

Introduction to INTERIOR DESIGN

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It is no exception that every one of us, at one time or another is involved in some kind of decision relating to Interior Design. By re-arranging furniture in a room or selecting it for a new space; by choosing a particular upholstery material from myriad of possibilities or selecting curtain materials and directing the tailor as to how you would like to dress the windows; by selecting a picture, a painting for a particular space;

We play the role of an Interior Designer. Most of us find these Interior elements and activities quite exciting and enjoyable.

The feel of satin, the smell of leather, provoking colour schemes, intimate lighting, stainless steel or polished granite imprint and leave behind quite an extraordinary sensation. It is indeed very stimulating to utilities these elements successfully for our products and Interior environment but it becomes a real challenge for a small community known as Designers. Our knowledge of Design can be compared, without exaggeration with the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

Only recently Designers have had some recognition otherwise they were the unknown lot. In the words of W. H. Mayall, our towns and tractors, our toys and teacups, our tables and traveling cranes are all conceived by designers who, though we may not always believe it, are working for our benefit. Knowing little about designers we also know little about the ways in which they work.

We are all aware that progressively life is becoming extremely complex. We are making astounding and mind baffling strides in technology and communication. Almost everyday some new development takes place in some sphere of life. New materials and processes are discovered so rapidly that by the time a product is conceived, manufactured and places on the consumers shelves it becomes obsolete.

Our values and life patterns are going through a tremendous change. We are compelled to spend major part of our time “in doors” (unless one has a field job). Born in hospitals, living in flats or houses, working in offices, factories or workshops, eating in restaurants, relaxing and playing in clubs and gymnasias etc. we simply cannot avoid human made structures of such enclosures.

We may love to travel, for pleasure or out of necessity but in order to get where we want to go, we find ourselves again enclosed in interiors of trains, boats and planes, or cars. Even a farmer now rides an enclosed cabin of his tractor in the more advanced part of the world.

The birth of Interior Design as a serious profession is a result of our own experiences of the spaces which are usually unsatisfactory, inconvenient and unattractive and uncomfortable.

Interior Design has therefore become a highly sophisticated activity, an amalgamation of science and art. It requires sensitivity to aesthetics and demands thorough knowledge of materials and technology.

Basically Interior Design should organize and improve, render it functional and attractive, convenient and comfortable any task or function in a space or enclosure, may it be a mansion, a factory or an office or even an interior of airplane or a submarine.

Have you ever wondered why a particular pain in the body does not go despite medication, perhaps it could be because of something you have 'placed' rather inconveniently and that you have to reach for it every day. One might not notice the reasons for various maladies that we encounter or even a permanent ailment which can make a person invalid or helpless but a closer and a detailed look into the physical interior environment can be highly illuminating. For years and years people with backache use uncomfortable chairs and take it for granted. Well designed products and environments are hard to find. Unfortunately lack of professionalism, aggressive promotional activities and ignorance on our part are some of the main factors that deliver substandard products into our homes and simply make our lives miserable.

Why is every other person wearing optical glasses? Perhaps our interiors are improperly and inadequately illuminated, our eyes have to fare with either wrongly lit or poorly lit interiors. Why is the staff not comfortable in a particular office? Is the internal environment friendly or sympathetic at all? Is it conducive to efficient work? Is there climatic comfort? Is the circulation obstruction free? Is a particular physical task trouble free? Are the colours soothing to eyes? Almost every problem somehow lead to one subject and that is the planning, organization and the maintenance of Interior elements.

Everybody knows now how a disorderly and disorganized interior of an outlet does not pickup business while a planned and pleasing interior can do the reverse; in fact it can have magical effects besides looking neat and organized. As a principal proper Interior design should increase the efficiency manifold and result in boosting the business. A professional approach to our interior problems can definitely improve the quality of our lives and business while unprofessional way, makeshift and 'trying to save a buck' do have their invisible dangers.

