

# ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

A N I N D I A N J O U R N A L O F A R C H I T E C T U R E

## SPECIAL FEATURE

## SHARMILA KUMBHAT: A CHANGEMAKER REDEFINING INDIA'S LIGHTING INDUSTRY AND EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS

Kumbhat's entrepreneurial spirit ignited early. At just sixteen, she began working at Metal Craft, a fabrication unit where she mastered technical and managerial skills. By nineteen, she was already a rising star, receiving the Best Female Entrepreneur Award from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Hungry for greater expertise, she moved to New York, where she spent a decade managing two thriving export companies, gaining invaluable experience in global business strategies.

However, her heart remained in India. Returning to Chennai, she joined her family business, K-Lite Industries—now synonymous with design-forward luminaires and architectural lighting. Her influence was immediate and transformative. She introduced modular systems, streamlined operations, and embraced sustainability, elevating K-Lite into a modern powerhouse. Under her stewardship, the company has supplied lighting to landmark projects such as the Indian Parliament, the Cairo Parliament complex, and sacred sites like the Golden Temple.

**Leading the Smart Lighting Revolution**  
With cities across the globe embracing smart infrastructure, Kumbhat recognised



Sharmila Kumbhat, Director, K-Lite Industries

the transformative role of lighting in shaping urban development. Spearheading K-Lite's entry into smart solutions, she launched K-Lite Europe in London to cater to international demand. This expansion cemented K-Lite's reputation as a leader in energy-efficient, urban lighting systems designed for modern cityscapes.

Collaborations with global designers and consultants have further propelled K-Lite's innovation pipeline. Yet Kumbhat remains grounded in her philosophy: "Take one step at a time and give your best." This pragmatic yet visionary approach has ensured that sustainability and design excellence stay at the core of the company's growth.

**Empowering Women in Industry**  
In an industry where women are often underrepresented, Kumbhat has

championed inclusivity and gender equity. Over half of K-Lite's workforce comprises women—a remarkable achievement in the traditionally male-dominated manufacturing sector. Her leadership style is collaborative, fostering an environment where creativity and empowerment thrive.

For Kumbhat, empowerment is not just a concept; it's a personal mission. She actively mentors young professionals, inspiring them to embrace bold aspirations



Reflecting on her journey, she recalls her time with Ratan Tata, whose leadership ethos continues to inspire her drive for innovation and integrity

in business and leadership. By breaking industry stereotypes, she has demonstrated that women can not only succeed but lead with distinction. "Everyone has unique potential," she says, a belief reflected in her company's ethos.

### A Beacon of Vision and Impact

As she looks to the future, Kumbhat's ambitions remain bold yet purposeful. Her focus on smart lighting, sustainable innovation, and global expansion aligns with the evolving needs of urban spaces. But perhaps her greatest legacy is the inspiration she offers others. By nurturing a culture of equality and innovation, she's lighting the path for future leaders to follow.

In an era where true leaders uplift others, Sharmila Kumbhat exemplifies what it means to lead with purpose. Through her work at K-Lite, she is not only redefining the lighting industry but also pushing the boundaries of what visionary leadership can achieve.

Parliament of India



Ayodhya Ram Path



Varanasi City



Chambal Riverfront, Kota, Rajasthan



The New Administrative Capital in Cairo - Egypt

