REAL ESTATE

Beyond Bricks and Mortar: A Consumer-Centric Approach to Real Estate Marketing in India

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Abstract

The Indian real estate sector has undergone significant transformation due to technological advancements, increasing market competition and changing consumer expectations. These developments have influenced the ways in which consumers search for, evaluate and purchase properties, making consumer-oriented marketing practices increasingly important. The present study examines the significance of a consumer-centric approach to real estate marketing in India, with particular emphasis on consumer behaviour, trust, transparency, digital marketing and customer experience. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based entirely on secondary data obtained from academic journals, industry reports, published surveys and other relevant sources. It analyses changing consumer preferences and the role of customer-oriented marketing strategies in influencing property purchase decisions. The study aims to identify marketing practices that can strengthen consumer confidence, enhance customer engagement and support long-term relationships between real estate developers and prospective buyers.

Keywords: real estate marketing; consumer behaviour; consumer-centric marketing; digital marketing; consumer trust; customer experience

1 Introduction

The Indian real estate sector plays a significant role in the country's economic development through employment generation, infrastructure expansion and urbanisation. Over the years, the industry has undergone considerable changes due to population growth, technological advancements, evolving lifestyles and changing consumer preferences. These developments have influenced both property demand and the marketing approaches adopted by real estate developers.

Traditionally, real estate marketing relied on newspaper advertisements, brochures, hoardings, property exhibitions and direct interactions with prospective buyers. However, the growing adoption of digital technology has transformed the property-buying process. Online property portals, developer websites, social media platforms and virtual property tours allow consumers to access property information, compare projects and evaluate alternatives before making purchase decisions. As a result, real estate marketing has evolved beyond conventional promotion to include digital engagement, information sharing and customer relationship development.

Property purchases involve substantial financial investment and long-term commitments. Consequently, consumers evaluate several factors, including location, affordability, construction quality, available amenities, developer reputation and transparency of information. Greater access to digital platforms has also made consumers more informed and selective, resulting in higher expectations regarding information accuracy, timely communication and service reliability.

In this evolving business environment, a consumer-centric marketing approach has become increasingly relevant. It emphasises understanding consumer needs and aligning marketing strategies with expectations relating to customer satisfaction, trust, transparency and personalised communication. For real estate developers, such an approach can strengthen brand credibility, improve customer engagement and contribute to the development of long-term customer relationships.

Against this background, the present study examines the role of consumer-centric marketing in the Indian real estate sector. It focuses on changing consumer preferences and the influence of digital marketing, trust, transparency and customer experience on property purchase decisions. The study further evaluates how these elements can be integrated into marketing practices to improve consumer confidence and strengthen relationships between developers and prospective buyers.