Knowledge or unknowingly we all participate in the design activity and also it is quite tempting to call oneself and interior designer, but can we, without prejudice, judge or weigh an interior on scientific bases is a serious question. While some of us are quite successful in our attempts on design but does that qualify us to undertake projects that require professional training and experience.

It is time that the managers, executives and other people, who are employing interior designers and counting on design to radically change their environments, should raise the standards of scrutiny and help introduce professionalism.

Our average housewife is usually pretty good at sewing and stitching at home but can she create a first grade three piece suit or a sherwani. We openly accept the idea that in order to become a good cook or a tailor or even a bearable musician it should take deep study, practice and experience, shouldn't we then approach the subject of Interior Design with the same attitude, which in fact is becoming one of the most important factors to govern the quality of life.

DESIGN:

Design is order, and for some it is a way of life. To achieve order, in any set of circumstances and any field, one has to go through a multitude of disciplines and process. Before we embark on a detailed introduction to the subject of interior design it should be worthwhile to familiarize oneself with the theory of the prime force, DESIGN.

The word Design is gaining tremendous popularity lately. It is one of those words that has been hijacked by every profession, perhaps because of its versatility. The most basic definition of Design, as we all know is to THINK, to plan, to conceive or to form a strategy. In the present day and age of rhetoric one finds that from tailors to hair stylists and from poets to politicians all have a liking for the word.

Although Design is one of the most fundamental human activities it was perhaps first adopted by producers of Art and Architecture. With the growing complexity in the professions of built environment Engineering,

Product design and Industrial design gave a serious use to the word. Today we have innumerable subjects and fields of study that prescribe and public Design as their main activity.

Design is probably the most important of all human endeavors; it can determine the caliber of a society, standards and the status of a civilization. Design conceives and defines all the means we employ to satisfy our many and increasingly intricate needs. In order to fully indentify our needs and satisfy them one needs enthusiasm and enterprise, inventiveness and ingenuity, scientific discovery and technical knowledge, spatial awareness and powers of visualization, together with knowledge of human attitudes, customs and habits and aesthetic sensibilities.

Only a quick look around in our environment will convince us that we are surrounded by products that are of no value, not functional or non aesthetic. We have been loaded with wasteful products; products we cannot replace, flimsy products, and out right degenerate and dangerous products.

Although we seem to be saturated by poorly designed products, environments and systems, good design is also available, conspicuous because of its smaller proportions. To Design is to conceive and to create, to accomplish needs. The most original definition of GOOD Design is given by A. N. Whitehead, that is “the accomplishment of the perceived need, simply and without waster”. Before getting into details we need to look at its fundamental principles. Design is a lot of common sense but there are elements relating to Totality, Time, value, resources and synthesis. Then there are elements of Change and relationship and service. All these basic principles are invoked to synthesize a design direction. They dominate any design process, may it be creating an armchair or an airplane.

TOTALITY:

Even if something is designed to satisfy a single function it usually consist of a variety of elements put together. Each aspect/ element usually demands individual study while the interrelationship of all the aspects and requirements becomes a first criterion and the foremost law. For example when a teapot needs to be designed we may decide to achieve a number of characteristics that are peculiar to teapots. Thus a teapot must have certain capacity, be stable, be comfortable to handle, pour easily, have a secure lid, be easy to fill and clean, be shaped to aid the infusion process, retain heat and possibly contain a strainer. Buying a teapot off the shelf, we may not think of all these things but perhaps look at the visual quality and the ‘designs’ printed superficially on the teapot.

There is no doubt that there should be some ‘appeal’ quality, but different types of gatherings would require different types of teapots, thus a visual quality is also becomes important. We may find that the manufacturing process and the type of packaging may also have a say in the total design. Therefore in order to achieve success in design a myriad of elements have to be considered at the same time.

