

Mother's Day special: Understanding why working women and home makers prefer residences in the extended suburbs or exurbs of the MMR

Being a mother can be described as a complex juggling act with too many elements in the air at any given point in time

Dr. Malini Saba | Updated: Friday, May 12, 2023, 08:38 PM IST



Being a mother can be described as a complex juggling act with too many elements in the air at any given point in time. From working and single mothers to home makers, there are innumerable achievers whose success stories could provide countless case studies for management students as well as live examples of smart multi-tasking.

The ability to handle so many responsibilities simultaneously is indeed laudable. That's why mothers play a key role in terms of facilitating the process of identifying and finalising residences. After all, they know best what they and their family members require. Their intuition and strategic thinking not only help in striking out avoidable options but also zeroing in on ideal choices from the alternatives available.

For starters, they tend to focus on the peripheral and emerging areas of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) as they can buy a house at a younger age while also availing the benefits of getting more space or additional rooms with the same budget. Once they have verified the social and connectivity infrastructure that exists within a short radius, their quest for the stability that home ownership provides gets fulfilled.

The open plan concept seems tailor-made for working mothers and any project offering that automatically gains their interest. After all, having the kitchen and dining area seamlessly merged with the living room enables them to keep an eye on their children's homework or catch up on the day's events while finalising meals.

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The flip side is that any clutter gets highlighted, making it a double-edged sword. This is why residences with well-planned sections, discreetly positioned multi-level storage and extendable table units get a thumbs up. The absence of maids during the COVID-19 lockdowns also resulted in many mothers opting for dishwashers as they enable quicker clearance of utensils while keeping the kitchen area looking spic and span.

Getting a walk-in wardrobe designed and installed is again one of the key aspects with utility and aesthetic value. It is a simple, one-time investment that saves both, time and efforts while getting ready before leaving for office. Most importantly, it ensures privacy and keeps the dressing area chaos out of sight even in situations where several outfits have been tried on and discarded just before stepping out.

Since several decades, long before the pandemic made it part of everyone's vocabulary, 'work from home' has been a popular concept, the 'go to' solution for working mothers. Sometimes it is just a simple chair-desk setup in a corner, an informal zone, which is not earmarked for any other specific activity. Attached or integrated cup holders for a coffee mug or water bottle are an ideal accessory. The trend of having an additional 'half' room has also been appreciated by working mothers for the same reason.

Safety measures incorporated at the main gate, within the boundary walls or inside the premises by leveraging technology are also among the facets that make a project 'preferred' by working mothers who return home late. Enhanced security through controlled access to the elevators, video door phones, intercoms, etc. provides peace of mind when there are senior citizens and/ or children at home.

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In fact, with technology enabling virtual control from a distance, working mothers can get notifications on their smart phones and utilise home automation to easily give access to extended family members during their unexpected or surprise visits. They can put on the air-conditioner and lights in the living room area and turn on the television so that their guests can relax and keep themselves occupied watching their favourite serials.

While going to a different city for work, instead of leaving behind an empty home with the lights off, working mothers could switch the lights in each room on and off, open and close the window blinds, play songs on the music system, thereby creating a perception of the house being occupied even in their absence.

Adhering to home search parameters and investing a bit more towards home automation after buying the right residence can indeed facilitate mothers and their multi-tasking endeavours!

Leveraging technology

Integration matters

Individual home automation products are available separately or as an integrated system. It is advisable to opt for the latter as this helps avoid problems like incompatibility and lack of scalability when you decide to add more elements.

Interacting with different providers can result in their passing the buck whenever problems occur, leaving the issue unresolved. Ensure that whatever home automation package you buy can be upgraded or expanded in future with software updates and accessories.

(The writer is Founder & Former Chairman, Saba Group and Founder, Ananke Foundation)

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