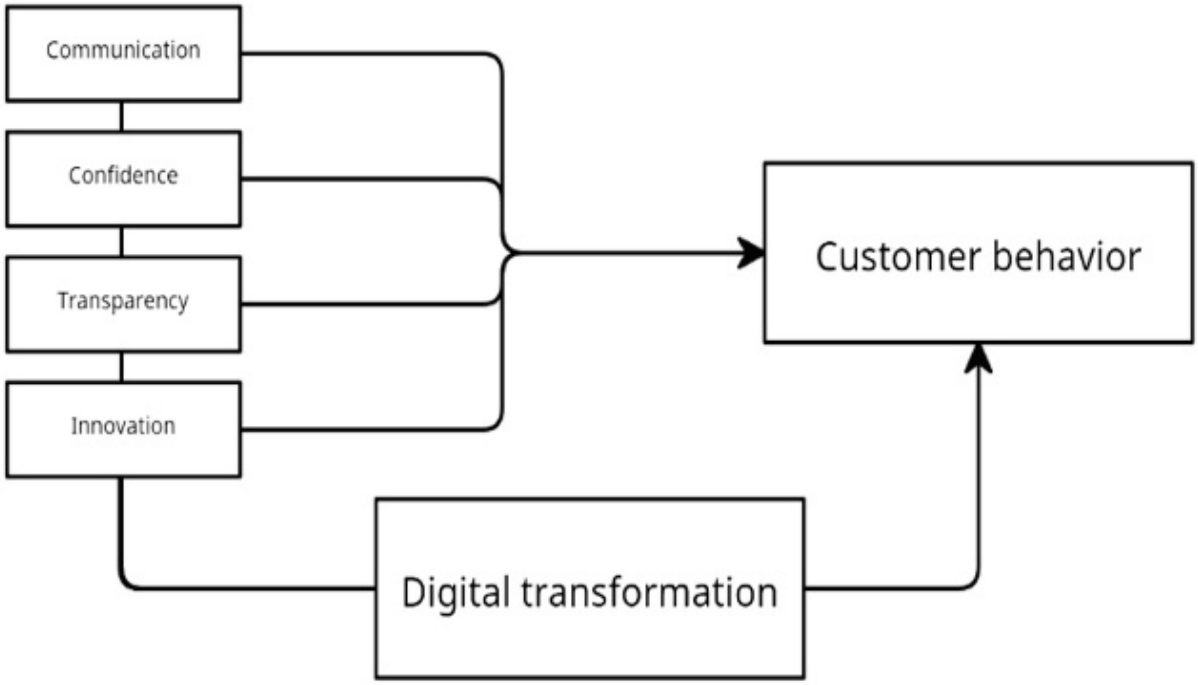


Figure 1. Drivers of customer behaviour in real estate marketing

2 Review of literature

The review of literature examines existing academic studies and industry publications relating to consumer behaviour, property purchase decisions and marketing practices in the real estate sector. It provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the factors influencing consumer preferences and the growing relevance of a consumer-centric approach to real estate marketing in India.

Existing literature suggests that residential property purchase decisions are influenced by a combination of economic, functional and psychological factors. Researchers have examined the significance of affordability, property characteristics, location, developer credibility and consumer perceptions in shaping buying intentions and satisfaction in the Indian real estate market.

Sundrani (2018), in the study *Factors Influencing Home-Purchase Decision of Buyers of Different Types of Apartments in India*, examined the factors affecting apartment purchase decisions among buyers in Pune. The study found that price was the most significant consideration for 1 BHK buyers, whereas buyers of 2 BHK apartments did not demonstrate a single dominant preference. For 3 BHK buyers,

product characteristics and location emerged as the two most important factors. The findings highlight the importance of understanding differences in consumer preferences across housing segments while developing real estate marketing strategies.

Dey (2016), in the study *Attributes Influencing Buying of Residential Apartments*, investigated the factors affecting apartment purchase decisions and post-purchase satisfaction in India. The study identified price escalation, dimensions of built-up area, readiness of the sample flat, quality of after-sales service, safety and security features, and environment-friendly initiatives as significant factors influencing residential satisfaction. The findings indicate that consumer satisfaction is shaped not only by property characteristics but also by the quality of services and facilities associated with the residential development.

Omrane and Bag (2022), in the study *Determinants of Customer Buying Intention Towards Residential Property in Kolkata (India): An Exploratory Study Using PLS-SEM Approach*, examined the factors influencing consumers' intentions to purchase residential properties. The findings revealed that value consciousness, including price, healthiness and quality, influences consumer attitudes, which subsequently affect buying intentions. The study also identified perceived behavioural control and subjective norms as important determinants of property purchase intention. These findings highlight the importance of understanding consumer perceptions and behavioural factors while developing real estate marketing strategies.

The FICCI–ANAROCK Homebuyer Sentiment Survey (2024), based on responses from approximately 7,615 participants across 14 cities, provides insights into changing residential property preferences in India. The survey reported that 67% of respondents intended to purchase property for personal use, while 33% considered it an investment. It also indicated that 51% preferred three-bedroom homes, compared with 39% who preferred two-bedroom homes. These findings highlight the importance of understanding consumer requirements relating to property ownership, housing configuration and lifestyle preferences while formulating marketing strategies.

