October 1976.

'Janata Colony Case Study' - paper presented at the Self-Help, Low Cost Housing Symposium, Habitat Forum, (UN Conference on Human Settlements), Vancouver, 1976.

'Janata Colony - issues in self-help'. In *Architectural Design*, London, October 1976.

'Slums in Bombay'. In *Policies towards Urban Slums*, ed. Madhu Sarin, UNESCAP, 1976.

'Revitalisation of Inner-city Slums in Asian Cities', working paper presented at UNCHS expert group meeting in Bangkok, 1983.

'Housing in Sri Lanka'. In Housing and Slum Upgrading in Sri Lanka, ed. S K Das, Centre for Housing, Planning and Building (CHPB), Colombo, 1984.

'Dilapidation, Repair and Reconstruction - case study', Bombay UNCHS monograph, 1984. Later published in Inner City Slums, UNHCS, 1985.

'Architect as an enabler of user house planning and design - implications for policy and for the profession'. In Architect as an enabler of user house planning and design, ed. John F C Turner, UIA, on the occasion of the International Design Competition, 1985.

Rethinking the City, co-authored with nine members of a special group invited by the Ministry of Housing and Planning, Government of Sweden, as a result of ten-day workshop, IIED, London, 1985. The group included Prof. Bill Alonso, Harvard University, Prof. Jorge Hardoy, Argentinean Urbanist, and David Satterthwaite.

'Feasible Strategies for Rehabilitation of Inner-city Slums', case study of Bombay Building Repair and Reconstruction Program, UNCHS, 1986.

'Shelter Redefined', 'Government Housing People', 'People Housing Themselves', 'Voluntary Interventions', 'The Chawl, Bombay', and 'Chandrashekharpur and Jagmara - Social Organisation of Space and Built Form', in a special issue on "Shelter for the Homeless" in *Architecture + Design*, New Delhi, January-February 1988.

Italian translation of the above published as the 46th issue of *Spazio e Societa/Space & Society*, Rome, 1989.

'Urban Coherence and Design Strategies: Design Ideas in Practice', paper presented at international workshop on Housing in Development, Catholic University, Bandung, 1990.

'Enabling the Rural User'. In *Architecture + Design*, 1991.

'Coherence in Mud'. In *Architecture + Design*, 1992.

'Architecture of Community Building, Participation and Local Development', documentation of Subernarekha Rehabilitation Project 1991, unpublished monograph.

'India - Architecture in Development', *Architecture of Nations: SAARC Countries*, ed. Razia Grover, a book sponsored by Aga Khan Foundation, and HUDCO and published by *Architecture + Design Magazine*, 1993.

'Evaluation of Relocation Programs in Bombay', paper presented at UNCHS Expert Group Meeting on Urban Relocation: Policy and Practice at Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1992.

'Metropolitan Planning & Management, case of Bombay', co-authored with Manju Gupta, a research paper commissioned by UNCHS 1993. Subsequently published as part of Metropolitan Planning and Management: Bombay and Cairo, UNCHS, 1996.

'Architektur in modernen Indien' (Architecture in Modern India), *DER ARCHITEKT*, the official journal of the German Institute of Architects, 1995.

'A Context for Design'. In Contemporary Indian Architecture: Housing and Urban Development, ed. M N Joglekar, S K Das, Galgotia Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1995.

'Housing and Living Conditions in India', research paper commissioned by the International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED), London as a preparatory document for HABITAT II at Istanbul in 1996. Reproduced in Global Report on Human Settlements, UNCHS, 1996.

Mediation in Planning, ed. S K Das and Prof. Serge Domicelj, *Bulletin 1996/1*, IsoCaRP, The Hague.

'Mass Housing at Nerul'. In *Architecture + Design*, India, 1997.

'Urban Coherence and the Architecture of Housing'. Co-authored with Meera Godbole. In Urban India in Crisis, ed. Dr Florian Steinberg and Dr Kulwant Singh.

SELECTED CONFERENCES

UNCHS Expert Group Meeting on *Upgrading of Inner-city Slums*, Bangkok, 1983.

Sixth Commission of UNCHS - Habitat, held at Helsinki, 1983.

Rethinking the City, a ten-day conference organized by the Ministry of Housing, Swedish Government, involving ten invited experts from Latin America, Africa and Asia, 1985.

NGO Forum, International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH), UN HABITAT, Limuru and Nairobi, Kenya, 1987.

Annual Congress of International Society of City & Regional Planners (ISoCaRP) on *Shelter for the Homeless*, New Delhi, India, 1987. Served as workshop Rapporteur.

UNCHS Expert Group Meeting on *Urban Relocation: Policy and Practice*, Rotterdam, 1993.

Annual Congress of IsoCaRP on *Expanding Demands on Planning*, Prague, 1994. Served as Rapporteur.

ISoCaRP Pre-Congress Preparatory Seminar, Dresden, 1995.

Annual Congress of ISoCaRP on *Planning and Mediation*, Sydney, 1995. Served as Rapporteur General.

The Forum of Professionals HABITAT II, the UN City Summit, Istanbul, 1996. Served as Rapporteur General.

