

INTRODUCTION

You should not accept or tolerate ugliness anywhere, in your life, in your activities, in your buildings. The worst type of ugliness of course is ugly behavior of individuals and groups. But to some extent, the environment reflects itself in the behavior of the individual, as a beautiful environment helps in developing a sense of beauty in the people who live there. It is desirable, therefore, that what we build, however simple and humble it may be, should have some artistic value. And mind you, do not connect artistic value with money.

Jawaharlal Nehru, "Building a New India"

In winter 2010, chasing a rare document on German architect Otto Koenigsberger, I arrived at Hindustani Housing's abandoned factory in Delhi. The olive green skin of the imported German machines was flaking off, exposing the rusted surface of their stout corpses. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, envisioned the Hindustani Housing factory, which would create prefabricated low-cost houses, as a quick and effective solution to the country's housing problem, and he invited Koenigsberger to help materialize his dream. The factory's machines, which once processed tons of cement each day to produce prefabricated housing components—the first of their kind in the decolonizing worlds—were now settled among the rubble and gravel. Inside the silence of the factory, I saw a muster of wild, bright Indian peafowls from the nearby woods along the Yamuna River. The peafowls were squatting on the cement-casting machines under the piercing light that poured in through the iron walls of the factory shed.

Once hailed as the promise of affordable modernism for everyone, the postcolonial hope of Nehru and Koenigsberger has since transformed into a nuanced surrealism. While this abandoned housing factory reflects the postcolonial state's push for centralization and industrialization, *Of Greater Dignity than Riches* looks beyond the narrative of how the postcolonial state exerted its centralized control to modernize its cities and villages. In this book, I explore an ambiguous territory in which the Indian state grad-

ually relinquished control of its subjects to a body of extra-state agents—village elites, foreign consultants, local designers, aid workers, volunteers, politicians—all of whom contested state power and had a vested interest in India's postcolonial future.

As a relatively stable domestic market emerged between the 1920s and 1950s, the Indian government, in collaboration with local and foreign architects and planners, embarked on various reformation projects to modernize and develop the domestic environment of the country's lower-income population. These projects extensively used the Gandhian political rhetoric of asceticism, which exalted voluntary poverty as the core strength of Indian civilization. Government reform and development projects portrayed economic scarcity, rhetorically called *poverty*, not as an impediment but as a new possibility—the essential ingredient of postcolonial development. Hope and optimism for an alternative future of development mobilized by the village and urban poor was the key to this austerity discourse. The “modernism of austerity,” as I call this endeavor, was a compendium of utopian ideal city and village designs in conjunction with pragmatic, low-cost housing prototypes for the urban and rural poor.

The Discourse of Austerity

In 1958 Le Corbusier was overwhelmed with designing the monumental architecture of Chandigarh, capital of the northern Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, now revered as the emblem of a bygone heroic modernism. At the same time, his lesser-known cousin Pierre Jeanneret was commissioned by the Indian Ministry of Food and Agriculture for a different purpose: to design and furnish model interiors of a working-class house for a government publication that would promote the newly crafted state slogan, “Poverty can sometimes give an impression of greater dignity than riches.”¹ The state's exaltation of poverty was not meant to offer the riot and famine-torn postcolonial India a makeshift modernism. Instead, the government set out to embrace poverty and resource scarcity as essential ingredients of postcolonial subjecthood.² When the Ministry of Food and Agriculture approached him, Jeanneret was designing housing for second- and third-class government employees, which, according to Le Corbusier, was incompatible with modern design principles.³ But Jeanneret eventually agreed to the government's plea for a different modernity, an inverted model of haute modernity. For a newly decolonized country like India, it was neither a peculiar nor a sporadic effort. In this book, I argue that the scarcity of resources, and sometimes poverty in its crudest sense,

were important factors in defining postcolonial Indian modernism as it is known today. The Indian state, along with many other stakeholders such as designers, trade organizations, and cultural activists, aimed to define the limits of poverty and its relationship with an impending industrial development.

