arcasia
Architects Regional Council Asia

VICE-PRESIDENT
ZONE A

Ar. Devendra Nath Gongal
SONA

ZONE A VICE-PRESIDENT'S
Consolidated Summary of Zone A Reports on the topic:
"Is the architectural profession still a sought-after profession in your country?"
45th COUNCIL MEETING

Ar. Devendra Nath Gongal | Vice-President Zone A 2024-25

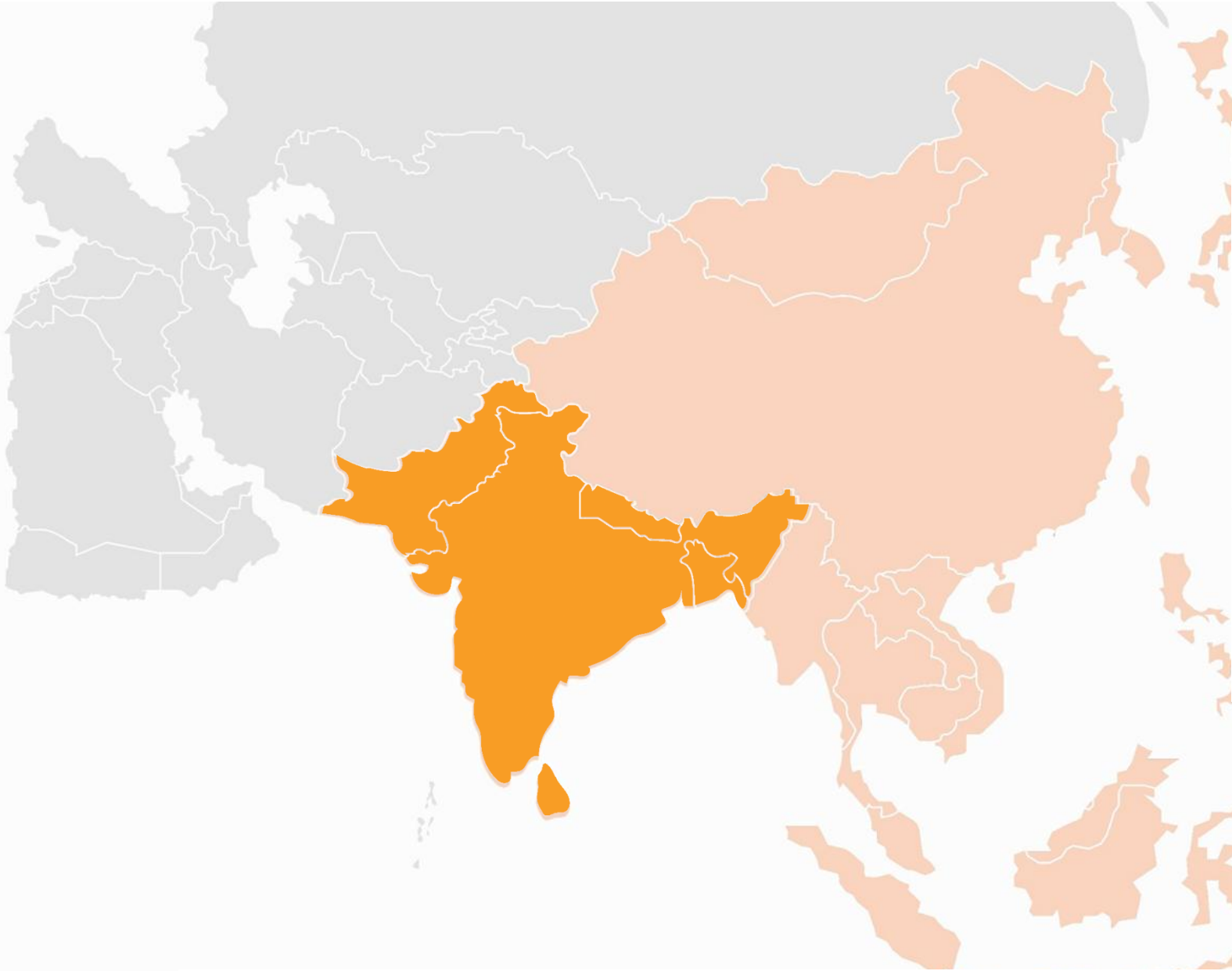
LEGACY

OVERALL / INCLUSIVITY

VISIBILITY

ENVIRONMENT

45th COUNCIL MEETING | 8 & 9 September 2025 , Incheon, Korea.



