



INDIAN SLEEP
PRODUCTS FEDERATION

July 2023

₹200/-

Volume 5 | Issue 3

Comfort Times

by ISPF

SMART MATTRESSES

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SMART MATTRESSES- How will this new segment grow in India?

The smart mattress segment is still at a very nascent stage in India but what is its future in India? Various research firms indicate that the global smart mattress industry is growing with the APAC region projecting higher compound annual growth rate (CAGR). The growing needs of the hospitality and healthcare sector in India is likely to drive growth for the smart mattress segment in India.....

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eMpulse Research and Data
Analytics (I) Pvt Ltd

Printed at

Aditya Graphics and Printers

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Price ₹ 200

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Do you want to start-up in the mattress industry

The Indian mattress industry is full of opportunities for startups. Anyone entering this industry must take cognizance of challenges.



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FROM THE EDITOR



On a lighter note, one could say that we are living in a 'smart age'. Our televisions, refrigerators, air conditioners and other electronic appliances are getting smarter and we are living with smarter appliances around. The integration of technology is now a conventional way of living. Anything that is not embedded with technology is either getting obsolete or is considered unique. Depends on the way people look at it. Even our mattresses are getting smarter. People would not be surprised if you would tell them about 'smart beds'.

While the global smart mattress market seems quite promising with the North America region dominating this particular segment, the Asia Pacific region reports the highest CAGR, as pointed out by Data Bridge Market Research. Industry watchkeepers are quite positive about the growth of the smart mattress segment in the Asia-Pacific region. As far as India is concerned, several factors like increase in disposable income of each household, growing consumer awareness, higher penetration of interconnected devices and consumer willingness to invest on smart household are likely to drive growth for the smart mattress segment in India. Besides that, the growth of healthcare and hospitality sector is also one of the primary reasons that will drive sales for smart mattresses in India.

In this issue, we have covered some of the interesting trends in the Indian mattress industry. A vague analysis of all the developments in the Indian mattress industry

gave us an impression that various mattress manufacturers are working really hard to lure consumers from the unorganized mattress players, who are still ruling the overall mattress market. If you just read through this issue, we have also covered about the strategies adopted by organized market players to steal the market share from their unorganized competitors, who conveniently evade taxes. And we are sure, they will soon turn this aim into a reality. Meanwhile, it is important for mattress manufacturers to prioritize sustainability which will help them run a long way in the mattress industry. The mattress manufacturers are investing the required resources and researching feasible ways to ensure sustainability right from the initial phase of mattress production. The role of mattress companies should not be limited to generating more sales. They have to maintain effective communication with their dealer and distribution network to ensure that consumers can conveniently give back the old mattresses, which could further go for safe recycling. There are many brands who are taking sustainability very seriously, right from the beginning of the production line till its used to the fullest extent by the consumers. However, a lot needs to be achieved in the area of sustainability. To ensure safe mattress recycling processes across the country, ISPF and IPUA had approached 'Kabadiwala' through which we could help the end consumers recycle old mattresses sustainably without affecting the environment. We are not going to stop here until safe mattress recycling becomes a common practice among Indian consumers.

S. SUNDARESAN



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Sheela Foam acquires Kurlon and Furlenco

Sheela Foam has announced the acquisition of mattress company, Kurlon and online furniture rental platform, Furlenco. The company confirmed that it will acquire 94.6 percent stake in Kurlon Enterprise Limited (KEL) and a 35 percent stake in Furlenco owner House of Kieraya Pvt Ltd. According to a report on *HT Mint*, the company has acquired KEL at an equity valuation of ₹2150 crore, subject to customary adjustments for working capital, debt and surplus cash. The report also mentions that the company is buying 35 percent stake in Furlenco for a cash consideration of around ₹300 crore.

The acquisition of Kurlon is likely to be completed by the year end, 2023. With this acquisition, Sheela Foam will be able to diversify its existing customer base into Southern and Eastern regions of India and after this acquisition, the company expects



to have a combined market share of 45 percent in the Indian mattress industry on a conservative outlook.

Through Furlenco's acquisition, the company aims to enter the growing branded furniture market. Furlenco is being valued at ₹857.14 crores and the company has a strong presence online with its operations in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi NCR. This acquisition is likely to close by August 31, 2023. In 2005, Sheela Foam had acquired Joyce Foam in Australia with 5 manufacturing plants and in 2019, it had acquired Interplasp in Spain.