Through a discourse of austerity, the state negotiated between “modernizing the poor” and surrendering their fate to the domestic market. It promoted resource scarcity not as a detriment but as a given condition in the path toward development. With this book, I am not proposing another revision of postcolonial modernism, nor do I intend to disagree with the established classification or divisions of design culture that emerged because of the unique regional and political conditions of the decolonizing worlds. Austerity is not about style in the conventional sense. By *austerity discourse*, I mean a unique tendency and sentiment among Indian architects, policymakers, public administrators, and foreign consultants to face the challenge of producing “development” with scarce economic resources. The discourse of austerity does not imply tightening the belt in austere times. Rather, austerity was viewed by most of the decolonizing world as an inevitable precondition to development. More often than not, the actual scarcity of resources was less important than the narratives of scarcity and development.

The narratives of scarcity was constructed through surveys, reports, diagrams, charts, conferences, exhibitions, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and anecdotal observations of designers and policymakers. This book shows the physical manifestation of the narratives of scarcity, which took the form of “ideal houses” and “model villages” that were either showcased in exhibitions or in the pages of magazines. But these ideal houses or model villages were not real spaces to be occupied and lived in. At best, they were a heuristic narrative petrified in physical form, built as didactic instruments to show members of society how embracing a culture of austerity would lead to prosperity. As a result, the recipe for postcolonial development was envisioned within the confines of an austerity discourse in which a network of metaphors, allegories, and icons of model homes idealized the present and the future. *Of Greater Dignity than Riches* studies the historical context within which this narrative and its physical manifestations took shape. In order to understand this historical context, it is essential to understand how the process of creating icons and metaphors of an idealized future resulted in new modes for the production and delivery of space. The austerity discourse set the tone for India’s postcolonial design and architectural modernism, even though the participating low-income population gained little if any power over the

actual production of its architecture. The project of austerity eventually idealized the life of the poor, and perhaps even reduced poverty into a stylized architectural representation.

The term *austerity* is loaded with contested meanings. It could refer to Britain's wartime economic state, which even today, as Rebecca Bramall explains, supplies an ideological framework for confronting the contemporary political situation in the United Kingdom.⁴ It could also refer to the stringent economic time in interwar Germany, which, according to Paul Betts, inspired designers of East Germany to produce "ascetic objects" with absolute, minimal articulation.⁵ *Austerity* could also mean the American New Deal sensibility of assuring unfettered growth with little resources and engaging with the less-affluent social class.⁶ Or it could refer to Mao's revolutionary China.⁷ In all four cases, design became more than simply a reaction to economic scarcity; it was a cultural expression, the embodiment of a specific way of life. Austerity culture was prescriptive—not an accurate representation of how the poor built houses for themselves or how they actually lived but how others imagined an ideal way of living for them. Resource scarcity, the lack of financial and technological ability to supply housing at an affordable price, is the driving force behind a lingua franca of development. However, a fine line exists between a pragmatic response to resource scarcity and the austerity discourse itself, which engulfed almost every aspect of spatial and material culture in India—from the smallest detail, the scientific design of a broom, to the largest, the rationalized planning of an entire village.

The Indian government embraced the concept of economic growth based on large-scale industrialization and accumulation, while at the same time arguing for a conceptual limit of growth by promoting the idealized, ascetic, and anticonsumerist values of Gandhi. By blending these two apparent opposites—growth and control, abundance and austerity—the government eloquently weaved an ambivalent postcolonial modernity. This apparent Janus-faced design culture, to empower both the consumer fueling the market and the apparent nonconsumers outside the market, was not compatible with the prophecy of pure, industrially oriented modernism.

A Modernism for the Poor

Architectural modernization in India has often been explained as an induced process, prompted by the model of American modernization theory and the Euro-American architectural movement. From this perspective,

India is at the juncture of global flows mediated by occasional interventions by Western modernists such as Le Corbusier and Louis I. Kahn and through large-scale projects. The popular view of India's aspiration toward an industrialized modernity also foddres the import-based model of architectural modernism. Social theory has depicted postcolonial India as obsessively addicted to large-scale development projects. It would be incomplete and inaccurate, however, to interpret Nehru's remark that "Dams are India's new temple" as a general representation of India's development goals. This generalization has turned into an academic myth that often only considers postcolonial history in reference to the capital city of Chandigarh, bolstered by stories that continually reiterate the collaboration between Western architects and Third-World states.

