

Sustainability - Driving innovation in Indian's rug & dhurries ecosystem

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The rugs and dhurries market in India is a vibrant and thriving industry, known for its rich heritage and skilled craftsmanship. The country has a long-standing tradition of producing high-quality rugs and dhurries, which are woven or knotted by hand using various natural materials like wool, cotton, jute and silk. These products range from traditional designs to contemporary patterns, catering to both domestic and international markets.

In recent years, with sustainability emerging as crucial to the success and longevity of every industry, the rugs sector has witnessed a growing demand for sustainable and eco-friendly products, emphasizing on ethical practices such as the empowerment of rural artisans, particularly women. By embracing eco-friendly materials, ethical manufacturing processes, and fair-trade practices, this industry has not only transformed its environmental impact but also played a pivotal role in providing sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Promoting rural livelihoods:

Sustainability initiatives in the Indian rug & dhurries industry have played a crucial role in empowering rural women. By offering skill development programs and employment opportunities, the industry has enabled women to become financially independent, thus

breaking the cycle of poverty. Many organizations and cooperatives have been formed to support these women, providing them with fair wages, access to education, healthcare facilities and training in new techniques. This emphasis on women's empowerment has had a transformative impact on their lives and the communities they belong to.

Innovation through sustainable design:

Sustainability has also fuelled innovation in the Indian rug & dhurries industry. Designers and artisans are now exploring creative ways to incorporate eco-friendly practices into their products. From incorporating recycled materials to designing rugs with minimal waste, sustainable design has become a driving force behind innovation. These efforts have not only attracted eco-conscious consumers but have also opened up new markets and opportunities for the industry.

Positive environmental impact:

The shift towards sustainability has also had a positive environmental impact. By reducing the use of harmful chemicals and adopting natural dyes, the industry has minimized water pollution and soil contamination. Furthermore, the emphasis on sustainable materials and ethical manufacturing has reduced the overall carbon footprint associated with the production of rugs. These efforts align with India's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically goal number 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Eco-friendly material:

One of the key aspects of sustainability in the Indian rug & dhurries industry is the use of eco-friendly materials. Traditional rugs were predominantly made using non-biodegradable synthetic materials, contributing to environmental degradation. However, the industry has shifted towards sustainable alternatives like organic cotton, jute, hemp, and natural dyes derived from plants and minerals. These materials not only reduce the carbon footprint but also enhance the quality and aesthetics of the rugs.

Ethical manufacturing practices:

To ensure sustainability, the industry has adopted ethical manufacturing practices. Artisans now work in well-ventilated and safe environments, protecting their health and well-being. This includes their own homes where they can attend to their daily chores, while also creating their masterpieces by hand. What is more, manufacturers today adhere to strict guidelines that prohibit the use of child labour and promote fair wages. This commitment to ethical practices has not only improved the industry's reputation but has also fostered a sense of pride and dignity among the artisans, especially the rural women who form a significant part of the workforce.

IMARC Group's recent report titled "India Interior Design Market: Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2023-2028" reveals that the interior design market in India achieved a total worth of US\$ 28.6 Billion in 2022. Projections from IMARC Group indicate a

promising future, with the market anticipated to expand to US\$ 51.4 Billion by 2028, reflecting a noteworthy compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.3% between 2023 and 2028.

Obviously, there has been a paradigm shift in the way rugs are manufactured and used. This is because the industry has showcased how aesthetics, sustainability and innovation can go hand in hand. It serves as a shining example of how sustainability can be at the heart of innovation, ensuring a better result for all.