Foam Home refurbishes its landmark store

Mattress brand Foam Home relaunched its store at Tardeo in Mumbai with a new, user-friendly design. The brand's landmark store has been designed by UK-based architectural firm, Lewis & Hickey.

With a wide range of mattresses on display, including high-density foam, memory foam, gel, latex and its globally patented ergoshell mattress technology, Foam Home offers a wide selection of products. Foam Home started as a local mattress refurbisher in the 1970s and eventually moved into manufacturing and launching sleep technologies.



The Sleep Company adds two new products to its lineup

The Sleep Company launched its two new products- the Smart Ortho Royale Mattress and the Elev8 Smart Recliner Bed. Both of these products were launched after rigorous research and testing, are designed and proven to provide unmatched comfort, support, and a peaceful sleep experience for individuals across India.

The Smart Ortho Royale Mattress takes centre stage in The Sleep Company's mattress portfolio. It is India's first and only luxurious orthopaedic mattress which has been certified by the All India Health Association, claims the company. The mattress features the pioneering RecoverX Pressure Absorbing Technology, which intelligently absorbs pressure from high-pressure body parts thus, alleviating pain. The mattress also includes Pro-Blend Technology, bringing the best of 100 percent natural latex and SmartGRID technology thereby, ensuring a peaceful sleep experience like no other.



The company also launched the Elev8 Smart Recliner Bed which comes with a Denver Leather Frame. This bed offers different recliner modes like head recline, foot recline etc. The scientifically designed, NASA-approved

zero-gravity position, reduces pressure on the spine and enhances sleep quality. The Elev8 Smart Recliner Bed also caters to routine activities through its TV or Reading Mode and Dual Massager Mode. "We firmly believe that sound sleep is a fundamental right for everyone," emphasised Priyanka Salot, Co-founder of The Sleep Company. "Through detailed research and testing, we have created the Elev8 Smart Recliner Bed and Smart Ortho Royale Mattress to revolutionise the way individuals look at and experience sleep. These products not only offer exceptional comfort but also specifically target and cater to the needs of individuals who experience back pain. Our passion for innovation and our relentless pursuit of addressing the pain points faced by individuals drives us to provide our consumers with the best possible solutions for a truly remarkable and peaceful sleeping experience while ensuring that the aesthetic of their space remains uncompromised."

Global Mattress industry to touch \$78.34 bn by 2030



The global mattress industry was valued at \$50.61 billion in 2022 and is predicted to grow from \$52.45 billion in 2023 to \$78.34 billion by 2030, attaining a CAGR of 5.90 percent during the forecast period, according to a report titled "Mattress Industry, 2023-2030" released by Fortune Business Insights

According to the report, the growing demand for customized and luxury products denotes a noteworthy shift in the consumer point of view for mattresses beyond consumer durables to an indicator of social prestige. At a higher level, the

escalating rise of domestic players offering a wide range of products is driving consumers' attention and distribution channels worldwide. Various successful launching of new products is predicted to boost the mattress industry growth during the forecast period.

The research firm has considered key global mattress players across various geographies. While North America appeared as the largest market in 2022, Asia Pacific is predicted to record the fastest CAGR during the forecast period, according to the report.

Mattress fraud costs UK mattress industry £100m a year: NBF

The National Bed Federation (NBF) has once again reported the issue of mattress fraud, in which unsuspecting consumers are being tricked into buying cheap mattresses. NBF is warning consumers to be careful while buying mattresses from unknown vendors and from certain marketplace platforms where the reliability of the products is questionable. According to NBF's estimates, around 280,000 consumers each year are buying a mattress from unreliable traders and the numbers are only increasing, as reported by Furniture News.

The growing fraud is estimated to be costing the UK bed and mattress industry around £100m per annum. Cheaply manufactured mattresses that are likely to be worth less than

£100 and they may feature a very basic spring unit with a polyester fibre pad or a layer of cheap foam over it, all covered in a cheap outer covering material, states the NBF.

NBF also explained that some of these products are actually dangerous as they must not have undergone various tests to ensure they meet UK mattress flammability regulations.

NBF's recent consumer mattress buying surveys, covering 1000 people who had bought a mattress in the previous six months, showed that in October 2022, 4 percent reported buying their mattress from a doorstep or 'back of the van' trader, whereas, the previous survey a year earlier put the figure at just 2 percent.