ZONE A

BIA
Bhutan Institute of Architects

IIA iai.or.id
The Indian Institute of Architects

IAB iab.com.bd
Institute of Architects Bangladesh

SLIA slia.lk
Sri Lanka Institute of Architects

IAP iap.com.pk
Institute of Architects Pakistan

SONA sona.org.np
Society of Nepalese Architects

AAM(mv) aamaldives.org
Architects Association of Maldives

Bangladesh

Growth Engine of South Asian Architecture.
Winning Aga Khan award is now a tradition.

Institute of Bangladesh Architects

IAB

Established in 1972

Total members of the Institute 4621

Has 4 Chapters in Bangladesh and one International Chapter in Canada

President – Ar. Dr. Abu Sayeed M Ahmed (2024-2025)

Bhutan

Aladdin's cave of sustainable Architectural heritage.

Land of Gross National Happiness and the only carbon negative country

Bhutan Institute of Architects

BIA

President- Yangki Dorji

Total number of members –around 300

Earth Trekkers

INDIA

Treasure trove of Architectural Legacy
Land of contributors to international architecture

Indian Institute of Architects
IIA

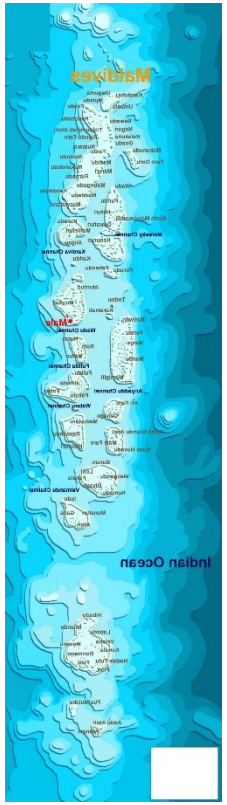
Architectural Student's Association established on 12th May 1917,
In 1922, the name was changed to **The Bombay Architectural Association**.
In 1929, officially registered as **The Indian Institute of Architects**

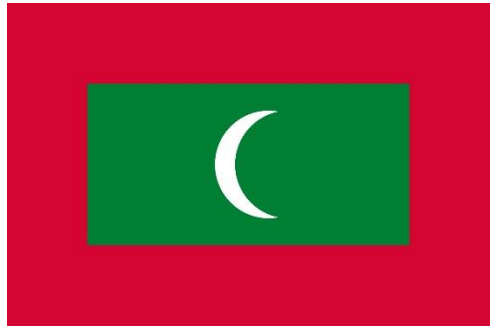
Total membership of the Institute as on date is 27713
24 chapters, 68 centers, 19 sub centers

President – Vilas Vasant Avachat (2023-2025)