CHANGE & VALUE:

It is becoming evident that in most of the products that are designed, one or more elements/ requirements go through a process called change sometimes it’s a correction/ amendment/ improvement, sometimes its only sales/ appeal/ fashions/ models techniques. Sometimes a serious development that takes place but the fact is that at times with out changing life styles more and more gadgetry is added on to our products range. Our cars, which at one times would have been thought adequate if they had delivered us in reasonably well protected manner to our destinations, now have heating and air conditioning systems, safety devices such as seat belts and child proof doors, wind screen washing/ wiping equipment, radios/ recorders etc. etc. plus each year a new design of the car, till this day, in the opinion of the author, does not conform to the principles of ‘totality’ considering that it emits poisonous pollutants, no matter how beautiful it is and takes us where we want, is not a complete and a successful design in all respects.

It is all right to consider market requirements and consumers needs but there is an order of priority in the principles of design as well, which have to be followed. The safety, security and public health should be among the top.

In simplistic terms the users grade or should grade all designed goods in the following order; performance, reliability, appearance, maintenance, delivery, packing and price. Unfortunately with cut throat competition people are deceived and offered a lopsided order of mentioned criteria, the user ends up with a sub standard product with low price, has a pretty packing and looks nice only. In poor economies like our own sometimes the 'price' becomes the only buying factor and we are left with an awkward situation.

TIME:

Obtaining the products in such markets means it is going to end up in the garbage pile very soon. We come to the next element of design and that is 'time'. A hammer which is a good design may last us for all our lives but if it has a wooden handle it is liable to break, a pair of scissors lasts even longer but in a particular situation they may require re-sharpening. Like violin, not all products mature with age but on the contrary they leave us before time. Sometimes we leave the products on our own accord, for example our motorcars. We may want our house to last a hundred years but may not want to live in it for more than ten years. Some products have to be replaced by choice like clothes for the want of new fashions and styles. The principle of value comes into force. But if a stylised piece of cloth was exorbitantly priced we may not even buy it or discard it as easily as other clothes.

Professor Mayall gives an example of a car to highlight the point of 'value'. Does one buy a Rolls-Royce car primarily because of its superb quality and reliability, long life, performance and comfortable accommodation? The answer is probably No. The car is like to be bought primarily to symbolize a particular social position or a way of life. Yet if the Rolls Royce lacked the superb engineering qualities for which it has become renowned, it would not have the symbolic values that we tend to ascribe to it.

Sometimes even excellent products are rejected because they do not conform to a particular image which is wrong. At many occasions we are totally unaware as to what determines the decision of a purchase. Consider going into a furniture shop, although most of the items would have the quality of performance, reliability, life and maintenance but we seem to like a particular piece of furniture, perhaps this 'value' can be termed as 'taste'. However most of the time we are beguiled into believing that certain sorts of products are necessary for certain sorts of living and we buy them with these attitudes in mind. No matter what the situation between the 'use value' or 'esteem value', every designed object should have a 'Product life' not just 'visual life'.

A careful selection of materials and systems and an appropriate technology to put them together should be the direction to physically achieve a particular goal.

RESOURCES:

No matter how brilliant we are with ideas, we simply cannot make the product if we have no materials and skills. Today the world is rich with materials and techniques. The real problem occurs when we have a myriad of options in elements/ materials for each individual situation. This calls for extensive study and research into available resources. The design, manufacturer and life of all products and systems depend upon the materials, tools and skills we choose to use.

In the word of Professor Mayall the materials should be able to stand up to all circumstances to which they will be subjected, and that they can be worked by the various manufacturing processes required, and also they should be economical to buy and work.

It is in the vast and heterogeneous world of everyday products, our buildings, domestic machinery, furniture and furnishings, that we may find problems usually occur because of the types of materials designers choose. The materials for such products may not have to cope with tremendous forces, elevated temperature or complex vibrations but they are far more likely to be used in less easily gauged circumstance involving say variable atmospheric conditions, corrosive process, maltreatment, absence of cleaning or maintenance, effects of microorganisms, insects, etc.