Tempur Sealy to acquire Mattress Firm in \$4 bn deal

Bedding company Tempur Sealy will acquire Mattress Firm in a cash-and stock-transaction valued at about \$4 bn, according to an *Associated Press* report. Mattress Firm operates more than 2,300 offline stores and an e-commerce platform. Once the Tempur Sealy acquisition is complete, the two companies will collectively own a total of some 3,000 retail stores, 30 e-commerce platforms, 71 manufacturing facilities and four research and development facilities across the world. Tempur Sealy will pay about \$2.7 bn in cash and \$1.3 bn in stock to Mattress Firm, which is partially owned by Steinhoff International Holdings NV.

After the acquisition, Mattress Firm shareholders will own about 16.6 percent of the combined company and Tempur Sealy shareholders will own the remainder. The acquisition is likely to be completed in the second half of 2024. After the acquisition is complete, Mattress Firm is set to operate as a separate business unit within Tempur Sealy.

The Associated Press report quoted Neil Saunders, Managing Director of data analytics company GlobalData, saying, selling Mattress Firm has been a "priority" for Steinhoff as the parent company looks to pay down debt. Saunders also added that through this deal, Tempur Sealy will be able to expand its distribution and reach more consumers.



Smart mattresses- How will this new segment grow in India?

The smart mattress segment is still at a very nascent stage in India but what is its future in India? Various research firms indicate that the global smart mattress industry is growing with the APAC region projecting higher compound annual growth rate (CAGR). The growing needs of the hospitality and healthcare sector in India is likely to drive growth for the smart mattress segment in India.....



The intersection of technology has become a norm in every business segment and the mattress industry is no exception. Smart mattresses are now a sub segment in the mattress industry. Smart beds or smart mattresses, use sensors and other technologies to gather data about an individual's sleep pattern. The sleep quality is reported through the smartphone connected with the bed. The data gathered on how one is sleeping could be further used to adjust or improve the sleep quality. These high tech smart mattresses are equipped with cutting-edge technology to deliver better sleep solutions. However, these are just an aid to make one sleep in a better way as they can adjust the firmness and temperature suiting every individual. More advanced versions of smart mattresses can adjust itself intermittently based on how one is sleeping.

These mattresses can be controlled with an app on your smartphone. In simple terms, the way a fitness tracker records your regular physical activities, smart beds or mattresses record your sleeping activities. They record everything happening to your body during your sleep time, namely, heartbeat, sleep quality, snoring, body temperature etc. Some smart mattresses feature more advanced technology that deliver dual zoned cooling and heating or firmness adjustment by pumping air or water in or out of the bed. It is largely useful for sleepers with medical issues as these beds can adjust themselves to address the medical or mobility needs. The global smart mattress segment is segmented into

- Polyurethane Foam, which is further segmented into HR Foam, Soft and Firm, Visco, Plastic Foam, Gel, Copper infused, Profiled, Reticulated etc.
- Hybrid,
- Innerspring, which is sub-segmented into bonnell coils, pocket coils, continuous coils, and offset coils
- Latex, which is further segmented to natural and synthetic.
- Water bed
- Air bed
- Adjustable bases

Though smart beds are ideal for medical purposes, it is also finding a space in households and in the hospitality industry. High net worth consumers are willing to invest in smart mattresses to get better sleep. If we consider a global scenario, the global smart bed segment looks quite promising, if we go by the predictions of Data Bridge Market Research, expecting the global smart mattress market to record a growth rate of 11.10 percent in the forecast period of 2021 to 2028. The market value stood at \$1500 million in 2020 and will reach \$3481.79 million by 2028. According to the market research firm, factors like rising popularity of connected devices, hike in disposable income and growing awareness about the benefits of smart mattresses are driving growth for the smart mattress segment.

(Source: Data Bridge Market Research)

Data Bridge Market Research states that North America dominates the smart mattress market and Asia Pacific will project the highest CAGR

The Indian mattress industry is still reeling under the pressure of the dominating unorganized players, price sensitive customers who still require targeted awareness programmes and most importantly the need to explore the untapped markets. Meanwhile, mattress industry watchkeepers are quite positive about the growth of smart mattresses in India. Data Bridge Market Research further states that North America dominates the smart mattress market and Asia Pacific will project the highest CAGR. However, the big question remains, how will this market pick up in India?

