

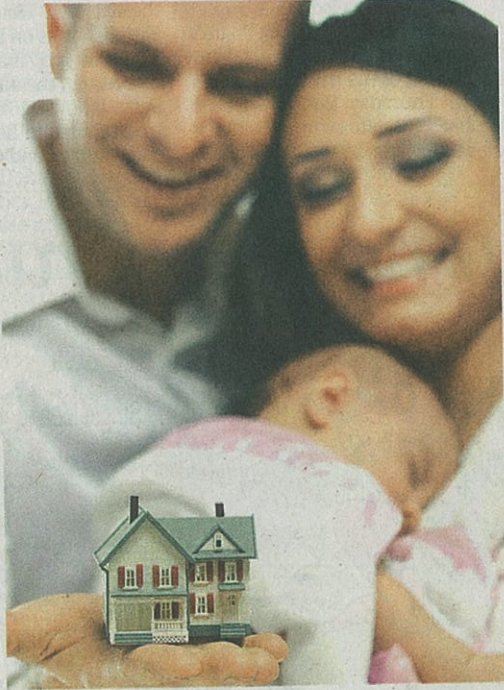
Mothers: Homemakers and house makers

Mothers are experts at multi-tasking. Is the aspect of earning vis-à-vis being just a 'homemaker' really important to a family looking out to buy a home? **Shilpa Pandya** takes a closer look

The paradigm of real estate marketing has changed, says Prakash Dhoka, director, Rishabh Group. "The focus on mothers, when it comes to making a sales pitch or to sell a home, has grown multi-fold. However, the importance given to the father hasn't diminished. It is a new marketing paradigm in the sense that now, the home is pitched as 'ideal for the family' and mothers are essentially 'homemakers'. Therefore, marketing options have to factor in on what the mothers would want in their homes," he explains. With home options that span the price spectrum, from a budget one-room-kitchen flat to a luxury apartment to a villa, Dhoka has worked in the 'mommy factor' in all the homes Rishabh Group offers. "Nowadays, it is not just about safety, security and privacy but also about the amenities and facilities a home offers. It is definitely about making the homes mother-centric, keeping in mind that she may be a working mother or a homemaker. The layout and architecture has to suit requirements of both and that's the real challenge," he shares.

Among the working mothers, there's the aspect of working mothers who have started earning money at a young age and their important role in buying a home. "Recent reports suggest that the income levels of the population in the age bracket of 25 to 35 has multiplied five times in the last 10 years and the relaxation of home loan lending norms by the private and state-owned financial institutions, have played a key role in the home buying decisions of young couples," states Smita Thorat, founder, Regenti Corp. "Young couples settle in a good job and then plan to invest in their own house as a second option, as in today's context, investing in real estate can offer higher returns vis-à-vis in any other option unlike fixed deposits or postal savings. The couples are not only keen on buying decent sized apartments for their stay but also look for a better lifestyle with basic amenities like a clubhouse and a garden to unwind themselves from their routine," she points out. It is no longer just the 'basic homemaker stuff' but also lifestyle enhancement that has to be factored in. Marketers have started

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targeting mothers when it comes to marketing and the layout of the house has also become more 'mother-friendly' than ever, adds Ram Makhecha, director, Vakratunda Group. "It is not necessary that a mother has to focus only on her children's needs, lifestyle issues are taking centre-stage as well. The layout and designing of homes are done, keeping mothers in mind, with features like more storage space, lesser maintenance and secure homes. The marketing and communication of the real estate projects also highlight amenities that a mother cares about, such as schools in the vicinity, a play area where the child learns while playing, entertainment options, basic necessities within reach - everything that a mother worries about for her children. Also the furniture, the paint,

the aesthetics are all made to appeal to the lady of the house. The design for the child's room is also done with the mother in focus. It has to be approved by her, given that the mothers generally look out for things that will bring a smile on the faces of their children," he shares.

Single mothers are a new sub-category of home buyers and this is being recognised as a growing sub-segment of women buyers, says architect Reetu Bajaj. "Indian society is evolving and we have seen mothers being important when it comes to marketing of residential real estate. Now, we are witnessing the second stage when the mothers are being slotted into working mothers, homemakers and single mothers. From the economic perspective, a family which clubs incomes of the father and mother, ends up with larger homes in projects that offer a better lifestyle. Mothers are definitely one aspect that cannot be ignored in real estate marketing," she adds.

Does the definition of a house maker necessarily mean someone who's a working mother? Ram Makhecha, director, Vakratunda Group says, a mother as a homemaker, is paramount but earning a salary is not a pre-requisite. "It is a fact that most mothers that come to our sites tend to be working mothers, especially those who have been married in the last decade or so. Yet, it does not imply that a mother who is not working or does not have a job, is in any way of lesser importance. Having a job is fine as it helps the family from a financial angle but being a homemaker is what makes the mother really important," he concludes.

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