

# GREEN SPEAK

## KAMATH DESIGN STUDIO



**What is the one thing you like most about being an architect?**

Architectural consciousness is holistic and contemplates human culture and civilization through time and in space. The practice of architecture enables an individual to be hydra-headed, and evolve a multitude of interests and skills.



Apparently contradictory attributes can blend seamlessly into a complex whole;

- the spiritual and material
- the meditative and expressive
- the subjective and rational
- the technical and artistic
- the poetic and prosaic

I enjoy the coming together of wealth (or lack of it), technology, skills, tradition, innovation etc. to create beauty and harmony in space, place and time.

**Do you see green architecture coming into the mainstream soon?**

Human ecosystems need to be self-conscious about occupying the forest. The two need to be symbiotic as never before. The human population is so vast and ever increasing and it is imperative that its habitat whatever its scale, does not colonise the earth and the prime elements. There is no option but to be synchronous with natural systems and cycles. Civilisation is now re-establishing its links

was started in 1981 as a partnership firm by Revathi Sekhar Kamath and Vasant V. Kamath. Since then, the studio has handled a wide variety of interesting and challenging projects, in diverse social, economic and geographical contexts.

They practice in Delhi and their studio produces work informed by an explicitly environmental agenda. Their work is a creative synthesis of attitudes and technologies into an aesthetic habitat and way of life and has been published and exhibited all over the world. They have more than 150 projects to their credit. Three of their projects have been nominated for the Aga Khan Award.

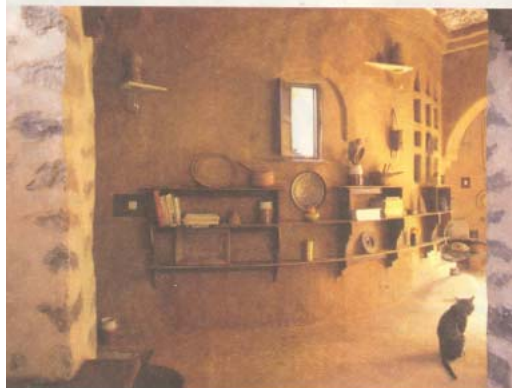
A one-on-one with Revathi Kamath brings out the well grounded and mature green sensibilities that drive this firm's work.

Compiled By Mala Bajaj

## ECOLOGY SOLUTIONS

with natural systems in an evolutionary progression. It is this process that architectural consciousness is beginning to recognise and express. A few architects are working towards the evolution of an ecological architectural vocabulary, to enable the human habitat to re-establish the qualities of beauty, harmony and equity.

and I do not view it as an object. The perception of beauty, harmony, flow and repose in the minds and sensibility of the users, is the purpose of architectural design. I do not keep a tab on the quotient of admiration for a project or a body of work.



collective that is continuously eroding through awareness and action, the all invincible edifices of global consumer civilization.

Some of the principles of ecology are interdependence, recycling, democratic partnership, flexibility, diversity, and a consequence of all these - sustainability. "Over more than three billion years of evolution, (the planets) ecosystems

have organised themselves (in subtle and complex ways) so as to maximise sustainability. This wisdom of nature is the essence of eco literacy.".....Fritjof Capra. It is the eco-literate architect who can rebuild human habitat sustainably

**What are you currently working on?**

The Museum of Tribal Heritage is now nearing completion. It has been extraordinarily difficult to work with the building culture established by the public works department and the bureaucracy. The architectural decision to have a green roof is being reviewed time and again at various levels. I am confident that "green" will prevail!

The studio is working on the design and construction of "the Gnostic Centre", a place for higher learning. We are also working on "Jivagram", a healing centre and ayurvedic university campus.

**Which is your most admired piece of architecture/design and why?**

The architectural construct is an expression of an event in an ecological continuum,

**Any driving principles on green architectural design?**

Human patterns and forms in space can be characterised as harmonious, destructive, colonising or evolutionary, in the context of nature and its dynamic repose as it continuously seeks equilibrium and sustains life purposefully.. I believe that the purpose of human civilization is to accord dignity to all forms of life and to recognize the holistic nature of the environment and value its regenerative and self organizing principles.

The material reality of the industrial and post industrial consumer society in global economic space, despite continuously expanding its resource base is unable to equitably fulfil human needs. The "heroic" individual, in that society, vying for a larger share of the pie, enhancing self worth, is perceived as a human characteristic that is on the wane, replaced by an ecologically conscious human

**Do you mould the client to your sensibilities or do you work around clients wishes?**

*Lobbying for work does not come naturally to the studio*

Lobbying for work does not come naturally to the studio. Work brings in more work, and therefore the client inevitably shares a value system in which or part. Our vocabulary is inclusive and the active participation of the client in design process allows the resolution of conflicting goals in an elegant way.

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