Maldives

Rising center of resort architecture





Architects Association of Maldives

AAMmv

President – Ali Shareef

Total member numbers around 200

Nepal

Mesmerizing Valley of Himalayan Architecture

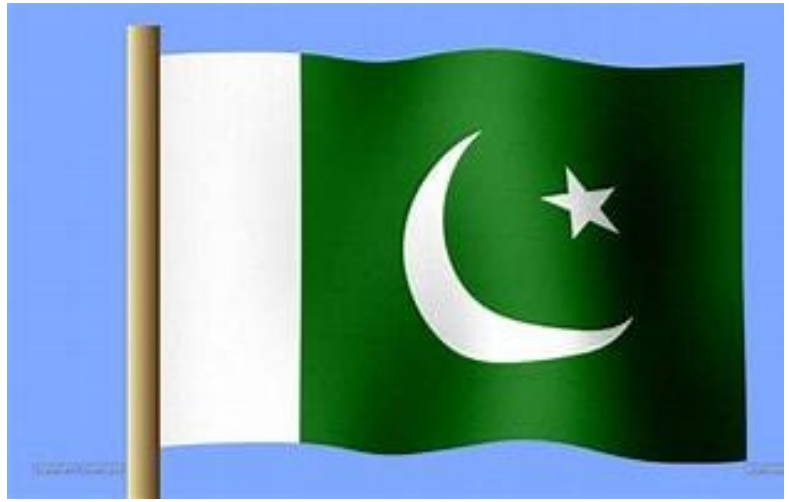
Society of Nepali Architects

SONA

Established in 1991
Total Membershio -1813
Has 2 chapters
President - Ar. Iswar Lal Joshi

Pakistan

Historical threshold of international architectural interaction



Institute of Architects Pakistan

IAP

Established in 1957 (registered in 1969, 1987 , 2021 under different Acts)
2782 Associate Members 106 Fellow Members 3,564 Affiliate / Student Member
Has 6 chapters
President - **Ar. Fawad Suhail Abbasi, FIAP** (2024-2025)

SRI LANKA

Pearl of the Indian Ocean and Island Architecture

Sri Lanka Institute of Architects

SLIA

The Ceylon Institute of Architects (CIA) was established in 1956

CIA obtain the status of an allied society of the RIBA in 1960

In 1976, CIA became the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (SLIA)

President – **Ar. Dilummini De Mel**

It is glorious to be an architect

The answers of “YES” or “NO” from the Zone A countries is heavily tilted towards “YES”.

This topic is the mother of the two other given topics. Discourse on this topic is not complete without a dialogue on :

- ‘What makes Architecture a sought-after profession?,
- ‘Why it is a sought-after profession?, and
- Is it going to be a sought after profession in future ?

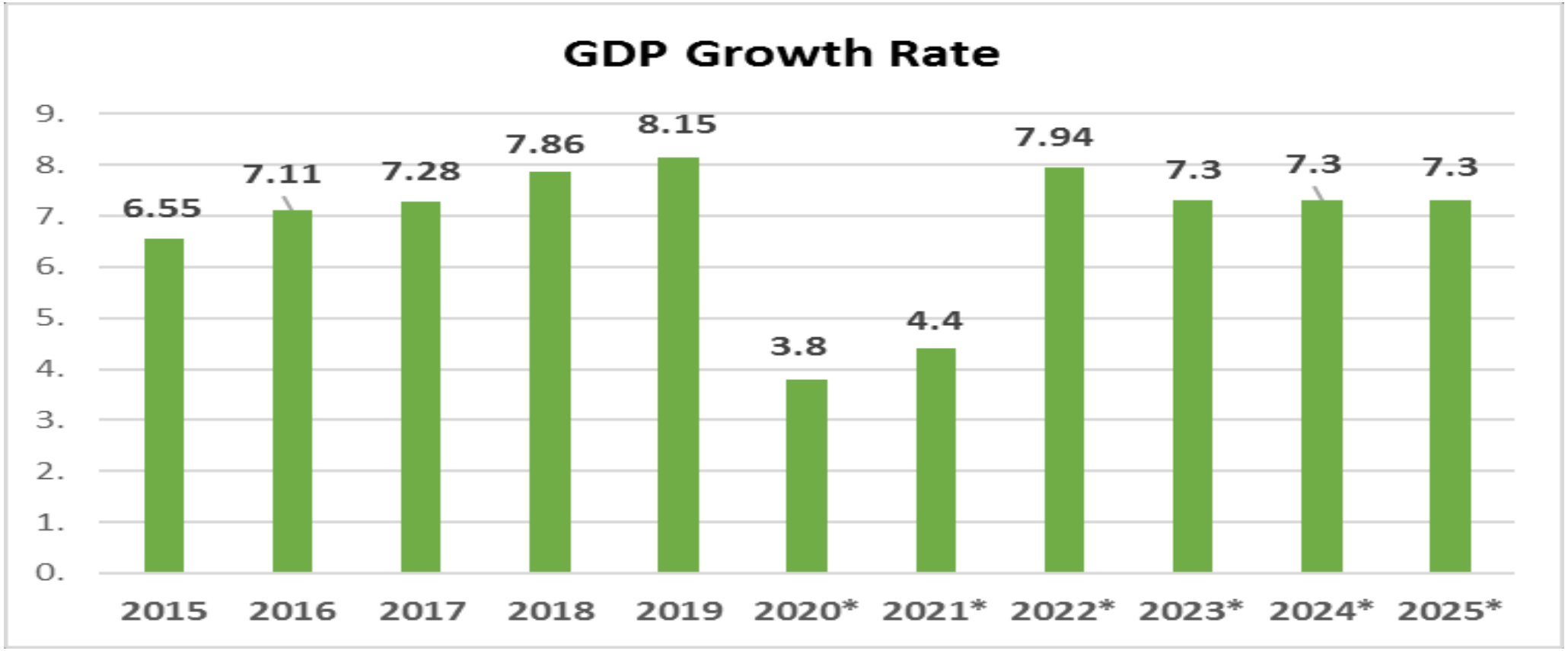
Although guarantee of getting job is the first obvious reason, nevertheless Architecture has always been regarded as a respected and sought-after profession in this part of the world.

