

Can Kolkata Attract Global Office Tenants and Investors?

By Dr. SamantaK Das¹



In the current scenario, Kolkata is the smallest office market compared to rest of the top 6 cities spread across the 4 regions in India. To give a perspective, Grade A stock in the city at around 30 million square feet (3 crore square feet) is one-third of a much smaller city like Pune. Even the demand for office space (leasing volume) in Kolkata holds similar proportion compared to relatively smaller cities like Pune and Chennai. Now, the question is how to integrate the city with rest of India's office space absorption and investments.

In the top 7 cities of India, Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are the prime movers of office market and their share is more than 40% of overall leasing volume in the last couple of years. Also, GCCs footprint

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is in the range of 30-35% of occupied Grade A office stock, which comes to around 265-270 million square feet; the three cities of Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi NCR have the lion's share of around 70%. **So, in order to expand the office market significantly, Kolkata has to attract GCCs. But it's not about one big fix – it's streamlining several interlinked areas where other top cities already have a strong edge.**

In spite of the fact that share of GCCs in office leasing in Kolkata has moved up significantly from approximately 10% in 2024 to around 30% in 2025, the base volume is too small to be excited about.

A lot of changes need to be brought in:

1. Brand reposition – the biggest gap: The city still carries an outdated perception – great for culture, not for global tech or enterprise operations. It needs a deliberate global branding push through events and road shows, highlighting the strengths like cost advantage, stable workforce and ample land parcels to develop conducive ecosystem for GCCs to establish their offices. The state government should aggressively deliberate with global firms like Microsoft and Google.
2. Stronger policy incentives and faster execution: The city needs single-window clearances that actually work in practice. The government should formulate incentives and plug-and-play office infrastructure policies for GCCs, by evaluating competing states like Telangana and Karnataka and creating differentiators.
3. Grade A office infrastructure: While areas like Salt Lake Sector V and New Town exist, the city still lacks in large & contiguous Grade A office spaces at scale and global standard business districts with integrated living & work & leisure. GCCs prefer ecosystems like HITECH city in Hyderabad and Outer Ring Road in Bengaluru. New Town has the potential for these types of developments; state government's intervention and support are need of the hour.
4. Talent narrative needs upgrading: It is not just supply of talent; it is more of deep tech, product engineering and AI/ML, which the city lacks in. Kolkata does have strong talent pool but that's more in analytics, finance and back-office operations. Industry-academia partnerships with institutes like IIT Kharagpur and IIM Calcutta need to be prioritized and implemented urgently.
5. Leadership and anchor investors: GCC ecosystems grow when a few big names take the first leap. The government needs to aggressively attract couple of Fortune 500 companies and once anchor players set up, others follow provided the additional driving factors are worked upon.
6. Livability: Kolkata needs to give the lifestyle similar to Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Senior global executives evaluate cities on lifestyle as well.

7. Mindset shift: There has to be a mindset shift for the city, from cost centre to value centre. The government should, through aggressive road shows, position itself as a hub for analytics, fintech, risk and digital transformation.

To summarize, Kolkata can realistically become a Tier-1 GCC destination in the next 5 years, given the rising costs in Bengaluru and Hyderabad if it markets itself better, fixes policy frictions, builds infrastructure clusters and attracts a few anchor GCCs.