



Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Sabeena Khanna
National President, Architecture Council

Dated: January 14, 2021

To,
Smt. Nirmla Sitharaman ji,
Honorable Finance Minister,
Ministry of Finance,
Government of India

Subject: Seeking Architecture - sector specific financial concessions, incentives and policies in the upcoming budget.

Respected Madam,

I am honored to introduce myself as the National President of Architecture Council and Founder Principal Architect, Studio KIA. The Architectural Council is a national platform focused on empowering women in architecture and easing the ecosystem in professional practice, academia, government service and entrepreneurship. Our purpose is to create the right awareness about women in architecture who choose this demanding profession and contribute to nation building through hard work and determination not only from the safety of their offices but by being on unsafe construction sites.

Our council is well represented by women of substance and experience across professional practice, academy and government sector from across the nation. I am glad to introduce my fellow council members:

1. Mrs. Dipika Tuteja – Vice President, Architecture council, practicing architect and editor - In AWE, an online magazine on sustainability.

Council Members:

2. Mrs. Anjali Lovekar- Founder, Lovekar Design Associates, Pune
3. Dr. Anuradha Chatterjee- Dean, Faculty of Design, Manipal University, Jaipur
4. Mrs. Aradhana Jindal- Principal & Dean MM School of Architecture, MM University, Ambala
5. Dr. Binumol Tom – Professor, RIT (Govt. Engineering College), Kottayam
6. Ms. Jolly Barooah - Practicing Architect, Goa
7. Mrs. Mala Mohan - ADG-Arch (Retd.), Military Engineering Services, Delhi
8. Dr. Prabhjot Kaur - Director, IKG PTU Mohali Campus, Kharar, Landran highway, Mohali
9. Dr. Sonia Mehta - Chief Architect, CPWD, Government of India
10. Ms. Shubhada Chapekar - Director at D Y Patil School of Architecture, Charholi, Pune.
11. Mrs. Sumit Kaur - Former Chief Architect, Chandigarh Administration
12. Mrs. Upinder Kaur - ADG-Arch., Military Engineering Services

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Supported by: ALL Ladies League (ALL) & Women Economic Forum (WEF) : www.aall.in, www.wef.org.in

The National Architecture Council would like to propose the following recommendations/policy interventions in the Architecture sector for women, with respect to the upcoming budget:

1. Explore gender pay parity not just in architectural practice but also in academy - Women need to be seen not just as employed but as primary earners. Often their work is seen as second income, and therefore deserving of lower pay.
2. Allocation of funds for creation of continuing professional development programs or short-term master classes on how to start, manage and grow a practice and build a brand.
3. Budgeting for creation and micromanagement of Skilling centers across all states for continual up skilling in technology, digital marketing, networking, and financial planning.
4. Provision of working women hostels with day-care facilities for children to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women architects in urban, semi urban, and rural areas. To instill women empowerment, these projects can be allotted to women architects.
5. Mandatory provision of crèches on construction sites and government offices.
6. Getting central and state governments on par on childcare leave (CCL) for two years and renaming it as family leave to enable women to work, if they choose to do so during the leave period.
7. Waiver of Earnest money for project bids for women owned architecture practices.
8. Tax reductions and GST benefits of 3% - 5% for women architects.
9. Tax benefits/holiday for women owned practices that employ greater percentage /all women employees.
10. Provision of women's re-entry internship / placement program by creating placement cells in states and Union territories.
11. Professional development program for site engineers and labor for gender equity and safety on building sites for women architects - Occupational safety on work sites for women is a major issue as the site is also a workplace for women architects beyond the realms of offices, and they need to feel safe there as well.
12. Flexible work policies and work from home options that are paid at par to facilitate work-home balance for men and women who want to start a family.
13. Tax holiday should be suggested for practices headed by women just as in IT and Start up sectors to help architecture practices sustain the initial setting-up years. This will be an incentive for women to continue working.
14. Means to provide legal/professional assistance to women owned practices to recover unpaid professional fees from clients.

Looking forward to your kind consideration and co-operation to the requests made above.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Warm Regards,

Sabeena Khanna
National President, Architecture Council,
Founder Principal Architect, Studio KIA