Is it the right time to bring smart mattresses in India in a big way? If the answer is affirmative, what should mattress manufacturers do to pester their consumers to invest in smart mattresses? Which are the key industry verticals that could drive growth for smart mattresses in India? Most importantly, how should they educate end consumers about smart mattresses? Once we find an answer to these hard questions, it would be further interesting to delve deep into the challenges manufacturers face while delivering smart mattresses.

Will smart mattresses become popular in India?

Smart mattress as a category looks very promising to industry experts but currently, it is at the nascent stage in India. Indian consumers, who primarily look for a 'value for money' product need a more convincing unique selling proposition (USP) to take interest in a smart mattress. *"The smart mattress segment is at a nascent stage in India. Though the future of smart mattresses looks good but it all depends on how long will it take to pick up in India," says Vijay Palanna, Director, Empulse Research and Data Analytics. According to Palanna, "It will be good for established brands to diversify their product portfolio by introducing smart mattress segment."*

There are various mattress manufacturers who are taking cognizance of this segment and are planning to roll out smart mattresses in the coming years. But they also know that this plan should be carried out meticulously. *"The current status of smart mattresses in India is still in its early stages. While there is growing awareness and interest in smart sleep technology, the demand for smart mattresses is yet to reach its full potential. However, with the increasing focus on health and wellness, there is a potential for growth in this segment. We recognize this opportunity and have plans to introduce smart mattresses in the market,"* says Nirbhay Gupta, CEO of Coirfit Mattress.

Currently, smart mattresses are priced at a higher side



Mattress manufacturers have to figure out ways to pester Indian consumers to buy smart mattresses.

and witnesses better demand from the premium and luxury segment. King Koil India has been operating in India for 15 years and is quite positive about the demand for technology-based mattresses. *"Recently, we launched a product named TECHNOSLEEP which can customise the support of mattress on individual sides from soft to firm with a remote which is getting a good response, another technology we have is by name SLEEP ID which helps to find a right choice of mattress for the end customers by answering some questions related to their body type and sleep preferences, that is helping retailers to sell correct mattresses,"* says Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India.

When it comes to India, the smart mattress category appears to be a mixed bag. While mattresses connected with technology could appeal to the customers but currently, it may not see higher demand due to its price tag. *"Smart mattresses are expensive and awareness about its features, benefits are yet to reach the masses. It will take some time for the smart mattress segment to penetrate the Indian market. Currently, it is placed in premium category and in the coming years, its cost is likely to come down,"* explains S Sundaresan, Secretary of Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF).

For the Smart mattress segment to grow in India, it needs to be positioned strategically among consumers. Palanna explains, *"Comfort is the strong preference when it comes to mattresses. The biggest challenge could be in terms of positioning the smart mattress. Because apart from comfort, the add-ons offered by smart mattresses can also be provided by a smartwatch. Why would people pay a premium for measuring their body vitals?"* He emphasizes that mattress brands first build the category for this segment and consumers should know about the advantages of buying a smart mattress. *"Brands have to work towards building up that interest and excitement among consumers and convince them that it is of a good value,"* he explains.

Growth Drivers for smart mattress segment in India

The industry experts indicated that the smart mattress segment will take some time to establish its presence in the India mattress market. However, they were positive about its growth in the future. There are various reasons that could drive growth for this segment in India. Key factors like increasing disposable income, growing commercial requirements and increased competition among market players are some of the possible growth drivers for smart mattresses in India.

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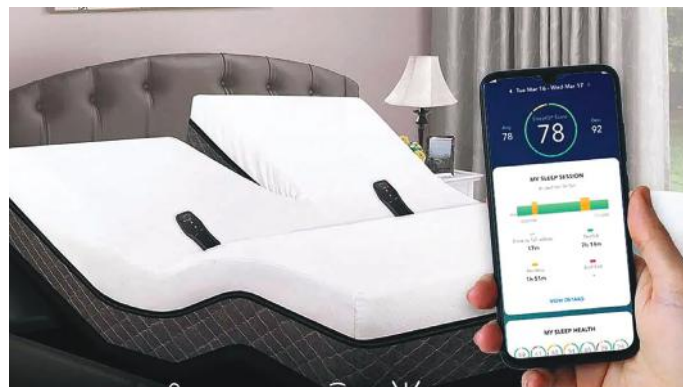
Allergies



