

Standalone Status or Community Comfort

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The decision to buy a house for yourself and your family—a place you can call home for years to come—is a crucial one. The factors that go into the decision-making process are too many to list down here, but one particular ‘tough decision’ everyone has to face is to whether to buy an apartment in a township or in a standalone building. There are no clear winners there as a lot depends on what you feel you need and what your requirements are.

Townships are typically located on the outskirts of a major city, as the land required for such a development is unlikely to be available within the city, and if available is too expensive to be commercially viable. In the outlying areas, the land is not only adequately available, it is also relatively inexpensive. Townships however need substantial investments on part of the builder as part of the basic infrastructure, including schools, medical institutions and shopping centers. Owing to the distance from the amenities that the city provides, having these facilities within the township is necessary, and often an important selling point.

An idyllic, expansive township, built to be self-sufficient in terms of most day-to-day needs, out in the countryside with a good deal of greenery around may appeal to many people who wish to bring up a family away from the polluted, crowded environs of a major urban centre. However, priorities vary and some people may prefer a home within the city for various reasons: better shopping amenities, closer to work, well-established schools, better choice of medical etc.

If your priorities make it imperative for you to stay within the city limits, your most likely buying option is an apartment within a standalone building. Spaces within the city are limited and land prices often exorbitantly high. However, a standalone building designed and developed by a reputed developer in a good location may very well act as a status symbol for you, owing to the exclusivity, proximity and quality of neighbourhood. These homes would typically be designed from a ‘luxury’ point-of-view, as opposed to homes in a township which are typically utilitarian. If you are buying a home with the idea of cashing in on the rising real estate prices, then inner-city homes are likely to give you better Return-on-Investment.

The flip-side of course, is that one should be very careful in checking out the location: the property shouldn’t be in a relatively isolated tract of the city with no proximity to schools, hospitals etc. If so, you lose most of the advantages of an inner city location, and moreover you may face problems as the property is unlikely to be self-sufficient the way large well-developed townships are. You should also be prepared to shell out the big bucks for maintenance, and for domestic staff who’re likely to demand higher wages than those on the outskirts of the city.

From the standpoint of community living, stand-alone buildings give you a better off as these are tightly-knit communities that often take important decisions together. This is often not the case in mass developments and townships.

Townships on the other hand have their own sets of advantages. They offer high quality living standards within a budget. Developers often make a virtue out of necessity by publicising necessary facilities within the township such as schools, nursing centers and shopping centers, but some reputed developers are not incentivizing their townships by also introducing premium sports facilities such as cricket/ football fields, tennis courts and even golf-courses! Moreover, the large size of the developments introduces an 'economy of scale' aspect for various mass-usage facilities such as cable TV, broadband, piped gas etc. as well as the opportunity for subsidized transportation by pooling in. Ample parking space is usually available, yet another big plus especially for families that own multiple 4-wheelers and/or 2-wheelers.

One must be careful when deciding, however, to ensure that road connectivity is not a problem and also, if possible, to ensure proximity to rail and air terminals. Good connectivity to central or nodal transport stations is essential, even if likely to be operational in the near future, for the future of the residential project.

From the point of view of family safety, townships may be a better bet. Owing to the self-contained nature of the projects, children need not venture out of bounds to go to school or to play in the playgrounds. A well-organized township built by a reliable builder will have ample security manpower working in a highly coordinated manner to ensure that the perimeters and the area within are free from encroachment and not compromised by unsavoury elements. Standalone apartments, on the other hand, while easier to secure, are likely to have a less competent security force as the administration is usually not run by a professional outfit. The open areas in townships make for a great quality of life, while the lower pollutions levels are good for health.

In a nutshell, there are various pros and cons for standalone buildings and large townships. At the end of the day, you as a buyer must make an informed buying decision taking your own needs into account, along with the vital features of the project in question. Carefully weighing form, functionality and affordability is the way to go when making such decisions.