

# Architecture Update

## Dialogue

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## Special Feature

Building Automation  
Systems



# Gene-X in Design

Creating Strong Footholds

# GEN(E) – X

## What are the struggles a woman faces to establish herself as a designer?

The design world is not a male-dominated arena anymore. More and more women are getting into the foray. Struggles, if any, is when the client is a little prejudiced towards a woman designer...merely because she is a woman! Overall though, it would only be in some very rare cases I would say, that a woman might have to go that extra mile to prove her worth than a man.

## Are opinions from women heard in the management team?

I think this would be totally based on case to case. Depending on what corporate set up she is working in, or at what level of hierarchy she is at. Since I run my own firm, I am the management. At our studio, we have the same process of ensuring there are no biases or gender gaps. I also work with a lot of developers, where their head of department of Architecture or Design is a woman, and her opinions are not only heard but implemented as well.

## Is the decision making authority in her hand?

Very much so, women in design these days are totally independent and follow what they believe in. Whether it's a self-run business or she is one of the top brass in a corporate setup, a woman is not only making



**Ritu Goregaoker**  
Director - Design, GA design

decisions, but getting them implemented also!

## How is the on-site acceptance of a woman by workers? Are the instructions followed?

As someone who spends 50% of her time on site, I would say there is absolutely no issue about instructions being followed. The work force and the contractors are all male and the work site is male dominated- as a woman, I have always been accepted by the contractors. I have worked under male architects and have never faced discrimination anywhere. Even after I became my own boss, whether its my employees, or contractors, vendors or the work force, acceptance and instructions have never been a

problem for me.

## How should a woman deal with monetary incompetence?

Monetary incompetence again is very subjective. Having handled sites completely on my own, the problems we face in discussing and coming to a particular figure while talking commercial terms are no different to the problems that my male counterparts face. I believe the field has become such now, that the distinction between male and female is practically no more and in-fact preference for women designers is on the higher side.

## What are the struggles a woman faces to establish herself as a designer?

Today, the design profession is gender-neutral as are most creative professions. There is immense respect for talent and creativity. Having said that, there could be some minor hiccups in terms of women's safety, issues which crop up in most professions and need to be tackled at the onset.

## Are opinions from women heard in the management team?

Gen-next is getting used to seeing women in positions of authority and fortunately people are looking beyond appearances. There seem to be less gender-based power struggles and more effort at equal opportunities.

## Is the decision making authority in her hand?

When you are in charge, the decision-making lies with you, irrespective of your gender. If everyone is focused on looking at the bigger picture and getting the job done, then the gender of the decision-maker becomes irrelevant.



**Shami Goregaoker**  
Design Director, GA design

## How is the on-site acceptance of a woman by workers? Are the instructions followed?

Workers are getting used to taking instructions from women and are showing concern and respect for them. I am pleased to note that the mindset of society has evolved from what it was around two decades ago. Women are also increasingly aware that the gender gap is slowly but surely closing in. We are living in good times.

## How should a woman deal with monetary incompetence?

Women need to educate themselves to a certain level, or develop skills which can empower them to make a living, to enable themselves to remain monetarily independent. Fortunately, we live in a country which encourages education for the girl child, allows women to vote, own property, run for elections, take up challenging jobs and be independent. These are good signs and women should not stop short of taking any opportunity coming their way in order to secure their present and future.