Breathing disorders

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- **Increasing disposable income:** the increase in monthly disposable income in Indian household has pulled many consumers towards the organized market players. These consumers do their research about various options available to them and they look for a product that would suit their sleep requirements. If the smart mattress makers can address their requirements, then these consumers will probably buy them and make it a part of their lifestyle.
- **Growth of the organized segment:** The organized segment of the Indian mattress industry is gradually increasing. Many new players are entering the mattress industry with better business and product ideas. With more number of players in the organized mattress market, the industry could see some more innovation happening in the smart mattress segment.
- **Increased spending on Research and Development (R&D):** Mattress companies are increasingly investing the required financial and human resources towards R&D. With better R&D initiatives, brands can come up with feasible solutions to make smart mattresses more acceptable among Indian consumers.
- **Growing needs of hospitality sector:** If we go by the real estate consulting firm CBRE South Asia's latest report, *"investments in India's hospitality industry are expected to surpass \$2.3 billion over the next two to five years."* The Indian Hospitality sector that was one of the worst affected sectors due to covid induced lockdown. However, this sector is all set to walk through its recovery path with reopening of borders and removal of travel restrictions. Meanwhile, India being an affordable travel destination compared to other countries is going to attract more tourists and travellers across the world. This presents a good opportunity for the hospitality industry to expand further with more construction related activities in hotels and resorts etc. The hospitality industry is likely to generate more demand for smart accessories (including smart beds) to provide a good experience to their customers.
- **Increased requirements from healthcare sector:** the healthcare sector also presents tremendous growth opportunities for the smart mattress segment in India. Conducive health insurance policies, emergence of public-private partnership models, extensive liberalisation of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), cost competitiveness and availability of skilled labour are some of the key factors large scale expansion in healthcare sector of India. Hospitals and healthcare facilities are aiming at providing best healthcare services to their patients through the integration of smart mattresses and other smart devices in their premises. These aspects present immense scope for the growth of smart mattress market in India.
- **Increasing penetration of smartphones:** According to a report released by market research firm Technavio, *"Increasing penetration of smartphones has been instrumental in driving the growth of the market."* Meanwhile, another report reveals the size of the smartphone market in India. Going by a Research and Markets report, *"India*



For the Smart mattress segment to grow in India, it needs to be positioned strategically among consumers.

Smartphone market size was valued at \$139 billion in 2021, and is expected to grow with a CAGR of 10.5 percent and reach US\$ 281 billion by 2028." With a good smartphone userbase, smart mattress industry is likely to grow in India.

Road ahead for smart mattresses in India

The smart mattress segment may not be ready to perform well in India but it has tremendous potential to grow in future. The Data Bridge Market Research report mentions, the North America dominates the smart mattress market, whereas, Asia-Pacific will project the highest Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR).

Meanwhile, a Future Market Insights report states that the smart bed market is likely to report the highest market growth in the Asia Pacific region, owing to increased healthcare sector expenditure for smart bed installation in developing nations like China and India. The Asia Pacific region is likely to hold the highest CAGR of 6.8 percent between 2023 to 2033, as pointed out by Future Market Insights.

As discussed earlier, mattress manufacturers have to figure out ways to pester Indian consumers to buy smart mattresses. By addressing consumers' pain points, offering them free trial sessions and ensuring transparency in their communication with customers, smart mattresses could pull the attention of more consumers. Manufacturers have to work on the right technology that would make smart mattresses available at reasonable prices.

"Smart mattresses are a new trend in the mattress industry, and there is a growing demand for them in the Indian market. The premium mattress segment is expected to grow in the coming years due to a combination of changing lifestyles, increased