KPMG India (2025), in its *India CX Report'25: Residential Real Estate*, examined customer experience across the residential property-buying journey. The report found that 44% of customers considered the property-assessment experience most impactful in shaping their overall perception of a real estate brand, while 46% identified the registration-to-possession experience as particularly influential. It also highlighted the importance of builder reputation, fair pricing, accurate property specifications, transparent communication and personalised engagement. These findings demonstrate that customer experience extends beyond initial property promotion and remains important throughout the buying process.

Prasad et al. (2026), in the study *The Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Buying Intention in Residential Real Estate in India's National Capital Region: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach*, examined the influence of digital marketing on consumer buying intentions using data from 499 residential property buyers in the National Capital Region. The findings indicated that content marketing, social media marketing, online advertising and virtual tour and website experiences positively influenced the perceived usefulness of digital marketing. However, search engine marketing did not demonstrate a statistically significant individual effect. The study also identified the mediating role of developer trust in the relationship between digital marketing and consumer buying intention. These findings highlight the importance of combining digital engagement with credibility and trust-building practices in real estate marketing.

Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that residential property purchase decisions are influenced by interconnected factors such as affordability, property characteristics, location, developer credibility, digital communication and customer experience. While existing studies have examined individual aspects of consumer behaviour and buying intention, their findings collectively highlight the need to understand these factors from an integrated consumer-centric marketing perspective. This provides the foundation for examining the role of trust, transparency, digital engagement and personalised communication in the Indian real estate sector.

3 Research gap and objectives

3.1 Research gap

The review of existing literature indicates that several studies have examined the factors influencing residential property purchase decisions, including affordability, location, property characteristics, consumer preferences and developer reputation. Recent research has also recognised the growing importance of digital marketing, consumer trust and customer experience in influencing buying intentions and perceptions of real estate brands.

However, the reviewed studies largely examine specific determinants of purchase decisions, individual marketing practices or particular stages of customer experience. There is scope to bring these dimensions together through an integrated consumer-centric marketing perspective. In particular, the combined relevance of consumer trust, transparency, digital engagement and personalised communication deserves consideration in understanding the changing expectations of Indian property buyers.

Accordingly, the present study examines these interconnected dimensions through secondary research, focusing on their relevance to property evaluation, consumer preferences and confidence in the Indian real estate market. It seeks to develop an integrated understanding of how consumer-centric marketing practices can contribute to more effective customer engagement and relationship development.

3.2 Research objectives

The primary objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the changing consumer behaviour and preferences in the Indian real estate sector.
2. To identify the major factors influencing consumer property purchase decisions.
3. To analyse the role of digital marketing in consumer awareness and property evaluation.
4. To examine the importance of trust, transparency and developer reputation in building consumer confidence.
5. To understand the significance of personalised communication and customer experience in real estate marketing.
6. To suggest effective consumer-centric marketing strategies for real estate developers.

4 Research methodology

The research methodology outlines the approach adopted to examine consumer-centric marketing practices in the Indian real estate sector. The study follows a descriptive and analytical approach to

understand changing consumer preferences, property purchase decisions and the marketing factors influencing consumer behaviour.

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine consumer behaviour, property purchase preferences and emerging marketing practices in the Indian real estate sector. It focuses on interpreting existing research findings and industry information to understand the relevance of consumer-centric marketing.

Nature of Data: The study is based entirely on secondary data. No primary surveys, interviews or direct responses from consumers have been collected. The analysis relies on information and findings already published by academic researchers, industry organisations and other relevant sources.

Sources of Data: Secondary information for the study has been obtained from published academic journals, research papers, industry reports, market surveys, books and credible online publications. Particular emphasis has been placed on studies and reports relevant to consumer behaviour, residential property preferences, digital marketing and customer experience. Publications by organisations such as FICCI, ANAROCK and KPMG have also been considered to understand industry trends and consumer preferences.