Watching the designer at work, sitting quietly at his drawing board or desk, we may not notice the conflicts he may be going through and trying to figure out what materials he must use, yet we are saturated with products which shrink, crack, craze, discolor, corrode, rot or even disintegrate.

So we understand now that in the process of Design, which can be utilized for the creation of a building, its internal environment or even an ashtray, certain basic objectives have to be borne in mind as most supreme and sacrosanct. All requirements that a products has to fulfill or satisfy must be isolated and then interrelated in totality, the periods over which they should last, that is a product life, their relative values and ability to accept change if desired, and obviously to utilizes the best possible materials and techniques and skills to produce it.

Evolution of Design does not stop there, there may be some external circumstances likely to effect whatever we produce, for example storage and transport, installation and trial usage, operation or handling (or even mishandling), vandalism, maintenance, replacement and reconditioning.

In more complex situations we may find armies of experts giving their own expertise to produce a particular product for example market analysis, manufacturing experts, experts in technological competence, managers of various areas etc. etc. Then there is an element of service in the formation of any design strategy that design must satisfy everybody and not just those for whom its products are directly aimed at.

There can be other influencing elements on the critical path a designer has to follow, in these rapidly changing times. For example for products using or causing industrial waste, dangerous chemicals, or creating noxious fumes and degrading natural environment and our biosphere special measures have to devised. The Gas used for cooling in the production of refrigerators, air conditioners etc. uses CFC's which in fact is damaging the protective layer of Ozone for our planet.

Simple questions like the packaging of our consumer products which end up in the streets or garbage heaps and pollute the city environment, if they are 'biodegradable' or not are not asked seriously at all. The reason to indulge in the theory and philosophy of Design at such length was intended as the profession of designing internal environment has been always confused with Interior decoration by a majority of people. It is high time that Design and decoration was clearly defined and the confusion eradicated. A brief history of Interior Design which follows will also shed light on the development of the profession whereby the traditional decorators also played a key role.

Decoration is only a small portion of the subject of Interior design. The dictionary would define decoration as "to furnish or adorn with fashionable or beautiful things" but technically it means "surface rendering". It's to do with fabrics, wall coverings and wall painting, and other superficial finishes and treatments. In England the wallpaper fixers and painters are still termed as decorators.

Gone are the days of Michelangelo, who was one of the greatest of all Renaissance masters. Those were the times when a single super craftsman was assigned/ commissioned for the design and implementation of many an arts and design projects at the same time. Michelangelo masterminded many architectural projects, yet he dealt with the internal environment with the same masterly manner. He was probably the first Designer to be mentioned in the history books for having completed an interior design project of a library

adorned with classical details. He is also known as the greatest Fresco Painters of all times (Fresco is painting on fresh plaster with water based paint), although most of all he is known for his sculpture. Bernini, who was a super sculptor, was also undertaking landscape and architectural projects, significantly his colonnaded exterior and landscape outside the Saint Peters in Rome may be mentioned. Today the situation is different. A professional of a single trade has to employ many specialists to come up with a product or environment, which becomes a composite/ hybrid of many systems. This is due to the growing interdependence and interrelationship of our modern products, and the chain reaction of requirements as laid down by complex functions. We have the Industrial revolution and the mass production in the background. We too have the discovery of electricity and new materials. We have the media explosion and the socio economic factors that dictate most of our present day products, environment and systems.

When we have to move people by air from one place to another we are not talking just about airplanes but the design of airports, the access to the airports, parking lots, airplane sheds and hangars for service and repair, runways, aircraft communication systems, security and safety devices, cleaning and maintenance, food services, accident and fire equipment, medical facilities, information services, ticketing and transit areas, baggage handling etc. etc. This calls for a variety of different and high expertise professionals.