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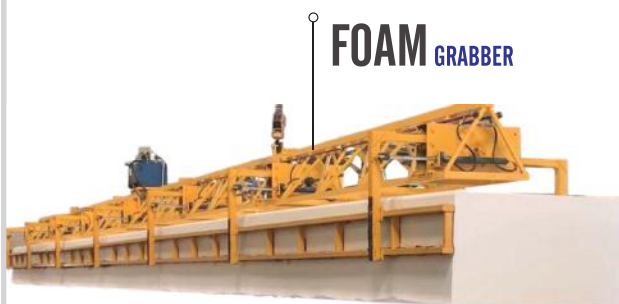
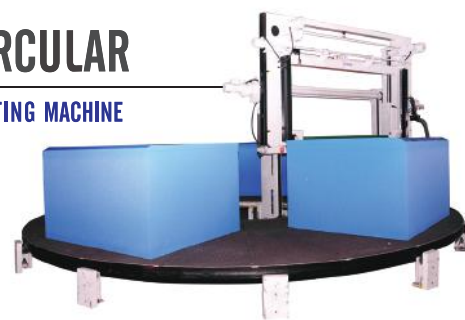
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disposable income, and growing awareness of the importance of quality sleep. At Wakefit.co, our goal is to understand customer behaviour and deploy advanced technology solutions so that we always stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends. Our innovative approach allows us to offer premium mattresses at affordable prices, thus attracting customers who appreciate the ease and convenience of our products,” says Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co.

Technological advancements and innovation are expected to play a key role in enhancing the performance of smart mattresses and expanding its application in various industries. Overall, the smart mattress segment still needs some time to penetrate the Indian market. Manufacturers need to build this segment with proper research and understand the consumers’ requirements that will enable them address their pain points. Coupled with right marketing and brand building measures, the manufacturers should also ensure that they are keeping the product value intact. [CT](#)

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- The global smart bed segment looks quite promising if we go by the predictions of Data Bridge Market Research expecting the global smart mattress market to record a growth rate of 11.10 percent in the forecast period of 2021 to 2028.
- Factors like rising popularity of connected devices, hike in disposable income and growing awareness about the benefits of smart mattresses are driving growth for the smart mattress segment.
- Factors like increasing monthly disposable income, growing hospitality and healthcare sector, increased smartphone penetration, increased spending on R&D are likely to drive growth for demand of smart mattresses.

Do you want to start-up in the mattress industry

The Indian mattress industry is full of opportunities for startups. However, starting up in this sector does have its own set of challenges and anyone entering this industry must take cognizance of all the primary challenges.



The unconventional work approach of millennials has led to the growth of startups in India. Millennials are progressive and advocate new ideas and are willing to be a changemaker in the business scenario. Going by Nasscom's findings, India ranks third globally as a startup hub with more than 4,200 startups creating over 80K jobs. Besides creating employment, startups are fresh in their approach and have unique ideas that addresses the pain point of customers.

In the recent years, the Indian mattress industry has witnessed many new brands making their way to the industry. Not only their product ideas but their business approach too, is very different, giving a break from the traditional pattern. Companies like Wakefit, Sleep Company, Flo mattresses, Repose etc. have grabbed everyone's attention for their new product ideas and distribution models. The Indian mattress industry offers significant scope for new players to enter and thrive. The growing market size, untapped market segments, evolving customer preferences, nation-wide reach through D2C model, increasing disposable income, advanced sleep technology and materials present enough scope for startups to venture into this industry. By understanding market trends, identifying gaps, and offering innovative solutions, new entrants are already capitalizing on the growing demand for quality sleep products in India.

Mattress Startups and their role in shaping up the Indian mattress industry

The Indian mattress market that is largely unorganized, new brands have established themselves as a promising alternative to established brands. *"Ten years ago, the online mattress market was less than 2 percent, but today about 12 percent of the mattress market is online. Startups have contributed well in this regard,"* says S Sundaresan, Secretary, Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF).

While the startups started reaching out to the customers by leveraging the D2C model, they had plans for the launching offline stores. This has improved the sleep experiences for the consumers. D2C mattress startups like The Sleep Company, SleepyCat, Flo Mattresses, Wakefit that gained consumers' recognition through their websites, apps and online marketplaces are now eyeing the offline route in the big way. Be it the D2C model or the brick-and-mortar model, they will continue snubbing the middlemen and reach the consumers directly through both the routes.

Startups in the Indian mattress industry have played a significant role in shaping the overall Indian mattress industry, in terms of product innovation, pricing, customer experience etc.

1. Product Innovation: Startups have introduced innovative mattress designs, materials, and technologies that were previously not widely available in the Indian market. New range of products like orthopaedic mattresses, memory foam mattresses, hybrid mattresses, and other advanced sleep

In the recent years, the Indian mattress industry has witnessed many new brands making their way to the industry.

solutions cater to specific customer needs and preferences, which has improved sleep experiences for consumers.