Scope of the Study: The study focuses on consumer-centric marketing practices in the Indian real estate sector, with particular attention to residential property preferences and purchase decisions. It examines the influence of affordability, property characteristics, digital marketing, developer credibility, trust, transparency and customer experience on consumer behaviour. The study also considers the relevance of these factors in developing customer-oriented marketing strategies.

Methods of Analysis: The secondary data is examined using descriptive, thematic and comparative analysis. Findings from academic studies and industry reports are organised according to major themes, including consumer preferences, purchase decision factors, trust, transparency, digital marketing and customer experience. Comparisons across the selected sources are used to identify recurring findings, differences in consumer preferences and emerging implications for consumer-centric real estate marketing.

Limitations of the Study: The study is subject to certain limitations due to its reliance on secondary data. The findings depend on the accuracy, availability and relevance of previously published information. Differences in research periods, geographical coverage, sample sizes and research methodologies may affect comparisons between studies. Furthermore, the findings are based on selected academic publications and industry reports and may not reflect the preferences of every consumer or property buyer across India. The absence of primary data also limits the possibility of obtaining direct insights from current property buyers.

5 Analysis and interpretation of secondary data

This section analyses published research findings and industry reports to understand the major factors influencing consumer behaviour and marketing practices in the Indian real estate sector. The analysis focuses on consumer preferences, purchase decision factors, digital marketing, trust, transparency and customer experience. The findings are interpreted thematically to identify their implications for consumer-centric marketing.

5.1 Consumer preferences and property purchase decisions

Consumer preferences in the Indian real estate market are influenced by financial considerations, lifestyle requirements, family size and individual housing objectives. Before purchasing a property, consumers generally evaluate factors such as affordability, location, connectivity, property size, amenities and construction quality. These preferences vary across consumer groups depending on their income levels, family requirements and purpose of purchase.

The FICCI–ANAROCK Homebuyer Sentiment Survey (2024) provides insights into changing residential property preferences. The survey reported that 67% of respondents considered homeownership primarily for personal use, while the remaining 33% considered it an investment decision. This indicates the importance of understanding the distinct requirements of end-users and investment-oriented buyers when developing marketing strategies.

The survey further reported that 51% of respondents preferred three-bedroom apartments, while 39% preferred two-bedroom apartments. These findings indicate a preference for larger residential spaces among a considerable proportion of the surveyed consumers. Factors such as location connectivity, living space and modern amenities also remain relevant in property evaluation.

The findings suggest that real estate developers should adopt differentiated marketing strategies based on consumer requirements, budgets and lifestyle preferences. Marketing communication should highlight relevant property features and benefits for different customer segments rather than relying on a uniform promotional approach.

5.2 Factors influencing property purchase decisions

Property purchase decisions are influenced by several interconnected factors, including affordability, location, construction quality, property specifications, amenities, accessibility to essential services and developer reputation. Since purchasing a property involves a substantial financial commitment, consumers generally assess both its immediate suitability and long-term value before making a decision.

The KPMG India CX Report 2025 highlights the significance of the property-assessment stage in shaping consumer perceptions of real estate brands. According to the report, 44% of customers considered their property-assessment experience particularly influential in forming their overall brand perception. This finding indicates that the quality and clarity of information provided during property evaluation can influence how consumers perceive a developer.

These findings suggest that real estate developers should communicate property features accurately and provide sufficient information regarding location, specifications, amenities and project facilities. Marketing strategies should focus on presenting genuine property advantages and helping consumers make informed comparisons rather than relying exclusively on promotional claims.