The story of success of modern products also depend on the degree of specialists utilities for the design of a single product. For example a furniture designer may be highly trained in his subject and rightly able to call himself a specialist in his particular field, yet he might call upon an ergonomist to advise on anatomical, physiological and indeed psychological characteristics, a materials expert to give him response on available materials he wishes to employ, a production engineer to tackle his manufacturing requirements, quality controller, cost analysts, colour consultants and even a reliability engineer in some parts of the world.

The other aspects of complexity of design are the overlapping of various disciplines for example an electrical gadget is not possible without the help from mechanical engineering experts.

THE HISTORY

The adornment of internal environment has its roots in the royal patronage. The growth of Medieval Europe to high Baroque compelled the aristocracy, the ruling classes, rich merchants etc. to display their power, wealth and taste, and the only way was to employ the best craftsmen of their times. Hence the demand for Artisans and craftsmen was created. This demand resulted in the formation of many guilds and associations of craftsmen all over Europe. Although the Industrial revolution changed the socio-economic fabric of the society and introduced automation, but the struggle of some pioneers of Arts and Design who felt passionately for the survival and rejuvenation of the arts and crafts, paved ways and triggered movements for its survival and prolonged richness.

William Morris in England has been mentioned by the historians as one such designer to have struggled for the restoration of arts and crafts, but there were several societies, association and movements striving for the betterment of standards of designed products.

England, termed as the workshop of the world, along with countries like Holland and France had their first schools of Interior Design and decoration soon after the Second World War. Architecture, the parent body, due to overburdening, was relieved of the design of internal portions of the buildings it created.

With the changing global scenario, architects had also fared an evolution. The time had come to share the built environment with the structural, civil, mechanical and electrical specialists.

With the changing trends of global economy and the resultant commerce, trade and industry the occupants of urban buildings were changing more frequently than before. They found that the existing layout plans and other internal elements differed from their requirements; hence an Interior Architect became an urgent need

to redesign the space as per their new and changing requirements. The new urban setup became saturated with the problems of design and crafts.

The guilds and societies became more and more active and involved in the design and crafts based problems etc. one such Institute of Decorators and craftsmen was incorporated in 1894 to become the first “British Institute of Interior Design” in England. This was followed by several Interior Design bodies to look after the interests of the new and emerging profession throughout Europe and Americas.

The British Institute of Interior Design has now merged with the Chartered Society of Designers (England) which is the largest, the oldest and the most comprehensive Design institutions of the world. It is concerned with promoting standards of competence, professional conduct and integrity within the design profession, and the establishment of the profession’s interest in government and official bodies. The Design climate is, however, a constantly changing one and therefore society is known for adapting policies to meet these changes.

With the efforts of these institutions and Design schools Interior Design has become a recognized profession, a legitimate occupation and an international phenomenon. Except for Pakistan and some other third world countries Interior design education is readily available, with proper affiliations with the respective universities. Interior Design graduates have started operating as full fledged professionals throughout the world and are playing an active part in the improvement of the built environment in general.

THE PROFESSION

In our modern times we find that our lives are becoming complex day by day. It is because people are complex, environment is complex, our economy and systems are complex and with this growing complexity, the emerging new technologies, discovery of new materials and processes, it has become a real challenge for any professional to keep with time.

In the recent trends of “global city” or the “global community” whereby the standards and values of the “universal” human being are converging, the techniques and technologies employed to achieve these standards and values is expanding at a tremendous rate. Interior Design being a major part of such a process is also facing confusing directions and getting mixed reactions. It is misunderstood and partly unrecognized only because it has not been clearly defined.

Generally speaking in all the trades and professions of the arts, crafts and building a “basic idea” is the starting point, subsequently require resources, energy and skills to produce what we conceive. Perhaps it is as simple as that and as difficult as that.

