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A Times Group Publication ₹150

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GOOD DESIGN CHANGES EVERYTHING

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 05 AUGUST 2026



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the designers
don't tell
you about
entrances
and foyers

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Designing Homes for Three Generations

IT'S NOT ABOUT LIVING TOGETHER — IT'S ABOUT LIVING WELL TOGETHER

FEATURE **MONIKA CHOUDHARY** PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY **HABITAT ARCHITECTS**



Monika Choudhary
Founder, Chief Development Officer
& Growth Strategist,
Habitat Architects

Monika Choudhary is a strategist, cultural narrator and design leader shaping the evolving language of design in India. At Habitat Architects, she steers the firm's direction towards innovation, luxury and environmental responsibility. With an interdisciplinary background spanning interiors and fashion design, her work bridges strategy and creativity, shaping spaces that are culturally nuanced and globally attuned, while remaining deeply rooted in context and human experience.

Some of the clearest conversations I have with families do not begin with style, materials or square footage. They begin with a more honest question. Can three generations really live well under one roof? The answer is not always found in the size of the house, but in the way the house understands the family. A multigenerational home is not simply a large house with many bedrooms. It is a house that understands how a family wants to live together.

In many Indian homes today, the desire to live together remains strong. Grandparents remain the emotional centre of daily life. Younger families value support, continuity and shared memory. But family life has changed. Routines differ. Work has entered the home. Privacy matters more. Ageing needs more thought. Children grow into adults faster than a house can change.

That is where architecture becomes important. A multigenerational home is not simply a large house with many bedrooms. It may be one building with one entrance, one home with separate floors, or a cluster of smaller homes within one compound, connected by a courtyard, garden, verandah or shared family space. The form can change. The real question remains the same - how much togetherness does this family need, and how much independence does each generation require to remain comfortable?

Over the years, I have seen that every family defines closeness differently. Some families live best in a shared home. One entrance,

Togetherness should not depend only on proximity. A well-planned home allows people to gather naturally and withdraw without guilt.

one kitchen, one dining table, one rhythm. These homes work when family life naturally overlaps and the planning must support that ease: a generous dining space, a kitchen that can hold more than one person at work, informal sitting areas where conversations continue beyond meals, and circulation that allows people to meet without feeling crowded.

Other families need a shared heart with private lives around it.



In a cluster home, the space between buildings often becomes the real architecture of family life.

Privacy does not weaken family life. Very often, it preserves it.



Before drawing a plan, families must discuss a few questions:

- Who needs quiet in the morning?
- Who comes home late?
- Can grandparents reach their bedroom, bathroom, dining area and garden without difficulty?
- Will a young couple feel they have their own home within the larger home?
- Where will the family meet without anyone having to announce it?
- Can the house support care in the future without making anyone feel dependent before their time?

These questions shape the home more deeply than finishes ever will.

They may enter through one doorway and gather in one living room, but each generation needs its own suite, sitting corner, pantry or floor. This is often the most balanced model today, allowing parents, children and grandparents to stay connected without making privacy feel like separation.

Then there are homes that are almost like a small family settlement: separate entrances, independent wings or pavilions, sometimes even individual homes within one compound. What holds them together is not the corridor but the shared ground between them - a courtyard, a garden, a shared dining space. Here, architecture does not force daily togetherness; it creates places where the family can return to one another.

Sometimes the most important design decisions are almost invisible. These are not decorative decisions. They are decisions about everyday comfort.

The success of a multigenerational home is not measured by how many people live under one roof. It is measured by whether every generation feels respected within it.

A home should not make privacy feel selfish. It should not make togetherness feel compulsory. It should allow both. Because designing for three generations is not about fitting more people into one house. It is about creating a way of living where each generation has room to belong.

A multigenerational home is not simply a large house with many bedrooms. It is a house that understands how a family wants to live together.