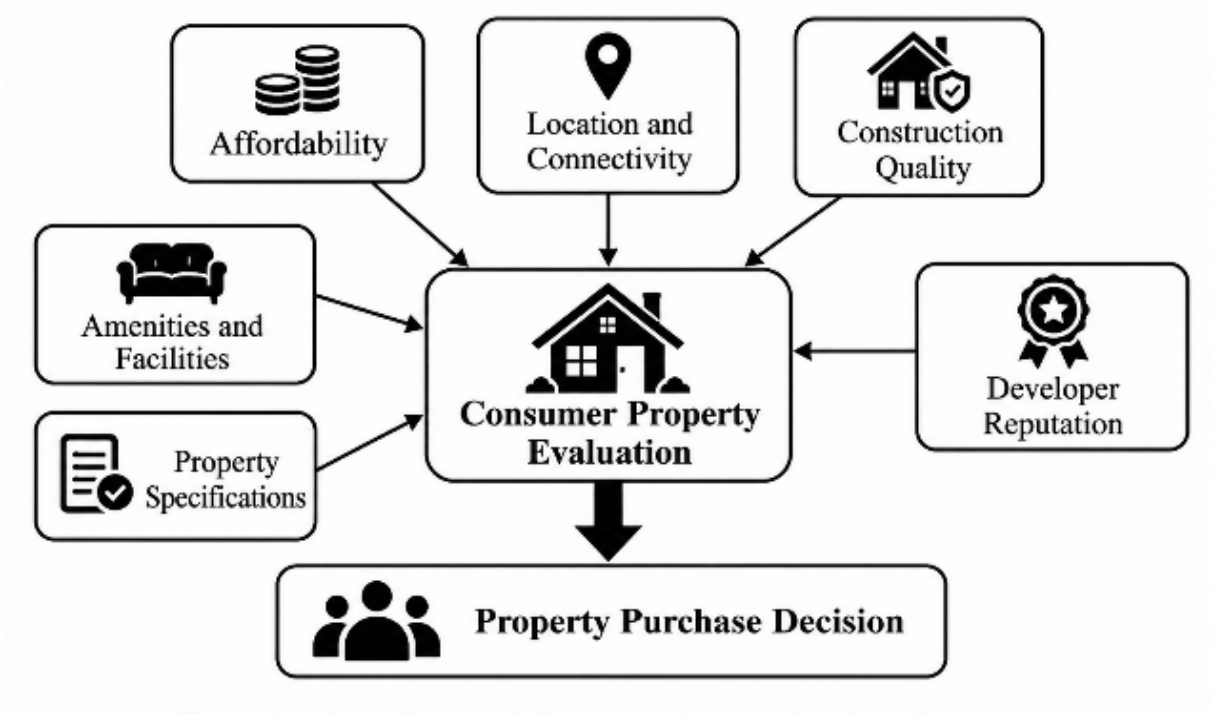


Figure 2. Major factors influencing property purchase decisions. Source: author's own representation

5.3 Role of trust and transparency

Trust and transparency are essential elements of real estate marketing because property purchases involve substantial financial commitments and long-term obligations. Consumers rely on information provided by developers when evaluating projects and making purchase decisions. Factors such as builder reputation, clarity of contractual terms, accurate pricing, construction quality and adherence to project commitments play an important role in building consumer confidence.

The KPMG India CX Report 2025 highlights the importance of transparent communication, developer reliability and consistent customer experience throughout the property-buying process. Clear information regarding project specifications, pricing, contractual conditions and construction progress can help consumers evaluate properties with greater confidence.

These findings indicate that developers should maintain consistency between promotional commitments and actual project delivery. Providing accurate information about approvals, pricing, construction progress and possession timelines can reduce consumer uncertainty, strengthen brand credibility and support long-term customer relationships.

5.4 Influence of digital marketing

Digital marketing has become an important component of contemporary real estate marketing. Websites, online property portals, social media platforms, digital advertisements and virtual property tours enable developers to reach wider audiences and provide property-related information conveniently. These platforms have also changed the way consumers discover, compare and evaluate residential projects.

Digital platforms allow prospective buyers to examine property specifications, explore project features, compare available options and communicate with developers before arranging physical site visits. The KPMG India CX Report 2025 highlights the importance of omnichannel communication,

personalised follow-ups and interactive property presentations, including 3D renderings, in improving customer engagement.

