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DESIGNABILITY

"Hotel stands undamaged as monument to your genius. Congratulations !" This was a telegram sent to Frank Lloyd Wright, by the Japanese Government, after a devastating earthquake razed dozens of buildings to the ground. The Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, designed by Wright, was one of the few large buildings that was so perfectly structured that it withstood the awesome might of a killer earthquake.

WHAT IS DESIGN?

Gone are the days when we had to put up with products that looked as if they belonged to the middle ages. The touch of the *designer* is obvious on almost everything we use today, be it a safety pin, a car, the way a cake of soap is packaged or even a highway system. Yet, the task before the modern designer goes far beyond making things look pretty and slick. Designers apply their artistic and creative abilities to improve communication, simplify manufacture, increase the strength and durability of products and develop products that are friendly to the user.

WHO WOULD MAKE A GOOD DESIGNER ?

Toys from Waste. Raghu, a class 12 student, had an unusual hobby that made him very popular with the children in his colony. He was an inventor! He spent his spare time using thrown away materials, to invent toys that actually worked. He

had invented kites that did not tear, self propelled boats and airplanes, roller skates... the list of his inventions seemed endless. Fascinated, I asked him how he developed his toys. His designs began as two dimensional drawings. He would draw out his invention on paper, from various angles, work out the sizes of the parts and how they all fitted together. Then he would transform his drawings into actual three dimensional products.

The main aptitude associated with design, is the *Spatial Aptitude*. This is the ability to deal effectively with two- and three-dimensional space. Good designers have a strong imagination, a visual mind. They are creative and artistic in their manipulation of space. Designers also require the ability to be logical and planful in their work. Calculations of dimensions and spaces are integral to design work. Although Raghu did not realise it initially, he had a high spatial aptitude. He went on to study design and today is a successful product designer!

AREAS DESIGNERS WORK IN:

Graphic Designers, originally called commercial artists, work mainly in visual communication and use a combination of drawings, paintings, photography and the print media. Today artists use computers extensively in their work.

Textile Designers apply the principles of design to cloth to produce fabric that is not only attractive but also strong, shrink proof, crush proof and so on.

The *Fashion Designer* uses different kinds of material to design apparel and accessories. The Fashion Designer is not limited to fashion shows and beautiful models! Most Fashion Designers work toward producing designs for clothing that the masses will one day wear.

The manufacturing industry was originally dominated by engineers. Today engineers increasingly work with designers to create products that look good, are convenient to use, safe and easy to maintain. Therefore, we have today a group of professionals called *Product Designers* and *Industrial Designers*.

The world of buildings offers a number of careers for designers. *Architecture* extends to the design and layout of buildings, suburbs and towns. The *Landscape Architect* ensures that the grounds around a building are aesthetically pleasing. *Interior Designers*, work on the insides of a building. They plan interior furnishings, colours, lighting and decor.

Other areas designers work in are ceramics, craft, sets and props, exhibitions, jewellery, photography, furniture. The list could be quite long, because, almost all aspects of modern life, turn to the designer for inputs.

Not many of us place much emphasis on the Spatial Aptitude. Careers in design are rapidly growing. Is there is a designer within you, waiting to be released? Your '*designability*' need not remain merely a hobby. It could well be converted into a lucrative and satisfying career.