



Mamma's pride

A home and hearth special

A CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

How important is the mother when a family is looking out to buy a home?

Plenty, says **Shilpa Pandya**

MUMMY KNOWS BEST

Developer Vivek Abrol has a strict procedure laid down for his sales and marketing staff: when a family comes for a site visit and wants to look up the sample flat, special attention is to be given to the lady of the house - the mother. "It is a fact that most families go by what the mothers say," shares Abrol. "The bread-winner is always out, kids go to school and it is the mother who actually runs and manages the house. Even in case of a working mother, it is her decision on how the home has to be," he adds.

Indian mothers are expanding their circle of influence in most purchase decisions. The mother generally makes the final decision, keeping in mind the need of every member of the house, explains Ram Makhecha, director, Vakratunda Group. Builders have started paying much more attention to an inquiry where the woman sounds interested in the property, because they have realised that the mothers know what is best for the family and also influences the home buying process, he adds.

Smita Thorat, founder, Regenti Corp explains that "Today, not only the apartments but also the common amenities are planned keeping in mind the needs of both, working women and homemakers. Take the example of developers who offer high-end modular kitchens, designer bathrooms, piped gas, utility areas, dry area, servant's rooms, etc., within the apartments, while the townships and residential developments are provided with children play area, child day care centre, entertainment zones, schools, super markets, vegetable markets, etc.," she adds.

In Thane, Jitendra Mehta, director, Mehta Realtors, says that from a real estate perspective, it has been an acceptance of mothers being important not just as 'homemakers' but also as 'decision makers'. "It reflects the change and evolution in Indian society. Mumbai and the peripheral regions are 'ahead of the times' and the mother being important to the decision making process is an accepted part of real estate marketing," he adds.

Architect Reetu Bajaj puts it very simply: after years of male dominance when it came to all aspects related to the house, developers have realised

that the home interiors need to be planned so as to suit the mother's requirements. "Developers are designing homes with features that address what women in the family would be looking for in a home, which includes more security, less maintenance and is more organised in terms of amenities that include 'walk-in wardrobes' and 'dry yard areas'," she explains. Bajaj also acknowledges that builders are trying to catch the mother's attention by using aesthetically pleasing features that include small touches like brass cabinet knobs and well-designed modular kitchens.

"Since most of the young mothers are now working, women chip in their incomes and increase the loan eligibility to buy a house. This enables them to buy bigger and better homes. The couple together invests in the property. Where the mother is earning and contributing to the payment for the home, she definitely enjoys a greater authority and dominance than earlier in the home buying decision too," Makhecha explains. At his site offices, Makhecha's sales team ensures that mothers are involved in the conversations about the home. "They listen patiently to all the concerns of the mothers and emphasise on features that solve those concerns," he concludes.

First influencers, then catalysts and now storming into what can be conveniently called the last male bastion - real estate. Indian mothers have indeed come a long way to prove that the challenging job of realty business can be managed along with family responsibilities and bringing up the children. **Ravi Sinha** salutes the mother



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Indian mothers storming into the last male bastion - real estate

When the mother of a three-year-old baby, Ramya Agnihotri (name changed on request) joined a Mumbai-based real estate company, her neighbours had suspicion in their eyes and colleagues were visibly uncomfortable in the presence of a woman. It took around a decade for this marketing director to scale up the professional ladder but more than that,

the real challenge was to make sure she is treated on an equal footing as an employee and alongside, not neglecting the upbringing of her child.

Similar is the story of Anuradha Gandhi, director, Property Solutions (I) Pvt Ltd, a Kalpataru Group company, where she leads the project management, facility management and mall management services of the company. Gandhi is

well-qualified to face the multiple challenges of the real estate sector professionally but the larger challenge at hand is bringing up her two daughters while taking up the demanding job of real estate. "I come from a progressive family where I had supportive parents and an encouraging husband but looking back, I feel times have really changed.

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