Prasad et al. (2026), in their study of residential property buyers in India's National Capital Region, found that content marketing, social media marketing, online advertising and virtual property experiences positively influenced the perceived usefulness of digital marketing. Their findings also highlighted the role of developer trust in the relationship between digital marketing and consumer purchase intention.

The findings indicate that digital marketing should extend beyond generating enquiries and promoting properties. Developers should use digital platforms to provide reliable information, encourage meaningful interaction and support consumers throughout the property evaluation process. Combining digital engagement with transparent communication and responsive customer support can contribute to stronger consumer confidence and improved customer relationships.

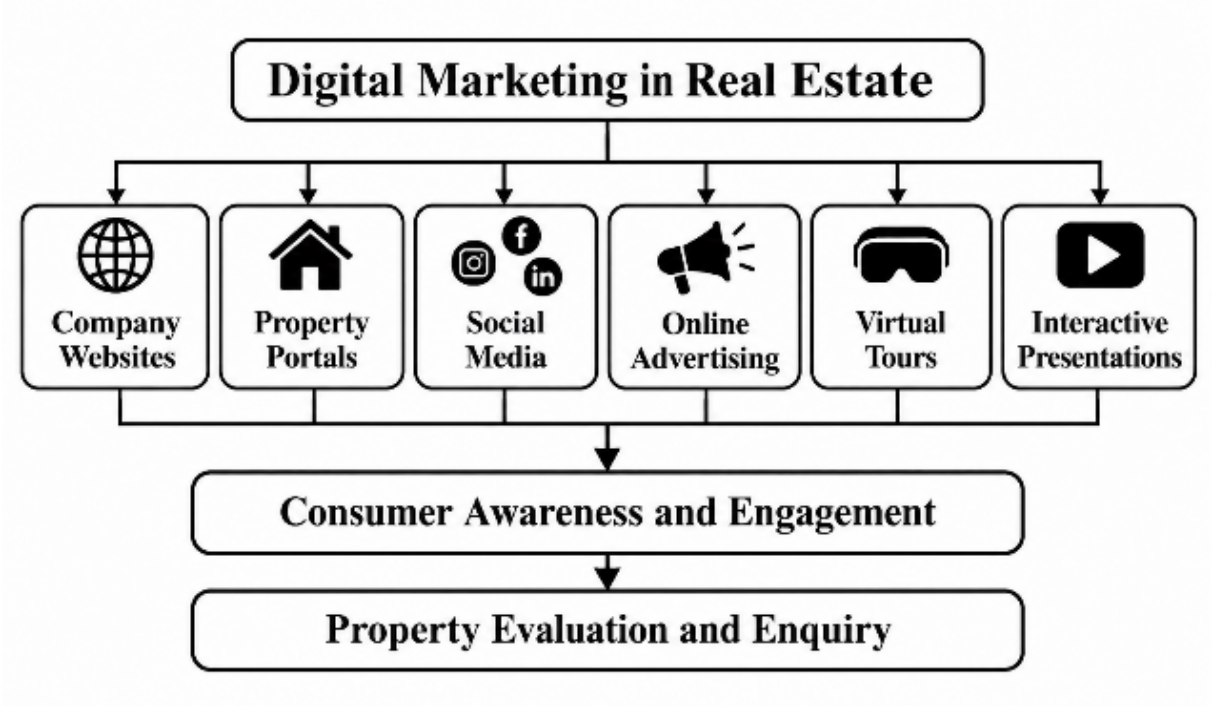


Figure 3. Role of digital marketing in real estate consumer engagement. Source: author's own representation

5.5 Importance of personalisation and customer experience

Customer experience extends across the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages of the property-buying process. Consumers expect timely responses, relevant property recommendations, clear information and adequate assistance while evaluating and purchasing a property. Effective communication and coordination throughout these stages can contribute to a positive perception of the developer.

