IPv6

Add an individual note to every living environment

Comfort, convenience, energy savings and aspirational living are some of the benefits of home automation

How has the demand for 'smart' homes evolved and grown in India? What are the factors driving this trend?

The demand for smart homes market in India is fast evolving. A new age smart home is an integration of automation services with digital and electrical infrastructure of the building. Initially smart homes were marketed as homes with advanced safety and security features. The market is now evolving into newer areas like smarter lighting control systems, entertainment systems, energy efficiency systems and most importantly a fully connected, centrally controlled system.

The definition of a smart home is now a house, which understands and interacts with its inhabitant, adapts itself to the living style of the resident. It is now a combination of enhanced security, entertainment, convenience and comfort com-

bined with significant energy savings.

Convenience, comfort, safety and security are the four biggest benefits to a home automation system. Demand for enhanced security (prompted by the rapid urbanisation and life-style), need for energy management/conservation and aspirational lifestyle are some of the factors that have contributed to the increase in demands for home automation solutions in India.

Smart living and energy efficiency have evolved as major aspirations with end users over the past few years. Quite a few builders have started showing interest in designing green buildings/ energy efficient buildings/smart buildings and are also offering basic home automation as a standard specification in their projects. Now even the government has also accepted the idea of including home automation in the concept of 'Smart Cities' in the country.

Is it just the gadget-conscious IT pros or the new IT savvy younger generation buyers as well that prefer automated homes?

With the rapidly increasing purchasing power clubbed with the exposures to technology and enriched lifestyle experience, Indians (HNI, rich upper middle class) are increasingly experimenting with various available forms of home automation-standalone/completely integrated/mixed. Additionally, the demand is also from both gadget conscious IT pros and the new IT savvy younger generation.
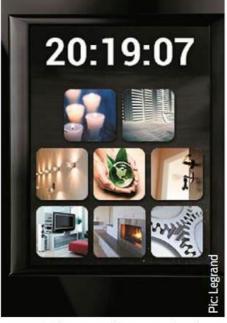
Home automation devices and products are increasingly being installed in the luxury villas, flats, bungalows and residences with huge space. This is to keep a tab on all the happenings around in the house.

Sameer Saxena, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Legrand India

Customers usually are people from affluent section of the society in tier I, II, III cities in India. Tier II and Tier III cities in India like Surat, Vadodara, Jaipur, Surat, Kochi, Coimbatore and Indore which have a high percolation of HNIs are also popular belts in India with request for automation.

The solution has gained popularity also among luxury developers so much so that basic automation like automated gates, surveillance systems, automated switches are being provided by the developers as a value added proposition. The users also have an option of scaling it based on his further requirement and desire.

Currently, the industry in India is evolving towards a converged offering with integration between lighting controls, security and entertainment. Ad-

vances in the areas of apps are also charging the user interfaces to a simpler and friendlier offering, even on their handheld devices.

Trends like fine lighting, standalone dimming, collective dimming, and scenario control are also being explored by patrons in the automation segment.

What are the key benefits that home automation provides the occupants or residents?

Comfort, convenience, energy savings and aspirational living are some of the benefits of home automation. Today's lifestyle is increasingly changing, from house it's changed to homes, and now it's from homes to 'my space'.

This 'my space' with intelligence, hi-tech with modern aesthetics is personalised and adds an individual note to every living environment. Such complex requirement of the living space is brought true through home automation. It redefines numerous little routine activities in our life to make it simpler, faster and automated thus providing convenience and customization.

Convenience and comfort: Home automation brings with it heightened convenience and comfort by making the tedious task of doing every day chores a cakewalk for residents. Things like switching off the lights, closing the door, turning off the dishwasher etc. are just a few clicks away due to the home automation technology.

Wireless connectivity and security: Home automation systems allow the owner to control his home even from a remote location. This unique technology makes one feel unperturbed and relaxed while they are away. Home automation provides advanced surveillance system so you can keep an eye on your toddler or an elderly parent even while you are away. In case you have guests coming over and you are not at home, you can remotely unlock your house.

Customized cameras, door phones allow you to check who is at the main gate from the comfort of your room, office or elsewhere.

Energy efficiency: The home automation products are also energy efficient. Since almost 30% of energy consumption in a building is due to lighting, usage of dimmers, sensors and controllers regulate lighting as per the requirement.

Many a time people forget to turn off the lights or switch off the appliances while leaving the house. Automation allows automatic switching off and switching off as per pre-set data.

To what extent were the higher costs involved, initially proving to be a deterrent? How has this been overcome?

Home automation does involve significant investments. However, exposures to aspirational life-styles, well-travelled patrons coupled with improved awareness is helping spread the concept.

Is it advisable to install 'smart' features or home automation in stages or plan and implement the entire thing at one go? Why?

It is always advisable to plan well in advance and have the basic infrastructure laid inside the building. The installation can always be done in stages. However, the fun is in the complete integration and management.

Why is it important to have a single provider for home automation? What are the problems that can arise with multiple providers for different aspects?

It is not a necessity to have a single provider for the automation products but it is advisable. The challenge with home automation sometimes comes in aggregating i.e. when consumers start buying different components from different brands. Then it becomes difficult to synchronize and connect all the products and bring them together under one interface. Add to that, the service aspect which becomes very complicated if we need to bring in all service providers together.

What advice would you give to someone who plans to go in for home automation?

Home automation systems are meant to simplify things in your home and in your daily life. Sometimes, users try to bundle up different products from various brands which make integration and interface complicated. While integration is possible; for a seamless user experience, home owners/ builders should stick to products from one brand.

- Opt for products that have an easier user interface so that everybody starting from a child to an elderly person can use and benefit from the application and devices installed.
- Please plan well ahead and finalise the requirements before civil structures are completed. (Before conduits and cabling are done)