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## STEEL STIPULATES AESTHETICAL FREEDOM

Steel possesses inherent qualities like reduced dead-load, speed of construction, design flexibility along with being a versatile material which offers flexibility to designers. It is a cost-effective solution and comes with advantages of increased speed of construction and larger spans, says **AR. V S VIGNESWAR**, Principal Architect, Architecture plus Value (A+V).

**Q** What are the major advantages of using steel vis-a-vis conventional materials?

**A** Steel is a versatile material which offers flexibility to the designer. It offers the major advantages of increased speed of construction and larger spans.

**Q** How structural steel can be innovatively used in construction to provide design aesthetics and at the same time offer economical solution?

**A** Structural steel can be used in an exposed manner to provide a great industrial aesthetic and at the same time a cost-effective solution.

In an IT Park designed by A+V (Architecture plus Value), we have used exposed steel skeleton with decking sheets painted in black which provides a great aesthetic to

the interiors of the building and provides significant cost reduction in terms of internal finishes.

**Q** What is your take on the variety of sections/grades provided by our steel producers for various demands of creativity?

**A** We feel that the variety provided by Manufacturers is adequate and if required larger sections can be custom made by the designer.

**Q** What trend are we going to witness in next 5-7 years, as far as designing structures with steel is concerned?

**A** There is going to be an exponential increase in the usage of steel as a main structural element. This is due to its inherent qualities like reduced dead-load, speed of

construction, design flexibility etc.

**Q** What should be the strategy of industry in promoting structural steel construction in India?

**A** A good strategy would be to create a Director-Designers interface with the industry via an online platform.

Often designers do not use steel as their knowledge on market availability and structural properties are limited as well. Such a platform would lead to better adoption of steel structures.

**Q** Which are the iconic steel-specific projects executed by you?

**A** Our firm is called Architecture plus Value (A+V). Some of the iconic projects executed by us are:





#### GKS Convention Centre:

GKS Convention Centre is a successful prototype to unlock the hidden commercial & community potential in the Indian Urban Context. The Centre was conceived as a premium Event-Venue which could host events of any format and size, ranging from Birthday Parties to Large Weddings and Conventions for business purposes. Additional Retail spaces were created at the street front to generate multiple revenue streams for the Developer. The two main highlights of the project designed with structural steel was the main hall of the Centre with a capacity of 1500 persons was designed with a Curved Steel Structure having an insulated sheet roofing. The Structure helped create a massive column-free space of 43m x 40m. The second highlight of the project is a Traditional Hindu Temple made with structural steel. Once completed this project will act as successful case-study for steel usage in event facilities. ■

#### REC Tech-Park:

REC Tech-Park is a Computer Science Training and Incubation Centre with built-up area of 40,000sq.ft.

The main aim of the design was to provide great spaces for the student community to train, socialize and start-up during their formative years. The spaces were designed in such a manner that the learning could continue out of the classrooms and extended into the non-program spaces.

In this project, we had the opportunity to explore steel as material for institution projects, which allows for speed and light-weight construction. This project was completed in a record time of 180 days for an AICTE inspection. The love affair with steel lead us to create long spans and a well-thought out functional grid. Entire structure was prefabricated and erected on site with steel deck slabs. This allowed for flexible usage in the teaching areas and could create an atrium with a light steel roof which allowed light and ventilation into the heart of the building. Overall, REC Tech-Park is a successful prototype for using steel as a construction material in Institution projects which has not been explored in India.

