

Source: Moneycontrol.com

<http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/real-estate/is-trumps-h-1b-policy-driving-it-pros-to-hunt-for-properties-here-2277569.html>

## Is Trump's H-1B policy driving Indian IT pros to hunt for properties here?

**Real estate brokers agree that the soundbytes from the US administration have been rather harsh on Indian IT professionals**



**Vandana Ramnani**

**Moneycontrol News**

Is the US policy on tightening work visa norms for foreign workers having an impact on the India real estate market? The uncertainty created among Indian Information Technology professionals by the recent tightening of the H-1B visa requirements has led to a rise in queries for home purchase by Indian workers in the US who are possibly considering returning back to India.

In Bengaluru, the hub of IT companies, many professionals currently working abroad are investing with seasoned developers. "There has been an increase of 20-35 percent from NRIs over the last few months but it is too early to say whether the techies working in the US have pressed the panic button," says Nausheen, a broker active in Bengaluru.

Techies returning to Bengaluru typically look at mid-segment properties in the range of Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 1.75 crore and those who are settled abroad for good scout for units in the range of Rs 3 crore and above. Township model is immensely popular with this segment as it has all the basic amenities in one place, says Nausheen, adding enquiries have almost doubled after 2015.

With the US policy likely to restrict outsourcing, several Indian IT firms are looking to hire local US talent instead of sending Indian employees on work visas. [Infosys](#) has already said it will hire 10,000 people in the US over the next two years. There are talks that the likes of [Wipro](#), Cognizant and [Tech Mahindra](#) may follow suit.

This may lead to more Indians residing in the US wanting to return and look for a job back home. According to a media report, the number of Indians in the US searching for jobs in India has gone up more than 10-fold between December and March. But will this be a mass exodus and will it lead to increased demand for residential and commercial real estate back home?

Real estate brokers agree that the soundbytes from the US administration have been rather harsh on Indian IT professionals. In Pune, a few IT professionals who are contemplating starting out on their own are scouting for some office spaces, says a broker.

“In the last three months there has been an uptick in residential demand and supply across key Indian cities registering a 70 percent increase over the previous quarter. However, it is too early to say if this uptick in demand is due to IT professionals returning home. While there could be demand creation due to this, it depends on whether these professionals already have property in India and are looking to scale up their investment, or if they are looking to invest into fresh projects,” says AS Sivaramakrishnan, Head, Residential Services – India, CBRE South Asia.

Assuming that the exodus does start happening, it unlikely that startups will spring up and look for commercial space to set up shop as the start-up story is lost in the wind, say experts. “The first priority for most of these techies will be to find themselves a job. IT companies will not be in an expansion mode; they may at best be looking at filling vacancies (post the layoffs) by adjusting or hiring talent that has returned. These people may consider buying houses with either the golden handshake that they may have received. Some may even invest in regular investment yielding income assets or two properties both for self-use and rental income. They may decide to invest either in their hometowns or in areas where they finally land themselves a job in places such as Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad and Chennai,” says Gulam Zia Executive Director - Advisory, Retail & Hospitality, Knight Frank India.

However, a section of real estate experts say that while it is too early to say whether there will be a mass exodus from the US or merely a trickle, their investments in real estate will all depend on whether the IT professional will return with a job in the home turf or will they come back without one.

“There will be a fair bit of exodus as many IT professionals are contemplating moving out, coming back to India but that will depend on the ability of IT companies here to hire them and their entrepreneurial streak to start something of their own. Having said that, we will see many IT companies going through a massive change due to the Trump factor. Many will get into newer competencies around machine learning, artificial intelligence, robotics, automation etc,” says Ronesh Puri, Managing Director of Executive Access.