Nehru's India only partially shared a culture of centralized modernization. The continuous reproduction and circulation of that fragmented reality, or the simulation of reality, eventually made it intangible, unimaginable, and unreal—to use Jean Baudrillard's term, it became a *simulacra*. The postcolonial Indian government and its allies, both local and Western, made a great effort to define modernism for the poor, even suggesting that the poor themselves act as agents of development. This version of modernism did not entirely follow the model of centralized, state-controlled modernization, as in Mao's China.⁸ Instead, it aimed to engage with local agencies and power structures and focus on the local community and its social condition.

Of Greater Dignity than Riches argues that the discourse of austerity was significantly shaped by the presence and involvement of Western consultant architects and planners in India. A significant number were either invited by the newly formed government or funded by the United States or the United Nations. Their vision of modernity, rooted in the growth-based economic model of industrialization, was challenged in the postcolonial Indian context, where they were constantly juggling growth and limit, abundance and scarcity. Together with local bureaucrats, consultants from the West tried to reconcile these opposing forces and suggested a new austere modernity that was neither heroic nor universal but, as they believed, would flourish at the grassroots level. Architects and planners often expressed hope that what could not be achieved in the industrialized and developed West might possibly be achieved in the new decolonized India. India was considered the last resort, the place where Western modernity would fulfill its prophecy of equality and freedom without falling to the market force. But there is no coherent single story of the modernity of austerity or a grand theory to represent it. It was a multilayered mix of many efforts from local designers, public administrators,

and policymakers in tandem with grant agencies, international diplomacy, and hired Western designers interested in India's postcolonial future. In cinematic terms, this book is a long-distance panoramic ripping off of this other modernism—a modernism that was imagined and prescribed for nonaffluent subjects in postcolonial India.

The Myth of an Ideal Home

The modernism of austerity played out most interestingly in the postcolonial state's vision of a new ideal home for the poor—both as an actual artifact and as an analogy of the postcolonial state. Over the course of the anticolonial movement, the notion of home attained a nuanced meaning commensurable to independence, autonomy, public democracy, and private culture.⁹ Gandhi's hermit-like ashram was of course the most dominant political icon. The Indian anticolonial struggle nourished the notion of home as an ideological idiom entwining personal memories and national histories.¹⁰ On the one hand, British women in India were held responsible for reproducing imperial power-relations on a household scale by codifying the establishment of the British home.¹¹ On the other, the incipient notion of the Indian home was in symbiosis with a growing nationalism, where home was a trope that "gave voice and form not to memory, but to [a] personal and collective future."¹² Partha Chatterjee argues that during colonial rule, the development of nationalism was primarily formed by claiming sovereignty in the "inner domain"—the realm of private space of culture practiced in a metaphorical home. By fostering otherness when compared to an array of "outer domains" such as state, trade, and religion, Chatterjee explains, home forged the identity discourse of a colonized community.¹³ Chatterjee's dichotomy, however, does not fully explain the complexity of the home icon as an immediate pre-Independence inner domain.¹⁴ The postcolonial Indian state, along with many private business enterprises and cultural institutions, created a nuanced meaning of the ideal home that allowed free interplay between the inner and outer domains. Various house reformation efforts and exhibitions disseminated a concept of the ideal home that suggested permeable boundaries would lead to an interchange of ideas.

Because the notion of an ideal home was already an established metaphor in Indian society, the postcolonial state used it as a symbolic space to define Indian nationalism and citizenship. To fulfill this objective, the Indian government invested in new organizations and ministries and initiated an array of projects to develop a prototype ideal home for the vil-

lage poor and urban industrial workers. A home of this kind, built in the most economical way, with minimal square footage, symbolized an austere culture and embodied the state's constructed vision of scarcity. Austerity was not a totalitarian imposition; it was reserved only for those who could not afford an affluent lifestyle. A tenet of this selective modernity was to complement growth-based modernity by including the poor and in turn granting them the same respect and dignity as the rich. Set against this context, the ideation process of an ideal home for the poor represents the politics of location-based postcolonial subjectivity and exemplifies the government's conceptions of an idealized life for the less affluent.

