

JURIES IN THE FIELD OF ARCHITECTURE

A look at the various types and subtypes of juries pertaining to the students of architecture as well as professional architects

The dictionary would tell you that a jury is a body of people who are responsible for giving a verdict in a legal case based on the evidence submitted to them in court. However, juries do not exist in the field of justice alone. They also exist in other fields where they are expected to help reach a conclusion, judge the best out of many or reward the good performers. You have seen many juries announcing the winners in various reality shows on television. Similarly, J.K. White Cement Co. India Ltd awards eminent architects based on the judgement of a closed jury.

Let us now take a look at various juries in the field of architecture, in general.

These can be placed into the following two categories:

- A) Juries Pertaining to Students of Architecture (JPSA)
- B) Juries Pertaining to Professional Architects (JPPA)

A) Juries Pertaining to Students of Architecture (JPSA)

These are the juries which concern colleges of architecture. They are conducted for one or more reasons, such as:

- a) conferring certificates
- b) grading/marketing students
- c) clearing students to proceed to the next stage –e.g. next semester
- d) extracting work from students under the pretext of a jury (the jury may be fake ; may not carry grades/marks) too in such cases
- e) streamlining design studio/thesis work going on
- f) encouraging inter-college interaction
- g) projecting/exposing the hosting college/ commercial organization/ non-profit organization.



Fig. 1: Image of JPSA (Courtesy: pvpcopuneblog.blogspot.com)

Juries Pertaining to Students of Architecture can be classified as:

- 1) Jury Type 1 A
- 2) Jury Type 2 A
- 3) Jury Type 1B
- 4) Jury Type 2B
- 5) Jury Type 3A
- 6) Jury Type 4
- 7) Jury Type 5
- 8) Jury Type 6

Let us look at each one of them in detail.

1) JURY TYPE 1 A

Here, the submission material is collected in advance, the designated student appears in front of the jury, and fellow students are allowed to be present at the jury venue to listen.

Such a jury is commonly seen in most colleges of architecture in India. Also known as an open jury, students submit their design studio/thesis work (drawings/sketches and models) to faculty members/ administration prior to commencement of jury (at least a day or two in advance). The drawings/

sketches collected are displayed over vertical surfaces. Sometimes, they are displayed over a surface inclined at approximately 80 degrees or very rarely, over horizontal surfaces (usually drawing tables). Some colleges finish displaying thoroughly prior to the scheduled jury dates while some keep displaying as the jury progresses. The collected models too are displayed in a similar manner, over horizontal/inclined surfaces (drawing tables/floor/stools) before/over the scheduled jury dates. Students appear for jury one by one in a pre-decided sequence or often take turns based on who has arrived first, or who is present when the faculty members demand presence, etc.

The students explain or defend their designs through the drawings and model(s) displayed. The jury generally comprises persons like internal/external faculty members of the same/different college, professional architects and occasionally consultants, such as electrification/structural consultants.

At a time, only one student appears in front of the jury. However, the jury itself comprises more than two jurors or jurists. Rarely does a jury contain a single juror. The defending student normally stands while the jurors sit on chairs or stools. The other students who are there to watch and listen, generally stand behind the jurors.

However, in India, it has been observed that most jury venues offer poor acoustics. Therefore, students have to be often scolded for making noise or disturbing the presentation. Those present have to be asked to maintain silence, which is easier said than done.

Poor acoustics is surprising because these venues are owned and managed by people associated with the field of architecture; people who are expected to design perfect acoustics as an integral part of architectural design.

It is the norm to serve several rounds of tea/coffee to the jurors through the judgement process and while they are recording the grades or marks.

2) JURY TYPE 2 A

In this type, the submission material is collected in advance, and the student appears while the fellow students are not allowed at the jury venue.

This jury is very much like the Open Jury Type 1 described earlier except that the students other than the one appearing are not permitted to remain present at the jury venue. Therefore, disturbance and noise from students standing behind the jurors is not an issue and this type of jury is usually audible to the student/jurors.

3) JURY TYPE 1 B

In this type, the submission material is not collected in advance. While the student appears, the fellow students are allowed to be present at the jury venue to watch and listen.

This jury is also commonly found at most colleges of architecture in India and is often referred to as an open jury. Students do not submit their design studio/thesis work (drawings/sketches and models) to faculty members/ administration in advance. They keep submitting their work as the jury advances. In all other aspects, this type of jury is exactly like Jury Type 1A. As work is not collected in advance, that is, prior to commencement of jury, it is not uncommon to see that the jury proceedings are disorderly, chaotic and full of interruption. Students often get busy displaying or removing their work when the jurors actually want them to be present for jury.

4) JURY TYPE 2 B

In this type of jury, the submission material is not collected in advance and while the concerned student appears, no other student is allowed to be present to listen or watch the proceedings.

