**Education has to be issue based rather than what is presently happening. People are getting carried away by forms and architecture is being looked at as an object which is a problem.   
In architectural schools lot of emphasis is given only to designing. But professional practice has much more to do with than just designing a good building. The other 'non-defining' issues about site coordination and work coordination, convincing clients and coordinating with consultants are also equally important. Architectural education is also about teaching patience, and not compromising on certain principles. There has been a huge technological advancement, use of materials and construction techniques. These have to be reflected in the teaching as well. There is certainly a big gap between education and profession.**

**PROFILE**: It is not hard to understand why Architect Sanjay Mohe remains to be one of the most respected Architects in India. For someone who lets his work do the talking always, his sustainable and simplicity-oriented designs have a deep connect to India's traditional culture. Founder of the eight year Bengaluru based Mindspace, Ar Mohe has held many positions of repute prior to that. He has had a working association of 21 years with Bengaluru’s famous Chandravarkar and Thacker Associates (CnT) , besides which his work experience also counts his years spent with Ar Charles Correa in Bombay and his work stint in Saudi Arabia. A prodigy of India's first architectural institute - Sir JJ College of Architecture, Mumbai his work straddles a spectrum of projects - Research Laboratories, Knowledge Parks, Campus Designs, Factories, Beach Resorts, Libraries, Corporate Offices, Hospice and Residences. A well known face adorning a lot of architectural forums and talks, he has a lot of awards to his credit. Some of them include The Golden Architect Award by A+D & Spectrum Foundation Architecture Award (2009), India; J K Cements Architect of the Year Award - 1991 /1999 /2001 /2004 /2007 /2008; The Award of the Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects - 2002; ar+d International Annual Award of Architectural Review (1999), London and d'line, for JRD Digital Library Bangalore; Gold Medal from ARCASIA (the Asian Forum for Institutes of Architecture-1998).

**Sanjay Mohe (SM):** I was born and brought up in Mumbai. Incidentally my journey towards being an architect started at a very early phase of my life. As a child I looked up to my eldest cousin who had returned from the UK after completing his RIBA. Being a pliable five years old I was influenced by his personality. As a child I was inclined to sketching and my folks planted the thought of me becoming an architect like my cousin and that's how the journey began. I graduated from Sir JJ College of Architecture in 1976 and started working with one of my professors from college. An opportunity of working on one of the township projects in Saudi Arabia came my way. Being just out of college, getting an opportunity to interact with the engineers who would explain problems at site, understanding techniques and technology involved in construction proved to be beneficial. After a span of three years in Saudi Arabia, I came back to India and worked with Ar Charles Correa for a brief period. Subsequently I joined Chandravarkar and Thacker Associates (CnT) and became one of the directors in 1995 and served in that position until Mindspace was formed in 2004.

**SM:** Normally you would find architecture mystified and full of theories; we keep it extremely simple by just believing in responding to climate, integrating nature into the built environment and make the space a happy place. Our approach always has been to design from the inside-out rather than outside-in and has a lot to do with the feel of the space rather than its appearance. We concentrate on the idea of transition from the outdoors to the indoors. In our traditional buildings a lot of importance is given to the main door which marks a transition from outside to inside. It is always decorated and also is a point of celebration. We in our architecture try to stretch this experience of celebration from outside to inside by introducing semi covered and open spaces like verandas and courtyards. It is about eliminating the door in the philosophical sense. We make our best efforts to make the transition from the outdoors to the indoors as smooth as possible.

It is difficult to define architecture in a few words. To me Architecture is a way of life, something which you cannot separate out; you have to live through it every day. More than being an object it is something that can be experienced and felt. Unfortunately Architecture is judged by photographs taken from certain angles which is not correct because some of the best spaces cannot be captured through photographs but have to be felt. Sustainability is a part and parcel of any sensitive architecture.

**ABD: What according to you is more relevant- sustainable architecture or green architecture?  
SM:** There has been substantial awareness of this subject. In fact the 'GREEN' word has been used so extensively that it is losing its importance. As far as green building rating system is concerned, it has definitely created awareness. It is more of a measurement tool than a design tool, a fact which is often overlooked.

But when it comes to sustainability, it has to be a part of your work. One has to conceive the idea of sustainability from the beginning and the concepts for the same have to be followed at every step through the entire design development process and not as an add-on feature. Sustainability begins with developing a built form appropriate and responsive to local climatic zones. I always say that when you are dealing with elements of nature you have to deal it like playing judo where you use the opponent's force to your advantage. The right amount of light and air has to be drawn in - anything more or less can be a problem. It is important to strike a balance. Sustainability is thus about channelizing right elements and also using materials which can make a building age gracefully.