Exhibitions

Public outreach was at the heart of the discursive formation of austerity. The concept of the ideal home was disseminated through various exhibitions, seminars, and public demonstrations. Through public displays, the state aimed to gain the public's confidence and generate public opinion about an idealized life of the poor. The displays glorified everyday, mundane life experiences. These exhibits set out to build an array of make-believe worlds, worlds that the audience would accept as factual and real but with an awareness that they might also be unattainable. The friction that resulted is dramatized in figure I.1, in which Prime Minister Nehru observes a prototype house for the less affluent at the first international exhibition of low-cost housing in 1954. The exhibition, co-organized by the Indian government and the United Nations, canonized various techniques of housing production to inspire local builders to construct ideal housing for the disadvantaged. In this photograph, the beholder, representing the state bureaucracy, and the beholden, the anonymous poor, belong to two irreconcilable spheres of reality. It was a matter of debate how the life of the typical and typified Indian could be aligned with the life that was suggested by the housing design at this exhibition. The objects on display, while appearing desirable, were equally unattainable. The ideal home exhibitions constructed an elusive parallel reality, and their effect was framed by the class-consciousness of their audience. They became the catalyst for creating an alternative society, one with a seemingly endless potential to combat the triviality of everyday life.

The austerity discourse was also an integral component even in the discussion of ideal homes for the upper middle class. In the winter of 1937, a group of young Indian architects headed by P. P. Kapadia, the president of Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), organized a display in the town hall



FIGURE. I.1. The South East Asia Regional Conference of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning was inaugurated by the prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, at the International Low-Cost Housing Exhibition Grounds, in New Delhi on February 1, 1954. Source: Photo Studio/February, 1954, A22a(v)/A22a(I) Photo Number: 36915. © Photo division, Government of India.

of Bombay. The institute publicized what it considered to be the ideal Indian home, a site for performing democracy and harnessing a “perfect way of living.”¹⁵ Its ideal home was not meant for the poor or industrial workers; rather, the IIA intended to set an example of how middle-class urban families could furnish their houses with economic, modern furniture. The architects who organized the event believed their solution would offset poor building practices and help all economic classes in Bombay. The IIA’s exhibition appeared at a time when anticolonial politics wielded underdevelopment as a political weapon and venerated poverty in a metaphoric way, mainly through Gandhi’s theatrical display of voluntary poverty. By contrast, this show evinced a picture of an affluent future that was the true objective of India, a future that was available “even for those who

[could] afford drastic reforms in the home.”¹⁶ According to Kapadia, the show represented an image of a desired future, not of the present that was characterized by “‘jerry buildings,’ chawls, tenement houses, [and] cheap and shoddy structures.”¹⁷ By extrapolating a mode of stern modern living in India, the IIA sought to invoke a “pointer to the future, a substantial step forward towards greater well-being, and let us hope greater happiness.”¹⁸ By setting a future-oriented platonic discourse of the “ideal,” this show portrayed home as a fictitious destination for Indian society—a place that would stimulate the desire for consumption. However, the irreconcilable lifestyles of the real and imaginary middle class made this an illusionary journey, an illegitimate peek into the lives of strangers.

This ideal home exhibition was criticized for exclusively addressing the urban middle class and excluding the common masses from the discourse of the “ideal.” The prime minister, in his inaugural speech, reflected on the palpable problems at hand, stating, “In our search for the Ideal[,] however, we cannot afford to lose sight of the practical realities of life.”¹⁹ The prime minister and other stakeholders suggested that the IIA arrange another exhibition demonstrating the unexplored dimension of the Indian “ideal home”—the home that would serve the needs of the poorer segments of society. The press, lambasting the show, protested, “It is all very beautiful, convenient and comfortable, but it is not of the slightest use to the average man with a limited purse, and still less to the poor man.”²⁰ This invocation of mass consumption was fueled by the campaigns of various design organizations, which showed how this standard of modernity could be achieved in a “cheap dwelling” by minimum means.²¹ A few days after the IIA’s ideal home exhibition closed, in response, the Gujrati Stree Shakhari Mandal (Club for Gujrati Women) displayed drawings and models of ideal one- and two-room tenements at its club fair.²² Architect Yahya C. Merchant, secretary of the IIA, assisted club members with organizing the display. The institute agreed to arrange a follow-up exhibition on low-cost houses and domestic spaces, but that plan was never realized.²³

