

Is a Delhi or Mumbai Address a Sign Your Supplier Is a Trader?

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A Delhi or Mumbai address is a weak trader signal on its own, because many real Indian manufacturers keep their head office in a metro while the mill runs elsewhere. A product mix spread across unrelated categories is a far stronger sign, and the GST premises, the export council certificate and one direct question all do better than a postcode.

Key takeaways

- In US-bound bed linen and tufted carpets, most Mumbai addresses among the top ten named shippers were manufacturers' head offices.
- 13 of 15 Indian maker profiles had one product chapter at 57% or more of their US shipments.
- The city test does hold in spices such as ginger and turmeric, the most intermediated spice line we read.
- Ask which unit makes your order and whether you can see it on a video call this week.
- A trader is a normal way to buy, often the right one for small or mixed orders.

Not on its own. Plenty of real Indian manufacturers keep their registered or head office in Mumbai or Delhi while the mill runs somewhere else, and in our read of US shipping records most Mumbai addresses among the top bed-linen and tufted-carpet shippers were exactly that. A far stronger trader signal is a product mix spread across unrelated categories.



The "big city address means middleman" rule gets repeated on forums and echoed in AI answers, and it isn't daft. It's just blunt. This post shows where it holds, where it fails, and the signals that do the job better. One thing I'll say up front - a trader is a normal, often useful way to buy from India. The point is knowing which one you've got.

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- 01 **In US-bound bed linen (HS 6302) and tufted carpets (HS 5703), most Mumbai addresses among the ten largest named Indian shippers were manufacturers' head offices.** *(Our read of US bill-of-lading records as published by ImportYeti, 23 Sep 2026 · Verified count, reading Indicative)*
- 02 **Real makers are focused.** 13 of 15 Indian maker profiles had one product chapter at 57% or more of their US shipments, usually 72% to 99%. *(Same records ·*

- 03 **The city test does work in some lines.** In ginger, turmeric and other spices (HS 0910), 12 of 49 named shippers were Mumbai-addressed and a fifth of named shipments were forwarder-named, the most intermediated spice line we read.

(Same records · Verified count)

What we don't know yet

- How these patterns look for goods shipped to Australia, the UK, the UAE or the EU. Those countries don't publish shipment-level records.

1. Why The Rule Exists

It comes from real experience. Mumbai and Delhi are trading cities, full of export houses, buying offices and wholesale markets. So the shortcut feels safe.

The trouble is that big Indian manufacturers also like a city office. Banks, ports, customs brokers and foreign buyers are there. The machines aren't.

2. Where The Rule Fails: Head Offices

In September 2026 we read the public US shipping records for 21 Indian product lines. In bed linen and tufted carpets, most of the Mumbai addresses among the ten largest named shippers belonged to manufacturers' head offices, with the mills elsewhere in India (our read of US bill-of-lading records, [ImportYeti](#), Sep 2026).

Those are some of the larger home-textile makers in the country. A buyer who crossed them off for a Mumbai postcode would have thrown away exactly the suppliers big retailers use. Ouch.

So a metro address tells you where the paperwork is signed. It doesn't tell you who runs the looms.

3. Where The Rule Holds

It isn't useless everywhere. In ginger, turmeric and other spices, 12 of the 49 named shippers had Mumbai addresses and about a fifth of named shipments were filed under forwarders' names, which made it the most intermediated spice line we read. Compare pepper and chilli, which were led by shippers in Kerala and the other growing and trading belts we'd expect (same records).

Spices fit the trader story because the trade runs through big wholesale markets, and a Mumbai exporter buying from them is doing normal business. That's the pattern where the city address and "trader" really do line up, and even then, the trader may be exactly who you want for a mixed range.

4. The Stronger Signal: How Spread Out Is The Product Mix?

This is the best single test we found. Of 15 Indian maker profiles we read, 13 had one product chapter at 57% or more of their US shipments, usually 72% to 99%. Makers make one kind of thing. The odd one out spread over nine chapters, stone and metal and more, and sent 99% of its shipments to a single US buyer, which looks like a sister company (our count, same records).

You can apply this without any database. Look at the supplier's catalogue, website and email signature. Bath towels and bed sheets from one company? Fine, that's one industry. Towels, brass lamps, basmati rice and auto parts? That's a trading house, wherever its office is. One Indian exporter

on a forum summed up the style - "We even export Lifts and Lollipops" ([r/IndiaBusiness, 2026](#)).



5. Three More Signals That Beat A Postcode

The address on the record, not the letterhead. The GST registration lists each premises and what it does there. A city office plus a separate factory premises in the right cluster tells you a lot. The first two digits of the GST number also show the state, which we unpack in [what an Indian GST number tells you](#).

The export council certificate. A manufacturer-exporter registration with the council that covers the product is the strongest public "we make it" signal India has, because the council asks for evidence of manufacturing ([Handbook of Procedures 2023, para 2.79\(a\)](#)).

The answer to one question. "Which unit makes my order, and can I see it on a video call this week?" A head office says yes and sends you to the mill. A trader tells you about the partner unit. Both are fine answers. A dodge isn't.

Here's how the signals compare.

Signal	What it tells you	Weight
Metro address	Where the paperwork is signed	Weakest
Product spread	One industry suggests a maker, unrelated chapters suggest a trading house	Strongest single test
GST premises	Whether a factory premises sits in the right cluster	Strong
Export council certificate	A manufacturer-exporter registration backed by evidence of manufacturing	Strong
The video-call question	Whether they can show you the unit that makes your order	Strong

6. So What Should You Do With A Delhi Address?

Note it, and don't decide on it. Run the product-spread test, check the premises on the GST record and ask the question above. If the answers say trader, decide whether a trader suits you. How partner units fit in is covered in [job work and subcontracting in India](#). For a mixed range or small orders it often does, and the honest trade-offs are on [manufacturer vs trading company](#).



If you'd rather someone walk into the unit behind the city office for you, [SourcingSync](#) does that. Either way, the postcode is the weakest clue you have, so give it the least weight.

Related reading: [Top Indian supplier lists are forwarders](#) · [Are Indian trade fair exhibitors manufacturers?](#)

Questions Buyers Ask

Do Indian manufacturers really keep offices away from their factories? ^

Yes, commonly. A city office near banks, ports and buyers, with the plant in a cluster town or industrial estate, is an ordinary setup.

Is it bad if my supplier turns out to be a trader? v

Can I see where a supplier really ships from?



What if the factory address is in a different state from the GST number?