<u>Reasons that makes it a sought-after profession.</u>

- Strong economy of a country.
- Vibrant construction and tourism industry,
- Socially respected profession,
- Dignified social norm towards national heritage culture,
- Personal passion,
- Availability of world market.

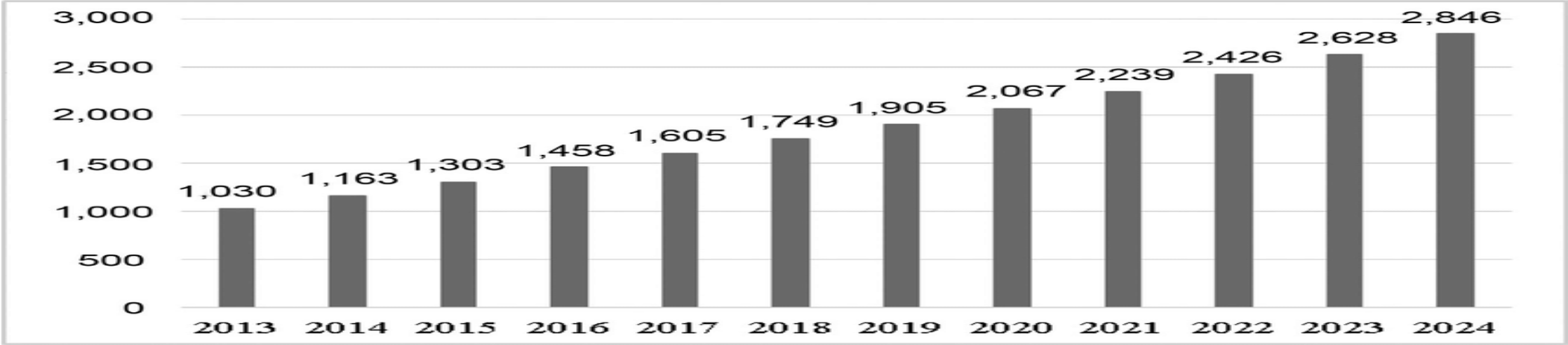
The state of economy can be considered as one of the primary drivers of the demand for architectural profession. Economy of South Asia since last few decades in general is getting vibrant and stronger year by year. This brought a direct positive effect in the job market for architects. India spends over $ 600 billion in various construction. Bangladesh architecture is increasingly becoming a sought-after profession supported by its good performance in GDP growth rate.

GDP growth in Bangladesh



This positive rise in GDP incited the increased activity in construction industry offering a good market for architects. Rising economic demand has thus sparked significant interest in architectural education, leading to a surge in architecture programs at different universities of Bangladesh.
This phenomenon is observed in almost all Zone A countries.

