

**How significant a figure is the individual architect? How do you see architecture's impact on the individual evolving over your lifetime?**

“For a city, architecture is the clothes it wears to the job interview.” A city is therefore recognized mainly by its physical environment and our architects play an important role.

The last two decades have seen many architects balance popular architecture and their own design sensibilities. They chose to follow their heart and have created magnificent structures. The buildings they built have become iconic in their own right so much so that they have affected the financial demographics of an area by turning them into major tourist attractions. They are popular, unique and make financial sense.

The Guggenheim Museum at Bilbao with its titanium plating and unique shapes opened new doors for Spain's tourism industry. People wanted to go and see this building more than the art inside. It changed the obscure town of Bilbao into much visited town of this decade making it the travel destination of the 21st century. Now, this led to some kind of frenzy among real estate developers around the world who wanted to replicate this phenomenon called the 'Bilbao effect'. The Bilbao phenomena gave the world a new breed of architects called the 'starchitects.' Frank Gehry, though he himself hates to be called starchitect, made people believe in the star value of architects. Just by having a star architect on their panel increased the value of the project. Architects, willing to talk about their passion, design philosophies, willing to experiment with new materials and willing to push boundaries of technology. The Bilbao effect and 'starchitects' go hand-in-hand. For a building to have that impact on people, the design has to be unique and for that to happen you need an architect with a vision and conviction in his own work.

In India, the sacred Architectural study “the Vaastu Shastra” has lead to many influences leading to huge changes in structures. Incidences of great losses have influenced different businesses and companies to believe in the science of ‘Vaastu Shastra’ as a generously profitable way towards profits. ‘Vaastu’ is considered to bring peace and harmony for the workers of a company. It also is believed to bring positive energy through the working locations, thus improving the output. As a reason, the recent ever-growing trend in the construction of offices includes ‘Vaastu Shastra’. The increasing beliefs in traditional sciences have influenced the structures in the modern era, leading to confluence the

modern with traditional beliefs. Considering various factors include the location of the office, the shape, slope space available for the reception and the various departments of the building; the placement of the electronic gadgets are equally important as well as the shape of the office being square or rectangular is preferable. The building should be of equal height in all directions and should not have hospitals, temples or graveyards near the vicinity of the office location. Therefore, architects play a major role in designing the houses and offices in India. Interestingly enough, this belief in the 'Vaastu' is also prominent in Chinese art and architecture and is known as Feng Shui.

There have been tremendous changes in our lifestyle today. Advancements in technology have not only made life easier for the individual but also given rise to more sustainable architecture. Good sustainable architecture reduces waste of energy, water and materials. During the construction phase, an architect can specify methods that will reduce the amount of material going to landfills. Other examples of sustained architecture include solar panels, efficient windows and overhangs Well-designed buildings also help reduce the amount of waste generated by the occupants when the architect incorporates on-site solutions such as compost bins to reduce matter going to landfills.

Personally, we feel that architecture has a significant effect on the individual, in terms of the value of their property. In the earlier days, architecture was only looked at as something that protected one from the sun, wind and other natural forces and then, privacy had to be considered. The development of agriculture and industrialization added value to architecture. Architecture became more than just mud and a brick put together and was used to show power and social standing. Ever since then, people aspire to own a particular property not only for the utility factor but to 'be in the league'. Keeping up with the Joneses leads to competition and individuals want to own bigger, better, well-designed and more expensive houses than the other. In this sense, architecture does have a significant impact on people's lives.