There is another misconception about Design which needs clarification. It is generally felt that the responsibility of the designers ends at the presentation of ideas, handing over of pretty pictures/ perspectives, for which they are quite famous, or after the delivery of the orthographic blue prints. This stage, in the opinion of the author is only the beginning. Generally speaking design is in-complete even if it looks complete on the drawing board. Real design is the successful accomplishment of the end product in a three dimensional reality, in actual/ physical form. Only at the end of a ‘complete design process’ can one determine the ability of a designer. Invariably the end product turns out to be different than the pretty picture that was once approved, due to various constraints or lack of professionalism.

For the sake of simple explanation we can use a ‘**Pentagon**’. This five faceted figure can be applied to define quite a number of design disciplines.

1. **Basic design:** Design is mostly common sense. What we need should be absolutely clear. The clearer the goal the easier it would be to arrive at. Just like the little implies it is the basic requirement, the functional requirement in question, for example if you want a trolley, what ‘kind’ of

trolley is naturally the first question. Is it for commercial use or domestic use? To carry good/merchandise in a store or a warehouses or food for guests in a hotel/ there can be a multitude of different sets of requirements that can create different types of tangible images in our minds.

2. **Design Language:** Obviously we can go on and on talking about the trolley in order to describe it but if we use a visual, a sketch, the description becomes instant and easy. Drawing is the most basic tool of the a designer, it also helps to think. A photograph or a print can be used to illustrate the idea, but if something special has to be created sketching becomes essential. If the trolley is approved by you and has to be fabricated, technical drawings have to be produced, and if you desire that several contractors should quote for the same to get a better deal, certain negative drawings will have to be made, so that as many prints as required can be reproduced. (The use of computers has made a sizable contribution to this particular aspect.)
3. **Materials and finishes:** For any designed object the decision for appropriate materials and finishes is one of the most important one most important one a designer would take. Therefore a thorough knowledge of materials becomes a pre requisite.
Is the trolley going to made out of wood or plastic or steel? Is the surface texture going to be smooth or rough, what colours are required and what can finishes be applied to the surfaces.
4. **Building and technology:** A designer ought to be aware of how a particular material is bonded to the other and what techniques, tools and hardware is required for the creation of a particular form or shape of a product. What are the methods of application, fabrication or manufacture of various products and systems?
5. **Aesthetics:** Aesthetics is not a purely philosophical entity. Its to do with our emotional and psychological relationship with any product. The product has to display certain visual qualities that are amiable and acceptable.

We may begin to adore an ugly chair which happens to be very comfortable in use but there is a lot to be said about the 'visual value' of any product that mostly remains neglected. If we can satisfy the functional requirements of a product as well as the aesthetical qualities we have achieved best of both the worlds.

Is the trolley pleasing to the eyes, does it have the right scale and proportions, does it have the delicacy and pleasurable surprises that a human mind enjoys.

As far as the design of a trolley is concerned the application of the design pentagon may not be so difficult but as soon as we employ the same for creating an interior, for example of a dentist who now a days utilizes highly sensitive and sophisticated equipment, it becomes a difficult task.

If one is involved in the Interior of a bank, there may be a dozen of specialist craftsmen supported by many professional working on the same site, for example mason, pleasures and marble fixers, steel fabricators, electricians, standard false ceiling fixers, painters and polish men, shuttering experts and carpenters, plumbers and fitters, glazing experts, telecommunications experts, fire fighting equipment suppliers, burglars alarm and other security devices people, CCTV systems staff, computer networking experts, window dressers, landscape artists, etc. etc. A professional Interior Designer is required to understand each trade and its tricks to complete a project successfully.

With the growing complexity and interdependence of various trades one can say without exaggeration that Interior design has become one of the most sophisticated professions in modern times as it demands adequate knowledge and adequate grasp of at least twenty specialists subjects. Their interrelationship and interdependence is obvious but a detailed study of each is very important.

Architecture:

Obviously Architecture is beyond the art of building buildings and it should be rather impossible to grasp the vastness of the subject, however, it is extremely important to understand how the buildings are conceived and constructed. The utilization of space, the development of a form and shape, the intricate details within, the sensibilities of scale and proportion, the use of rhythm and balance, the play of light and the creation of order. All in the process of satisfying human needs. One has to be

familiar with the history of built environment, in different parts of the world and also in different times, for that could reveal different kinds of solutions of similar problems.