Construction industry growth in Bangladesh



It is not so easy to define quantitatively a sought after profession. The following indicators at some point can reflect it for any practical purposes.

- Number of enrollment in educational institutions for architects.
- Number of Architects pass out,
- Increase in number of architectural consultancies services,
- Increase in number of institutions for architectural education,
- Shortage in architects in the market reflected by unfilled vacancies in different institutions.

- Zone A countries have performing well in all the above indicators.

Architecture in India remains deeply respected. India has around 400 architecture colleges, and together, at a rough estimate they offer about 20,000 seats every year. On the other side, the population of India is around 140 crore or 1.4 billion souls. With an average of 4.5 persons in family size, there is likely to be 31 crore or 310 million households. As of 2025, consider about 125,000 registered architects in India. Now, with this statistic, the math reveals that for every 2,500 households there is "1" architect. This indicates that India has a short supply of "architects".

(one architect serves 1,12,500 person in India, and 12,245 in Sri Lanka)

Global scenario of number of architects/number of households

Estimated world population – 8.2 billions- *(copilot search)*

Estimated number of architects – 3 to 4 millions- *(Architezer)*

Estimated number of households – 2193 millions- *(Helgi Library)*

Average architect per household - 640

In Nepal architecture is steadily and convincingly becoming a respected profession; sometimes even referred as a profession for the elites; which otherwise was overridden by engineers. Just during two and half decade i.e. from 1999 to 2025 significant increase in number of architects and institutions was observed. Today there nearly 4000 architects and 17 architectural institutions with total of 550 architects passing out annually.

Bhutan and Maldives can boast of having one institution each for architecture education producing around 20 to 30 architects each year. If Bhutan is experiencing it architects opting to migrate, in Maldives architects are shifting to professions like management for better opportunities.

Bangladesh is increasingly seeing the preference among students to pursue architecture as a viable and rewarding career path. At present there is a shortfall of 700 more architects teachers, because of the increased number of architecture education and number of rising students. This is in average 5 times more teachers than is at present. The ratio of teacher to student is 1:10 instead of the desirable ratio of 1:5.

In Pakistan architecture education has expanded significantly and the consistently high and increasing enrollment figures each year reflect a sustained belief in the profession's viability and its potential to influence the built environment meaningfully. Over 30 institutions in numerous universities now offer architecture degrees, with. Interestingly IAP reports that "this signals sustained interest, though not matched by market absorption."