The KPMG India CX Report 2025 highlights the importance of customer experience during the registration-to-possession stage. According to the report, 46% of customers considered this experience particularly influential in shaping their overall perception of a real estate brand. This finding demonstrates that customer experience continues to influence brand perception even after the initial purchase decision.

Personalised communication and consistent customer support can help developers understand individual requirements and provide relevant property options. Maintaining communication during documentation, registration and possession, along with providing appropriate post-purchase assistance, can improve customer satisfaction and strengthen long-term relationships.

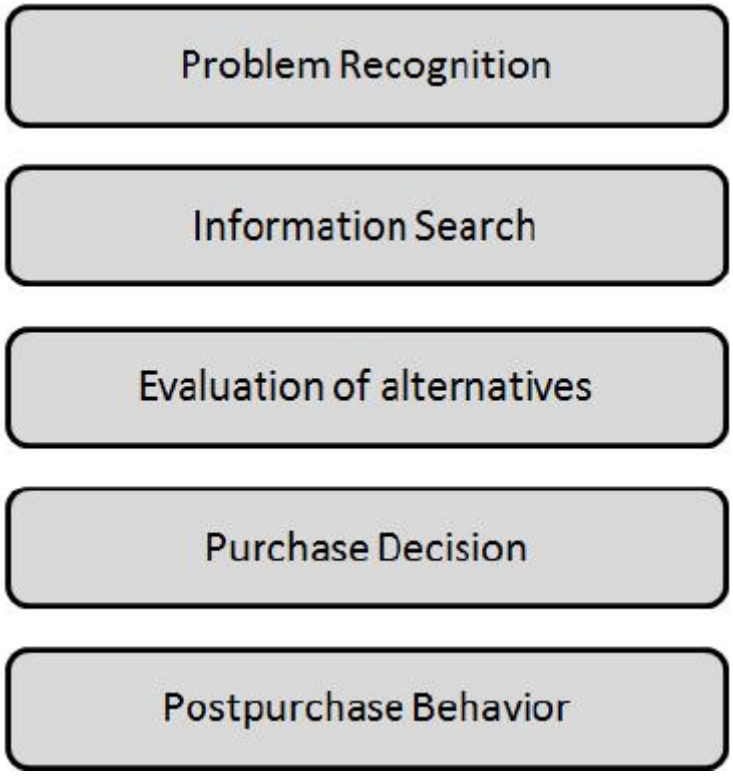


Figure 4. Stages of the consumer property-buying process

5.6 Overall interpretation

The analysis of published studies and industry reports indicates that consumer-centric marketing has become increasingly relevant in the Indian real estate sector. Property purchase decisions are influenced by several interconnected factors, including affordability, location, property characteristics, developer reputation, transparency and customer experience. These factors collectively shape consumer preferences and perceptions during the property-buying process.

The findings further indicate that digital marketing has expanded access to property-related information and improved opportunities for interaction between developers and prospective buyers. However, digital promotion alone may not be sufficient to establish consumer confidence unless it is supported by accurate information, transparent practices and consistent communication.

Overall, the analysis highlights the need for an integrated marketing approach that combines an understanding of consumer requirements, personalised communication, digital engagement and reliable customer support. Real estate developers who align their marketing practices with consumer expectations can strengthen brand credibility, improve customer satisfaction and establish long-term relationships.

6 Discussion

The analysis of secondary data indicates that consumer expectations in the Indian real estate sector are increasingly influenced by affordability, property characteristics, developer credibility and overall customer experience. Although traditional factors such as location, price and construction quality continue to influence purchase decisions, consumers are also placing greater importance on transparent information, digital accessibility and personalised communication.

The findings of the FICCI–ANAROCK Homebuyer Sentiment Survey 2024 highlight the importance of understanding different consumer preferences and housing requirements. The variation in preferences for property sizes and the purpose of homeownership suggests that developers should consider different consumer segments while designing their marketing strategies. Similarly, the KPMG India CX Report 2025 emphasises the significance of property assessment, transparent communication and the registration-to-possession experience in shaping customer perceptions.