Although the IIA’s show lasted only eighteen days, it attracted more than one hundred thousand people who bore witness to the possible, if sometimes drastic changes designed for the Indian home. It might appear that the narrative created by the IIA exhibition was a binary opposite of austerity discourse. And yet the show proposed a model for how Indians could modernize their homes with limited resources and restrained growth. Austerity was not limited to the reformation of housing for the poor and industrial workers. The austerity discourse offered a new mode of thinking that affected almost every aspect of Indian society. A decade

before Indian independence, coinciding with the end of the Great Depression, IIA's exhibition brought together an image of a nonfeudal society and stark functional living at a time when India was spawning a class comprised of native urban elite and a boom in the building industry, along with a new wave of domestic consumers.²⁴ This show was the first of its kind in India to identify the real-estate industry and household goods as two of the prime driving forces for capitalist development and to propose the home as central to consumer discourse.²⁵ With its selection of Bauhaus furniture and cutting-edge transatlantic household objects, this exhibition heralded a forthcoming postwar, postindependence domestic market that would be based upon industrially produced consumer goods and household objects.²⁶ By proposing a new material culture—a new way of life based on new household objects—this show was instrumental in bringing about a historical breach with the preceding colonial era and a promise to reestablish the Indian home in a new and democratic modern world.

Modern Design for a New Generation

The Indian architects' longing for contentment through affluence is an integral part of the austerity discourse. The IIA subscribed to the interwar Bauhaus interpretation of modernity based on economy and the liberal socialist view of architectural production, possibly closer to Hannes Meyer's socialist view. However, economy and collectivism were not the only factors deemed important by the IIA. The institute shared a close affinity with the European tradition that relied on domestic space to provide an intimate area for practicing individualism.²⁷ The home, which promised a personal comfort zone that operated within an exclusive private space of isolated human action, eventually harnessed the "pampered individual."²⁸ The IIA was well aware that its conceptual ideal home needed a new generation of potential citizen occupants. As reflected in the lantern lecture delivered by architect H. J. Billimoria in the Art and Architecture series under the auspices of the Bombay Presidency Adult Education Association in 1941, only a new Indian generation would be able to realize and appreciate modern "interior decoration" or the modern way of life.²⁹ An invisible presence of a new kind of citizenship was implicit in the choreographed interior of the IIA's show. This new citizen would be simple, minimum, and austere but at the same time contextual and traditional.

India's exhibitions and the associated discourse of austerity canonized material culture, design, and architecture as manifestations of progress

and development. Newly established institutes such as the National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad or the Building Research Institute at Roorkee helped to foster a new direction in design suitable for the growing and malleable sociocultural and market condition. This institutionalization effort was also a venture to remove the stigma attached to India—the exotic other that was exploited by colonial power to satisfy its own culture of imperial taste. Through new design and research institutes, India affirmed its position in the dominant growth-oriented modernity while simultaneously imagining an idealized material culture and domestic environment that calibrated with its Third-World allies.³⁰ An emerging India was moving up the scale of development, indicating that it was no longer merely a consumer of the material spectacle produced by the West. It began to disseminate its own version of contemporary spectacle. Absent from the historiography of architecture and modernity in India is an in-depth study of the nature of its resurgence; India explicitly challenged the indulgence of domesticity and the exuberance of material fetish, which is a point of focus for this book.

Austerity in a Global Context

On a global scale, the ideal or model home for the poor attained different political meaning. Developed countries, especially the United States, interpreted a scarcity of resources and resulting reduction of home ownership as the root cause of the global spread of communism.³¹ International agencies, including the United Nations, and American NGOs such as the Ford Foundation took considerable interest in creating the myth of the affordable ideal home in the global south. For the US government, India was strategically an important place and a source of political anxiety both because of its geographical location and because of Prime Minister Nehru's inclination toward socialist ideas. This anxiety manifested in a number of collaborative projects between the Indian government, local trade and cultural forces, the United Nations, and the Ford Foundation. Through exhibitions they coordinated together, local and foreign stakeholders made strong statements on a number of new initiatives: municipal bylaws, national policies for industrial housing, rationalized minimum housing, scientific ways to achieve material economy, mortgage and credit systems for new housing, the production of building materials, and the training of unskilled laborers for the building industry. Despite an ephemeral existence, these exhibitions reveal subtle attributes of the modernism of austerity.