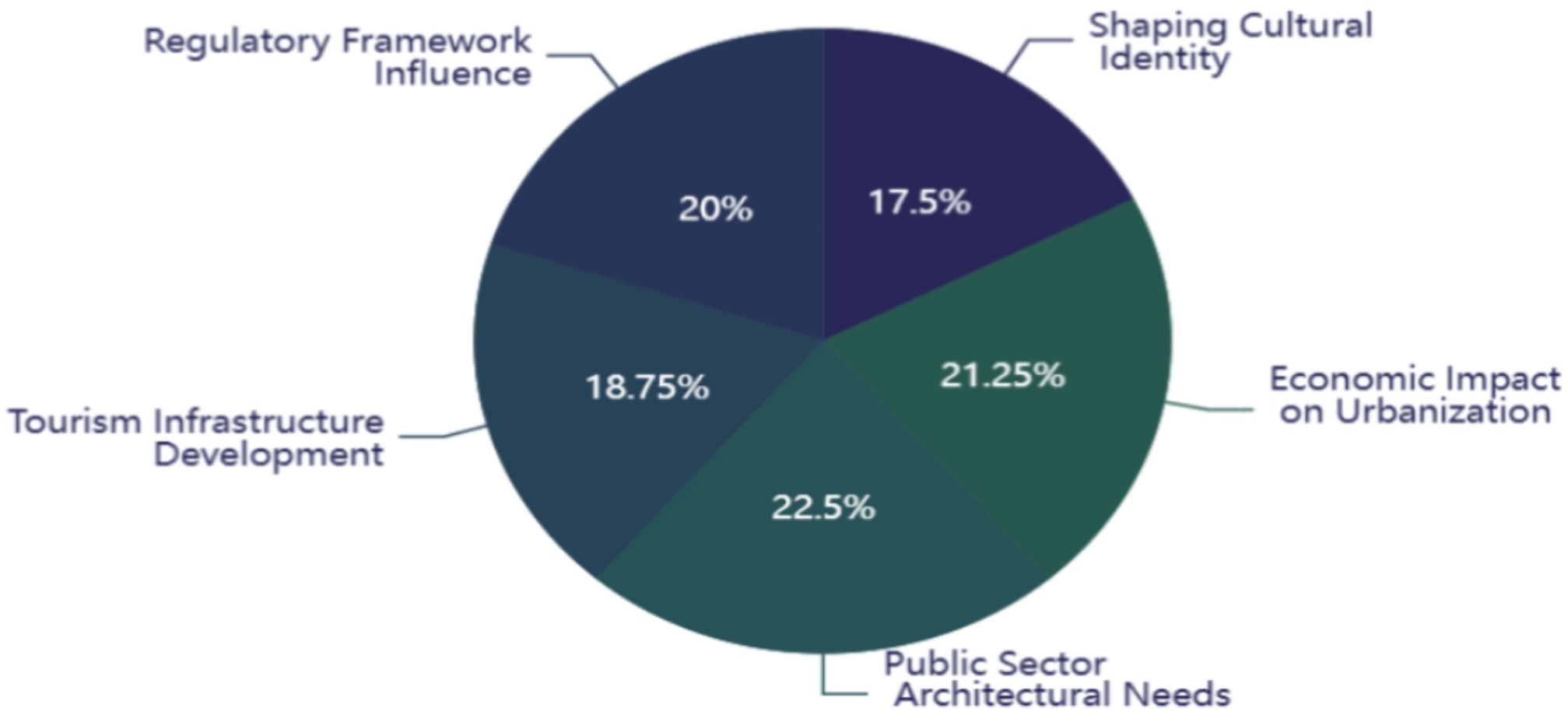
The geography and its anthropology makes Zone A practically a continent by itself although. In spite of a mind boggling mosaic of languages, religions, cultural traditions and rituals, music, art, social norms, nature and landscape, the bed rock of its uniqueness is its solid shared legacy of unity in diversity. This is very strongly reflected in its architecture cultural and historic wealth.

“Master builder” with different local names in the past is todays referred as architect. These master builders were respected by the kings, queens and general people. They created masterpieces, inimitable edifices. The urge to associate with these and the dignity attached to it inspires students to pursue architecture as their profession. Architecture in Zone A continues to attract a steady stream of students, drawn by its creative promise, cultural prestige, and potential for impact. Most of the time Architectural profession is chosen out of passion rather than other criteria.

- Except from the economy, other nonphysical aspects for students that allure them to this profession are its pomp, romanticized ideals, social aspirations, pleasant but sophisticated debonair, a medium of identity, vanity for their shared architectural heritage and personal passion. Zone A people inherently love to indulge in the metaphysical world. Architecture legacy of this reason is a confluence of art, mundane and metaphysical world. This profession is associated with fantasia that fascinates the students with a strong and captivating charm. Architecture continues to attract a steady stream of students, drawn by its creative promise, cultural prestige, and potential for impact

Context & Purpose of Architectural Profession

SLTDA (2025), UN-Habitat (2024), RIBA (2024), ICCROM (2023), and the Department of Cultural Affairs (2025)



Career Pathways: Navigating the Landscape

For aspiring architects, the profession offers diverse trajectories, each with its own rewards and risks:

Pathway	Description	Desirability Factors
Private Practice	Design firms, consultancies, freelance work	Creative freedom, but income instability
Public Sector	Government departments, planning authorities	Job security, limited design autonomy
Academia & Research	Teaching, publishing, heritage documentation	Intellectual fulfillment, modest pay
Allied Fields	Interior design, visualization, urban branding	Marketable skills, broader client base
International Opportunities	Remote work, global firms, postgraduate study	Exposure and growth, but competitive entry

The future of Architectural profession, challenges and way out

Will architectural profession will remain a sought after profession in Zone A? As we look at the future, it is not difficult to suggest with ample of evidences that this profession for all reasons is going to be vibrant and dynamic in future, will play an essential role in shaping the built environments and the quality of the urban life, supported by expanded scope in rapid urbanization.

