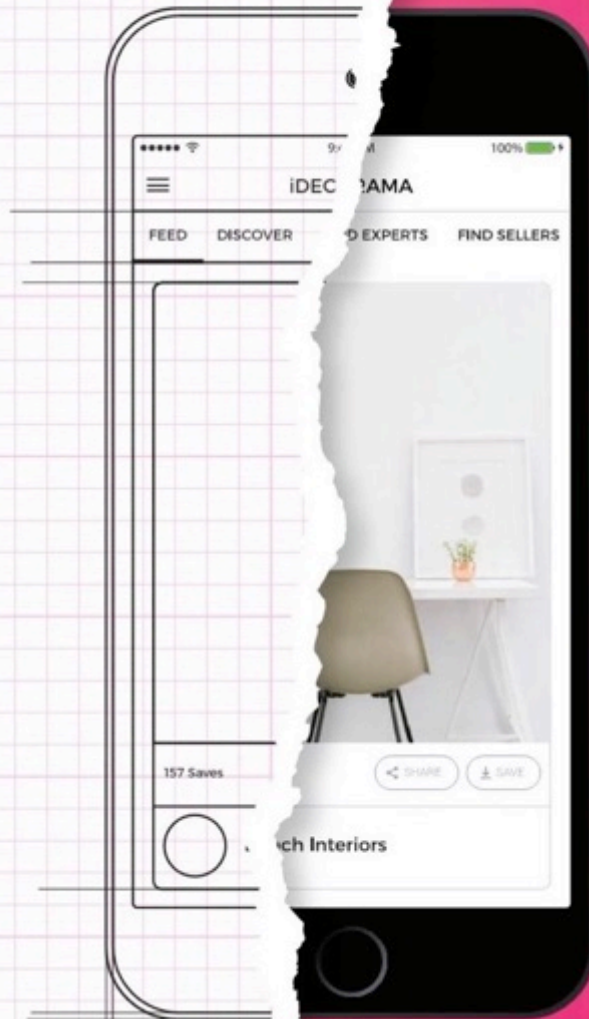


iDECORAMA

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RAMA

AUG-SEP 2016 ₹200



SPECIAL FOCUS  
**Innovation &  
Product Design**

PREVIEW  
**Decorama  
Design Show**

LEAD STORY  
**Women in  
Architecture**

LAUNCHING

iDECORAMA





## A NEW BEGINNING!

We are absolutely stoked! It's been a successful year at World of Decorama following the ebbs and flows and now we are in a new phase of our growth. We are diversifying and re-branding ourselves as iDecorama. We are soon launching our new web platform [idecorama.com](http://idecorama.com) and mobile apps which will enable architects, designers, brands, vendors and other professionals to enlist their services and products and create umpteen choices for home owners and other clients in their designing or renovation journey.

Our anniversary issue is full of exciting stories. We celebrate the women in architecture. To know the challenges is to face them and so we nominate 11 leading women architects from India to speak up on the challenges of being a woman professional in this field. We celebrate their leadership and choices. We have a line-up of interesting projects. That apart, we are featuring India's most happening product designers to celebrate innovation in product designing.

We have launched our collateral event The Decorama Design Show that will bring together the biggest brands in the luxury interior infrastructure, furnishings and home décor segment. We speak to few brands onboard to comprehend the latest trends and their predictions for the upcoming year.

All in all, it has been a celebratory affair and we could not have asked for more.

Our purpose remains to inform and engage our readers and we are forever grateful for your unceasing support. In case you have missed out on our earlier issues, do not forget to check out [magazine.idecorama.com](http://magazine.idecorama.com)

Happy reading!

*Kashmira Pathare*



# iDECORAMA

August-September 2016

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# *breaking* gender rules

Having worked rigorously and scrupulously through five years of architecture schools, students are ready to take on a world full of challenges. But what not many are aware of at this stage is that some of these, rather a lot of these, are women who will succumb to the rigors of child-bearing and satiating the needs of their family and will put their ambition on the backburner.

There is a constant concern over inclusiveness in this profession. Years after fighting for equal rights, women are still struggling to be fully absorbed into the system let alone shatter the glass ceiling. Some say, society's socialisation laws covertly exclude women by treating them as the 'invisible' girl child while some others believe the 'mental block' is the only barrier a woman will ever need to overcome to rise in any profession. How much of this problem is real or imagined?

We went on to speak to the leading ladies of architecture on the challenges of being a woman in this profession and the recourse taken to re-absorb as many women professionals into the work force over the years. Some insights surprised us outright. It turns out there has been a radical increase in the number of girls graduating from architecture schools, statistics pointing out to metropolitan cities. Nearly

60 percent of the architectural workforce comprises women in urban cities and much lesser in tier two and tier three cities but only a handful continue to work till very late into their career.

