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Give your home that much-needed lift

By Sangeetha G. Jun 01 2011



As houses go vertical in cities due to space constraints, elevators are becoming an integral part of modern homes. For houses of three floors or more, elevators are a must but people are also going for lifts in houses with just two floors for the sake of convenience.

“When you have a small plot in a city, your house can expand only vertically. Having bedrooms, gyms and home theatres in the upper floors only leaves space for a larger living room, dining space and kitchen on the ground floor. But climbing stairs, especially for the aged, is a big problem, which necessitates elevators even in houses with two floors,” said Dameem Ansari, chief architect, Ansari Architects, Associates and Interior Designers.

The main issue in fixing an elevator to an existing house is the availability of a space that is accessible from all parts of the house.

“It is easy to fix an elevator in houses with circular staircases as there are stairwells available. In ordinary staircases structural engineers have to break slabs in order to make space for the elevator,” he said.

According to Ansari, traditional elevators with collapsible grill doors are not much in demand as they have safety issues when children use them. In some cities, government authorities insist on covering the door with sheets. Such lifts are cheapest and cost around Rs four lakh with an additional Rs two to 2.5 lakh for the civil works and machine room on the terrace.

Nowadays, houses generally prefer elevators with automatic doors. While collapsible door lifts require 4.5 X 5 ft area, those with automatic doors need 5.5 X 6 ft area. Elevators having automatic doors with mild steel finish cost Rs two lakh more than collapsible lifts.

The door can also be made of glass, which lessens the claustrophobic feel inside the lift. This would lighten your pocket by an additional Rs 1.5 lakh. One can also opt for all the four walls being made of glass and this will cost a total of Rs 14 to Rs 15 lakh.

Platform lifts, too, are in demand. These are elevators with just a platform and handrails, without the outer covering. These are mainly used in places where there are people on wheelchairs. Safety is a big problem in such lifts but they require the least space. A platform lift can be fixed in 3.5 X 3.5 ft area and it can cost around Rs six lakh.

Capsule lifts that are usually seen in shopping complexes and hotels, can also be fixed in houses provided there is a big atrium in the central portion of the house. Capsule lifts come for a minimum of Rs 16 lakh.

Then there are hydraulic lifts or piston lifts, which do not need machine rooms. Instead of iron ropes, pistons move the lift.

“Generally we suggest elevators with automatic doors as they are safe. We also use a rescue device, which helps the lift land on the immediate lower level and open up automatically in times of power failure. The rescue device has an inbuilt UPS. This comes at an additional cost of Rs 50,000,” said Ansari. So go ahead and revel in vertical living with these ‘elevating’ additions to your house.

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