The encouraging picture of the future of this profession is not without challenges. This profession is at the brink of significant transformation propelled by technological innovation, growing diversity, pressing environmental concerns, evolving societal needs and concern on sustainability efforts.

"The profession today sits at a crossroads—caught between romanticized ideals and pragmatic realities." *(IAP)*

Here are some challenges and development that could make substantial influence in zonal and global perspective facing this profession in the years ahead.

<u>Challenges</u>

- Professional saturation has become a defining challenge for the architectural field in Pakistan institutions that produce hundreds of graduates annually, yet the demand for skilled professionals still exceeds supply.
- Educational Disconnects: Theory-Practice Gap
- Economic Volatility
- Fee Structures & Professional Recognition
- Regulatory Complexity and Governance Gaps
- The surge in degrees hasn’t been matched by reforms in curriculum, industry collaboration, or economic planning

Development that demand competitiveness in the profession

Sustainability & Climate Resilience: Increasing emphasis on sustainable and green design reflects the profession's commitment to addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time, including climate change and environmental sustainability.

- Digitalization:
- Smart Buildings:
- Modular Construction
- Increased globalization
- Building Information Modelling (BIM)
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
- Machine Learning
- 3D printing
- Virtual Reality (VR)
- Augment Reality (AR)

Recommendations

- Education and Research Expansion
- Technology and Innovation
- Policy & Advocacy
- Collective reimagining to align education, policy, and public perception with the evolving demands of urban life, climate resilience, and cultural stewardship.
- Digital literacy, interdisciplinary integration, and practical exposure.
- Heritage-Led Development,
- Growth of global trade and travel demands to understand and design for a wider variety of cultures and environments.
- Collaboration between schools, professionals, and councils like the IIA and ARCASIA.

Gender in Architectural profession

- Architecture has become increasingly a sought after profession for women. UIA has estimated that 30 % of graduates from architectural school are women. Although no research has been conducted, it is observed that today the enrollment of women in Zone A countries is around 50% surpassing the global average. In some cases crossing over the 50% mark has also been noted down.
- Although participation of girls in this profession is steadily increasing it is also observed that while women consistently excel in academic environments—often leading design studios, winning awards, and producing innovative work—their transition into professional practice is marked by exclusion and constraint.

Increased Globalization vs Architectural Powerhouse

- Globalization of trade and travel has opened a vast market for Zone A architects. This has also affirmatively enticed students to embrace this as a lucrative profession.
- Global Architectural Service is predicted to reach approx. $ 549.6 billion by 2032. It represents Compound Annual Growth Rate of 4.3%.
- Some sources report that the employment market for Architects will grow 8% from 2018 to 2028, which is higher than the 5% average for all job types. (internate)
- A trend of architecture graduates from Zone A immigrating to foreign countries is increasing. This may explain in part the gap between the supply and demand of architects in some countries.
- Many architects from Bhutanese institution have also migrated outside the whereas in Maldives changing to management jobs is prevalent.
- Zone A is now markedly becoming the powerhouse of architectural man power. RIBA in its part has alerted its architects to compete against the cheaper workforces from the emerging markets.

Conclusions:

- Architectural profession in Zone A is a sought after profession marked by a complex situation of respect and recognition. The trend shifting towards women architecture is to be taken in consideration with social transformational changes.
- Many policy level changes in architectural education and regulatory aspect is called for. At the same time, architects are required to be abreast with the recent technological development and environmental issues as a path to the bright future.
- The situation in Zone A in short reflects that:

It is glorious to be an architect