

From where I sit

A shared purpose, by Eishan Jain



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I have been part of ADP since 2015, and I've met some wonderful, bright and like-minded colleagues over the course of time. As an associate director, I can call the shots on how a project will run – but taking the opinions of colleagues and clients is a necessary part of decision-making, and has helped me over the years in becoming better as a designer and as an individual.

From my very first day at ADP, I've realised that this practice is different from the rest. It's not so much what we do as how – and most importantly why – we do it. The thought process that we give to the roots of each action is what makes us ADP. Our actions are measured by three important parameters: **sustainability, belonging** and **engagement**.

Ever since I joined the architecture industry, I wanted to make a positive impact in the world. Foresight, optimism, focus and resolution to do the right thing are hugely important traits to me, and all help me to reach my ultimate goal of **“creating and enhancing joy in the world”**. Architecture is a profession which entrusts us with the power to create, which is a big responsibility. When you create something, it then becomes part of the larger world around us – forming an ecosystem. This drives the need for **sustainability**. Our duty should be to create things which take us one step further towards a sustainable world. It's for this reason that sustainability is one of the founding principles of ADP.

It goes without saying we enjoy doing things or working towards goals which “belong” to us. This feeling of **belonging** keeps us focussed on our goals, and we leave no stone unturned in caring for things which belong to us. This is a guiding principle for ADP. Each person here gets attached to the rope binding us together, and becomes “one with the practice”. We follow the same principle in each project we undertake. The project belongs to us – from the day it comes onto our table to the day it is standing in the soil.

Our belonging doesn't end with desk work. We carry our projects in our heart, and whenever we get an opportunity to visit or talk about them – be it a summit, award function, extension or simple get-together in the premises – we grab it. This is because we know that we have created something which is not harming our environment, and which is unique.

Just as a house becomes a home when people move in, we believe that all buildings take on life in use. When we take any decision regarding a space, facility or building, we are engaging ourselves. This is the essence of **engagement** – our third driving factor.

Whenever a client engages me for their project, I always make sure to take their own thoughts into account. These are not confined to the practical requirements of a brief (“I need a bedroom measuring 12 by 14 feet”), but encompass how they foresee themselves using the space that we create. This question is the key to everything we stand for: it sits at the heart of sustainability, belonging and engagement. Taking the example of a bedroom, I might ask: “Do you just want to use it as a room to retire to at night, or could it have other uses at other times as well?”

During the Covid pandemic, we have learned that life is uncertain, and that we cannot be tied by what is immediately visible to us. Finances are important, but we have to look beyond money and into the future. The happiness that comes from within is and has always been essential. Both physical and mental wellbeing are important, and taking time out for yourself is an important part of individual tasks and goals. Smaller happy moments cannot be ignored in pursuit of one large happy moment. It's only after the collaboration of all happy individuals that we can form one single, larger entity. And that's what ADP's philosophy of “one practice” means.

What we do today will lay the foundations for generations to come. We will be looked up to if we set things right and leave behind a sustainable, engaging place, where everyone can easily belong.