

AREA WATCH

- Goregaon, located about 30 km north of central Mumbai, is well connected to the rest of the city
- Over the last three or four years, it has become an upbeat location

(fast FACT)

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Goregaon goes upmarket

Goregaon has been seeing tremendous development in recent times, says Gayatri T Rao

Among the Western suburbs is Goregaon, located about 30 km north of central Mumbai. It is well connected by all modes of transportation like buses, taxis, autorickshaws and trains. Compared to places beyond Borivli, like Vasai and Virar, there is more accessibility to Churchgate.

Over the years, Goregaon has evolved tremendously. The main feature of this suburb is that commercial activity in terms of IT-based offices has increased. The very profile of the place has changed to an upbeat kind of location. Goregaon has developed into a desirable suburb.

Basically, four to five years back most of the development happened in the regions of Andheri and Kandivli, to some extent in Malad (places like Mindspace). Goregaon was entirely skipped from this scheme of things. Here four to five major projects were taken up - the first was Royal Palms, the second was Oberoi and the third was the Hub," says Dilwar Nensey, of Royal Palms.

"Two things make living in Goregaon desirable," he adds. "The first is that people are shifting northwards from South Mumbai,

at with the offices in places like Bandra-Kurla Complex. A person wants facilities, recreation and entertainment on his doorstep." Nensey also points out that Goregaon has low pollution levels.

Juhi Rastogi, a resident, says: "When we shifted into this area, there were hardly any shops. There were no mega malls. Neither Infinity (Andheri west) nor Inorbit (Malad west) existed."

According to estate agent NPG Nair, a lot of redevelopment has happened in this area. All the land being occupied by MHADA, hardly any of it is available for the initial construction. The old three to four storey MHADA buildings have been demolished and have been reconstructed into seven-floored towers. Industrial complexes and industrial colonies have given way to 17-22 storey residential complexes with ultra-modern amenities. "Mahindra Lifespaces has

developed company premises near Patkar College parallel to the railway tracks. This is again a multi-storey building with a swimming pool," says Nair.

This activity has been in full swing creating a good ambience. There used to be a lot of slums in Goregaon (west), like in Teen Dongri area, and Sanjay Aggarwal, a retailer of pooja articles, observes that there is a great deal of redevelopment in that area.

Due to proximity to the sea, construction companies have to adhere to central government norms.

under construction is subject to litigation like the land between Bangur Nagar and Andheri."

Bangur Nagar is also seriously looking for cluster development for which Nair expects the government to put aside some FSI incentive. Eastern Ceramics near Bangur Nagar was converted into a residential complex called Vasant Galaxy by Seth Developers. Farida Kinkhabwala, another resident, says that Motilal Nagar, a large stretch of row houses, is also developing into high-rises.

"Goregaon is undergoing a

multi-storey building. Construction by Oberoi Sherwood with all the modern facilities has hiked the prices above Rs. 12,000 per sq feet. There is also the Lakkshachandi Heights," he avers.

D.B. Realty is the developer of Gokuldham and Yashodham, a large township development located at Goregaon (E), introduced by them in the late seventies. Within the layout they are now constructing the tallest building in the suburbs, viz. Orchid Woods, a 47-storey high-rise. Apart from this and the Lakkshachandi Heights, they have other projects like Prakriti, Swapnalok, etc. The rates here are above Rs. 7,000 per sq ft to more than Rs. 9,000 per sq ft.

Asked why this location was taken for their projects, Jessie Kuruvilla, Vice-President of D.B. Realty avers, "This location was selected by us because we make townships for which large chunks of land are needed. Today Gokuldham is a very famous township in the suburbs."

In the late seventies and early eighties, Gokuldham was a township made for the lower middle class and middle class.

Now with new developments coming up and with schools, malls, temples, restaurants, medical centres, IT Parks etc, the gentry is of upper middle class.

"Gokuldham at Goregaon (E) is an ideal location to live in because of proximity to the station, easy accessibility to the domestic and international airport. It is close to Bandra-Kurla Complex and Sahar, which is the commercial hub of Mumbai. There is a mix of residential, and commercial complexes within the layout," according to Jessie.

When accommodation is available, will the crowd be far behind? Congestion has increased in this area in the last few years. Juhi says that population has increased manifold.

Nair, being an elderly person himself, observes that Mahatma Gandhi Road has become so congested that senior citizens cannot go for a morning walk. "They have to keep to the interior roads."



Accordingly, there should be no construction for 150 kms from the sea and from 150 to 500 kms from the sea only 1 to 1 FSI (Floor Space Index) is available, i.e. the height of the building has to be equal to the breadth of the building. Beyond that no TDR (Transferable Development Right) is available.

The increase in construction activity has attracted more people. Increased demand has seen increase in prices. "Where in 2005, the average price of a flat with 500 carpet area was Rs 15 lakh, now it is not even available for Rs 55 lakh, that too in a building without a lift," avers Nair. "Much of the land

dramatic change from a green area to a commercial mall area," she adds.

Goregaon (east) was some years ago famous for industrial estates, says estate agent Raghunath Patil. "Now a lot of development is happening here. People prefer to live near their workplace, today and so a lot of residential areas are coming up here like the Nagri Nivara, which is partly located in Malad. Now people have started living in places they would never have gone to before," he adds.

Nair insists that Goregaon (east) also is a frenzy of activity "Ciba Geigy has also been converted into