Almost all architecture encloses space and becomes 'housing' for the internal environment; therefore a thorough understanding of architecture is of utmost importance.

Building construction:

The construction methods and systems required to erect a building is an integral part of the subject of architecture but with interior designers who have to marry old and sometimes new structures together its knowledge becomes extremely crucial.

Many interior projects demand alterations and spatial changes in an existing construction and in order to perform such a surgical act one has to be fully acquainted with the construction methodology.

Structural Engineering:

Occasionally the client would require special construction like mezzanine floors, stairs, room extensions etc., and sometimes structural elements like columns, beams and cantilevers have to be relocated or removed completely, therefore a basic knowledge of the structure in the realms of architectural is very important.

Materials and finishes:

This subject gains importance and needs special attention because of the fact that there is a whole galaxy of materials beyond the architectural construction materials. The variety which starts from natural materials like stone, wood and ferrous materials, alloys and man made materials like plastics and ceramics, fibres, skins, finishing coats and textiles is simple endless. Just a small item of floor coverings which is above the architectural finished floor can take an entire volume. The long list of materials which the designer should be aware of is simply baffling.

An in depth study of their properties and characteristics, their stability and behavior under stresses and strains, climatic conditions is extremely critical.

Electrical Engineering and Electronics:

There is hardly any building or its interiors nowadays which are not powered by some sort of energy source or equipped by electronic fittings and devices. All interiors live on electrical gadgets, equipment and appliances, lighting and air conditioning. The jungle of cables consisting of electrical circuitry, communication cables, computer networking cables etc. have to be properly channelled and incorporated in the finishes. The long and changing list of electrical appliances and gadgets used in residential or contract interiors can be agonizingly long but their updated knowledge is extremely important.

Illumination:

Many interiors remain in our fond memories for a long long time because of their unusual or special lighting effects and techniques. Illumination of interiors by standard or non standard luminaries, with innovative methods is an art by itself. Although it is linked with the electrical side of the subject but an electrical consultant who adopts a 'run of the mill' approach to lighting systems or who is busy, will hardly have the time to do 'creative lighting'.

We have to remember that all interior have to be artificially lit and all situations demand certain lighting standards therefore it is extremely important to have a good knowledge of the same.

Mechanical engineering:

One is not expected to be a mechanical engineer in order to become an Interior designer but there is not a single building without the hidden world of its services. Almost all interiors have to have toilets, mechanical ventilation, the heating and cooling systems. One has to be fully aware of the infra structure that supports all interiors. The plumbing tubes for water supply and drain systems, the ducts

and trenches, chutes and the drains, the air conditioning systems are all very complicated and demand serious attention and knowledge.

The coordination of all the hidden elements of interiors is one of the most difficult tasks of all. The greater the number of services and concealed elements, greater the need for expertise and experience.

Landscape and Horticulture:

The urban life has driven most of us away from our soils and the natural green, therefore invariably the clients show liking for interiors rich with plants etc. The knowledge of indoor and outdoor plants, their life cycles, feeding and pruning can be extremely helpful

The designer never really gets into the heavy duty work of a landscape architect which is quite a vast field by itself but knowledge of the same can assist him or her in large scale interiors projects which demand landscaping for example five star hotels and recreational centers etc.

Acoustics:

A professional interior designer at one time or another is confronted with acoustical problem therefore his education of the science of sound and the insulating method is highly important. This again is a specialists area but his knowledge of acoustics can help shape an interior from the beginning rather than acoustic baffles hanging all around, for example designing classrooms, auditoriums or a large public halls require such expertise. Sound recording studios require difference sound treatment.

