

RUGMARK NEWS

RUGMARK FOUNDATION

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RUGMARK REACHES 5 MILLION MARK!

In our previous issue RUGMARK India announced that it is close to achieve the milestone of labelling 5 million carpets/rugs with RUGMARK labels. In September this year, RM exported 5 millionth RM labeled carpet from India! "We thank our Chairperson, Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, the board members and our valued licensees (carpet exporters and importers and buyers) for this achievement." says Mrs. Sharda Subramaniam, the Managing Director of RUGMARK Foundation India.

RUGMARK label acts as certification trade mark, which assures importers and buyers that carpets with this label have been manufactured/exported by a company which has committed itself to work without illegal child labour, and which is subject to an effective surveillance mechanism.

The export of 5 million carpets/rugs with RUGMARK label coincided with 12 years of establishment of RUGMARK Foundation in India.

Mrs. Maneka Gandhi is the Chairperson of RUGMARK India since June 1995. Mrs. Gandhi, a Member of Parliament of India has been the Union Minister of India for Environment and Social Justice & Empowerment. Her involvement has helped in a big way to strengthen RUGMARK's role in the Indian carpet industry.

Germany being the second largest carpet importer for Indian Carpets, the participation of the German carpet importer has been crucial for the success of RUGMARK initiative. The involvement of the German import trade was in the beginning facilitated by IGEP/GTZ. Dr. Dietrich Keschull, one of the founders of RUGMARK initiative and his team brought in the big importers, Karstadt, Otto, Quelle, Neckermann, Kibek and other big players. Later the association of many other carpet importers, retailers from UK and European countries further strengthened RUGMARK initiative.

To further popularise and make RUGMARK initiative more widely acceptable, RUGMARK India started inspections of carpet manufacturing units, which are

in factory set up, using widely social criteria. This is expected to meet the growing trend and demand for verification of additional social standards viz, health and safety measures, compliance of social security measures etc.

RUGMARK India extends its sincere thanks to all its supporters and well wishers for their support and guidance not only in good times but also when the international carpet market was facing tough times.

TEN YEARS OF OPENING OF FIRST RUGMARK SCHOOL

The tenth anniversary of the opening of first RUGMARK School was celebrated on 23rd August 2006. The first RUGMARK School was established in 1996, in village Jagapur, Baribisa, Distt Bhadohi (U.P.). The unprecedented response to this initiative led to the opening of six more RM schools including one rehabilitation centre (residential cum day school) in the heart of carpet belt of Uttar Pradesh. The success and popularity of RUGMARK schools motivated many other organisations to give priority to basic education in the carpet region.

The carpet manufacturing and exporting company, M/s Om Carpet Company provided its building to RUGMARK Foundation on a nominal rent to run a RUGMARK School. RUGMARK is thankful to the owner of the Company Dr. O. P. Mishra (Dr. Saheb) and Raja Babu for their commitment and support for a noble cause. Their support and cooperation has helped hundreds of needy children in getting free and quality education.

The School is upgraded upto 8th standard. Presently about 300 children are receiving education in this school. The students not only get high grades they actively participate in sports and athletic events organized by the State Education Department. RM students have won many prizes at district and division level competitions. Besides, they have represented their districts at several State level sports and athletic events. Shri Lalla Ram Yadav, the physical education teacher have become a coach and guide for the school students. He constantly

motivates his students to participate in extra curricular activities as well. No wonder RM students are making their presence felt wherever they go.

TEACHERS WITH A DIFFERENCE

RUGMARK is happy to have two new teachers in RM schools. One would take up tailoring classes and the other would give craft lessons to the students. What makes this development worth reporting to our readers and supporters is the success story of two RUGMARK students: Punil and Bhola.

Punil was released from carpet weaving and was admitted in RUGMARK Balashraya in January 1997. Punil's native village is in Khagadiya District of Bihar. His village falls in the flood affected area. The inhabitants have no alternative but to go to other places in search of work. Punil had to leave his home at the age of ten. His father was given a small sum as advance payment.

Punil was found working in one of the looms in a village of Mirzapur district by RM inspection personnel within a few months of his coming for work in that area. He was admitted in RM Balashraya, where he passed High School (10th standard) examination from UP State Education Board. In addition, he acquired vocational training in tailoring and other crafts.

Punil after passing his 10th class examination expressed his desire to financially support his family. He wanted RUGMARK to help him find some work. RUGMARK schools has vacancies for tailoring teachers. After evaluating the aptitude and qualification of Punil, he was selected for the job of a tailoring teacher.

The second new teacher: Bhola, has more or less the same story. He belongs to District Garba of Bihar. After the demise of his father, it was difficult for his mother to provide two square meals to her seven children. Bhola being the eldest son had to support his family along with his mother. He was therefore lured by some middleman to the carpet belt.

Bhola was released from carpet weaving and admitted in RM Balashraya in December 1998. He passed 8th class examination last year and then wanted to financially support his family. In view of his aptitude and expertise in tailoring and stitching he was offered the job of a tailoring teacher in one of RM Schools.

RUGMARK has many such stories, which we would share with our readers in subsequent newsletters.

CARPETS FROM RUGMARK'S TRAINING CENTRE FOR WOMEN SHOWCASED AT CADEAUX, LEIPZIG, GERMANY

IGEP Foundation as a trade promotion organisation facilitates the participation of Indian companies in trade fairs in Germany. In September this year, IGEP helped some Indian companies to participate in the Trade Fair Cadeaux, Leipzig from 9-11 September 2006.

RUGMARK concept was also presented to the consumers, buyers and visitors. The Director of IGEP Foundation and RUGMARK - India's Managing Director, Mrs. Sharda Subramaniam attended the Fair to help and support Indian companies in the Fair.

The carpets manufactured at RUGMARK's Carpet Weaving Training Centre for Women at Gopiganj (Bhadohi) were displayed at the trade fair. They were appreciated for the exquisite designs, subtle elegance and attractive colours and workmanship by the buyers and other visitors. In addition, the brochures giving the information about Indian carpets and Indian carpet industry word distributed at the fair.

In this trade fair, together with Indian companies, about 430 exhibitors from 13 countries displayed their latest fashionable collections. The products displayed at the Fair included the household items like: tableware, gourmet, cookshop, crafts, gifts, lifestyle, floral design, creative games etc. Moreover, the special shows, workshops and seminars were full of ideas on how to make the stocks fly out of the door!



In the picture are seen the representatives of Otto Group, Germany in one of the RUGMARK Schools. RM students and the staff were happy to see Mr. Carsten Grassau, Mr. Theo Keller and others from Otto group among themselves in RM School, Barhi Newada, Varanasi.