

The Price of Smartness

A mid-segment smart home could cost anywhere between ₹6 lakh and ₹20 lakh more than a home of the same size that isn't smart, says **CN Raghavendran, Partner, CR Narayana Rao Architects**. "It means nothing when you compare it with what you pay and what you experience. And if you plan for smartness in advance, you save on the cost of implementation."

"At Puravankara, intelligent elements are perceived at the design and construction stage of the property, which helps minimise the cost of installation," agrees **Abhishek Kapoor, CEO, Puravankara**.

"Builders can also gain a cost advantage from implementing volumes," adds Raghavendran.

If you compare a home in a smart project with a similar sized one in an almost similar project in a micro-market with similar price-point trends, the difference works out to between 3 and 5 per cent, estimates **Dr Niranjan Hiranandani, Managing Director, Hiranandani Group**. "The actual difference

depends on the level of 'smart' features. The price-point of a smart home is worked out in the same manner as other homes; the calculation includes all the amenities and features, including those that make it 'smart'."

Home developers levy extra charges for automation technology depending on what's on the plate, the quality of automation, the features being offered, the size of the home, and other factors, according to **Alok Hada, Director, Anusha Technovision**.

Tech-based amenities come at a price, with the premium largely depending on the facilities being offered, and including both a higher upfront price as well as higher maintenance charges, observes **Santhosh Kumar, Vice Chairman, Anarock Property Consultants**.

As technology tends to get outdated quite soon making smart gadgets or appliances obsolete, Kumar proposes that real-estate developers ensure that these digital amenities come with an in-built capability to update their technology components.

sees awareness and demand growing for smartness extending beyond home lighting, air-conditioning, security and entertainment, to curtains, water supply and heating and even household gadgets. All these aspects can be programmed and integrated with a smart home controller.



"A lack of entertainment-based features can be a deal-breaker in a smart home."

- Harshavardhan Neotia, Chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group



"A smart home need not necessarily be technology driven and IT/AI integrated."

- Spoorthi S Narayan, Associate Architect, Morphogenesis

Pandemic impact

COVID-19 has created awareness of hygiene, cleanliness and the luxury of privacy and independence, observes **Spoorthi S Narayan, Associate Architect, Morphogenesis**. "People living in high-density apartments are rethinking building independent resilient 'pandemic-safe' homes. Touch-free, sensor-based appliances/fixtures, technologies enabling the automated sanitisation of frequently touched surfaces and common bathrooms and smart design are in demand. For example, a semi-outdoor foyer could integrate a disinfecting



Customers are looking for safety solutions, smart surveillance, smart entertainment (voice-driven TVs, speakers and consoles), and voice assistant technology for remote control.



- **Abhishek Kapoor**,
CEO, Puravankara

"In design, the component of technology is often veiled."

room/clean room containing a glass box for individuals to pass through."

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the advantages of living in a smart home. It is no longer seen only as a luxury add-on, even buyers of mid-range homes now are opting for smart homes for being safer, opines Dr Hiranandani.



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Anarock Property Consultants

Vernacular Smartness

"A smart home need not necessarily be technology-driven and IT/AI integrated," says **Spoorthi S Narayan**, Associate Architect, Morphogenesis. "It starts with the organisational principles of passive design and intelligent strategies that can be inspired from vernacular architecture. Old Indian homes have always been smart in responding to climate, context and culture. Whether it is the use of locally available materials or construction methodologies, there's a lot to learn from old Indian homes. We need to extend this ingenuity by integrating vernacular principles with technology. A secondary layer of home automation would further enhance the smartness of a home."

The biggest smart home market is in...

Smart homes are following conventional real-estate trends, which usually begin in metros, then move into Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities, and then to other segments of micro markets, observes **Dr Niranjan Hiranandani**, Managing Director, Hiranandani Group.

Pune, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Chennai have the largest concentrations of smart homes in India, according to **Abhishek Kapoor**, CEO, Puravankara. "Pune, with its IT hubs and tech-savvy, smart homebuyers and enhanced tech intensity and affordability, is the biggest market, accounting for close to 15 per cent of the space."

IT-driven cities such as Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad and even the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) are seeing the greatest development of smart homes, mainly because housing demand in those cities is largely driven by tech-savvy individuals, adds **Santhosh Kumar**, Vice Chairman, Anarock Property Consultants.

"Pune, Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Jaipur, Kolkata and Ludhiana are leading the home automation market because of the availability of budget-friendly home automation solutions at a low cost, and the rise in crime rates, which has propelled demand for video surveillance-based security solutions that are integrated with real-time analytics," explains **Alok Hada**, Director, Anusha Technovision.

In metro cities, millennials and working couples with dual incomes are driving demand for smart homes, shares **Harshavardhan Neotia**, Chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group. "Builders get better sales velocity in these segments if they offer smart homes."

In integrated townships, smart home features are "expected" and considered a desirable part of the overall product offering, he adds.

"The architect can help identify all the activities that a smart home user would want to control."

- **Rahul Kumar**, Principal Architect,
Rajinder Kumar & Associates

COVID-19 has pushed demand for contactless technology, which is easy to operate and is hygienic, adds Hada. As homes convert from just a comfort shell to entertainment areas, there is an inclination towards learning robots, smart HVAC systems, and lighting and climate control innovations.

The pandemic ushered in work from home, which, in turn, ushered in multitasking, and this desire to do more with your time could spur demand for automation, suggests Raghavendran.

Indeed, things are definitely looking up in the smart home space. On the back of improved lifestyles and a surge in touch-free automation awareness, Neotia believes smart homes will become the default choice of homebuyers in the near future.

"There is a growing awareness that smart homes make smart thinking," concludes Raghavendran. "The next generation will not accept a home that isn't smart!"

- **CHARU BAHRI**

To share your views on the market for Smart Homes in India, write in at Feedback@ConstructionWorld.in