Anthropometrics and Ergonomics:

The objective of this subject is to give awareness of the psychological space requirements of one person and the immediate relationship to the next person in any situation. There are available internationally acceptable anthropometrical studies, standards and data body measurements, individual items measurements, which the designer has to be fully aware of.

The knowledge of ergonomics become useful in furniture design and product design, it studies the proper human anatomical relationship with all the products in use.

Decoration:

We come to the part for which Interior Design is commonly known for, but infact refers to 'surface rendering' the designer has to be well versed with the theory and application for paints, varnishes, polishes, lacquers etc. The different qualities available are in hundreds and every product is used for a different situation. The other finishes include wallpapers and fabrics, wall hanging etc. tiles and corks, the variety available for covering the walls is unbelievable.

Textiles:

This subject usually coincides with decoration as a lot of our decorative skins consist of woven fabrics. Adequate knowledge of textile and how they are produced is essential as not interior will be without some sort of fabric. It can be a bedspread, upholstery material or a wall hanging.

Furniture Design:

Furniture is usually the biggest (free standing) item and at times the costliest item of an interior project. Its compatibility with the internal environment is quite a problem. Although most common practice for the interior designer is to select from a myriad of possibilities already available in the market but now and then he comes across a situation where custom designed furniture becomes necessary. A designer may also want to design an ashtray to go with his interior units but a thorough knowledge of furniture design becomes a pre requisite for Interior Design.

Joinery and workshop practice:

The structure and its assembly in architecture is 'big scale' but all interiors are in variable loaded with small scale structures and assemblies, for example counters and cabinets, bulkheads and borders etc. therefore a thorough knowledge of wood workshop practice and metal workshop practice is extremely important for the professional designer.

Colour and Graphic Design:

Without colour everything would be extremely bland and pale. Colour induces life and its importance does not need any emphasis. The study of theories of colours and its application plays a very important role in the carrier of an Interior Designer. As far as graphic art is concerned it is impossible to master this subject which is quite vast but certain areas like typography, printing methods, super graphics and effect is more relevant for the interiors. The design of shop fronts and other facades, images of public places like a restaurant or a salon, printing of slogans or signs, design of directional signs etc. are all that require the expertise of a professional designer.

Fine arts:

One doesn't have to paint or sculpt to become an interior designer but as discussed earlier sketching is the most important tool of a designer to express his ideas, just like the painter or a sculpture. All schools of Interior design give an introduction and awareness to its students about the history, styles and movements of arts in different parts of the worlds. It is a mind molding process and quite an important one.

The other aspect about fine arts is that interiors are always adorned by paintings, prints, murals, art effects, ceramics, sculptures and other small accessories having decorative value, and it takes good education in arts to select the right thing for the right spot.

Visualisation:

There are two meanings for this word here. One is to do with human perception. Design is a perpetual equation of cause and effect which demands imagination slightly higher than average. It requires the stimulation of a particular part of the cerebral cortex whereby he is trained to 'perceive', travel into spaces without being there, to visualize a product without actually making it. Unfortunately this does not come with learning but can only be acquired through experience.

The other side is to actually prepare visuals, the art of presentation. A designer who cannot present his ideas is definitely handicapped. There are various specific fields like studio drafting, the art of making perspective drawings and professional delineation which need special training but nevertheless very important for a professional's career.

Quantities and Surveying:

This should fall under the Professional practice heading but a professional designer should be able to conduct accurate physical surveys. A good knowledge of geometry is essential. A surveyor of architectural/ Interiors should be able to prepare the quantities of interior items to process a tender for construction or for records.

Management and accounts:

The importance of management and accounts does not need any elaboration because if interior design is to be treated as a business extensive knowledge in the two is quite essential.

Human psychology:

Beside residential interiors, where a designer has to build a constant rapport with his clients to visualize and construct an accurate picture of their requirements, the contract and the corporate side of the business will also require meetings with executives and managers. A profound knowledge and understanding of human behavior can greatly assist him in the creation of successful interiors.

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