

## Imports bring variety & competition

-By GD Singh

*With rapidly increasing disposable incomes in hand, high aspiration of young Indians to improve their lifestyle, much greater international exposure through travel and media and a huge population of 1.28 billion people, India is today a global marketers' dream destination, ready to consume a variety of international products. Home textiles, furnishings and home décor categories are no exception.*

*How are imports impacting the Indian market across product categories like bed & bath linen, furnishing fabrics, floor coverings, rugs and carpets, table & kitchen linen and other home textile products? What are the key benefits of imports? What is driving import in these categories? What are the current import trends? Which are key import sources for India & why? What is Indian importers opinion on the current and emerging import scenario and future of imports in India in these categories?*

*Home Fashion interacted with successful importers in different categories to find answers to these questions. A special report.*



In absolute terms, during first 10 months of FY 2014-15, India imported all made-up products worth Rs. 2,574.3 crore of which home textiles accounted for over 90%, others being products like fashion and other accessories. India's home textiles export of Rs. 23,817.7 crore during this period was almost 10 times of imports. This makes

it clear that while India has major competitive strengths in this sector, yet import of specific items in a free and growing market of India's size are inevitable for various reasons.

Contribution of home textiles in the country's total exports during Apr-Jan 2014-15 grew by 2.4% as against 2.2% during this period in the preceding

year. Contribution of home textiles in India's overall imports during these periods however remained stagnant at 0.4%. But since India's overall imports grew by over 30%, even with the same share, home textile imports have grown by 30%.

## Why import?

In this era of globalised commerce and consumers across the world seeking international lifestyle, at least partially, some degree of import of finished products in every consumer product category is inevitable, especially in the gigantic, upwardly mobile and highly aspirational market of India's size. Home textiles, furnishing fabrics and home décor are no exception.



**Mohit Modi**  
Proprietor,  
Spreadhome

Import content in the overall product mix of Indian market players varies from company to company. It also depends on whether the importer is a brand, wholesaler, distributor, retailer, or these days, even a manufacturer. Spread, a leading premium brand in bed & bath linen segment in India, has an import content of as high as 95%. Mohit Modi, Managing Director, Spread Home feels that innovations, colour co-ordination, design aesthetics and functional aspects are not as well developed in Indian products, as in their European counterparts. "Few good Indian manufacturers like Micro Cotton, who make highly innovative, world-class products, are not willing to offer their best in range products in the Indian market freely. So, we import such items from Italy, Turkey, Korea, and Portugal."

Obsession, today a well-known brand across India for modern floor coverings, rugs and bath accessories has its genesis in import. Beginning with small consignments of half a container which accommodates about five to ten thousand pieces

of bath mats depending on their size and thickness, today Envogue Furnishings, which owns this brand, imports up to 50,000 pieces per article. This makes them one of the largest customers for suppliers in Europe as well as Asia, commanding



**Ashish Dhingra**  
Managing Director,  
Obsessions

high respect, good prices and prompt service. "Internationally, we get much better service, more innovative products with quicker deliveries and even better prices," reveals Ashish Dhingra, Managing Director, Envogue Furnishings. Obsession imports ready to use finished products only, which can be sent through the retail and distribution channels immediately on arrival.



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"We thought of imports to meet the growing latent demand for good, easy to maintain, synthetic and machine made products. During 1990s, India mainly produced basic, handmade cotton floor coverings or pure wool rugs and durries," recalls



**BS Bagga**  
Managing Director,  
Dream Touch

and in 2010 he got into the role of Editor.

Earlier 60% of RR Decor collections were sourced from domestic market and 40% from overseas companies. They have designers in Italy, UK and France, besides an in-house team.

“There is no in-house production – we choose the fabric and design and get it manufactured from 27 top mills from across the world. The products are done on premium fabrics that cost between Rs.1500 to Rs.10000 per metre,” explains Khemka and adds, “We sell to countries like US, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, GCC, Oman, UAE, Iran, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, Mauritius and China, in the order. There



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is also institutional sales to hospitality sector clients and interior designers. Distribution in the domestic market is done through speciality retailers like Jagdish Stores, Seasons Furnishings and Bharat Furnishings.”

## Key products imported

### Rugs & carpets

Total value of rugs & carpets imported during the 10-month period of April-Jan 2014-15 was Rs.434.32 crore. Tufted carpets are popular import variety for India, with a share of Rs.336.15 crore.

China, followed by Thailand, USA, UAE, Belgium and Netherlands are major suppliers respectively. Woven (not tufted) Kelem, Schumacks and Karamanie are the next popular range of floor coverings imported during this period with a value of Rs.53.77 crore. Turkey is the top supplier for this, followed by Indonesia, China, Thailand, Belgium and Ireland.

### Special woven fabrics

This category according to trade definitions includes Tufted Textile Fabrics; Laces; Tapestries; Trimmings; Embroidery, Quilted Textile Products, assembled with Padding. Imports in this segment during Apr-Jan 2014-15 amounted to Rs. 951.12 crore. China was the largest supplier, with over 33% share followed by Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Germany, Thailand, Korea RP and Taiwan.

### Made-up textile articles

The category “Other made-up textile articles”, according to Government definition includes data of Sets; Worn Clothing and Worn Textile Articles; Rags, Blankets and Travelling Rugs, Bed Linen, Table Linen, Toilet Linen and Kitchen Linen, Curtains (including Drapes) and Interior Blinds; Curtain or Bed Valances, Other Furnishing Articles, Other Made Up Articles. Sooner this confusion is cleared, better would it be for the trade and monitoring and import scenario in India.

Since this category includes such a wide range of made-up products, which include largest selling home textile products in India like bed linen, curtains, furnishing and blinds, import value during Apr-Jan. 2014-15 amounted to Rs.549.7 crore. Here too, China was the top sourcing destination followed by Vietnam.

Blankets and travelling rugs were single largest item in this category making up for 75% of the imports with a value of Rs.439.2 crore. China was the dominant supplier. Import of all





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**Rohit Khemka**  
*Managing Director,  
RR Décor*