Architecture as a career takes well over a decade to sustain and a minimum of two to establish. It requires good networking and a dedicated patronage in the form of good projects to translate into a well-rounded and fruitful career. It is thus astounding to note that women in the 21st century still choose or are made to choose their family over their careers.

These women pioneers, entrepreneurs and principals are the few of the many who have endured years of struggle to create egalitarian workplaces with flexible work hours to induct more women back into the workforce. Some have suggested that families can play a key role in instilling confidence in women following their childbirth and child rearing years, while organisations and colleges can hold professional courses such as orientation on new technologies and revisions of architecture curriculum in order to encourage and motivate them to resume their careers.

After all, a step towards inducting more women back into this profession will be a leap forward for the architectural community!

Leading women architects share insights into how it is to be a woman practitioner in largely male-dominated profession and what dissuades most of them from resuming their careers after a sabbatical, writes Kashmira Pathare

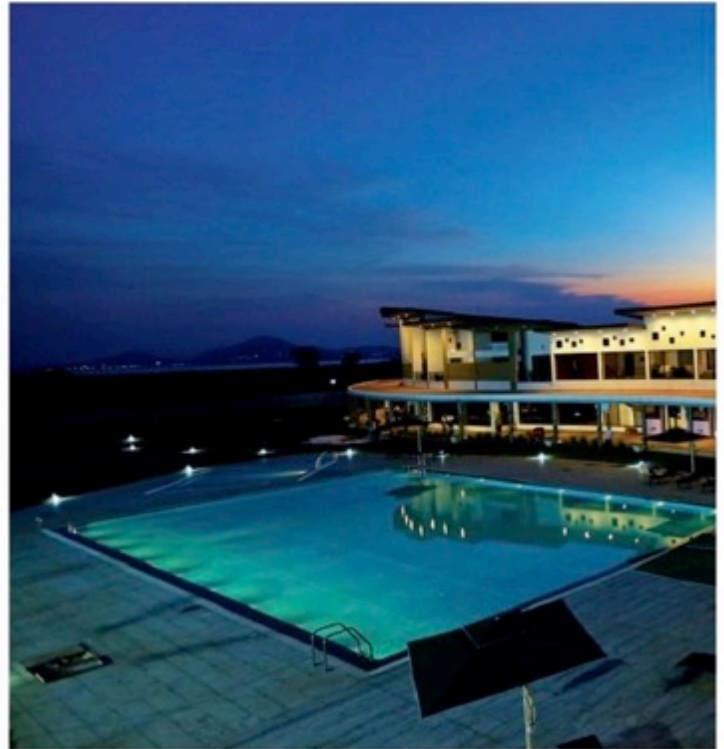
# sheila sri prakash

**W**omen architects are confronted by the twin challenges of a nascent profession and societal conventions. Architecture as compared to other professions is still in its infancy in India. Only in 1972 was The Architects Act passed by the Indian Parliament, when architecture came to be recognized as a profession. Until then, civil engineers were designers and builders. Additionally men dominated the entire real estate industry – thinking, deciding and acting on all matters related to development and construction. Women have gradually gained social acceptance because of their relevance and sensitive approach to problem solving and team building. They have the unique ability to harness forces of creation and nurture life. However it is up to each, to differentiate and realise their full potential.

Given our cultural bias, women have been slow to evolve as professional designers. It is challenging to cope with the demands of child bearing and of raising a family while delicately balancing the rigors of work. Only the hardest have the stamina to simultaneously create wholesome work and home environments. Women architects have to persevere more to get opportunities, and make it count.

Recently, the World Economic Forum accepted my concept of holistic sustainability as a valuable guide to urban design. I call it the Reciprocal Design Index. The Reciprocal Design Index (RDI) is a synthesis of social and urban design indicators. Cities of the world in a segment of countries categorised by their gross national income (GNI) per capita become comparable. The social and urban design indicators of a city can be compared with the country's indicators and / or that of the segment of countries to which a city belongs. The world is looking to the east for answers to the toughest questions of the century on urbanisation, poverty alleviation and inclusive growth, and I am sure that Indian thinking as exemplified by indo centric approach to architecture will show a path.

We are surrounded by design aesthetics that are synonymous with our region, language and ethnicity. Every architect has to search for her roots to understand what drives her artistic sensibilities.







Sheila Sri Prakash founded Shilpa Architects in 1979. She is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on the Future of Environment and Natural Resource Security for the 2016-2018 term. She formulated the Reciprocal Design Index in 2013 when she was a member of the Global Agenda Council for Design Innovation to establish, document and incentivize sustainable design in cities. She has been a performing artist, bharathanyam dancer, musician, sculptor, writer and is a passionate patron of the Arts.

Sheila has a B.Arch from the Anna University School of Architecture and Planning and also attended the Executive Education Program at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.