

Architecture Rooted in Responsibility, Culture, and the Common Man



In the evolving discourse of Indian architecture—often caught between spectacle and speed—Padma Shri G. Shankar stands apart as a practitioner whose work consistently places people, ecology, and cultural continuity at the centre of design. An architect, planner, and social visionary, G. Shankar has spent decades demonstrating that architecture need not be extravagant to be impactful; instead, it can be ethical, inclusive, and deeply humane.

An Architect Shaped by Context

Based in Kerala, G. Shankar is the Founder and Chief Architect of Habitat Technology Group (HTG), an institution that has grown into one of India's most respected architecture and planning practices. From its inception, HTG was not envisioned merely as a design firm, but as a platform for socially responsive architecture, addressing housing, public infrastructure, institutional buildings, and urban planning with equal seriousness.

Kerala's geography, climate, and socio-political fabric have strongly influenced Shankar's architectural philosophy. His work reflects a profound understanding of tropical architecture, vernacular wisdom, and local construction systems—combined with contemporary planning principles.

Architecture for the People

Perhaps G. Shankar's most defining contribution lies in mass housing and public architecture. While many architects focus on bespoke or elite commissions, Shankar has dedicated a significant part of his career to affordable housing, cooperative housing societies, and government-led housing missions.

His housing projects challenge the notion that affordability must come at the cost of dignity. Thoughtful spatial planning, natural ventilation, daylight optimization, and community-oriented layouts are hallmarks of his work. These projects emphasize livability over luxury, proving that good design can—and must—be accessible to all.

Sustainability as a Way of Life

Long before sustainability became a global buzzword, G. Shankar was practicing climate-sensitive design as an ethical necessity. His buildings respond intelligently to Kerala's humid climate through passive cooling strategies, shaded courtyards, sloping roofs, and material choices rooted in regional availability.

For Shankar, sustainability extends beyond environmental metrics. It encompasses social sustainability, cultural continuity, and economic feasibility. This holistic approach has made his work both enduring and adaptable, particularly relevant in today's climate-conscious architectural landscape.

Institution Builder and Thought Leader

Beyond buildings, G. Shankar's legacy includes his role as an institution builder. Habitat Technology Group is not merely an architectural office but a multidisciplinary ecosystem engaging with urban governance, policy frameworks, and long-term planning strategies.

He has also been actively involved in professional bodies, advisory committees, and academic forums, contributing to policy discussions on housing, urban development, and sustainable construction. Through lectures, writings, and mentorship, Shankar has influenced generations of architects to think beyond form-making and engage with architecture's social responsibility.

Recognition and the Padma Shri

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to architecture and public service, G. Shankar was conferred the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours. The award acknowledged not only his architectural achievements but also his unwavering commitment to inclusive development and nation-building through design.

This recognition placed him among a rare group of architects whose work transcends professional acclaim to achieve societal impact at scale.

A Legacy Beyond Form

Padma Shri G. Shankar's work reminds us that architecture is ultimately about people and place. In an era increasingly driven by iconic imagery and rapid urbanization, his practice offers a counter-narrative—one rooted in humility, responsibility, and long-term relevance.

His buildings may not always seek attention, but they command respect. They endure because they are contextual, compassionate, and consciously designed.

As India continues to urbanize at an unprecedented pace, the architectural philosophy of G. Shankar stands as a guiding reference—affirming that true progress lies not in building bigger, but in building better, fairer, and wiser.