

# Modern Floor Coverings Beginning of a new era in India



*Pic Courtesy: Ego Flooring*

**W**hen it comes to use of floor coverings, India has been completely defying the global trends. “For us Indians, traditionally, the most preferred floor covering has been various forms of stones and marble, which till today account for 80% of the country's floor coverings consumption. This percentage in countries like USA, Europe and even China is between 30-40%,” says

Roshan, Director, Ego Flooring Pvt Ltd.

Why conventional stone is so popular in a country, which makes the most exquisite and luxurious handmade wool and silk carpets in the world, which are full of softness and character. Not only that, these rugs are sought by buyers across the globe, with India commanding a lion's share of 38% in the world market, clearly indicating, volume and scale of production. Then why don't Indians themselves

use these lovely rugs in their own homes? It's certainly not because of affordability, knowledge or choice of Indians. They want easy maintenance, and cool feeling being a warm climate country, which is offered by most forms of marbles and stones. Handmade woollen and silk rugs are simply unaffordable in terms of prices for most Indians, too warm for most parts of India's climate and are difficult to maintain in the country's dusty environment. And very few know about more options in floor coverings beyond these two categories.

## Modern floor coverings

It seems that the consumers here are simply not exposed enough to the plethora of modern floor coverings to which the world has been changing over to during the last three to four decades. Lack of knowledge, lack of understanding, not enough push by the manufacturers and brands are some of the reasons that Indians continue to live with their traditional floor covering solutions.

So what are the modern options in floor coverings? Several, to answer the question straight. From wooden flooring to vinyl to astro turf to a variety of synthetic solutions for both indoor and outdoor applications. Further each one of these main categories have several sub-categories and infinite design, style, price and technical options for various end uses like residential, institutional, outdoor, sports and so on.

Home Fashion spoke to some key industry players in these categories to assess the current market scenario in India. Excerpts from their views:

### **Roshan Bisani** *Director, Ego Floor*

Ego Floor is a 10 year old company, pioneering in India the sales of wooden floor coverings, completely under its own brand "Ego".

Though the Indian market for modern wooden floor coverings is in existence for over 25 years, it was very small and demand has been from niche

segments. Its only in the last 10 years, the market has started unfolding in true sense.

Key Categories in wooden floorings are Laminated flooring, engineered flooring, solid wood, outdoor and sports flooring.



*Pic Courtesy: Ego Flooring*

Currently, the Indian market size for wooden flooring would be in the range of Rs. 1000 to 1500 crore, of which only about 25% is catered by 12-15 branded and organised sector players. Of this Indian brands are not more than 2 or 3, Ego being one of them.

We also distribute in India some international brands like Quick Step from Belgium; Pergo from Sweden and Kronotex from Germany. Kronotex is world's number one brand with a market share of about 20% in India.



*Pic Courtesy: Ego Flooring*

Out of the total floor covering market in India, wooden floors account for only 2-3%, synthetic and vinyl for 7-8%, carpets for another 8-10% and stones and marbles for 80%.



### **Sunil Parekh** *Director, A to Z*

In India the demand for modern floor covering is for Polypropylene because people are influenced by the looks of the product. It is also eco-friendly and recyclable. The choice is more towards carpet tiles for office and corporate areas, vinyl flooring for hospitals and nylon flooring for general use. Major sub categories are carpet, carpet tiles, PEC flooring and vinyl.

Current size of the Indian market is about Rs. 400-500 crore, which is annually growing by 40-50%. Key players in this business currently are importers as very little is produced in India due to lack of technology, investment and market size.

A to Z markets its own brand 'walk-on' in India. Walk-on floor covering mainly manufactures wooden floor covering on planks and tiles used for both interiors and exteriors.



*Pic Courtesy: A to Z*

The products manufactured are sold by architect, dealers, distribution through online presentations from architects.

### **Vatsal Bajoria** *Proprietor, ATM Enterprises*

Key products available in India in modern home flooring are the wooden flooring and PVC or Poly Vinyl Chloride Flooring, which are considered the most important among the other categories like Polypropylene and grass flooring.

Though tiles and marble are used extensively in India, with changing trend and lifestyle, the



*Pic Courtesy: ATM Enterprises*

demand for wooden and vinyl flooring is increasing.

Wooden flooring is further divided into 3 categories which are: laminated flooring, engineered flooring, and solid wood flooring. Similarly, vinyl floorings are offered multiple varieties like tiles, carpets, strips flat planks etc.

While wooden flooring is used in offices, for homes primarily synthetic carpets, nylon carpets and cheaper Polypropylene flooring & nylon are in use. Among all the players of modern floor coverings present in India, some well European brands include Armstrong, Pergo and Kronotex.

Indian market for modern floor covering is very good and is growing by about 10-15% per annum, including in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

### **Manish Singhvi** *Director, Spaarsh*

The demand for wooden flooring is increasing year on year and it occupies 25-30% share of the entire modern floor covering market in India.

Size of the Interior wooden flooring in India is around Rs. 200-300 crores.

The products are usually imported from Europe, Korea & China. Keeping the demand in mind, wooden flooring further has been created in varieties such as a laminated, engineered and solid wood bamboo. These three have different compositions with different usages in the industry.



*Pic Courtesy: Spaarsh (VIVA Surfaces)*

In laminated flooring, High Densified Fibre (HDF) backing is done by pressing a decorative paper along with the fibre on HDF board. HDF board is a particle board with different sizes of 8mm, 10mm and 12mm. Engineered flooring is made upon Plywood or a Pine wood with a layer of actual wood on top of size 12mm. Bamboo Flooring is a solid actual real wood flooring in which actual bamboo is composed and processed.

These floorings come in planks and in tiles shape which has an interlocking system and needs a professional to install in the required spaces.

Market growth for wooden flooring is only 10% as Indian climate is mostly hot and humid, where people prefer mostly marble flooring to keep the interior cold. Besides, marble flooring is readily and conveniently available to the consumers.

### **Vinod Hemnani VP, Symphony International**

Annual growth rate of 20-25%. Main stores are in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. More stores are expected to be launched in Kolkata, Delhi and Ahmedabad over the next 4-5 years.

Distribution is done through their own dealer network besides their own shops. Direct contact with architects is maintained as 90% of wooden flooring business comes through recommendation by architects.

Retail prices for low-end wooden flooring starts

from Rs.80 Square foot and goes up to Rs. 3000 per square foot. Currently, the Indian market demand consists of about 40-50% for low-end, 30-35% for mid-range and only about 12-15% for the premium range.

Products under Symphony International are 100% imported as the raw material like oak, used specially for flooring is not readily available in India for manufacturing, so it has to be imported.

Overall market growth for wooden floor covering in India is between 25-35%, which is likely to grow at a faster pace in the future as consumers get



*Pic Courtesy: Symphony International*

exposed to the benefits of wooden flooring over marble and stone flooring, in terms of temperature control and friction on the surface. Besides, there are health benefits. For example, wooden staircase is much more comfortable to the knees, it is less tiring as it provides more flexibility to the body due to a cushioning effect which stones do not have.