The Seoul Metropolitan Fora on *The City at the time of Changing Paradigm*, organised by the city of Seoul and City University, Seoul, December 1996. Panelist for discussion on creating a Centre for Urban Studies at the university.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Bombay Urban Industrial League for Development (BUILD): An urban industrial mission project of the World Council of Churches, Mumbai, 1975

Designed a community-managed in situ housing reconstruction for Jaffar Baba squatter settlement of 240 families. Initiated a local and international campaign against constructing staff housing of the Bhaba Atomic Energy Commission and forcibly evicting 72,000 people of Janata Colony.

Honorary Coordinator, Bombay Civic Trust, Mumbai, 1977-'79

Produced a newsletter, *Citizen's Action*, mainly dealing with urban housing and environmental issues and conflicts.

Founder and first honorary Secretary General, Bombay Environmental Action Group (formerly known as Bombay Bachao Committee), Mumbai, 1978-'79

Brought together eleven NGOs in diverse urban fields, including urban planning and development, ecology and environment, and community rights, to successfully fight the location of a major World Bank funded fertilizer complex across the bay on the mainland. (This organisation subsequently emerged as a national resource centre for similar exercises with consultative status with the Ministry of Environment, Government of India.)

National Campaign for Housing Rights, New Delhi, 1986-'87

Substantively helped in the formation of a coalition to influence the Government of India's national housing policy announced in 1987. The campaign brought together many housing NGOs across the country in a dialogue and consensus building to affect the policy.

Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai, 1987-'88

Helped this Bombay-based NGO intervene in housing for urban squatters and pavement dwellers, and in particular, helped in the design of training programs for community-managed participatory housing and relocation.

Honorary Planning and Design Advisor, CARE-India, Orissa, 1999

Intervention in post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation after the cyclone in Orissa, 1999, setting up community-managed housing programs and designing multi-purpose cyclone shelters. This project was listed amongst the 100 Best Practices by UN Habitat and received a Best Practice award from HUDCO, Government of India.

CONSULTANCIES

Design Consultant, Building Together Project, Bangkok, 1981-'82

Assisted in the preparation of conceptual and detailed design for a low-income mutual aid housing project in Bangkok.

Planning Advisor, National Housing Authority, Thailand, 1981-'82

Assisted in the design of World Bank funded sites and services projects as a component of the Bangkok Metropolitan Urban Development Exercise.

Consultant, Camilo Torres Mutual Aid Housing Project, Medellin, Colombia for CORVIDE, the municipal housing agency of Medellin, 1982

Assisted the organisation in the preparation of site layout proposals for aided self-help construction of shelter and community facilities on behalf of IHS, Rotterdam.

Consultant, Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB), Netherlands, 1982

Evaluation of the *Unintended City Project* undertaken by UNNAYAN, a Calcutta based NGO working with urban poor.

Advisor, Centre for Housing Planning and Building (CHPB) at the National Housing Development Authority (NHDA), Sri Lanka, 1982-'83

Designed and implemented a workshop on *Slum and Shanty Upgrading* for middle level officials from government and non-government organisations. This included faculty training and other preparatory work.

Consultant, UN Habitat, location, 1983-84

Designed the project format and research methodology for *Revitalisation of Inner-city Slums* through city case studies, comparative analysis, expert group meeting and publication of results.

Consultant, UN Habitat, Mumbai, 1985

Carried out a detailed research study (at policy, program and project levels) including evaluation of the Building Repair and Reconstruction Program in Bombay, that resulted in a UN Habitat publication on the subject.

Consultant, NOVIB, Calcutta, 1986

Monitoring and evaluation of Unnayan, a voluntary agency that focuses on issues related to housing and livelihood for the urban poor.

Advisor to Design and Development Group of HUDCO, Mumbai, 1986

Helped with the formulation of the Urban Renewal Program in Bombay, designed and financed by HUDCO and implemented by the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA).

Also supervised a research study on Low Income Settlement Transformation.

Consultant, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN Habitat), Nairobi, 1986

Prepared a research publication on inner-city slums based on a global survey and with case studies from Santiago, Lima, Cairo, Bombay, Colombo and Bangkok.

Consultant, HUDCO, New Delhi, 1986

Assisted in design appraisal and review of projects submitted by various housing agencies to HUDCO for approval and financing.

Consultant, UNESCAP/ UNDP, Bangkok, 1987

Preparation of project document submitted to UNDP for funding the creation of a network of local authorities and NGOs in Asia and the Pacific, which has subsequently evolved into Asia Pacific 2000 and further into CityNet. This two-month exercise produced immediate results, i.e., UNDP approval for setting up of the network.

Consultant, NOVIB, The Hague, 1987

Preparation of a policy document on *Housing the Poor in the Asian Region* for a workshop involving counterpart NGOs of NOVIB from Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India.

Consultant, UN Habitat, Nairobi, 1993

Preparation of monograph on Bombay resulting in UN Habitat publication on *Metropolitan Planning and Management in the Developing World Spatial Decentralization Policy in Bombay and Mexico, 1993.*

Consultant, NOVIB, The Hague, 1996

In a team of two, evaluated Habitat International Coalition (HIC), a global coalition of NGOs in housing, on behalf of the Consortium of funding organizations. Scope of work included evaluation of programs managed from Mexico City (the Secretariat), and regional programs with Urban Communities, NGOs and CBO's, 1996.

Consultant, UN Habitat/UNDP, Phnom Penh, 1998

As part of a team of four, evaluated the Phnom Penh Housing and Squatter Upgrading Program and identified new strategies and projects for future intervention.