**ABD: What difference do you find in the design approaches of yours with the younger generation?  
SM:** The access to knowledge and information is easy now - probably there is an oversupply of information. Today we see a lot of turned and twisted forms coming up in different parts of the world like in China, Dubai etc. This has a lot of influence on the younger minds where they are getting carried away by the forms and not addressing the soul of the problem. I also think that somehow the younger generation is getting confused about the creative process due to plethora of software/computer technology present now. Most of the designs are guided by the inputs that are fed into the software and many a times this happens without having an idea of the output desired. This gap and the fact that we really don't have control over what the computer gives us does scare me at times. Many things are being decided by the machine and this is what probably the future is. One needs to act on it and I am sure we will find a way out; else we will be going away from the intimacy of the creative process.

**ABD: How does Indian architecture compare to the architecture of the world? Which works in the contemporary era would you say are appreciable for their answers to the Indian context?  
SM:** In today's world, due to easy access to information, we know about developments across the globe instantaneously. Most of the modern developments in the cities look very similar whether it is Singapore, Shanghai, New York etc. We can see Indian Architecture heading in the same direction. Our urban areas are blindly following the western language of office building - first creating a glass box, then closing it with curtains and blinds to avoid glare on the computer monitors, then switching on all the lights and pumping more energy for AC to reduce heat gain through the glass. This is criminal waste of resources. If we try and develop a built form appropriate and responsive to local climatic zones, we will be able to use the available resources efficiently. We need to look at it from the Indian perspective responding to our climate, available technology, context and culture. Talking about the works of contemporary architecture, one cannot generalize. There are enough sensitive young Indian architects who are doing good work. On a larger scale what we generally see are glass buildings cropping up without response to context and the surroundings they are built in.

Works of Charles Correa, B V Doshi and Geoffery Bawa have always inspired me. They have perfected the way of building in tropical climate by creating porosity in the buildings and bringing in nature instead of creating closed boxes.

**ABD: How has your Architectural practice changed since you started working? How have you evolved/grown as an architect?  
SM:** The basic principles have remained the same throughout, though the language has changed. Initially we started with local materials. We have used a lot of stone in Bangalore due to its easy availability and also due to the fact that it ages beautifully with time. Moreover there were craftsmen available to work on them .But gradually due to time constraint instead of using full stone walls we shifted to using composite walls and eventually we started using stone as dry cladding on plastered walls. Keeping the cognitive content same we experiment with colours, forms and geometry. It can be compared to conveying a message in different languages. Light has been the most dynamic element we have used and we are constantly trying to refine the quality it can add to spaces. Change in geometry results in change in proportions of spaces which throws different challenges to ponder upon.   
I could say that over the years we have tried to understand certain aspects a little better - whether it is light, materials or spaces.

**ABD: Who are the architects (nationally and internationally) you admire and is there any architect whom you consider your role model?  
SM:** I have always believed in simplicity. Hence the work of Tadao Ando and Richard Meier are really inspiring. I have learnt a lot from Mr Correa, Mr Doshi and Mr Geoffery Bawa - learnt the art of building in our tropical climate; of introducing porosity in closed boxes; of getting the air to circulate into, and light to modulate in the built spaces. I have learnt to recognize and treasure the skill with which they handled the transition from outdoors to indoors, blurring the boundaries where one ends and other begins. Ando's works mean a lot for its supreme simplicity. I consider him as my role model. B V Doshi was here during the construction of Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) and Correa used to come since he had a branch office for a short period here in Bangalore. I was a part of a group of 7-8 architects then in late 80's and early 90's and we called ourselves the BASE group. We would meet often, exchange slides, travel a lot together, connect with education, hold workshops for students and this process changed the way we looked at architecture and increased our passion for architecture besides giving birth to a lot of questions. Because of this we were in touch with Correa and Doshi who introduced us to other foreign architects travelling through India which aided in our learning. Though the group is no longer active in conducting activities like it used to, we still keep in touch with each other.

**Concluding Words**  
If designs could be inspired from an architect's personality, Ar Sanjay Mohe would have bagged the award for it. His simplicity is truly reflective of the simplicity in his designs that he looks to achieve -you find it hard to distinguish between both of them. If 'Practice what you preach' could have gelled with an architect it would again have to be him. When he talks of openness in his design approach, you see the same openness that he follows in his design practice. There are architects who work for money, there are architects who work to give the country a better architecture, there are also architects who work to fulfil their passion; but there are fewer architects like him who want to make their works a place of learning - who work to make a brighter future. An inspiring role model for many, it is these very values that make up Mohe Sir. *Apurva Bose Dutta*

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