This type is similar to the Open Jury Type 2 A in that the students other than the one appearing are prevented from being present at the jury venue. Hence, noise, distraction or disturbance of any kind from fellow students present behind the jurors is not an issue. The students and the jurors can hear each other clearly. The students appearing keep submitting their work as the jury advances. However, since work is not collected prior to commencement of the jury, the proceedings tend to

be chaotic, disrupted and far from organized. Student/s are more busy displaying/removing their work when they should be actually present before the jurors.

5) JURY TYPE 3 A

This type of jury collects the submission material in advance and no student is permitted at the jury venue. A not so common type, this jury is referred to as a Closed Jury.

Students submit their design studio/thesis work (drawings/sketches and models) to faculty members/ administration well in advance. The collected drawings and models are displayed as described earlier before the scheduled jury dates. The jury proceeds either in a pre-decided sequence or a random or emerging one. There are normally at least two jurors.

The jurors are allowed to go through the displays in peace without any disturbance whatsoever, as nobody other than the jury members are present at the venue. The seriousness of the exercise is reinforced by the sight of the peon who serves tea/coffee to the jurors at least twice or thrice during the day. The grading or marking technique followed by the jurors can be many.

6) JURY TYPE 4

In this type of jury, the submission material is collected in advance but students are not permitted at the jury venue.

This is the most commonly found jury at colleges of architecture in India these days, and is often referred to as inter-college closed jury. This type of jury:

a) Encourages inter-college interaction amongst students

- b) Projects/exposes the host college to the other colleges
- c) Extracts relevant information from participating colleges

Such juries come out with their rewards in varied forms, such as money, literature, tours, hotel stays and certificates. Students submit their pre-invited work (drawings/sketches and models) to the faculty members/ administration prior to commencement of jury (much in advance). Drawings and models collected are displayed in ways mentioned earlier, before the scheduled jury dates. No students are allowed near the jury venue. Therefore, there is no external noise or disturbance. The submissions are usually in the form of soft and hard copies, which are evaluated.

7) JURY TYPE 5

In this type of jury, the submission material is collected in advance and students are not allowed at the venue. This jury is quite like jury type 4 and is commonly found when it is organized by commercial organizations, such as manufacturers of plywood, cement or ceramic vessels. Such juries are also found in non-profit organizations. This type of jury:

- (a) projects or exposes the host commercial organization to the world
- (b) conducts some community/social activity amongst participating colleges under organizational policy and/or
- (c) combines both (a) and (b)

Such juries announce the rewards in the form of money, literature, tours, hotel stays and certificates. The students submit their pre-invited work to the hosting commercial organization or to the pre-decided college prior to commencement of jury.



Fig. 2: Image of JPPA (Courtesy: downtown.org)

The collected drawings and models are displayed in the usual ways discussed earlier before the scheduled jury dates. No students are permitted anywhere near the jury, therefore, the venue is rather calm. The jury proceeds in a pre-decided sequence. Here too, the juror(s) are normally more than one. Rarely is there just a single juror. It is common to have two or more. The jurors evaluate the soft as well as hard copies as collected.

8) JURY TYPE 6

Permutations and combinations of all 7 jury types discussed earlier can broadly go under this type of jury. Possibly 6 to 7 jury types can further emerge from these combinations.

B) Juries Pertaining to Professional Architects (JPPA)

In these types of juries, professional architects are assessed under various

criteria. The reasons behind conducting each type are given as follows:

1) JURY TYPE 1

Submission material is collected in advance in this type of jury and participants/applicants are not allowed at the jury venue. This jury normally confers certificates/awards for some achievements in the field of professional architecture. Such juries are held at hotels or convention centres.

Normally a closed jury, in this type the participants and applicants are rarely informed to stay present. They just submit the demanded work to the jury organizer/s prior to commencement of jury. The collected drawings and models are displayed before the scheduled jury dates. The jury comprises eminent professionals/academicians as jurors.

2) JURY TYPE 2 A

Submission material is collected

in advance and no participants or applicants are permitted at the jury venue. Such juries select architect(s) for awarding projects. They are usually held at premium places like some hotels, convention centres or clients' offices. These are closed juries and rarely are participants asked to be present. The participants/applicants merely submit their demanded work to the jury organizer/s prior to commencement of jury.

3) JURY TYPE 2 B

In this type of jury, submission material is collected in advance and the participants/applicants remain present at the jury venue. This type of jury usually selects architect(s) for awarding projects. It is an open jury where participants/applicants are interviewed and selected on the basis of discussions on the material submitted, credentials, etc. Methods of awarding projects vary.

4) JURY TYPE 3

In this type of jury, submission material is collected in advance and the participants are not allowed at the venue. Like types 2A and B, this type is also meant for selecting an architect for awarding a project, as per the strict norms of architectural design competitions (as prescribed by the Council of Architecture, in case of India). These juries are also organized at premium locations.

This write-up is based on the author's observation and analysis. He welcomes any additional input to complete/enhance it at: khatt101@yahoo.com.

Sources for images:

- (1) www.pvpcoapuneblog.blogspot.com
- (2) www.downtown.org
