

Connected growth

Affordable housing will usher in infrastructure development in the suburbs, says Shilpa Sachdev

Places like Navi Mumbai, Vasai-Virar and Thane have emerged as the hotspots for affordable housing projects. With most of these places located far off from the main city, it has become inevitable to get the supporting infrastructure in place. It could be safely said that infrastructure will see a major improvement as more affordable housing projects come into the picture.

According to Pawan Swamy, Managing Director - North India, Jones Lang LaSalle Meghraj: "Affordable housing is a mandatory component of certified township projects developed through the Township Policy, and such townships will certainly add to the entire location in a positive way. The arrival of any kind of housing in a remote location will boost demand, catalysing interest by other players and enhancing the chances of such a location from developing rationally. The Government will assist in making certain projects approachable, but the developer will have to do his bit as well."

With affordable housing being given so much importance and attention, infrastructure will have to be catered to, says Anil Mittal, MD, Mittal Group. "Take the case of 'Evershine Nagar' or 'Hiranandani'. These complexes came in first and slowly changed the whole landscape of the locality," he adds.

To give another example, the Lodha Group in its Casa Univis project at Ghodbunder Road, Thane, is providing the best infrastructure, which includes a club house, convenience retail, school, medical facilities, temple and so on. The township also has transportation facilities for the residents to ensure connectivity to prime hubs. Moreover eco-friendly electric buses transport residents within the township. Such an endeavour also creates a business opportunity for other sectors like entertainment, retail, transport etc in the micro-market. In a nutshell, the way development shapes up is based on the vision of the developer and its ability to deliver in every micro-market.

Suresh Haware, MD, Haware Builders shares, "Since most affordable housing projects are located far-off, providing proper infrastructure has become the need of the hour. The government is developing these areas but if not, then the developer himself has to provide all infrastructure facilities including roads, sewage, drainage, water supply, electricity to make the area self sufficient. Development of good social infrastructure with facilities like school, hospitals, markets, local transport and sound communication services is equally required. We are providing various amenities to help easy commuting at our Ghodbunder project in Thane. Also as the area comes under Thane Municipal Corporation, even the local body is developing infrastructure."

The Government will be equally responsible in sprucing up infrastructure in pockets where affordable housing is making a noise. Hari Nair, CEO, RNA Builders (NG) says, "The Metro link connectivity which so far is up to Oshiwara should be extended to Vasai-Virar as this region is witnessing tremendous inflow of affordable housing projects. Certain signal points are heavily jammed during peak hours and act as bottlenecks in smooth commutation. We need to bring in more flyovers to deal with this situation. The Monorail system could also be planned ensuring that it takes into account the areas that are witnessing increased buyer attention. We as developers can provide for internal infrastructure and service up to 500 metres within the project radius but beyond that it is the Government's onus to ensure that the proper infrastructure is brought into place." **Milan Kothary**, MD, GVA Intercapitalis says, "In January government came out with Rs. 10000 crore bond for infrastructure. Such measures have to be taken at short intervals. The other issue is to see that these are implemented in time. It is the need of the hour, we can't afford to slack."