My book considers the multidimensional parameters of a broader Cold War *mission civilisatrice* mobilized by the United Nations, the Point Four Program, and the Ford Foundation. The formation of austerity discourse in India was the result of the end of British colonialism, the emergence of conceptual allies of the Third World, and the spread of the global Cold War. It was a time when development-centric and growth-oriented modernization was reified as a discursive device in the name of modernization theory—spilling across finance, culture, and the built environment from the First to the Third World.³² Poverty, exclusion, and sociopolitical marginalization were no less important topics for cultural studies than issues to be discussed exclusively in relation to political and economic failure. Western and Eastern social scientists came to the consensus that they could not overcome underdevelopment if they only considered development within the realm of economics and politics. Development, theorists of modernization argued, is fundamentally a cultural issue related to the mindset, behavior, and cultural belief system of poor societies, which had little or no motivation to alter their station in life. Major development studies during the 1950s and 1960s concluded that, instead of attempts to change the indigent mindset, it should be viewed as an inevitable ingredient in the constituency of development.³³

India's modernism of austerity held a similar vision, which maintained that the colonial definition of poverty must be revisited. And if the poor and the affluent altered their thinking process and started to see poverty as a new form of dignity, alluding to Gandhi, they would reimagine the concept of development. In this altered world vision, India would no longer aspire to Western material abundance. Instead, austerity would leave a permanent mark of progress. In this regard, development projects in India assisted by the United Nations and Ford Foundation consultants were not exclusively exported by the West to fulfill its so-called neo-imperialist mission. The case studies in this book explore indigenous agency and problematize the export-biased models of Third World modernization that emphasize unidirectional linear transmission from West to East. Postcolonial India deployed architecture and design as a *performative* modernity, translating ideas about development into images symbolizing postwar, postcolonial national identity.³⁴

The exhibitions explored in this book portrayed the modern subject, whether Indian or Western, as willingly submitting to a situation that ultimately challenged her own role in society. This society was a well-organized force to be confronted, a space in which the masochistic pleasure of self-submission to the comfort and security of home was to be unlearned and deconstructed. The exhibitions discussed here did not

promote a particular architectural style or material culture; they were recognized by the name of the organizing institutions involved, such as the United Nations; and none canonized a single designer or a single design ideology. In fact, the organizers of these exhibitions conceived the exhibitionary place as an amalgamation of possibilities. The common theme combining each approach was a conviction to form different discourses of modernity. Thus, they were not exclusively devices to import and impose Western ideals, nor were they exclusively places to promote indigenous and vernacular design.

The Scope of the Book

Chapters in this book are organized not in strict chronological order but thematically, focusing on selected aspects of the austerity discourse. Since the themes discussed here emerged concurrently and were entangled at their inception, I could not always maintain a strict chronology, even within a chapter. Most of these case studies recount joint efforts of foreign institutes or architects and designers and Indian government organizations, which means they present at least two different perspectives: from the Western consultants and from the Indian government. Because of a paucity of Indian sources, a substantial number of archival documents used in this book came from Western repositories. As a result, the stories in this book mainly capture the position of Western agencies.³⁵ While the colonial bureaucracy invested substantial time and effort in documenting its activities, in the postcolonial period, the archiving of design-related documents was marred for a number of reasons, the most important being the feeble mechanisms that were available for archiving institutional documents in individual design and research. Archiving documents, when it comes to so-called events of secondary importance such as design, is in many instances subjective and selection of documents depends on the circumstances. In the case of India, this selection process, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion of archival documents, is crucial. India's past, at least with regard to the case studies that I selected for this book, is mainly approachable through foreign sources.

Of Greater Dignity than Riches explores how an ideal prototype housing unit was formed for industrial workers in India's emerging industrial centers; how the agency of poor citizens tempered threats to state authority; how various government agencies conceptualized and idealized rural poor and village communities; how ideal villages were created as a means to develop what the state viewed as impoverished and disintegrated com-

munities; and how pure austerity values gradually waned from the design discourse. As a result, India's newly established design cells and institutes created multiple transnational connections that were aligned toward global design norms.

Taken together, the chapters in this book posit the Indian subjects within an imagined landscape of ideal homes, model villages, and the country's associated material culture. Showing the conceptual limits of these models and indicating the everyday experience squared by these limitations, I propose that these house reformation efforts, exhibitions, and ideal homes offer the nuances of a new Indian subjectivity.