

From painting cinema hoardings, decorating Ganeshas and designing press layouts to nurturing a design culture through education in India

‘The design journey of Prof Sudhakar Nadkarni’, the life and work of the maverick Guru of democratic design unravels in his biography ...

Who established the first ever design program in the rigid citadels of engineering schools in India that didn't look beyond producing well trained labor for Industrial markets? Who visualized, framed the curricula, set the inventive pedagogy and nurtured it through the years to establish it as a separate stream that was hitherto deep rooted in art and engineering, combined it with communication, social, psychological, anthropological studies and at a later stage with management to establish something so unique, so unknown, yet so familiar; the much needed inventive education in design and design thinking?

It was an idea whose time was yet to come and the young graduate from J. J. School of Arts (1954-58), named **Sudhakar Nadkarni**, then an art director with a flourishing ad agency was quick to grasp it and was 'crazy' enough to leave his lucrative career to take off to join the Program in Industrial Design at the School of Design (HfG, ULM) In Germany (1962). This was a period of transformation not only for him, but also for the ULM school as its tenets of philosophy were undergoing a transformation, where the old school of design entrenched in art was slowly getting eclipsed by a more rational thought that justified scientific and humanistic approaches while emphasizing the practical and social aspects of design. The four year stint at ULM (1962-66) changed the lenses of young 'Sudha' and confirmed his belief that user-centric design was here to stay, form followed function and consumers' safety was of paramount importance. And with the youthful passion, persistence and enthusiasm that he possesses till date, he went right ahead to set things right in the world. The book aptly titled **‘The Design Journey of Prof. Sudhakar Nadkarni’** authored by Prof Mandar Rane, Alumnus of IDC, IIT Bombay, describes the troubles and triumphs of Nadkarni as he became the game changer by not only establishing design education but design thinking as a philosophy in India.

Prof. Nadkarni, born and brought up in a humble Maharashtrian household hailing originally from Talwada, a small hamlet near Sawantwadi, went on to become a designer-par-excellence bracing his brilliant artistic mettle with stalwarts like the legendary Charles Correa, the deeply spiritual Kohei Sugiura, master designer Dashrath Patel and many others that became his lifelong friends during this common quest. But going beyond personal achievement and glory, he had the vision to open the avenues of this unique stream of education to Indian youth beginning with National Institute of Design (1966-69), contributing to the Master's degree in Product design and

Communication Design at the Indian Design center - IDC (IIT, Bombay) (1969-1997) founding IDC (IIT, Guwahati)(1997-2003) ,followed by setting up a two year, full time MBA program in Business Design at S.P.Mandali's Prin. L.N. Welingkar Institute of Management (WeSchool), Mumbai (2006 onwards), thereby establishing Design and Design thinking firmly on the Indian soil. This book written in a dialogue form is sure to remind the discerning readers of the peripatetic dialogue by Plato and Aristotle, as they are indeed a culmination of various discussions between Prof. Nadkarni and Prof. Mandar Rane who has interviewed him.

Shaped as his personal memoirs, this book goes way beyond the realm of personal story telling to offer a ringside view of this evolution of design education and also raises question about it that have bothered the Guru time and again...What were the many concerns that it envisaged to address and where is it taking its practitioners today? Is design something that largely caters to provide a labor force with a western imagination shaped by global economic forces? A luxury for the elite few or is it democratic enough to solve the umpteen number of problems faced by the Indian diasporas?

From the times when the only aspiration for the young art graduates was to work under a well known creative director in an ad agency, design and design Thinking has indeed come a long way. We find this confluence of design, aesthetics, science, technology and management firing the creative imagination and innovative acumen of master designers, researchers, experts, scientists, technicians and young graduates from IDC and WeSchool that are instrumental in bringing change in the way governments, NGOs, and corporates are working. Knowledge has become the essence of design, theory has become practice.

As IDC is about to enter the 50th year of its glorious existence setting many milestones on the way, this book is indeed a fitting tribute to that indomitable spirit of Prof. Sudhakar Nadkarni. The dream seen by Prof. Nadkarni to make design and design education, important forces in fulfilling the national agenda and becoming contributors to the development of the deprived Indian masses is yet to be fulfilled ; the journey is far from over. Prof. Nadkarni comes across as a very committed academician, administrator, designer, businessman, loving patriarch and a much adored friend but above all he comes across as a visionary with the heart of a social activist, fired with dynamism, passion and determination to contribute to the progress and development of the multitudes through all his efforts by enhancing design and design thinking education in India.

Title :The Design Journey of Prof. Sudhakar Nadkarni
Author: Prof. Mandar Rane
Publisher: Self Published

Price: INR 500 (price in India)
--

Pages: 96

First Edition: June 2017