The discussion further indicates that digital marketing has expanded opportunities for consumer awareness, property evaluation and interaction with developers. However, digital engagement needs to be supported by accurate information, reliable commitments and responsive customer service to establish consumer confidence. Personalised communication and consistent assistance throughout the buying process can also contribute to improved customer satisfaction.

Overall, the findings suggest that effective real estate marketing requires a shift from conventional property promotion towards a more integrated consumer-centric approach. Understanding customer requirements and combining digital engagement, transparency and personalised support can help developers strengthen brand credibility and establish sustainable customer relationships.

7 Suggestions and recommendations

Based on the analysis of secondary data, real estate developers should adopt marketing practices that focus on consumer expectations, transparent communication and long-term customer relationships. The following recommendations may help improve marketing effectiveness in the Indian real estate sector:

1. **Strengthening Digital Presence:** Developers should maintain informative websites, updated property listings and active social media platforms to improve consumer awareness and provide convenient access to project-related information.
2. **Ensuring Transparency:** Clear information regarding property pricing, project approvals, construction progress, contractual conditions and possession timelines should be communicated to reduce uncertainty and build consumer confidence.
3. **Understanding Consumer Preferences:** Developers should identify different consumer segments based on budget, lifestyle, location preferences and housing requirements to offer relevant property options and improve marketing effectiveness.
4. **Improving Customer Communication:** Timely responses, personalised follow-ups and consistent communication should be maintained throughout the property-buying process to address consumer queries and improve engagement.
5. **Enhancing Customer Experience:** Interactive property presentations, virtual tours, organised site visits and efficient post-purchase assistance should be incorporated to provide a convenient and satisfactory customer experience.

6. **Building Brand Credibility:** Developers should focus on construction quality, responsible commitments, customer feedback and consistent service delivery to establish a reliable brand image.

These recommendations highlight the importance of moving beyond conventional promotional activities towards an integrated marketing approach that places consumer satisfaction, trust and long-term relationships at the centre of real estate marketing practices.

8 Limitations and scope for future research

The present study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from published research papers, industry reports and market surveys. Therefore, its findings depend on the availability, reliability and relevance of existing information. Differences in geographical coverage, research periods and sample characteristics across the selected publications may also limit direct comparisons. Furthermore, the study examines the Indian real estate sector broadly and may not represent the specific preferences of consumers across all regions and market segments.

Future research may incorporate primary data through consumer surveys and interviews to obtain direct insights into changing property preferences and purchasing behaviour. Further studies could examine regional differences in consumer expectations, compare the marketing practices of different real estate developers and investigate the long-term influence of digital engagement, transparency and customer experience on consumer loyalty and property purchase decisions.

9 Conclusion

The study concludes that consumer-centric marketing has become increasingly important in the evolving Indian real estate sector. Changing consumer preferences, technological developments and growing market competition have influenced the way consumers evaluate residential properties. The analysis highlights that factors such as affordability, location, property specifications, developer reputation, transparency and customer experience collectively shape property purchase decisions.

The study further indicates that conventional promotional strategies alone may not adequately address the expectations of modern consumers. Real estate developers need to adopt marketing practices that focus on understanding customer requirements, providing accurate project information, strengthening digital engagement and maintaining personalised communication. Transparency and reliable commitments throughout the property-buying process are equally important in developing consumer trust and confidence.

The findings also emphasise that digital marketing can support consumer awareness and property evaluation when combined with meaningful interaction and responsive customer support. A positive customer experience across the pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages can further contribute to customer satisfaction and long-term relationships.

Overall, the study highlights the need to move beyond product-oriented promotion towards an integrated consumer-centric marketing approach. By aligning marketing strategies with consumer expectations and prioritising trust, transparency and customer experience, real estate developers can strengthen brand credibility and build sustainable customer relationships in the Indian real estate market.

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