

Judging realty for its worth

Timely delivery of projects and provision of quality services are crucial for developers who seek ideal brand positioning.

By **M.A. SIRAJ**

Development and construction are thankless jobs, for no amount of precision, excellence and finesse in execution can spare the builders of grievances from consumers. Building a brand for developers is, therefore, an arduous climb on any index. With the regulatory law RERA having registered its presence in the real estate sector a year ago, buyers are increasingly looking up to brand indexes to make a judgment on performances of developers.

The BrandXReport 2017-18 by Track2Media Research Venture, into its sixth annual version, has several vignettes to offer to players in the arena. The report makes it

clear that responsibility and accountability were the only criteria used by consumers to judge the developers. Hence it has become *sine qua non* for the developers to focus more upon quality of product and the services rather than market size or any other factor.

The report says, "A delivery track record of say around five to ten million square feet with timelines met and consumers satisfied is adding more credibility to the developer than unrealistic delivery volumes where projects are inordinately delayed and satisfaction to the buyers is constantly denied".

Given the demand-driven na-

ture of the market, the report says, it is hard to believe that there are no buyers and attributes the slackness and stagnation to sceptical buyers who think they are not getting what they are looking for. Having tracked the performance of 500 developers, across 10 parameters, the report says the current situation stems from negative reputation of the builders owing to default on delivery schedules and compromises on quality. Brand management therefore emerges as the most critical aspect of the business which is less understood and even less attempted.

The performance has been audited across financial perfor-

mance, investor's confidence, execution capability, public perception, users' experience, consumer connect, aspiration value, recall value, media perception and employment worthiness of the companies. Sobha Limited emerged on top of the chart of Brand Leadership at the national level. It is for the 4th year that the company has maintained its position at the top. Five of the top 10 brand leaders – Sobha, Prestige Group, Puravankara, Embassy Group and Brigade – come from the southern zone. Prestige Group takes the second slot among the top 10 while Puravankara and Embassy occupy 4th and 5th position and Brigade, the 9th.

Purvanakara Limited, which taken a giant leap from 9th to 4th position as a national brand last fiscal, has surprised many with its dominance at the same level with improved score. Tata Housing that had a few management issues to sort out during the year does not

figure among the top 10 any more. Raheja Corp has bounced back into the reckoning taking 8th position after two years of absence from the elite group. Embassy Group improved its tally to leap from 7th to 5th position.

RERA compliance

Real estate in South India has continued to outperform other peer markets for the fourth consecutive year. Compliance with RERA norms provides an edge to South Indian developers. Within the region, Sobha and Prestige Group take the first and second ranking while Embassy Group has strengthened its brand leadership with improved performance at 3rd spot as against 4th last year. The only developer to exit the elite list is Mantri Developers owing to mounting consumer grievances. Mahindra Lifespaces has made a comeback into the brand leadership index after a gap of three years and occupies the 9th slot.

Non-native developers Godrej Properties and Mahindra Lifespaces too are among the top 10 brands in the region.

Downswing in west

In Western India, Godrej Properties, Oberoi Realty and Raheja Corp take the first, second and third positions respectively. The report notes a downswing in brand competitiveness in the Western zone with brand consciousness increasingly losing its sheen to the South. Kalpataru and Indiabulls Real Estate have regained a slot among the top 10 whereas Rustomjee and Kanakia Spaces have slipped out of the elite list. Tata Housing has a drastic decline from the 3rd spot during the last fiscal to 9th this year. No Ahmedabad-based developer could find a place in the elite list.

DLF Building India has continued to reign supreme in the Northern zone although the year was strewn with challenges for the

group. The report describes Eastern India as the least brand conscious and least brand competitive among all regions. None of the brands from the region are contenders for a slot among the national top 10. Ambuja Neotia takes the topmost slot while South City and Srijan make it to the second and third positions respectively.

Significantly, Godrej Properties is seen to be improving its ratings across the board in all regions and besides its slot among the top 10 of the national list, it has carved out a place among the elite in all the four regions.

The report running into 306 pages is a virtual compendium of realty across the nation, taking stock of a wide variety of asset class, and scrutinises the brand trust from a host of angles. It could prove to be a handy guide to judge realty for its worth and provides metrics to measure the quality of goods and services in a sector where none existed before.