2. Better pricing through D2C approach: By leveraging D2C models, mattress startups have been able to offer affordable and good quality mattresses. With the D2C model, companies could eliminate the middlemen and reduce overhead costs, passing on the benefits to customers. This has created price competition and made better sleep products accessible to a wider range of consumers.

3. Consumer friendly sales strategies: Startups have embraced the e-commerce boom in India and made mattresses more accessible through online marketplaces. By offering doorstep delivery, generous trial periods, hassle-free returns, and customer-friendly policies, startups have made the purchase process more convenient and customer-centric. This shift has allowed customers to research, compare, and buy mattresses from the comfort of their homes, significantly changing the way mattresses are bought and sold.

4. Better Customer Experience: Startups have prioritized the overall customer experience by offering personalized services, responsive customer support, and addressing pain points in the buying process. They have focused on simplifying the mattress buying experience by providing detailed product information, educational resources, and transparent pricing. This customer-centric approach has helped build trust and loyalty among consumers.

5. Marketing and Branding efforts: Startups have brought a fresh approach to marketing and branding in the mattress industry. Through social media platforms, online influencers, and engaging content, they have successfully created brand awareness and garnered a loyal customer base. They have showcased the benefits of their offerings and differentiated themselves from traditional mattress brands, effectively reaching and capturing the attention of the target audience.

6. Competition and Innovation: The entry of startups has intensified competition in the mattress industry. In response, established brands have also improved their product offerings, customer service, and online presence to stay competitive. This has ultimately resulted in an industry-wide focus on innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction.

Overall, startups in the Indian mattress industry have brought about positive disruptions and raised the bar for the entire industry. They have introduced new product concepts,

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improved affordability and convenience, and elevated the customer experience. Their influence has pushed traditional players to adapt and innovate, thereby, benefiting consumers with a wider range of options and better sleep solutions.

How to start up in the mattress industry?

Starting a mattress business in India can be a lucrative venture, considering the growing demand for quality sleep products. *“One piece of advice for new-age mattress brands is that building a business in the mattress segment requires effort, dedication, and passion. The barrier to entry in this market is very low but the challenge is to differentiate oneself by understanding consumer needs and creating strong moats. The success mantra in this segment is to always listen closely to the customer and streamline business operations to cater to the evolving target audience,”* says Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co

Like any business, one needs to consider various factors before establishing a startup in the mattress industry. Startup owners must conduct a thorough market analysis to understand the current trends, competition, and consumer preferences in the Indian mattress industry. Identifying the target audience and their specific needs will help startups develop suitable products.

Working on a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) will allow consumers differentiate their products from other competitors. Startups must offer them unique features, such as orthopaedic support, eco-friendly materials, customizable options, or innovative sleep technologies. Startups should aim to provide value for money to attract customers.

Meanwhile, collaborating with the right suppliers and maintaining good business relationships with reliable and reputed mattress suppliers who can provide high-quality

By understanding market trends, identifying gaps, and offering innovative solutions, new entrants are already capitalizing on the growing demand for quality sleep products in India.

materials and components will help the startup achieve its desired objectives. New companies must ensure that their suppliers adhere to quality control standards and provide timely deliveries.

Deciding on the manufacturing process, as in, whether to manufacture the mattresses in-house or outsource production is one of the areas that should get top priority. While In-house manufacturing may require significant initial investment, outsourcing can provide cost advantages to new companies. Startups must take cognizance of their business model and determine the best solution.

While starting up in the mattress industry, it is important to leverage an appropriate distribution strategy and it should be efficiently implemented. While online platforms provide wider reach, physical stores give a ‘touch and feel’ experience to the customers. In the recent past, it has been observed that startups had first launched themselves on the online marketplaces, while having a prompt and fully operational website and user-friendly apps. And for their customers convenience, they offered a 100-day trial policy with easy exchange and return programmes. But eventually, they raised funds to go the offline route to allow their customers

to physically experience their mattresses and sleep products.

It is also important to create a strong brand identity and effective marketing strategy which will create awareness and drive sales for the new brand. Startups could leverage various social media channels, online advertising or reach out to the consumers through domain specific influencers to reach the right target audience.

In order to maintain a good image of the brand, new companies must ensure seamless customer service that would facilitate prompt responses to inquiries, smooth order fulfillment, and hassle-free returns or exchanges. If customers feel satisfied with the entire shopping experience, they will look for their next set of sleep requirements from the same brand.

One should definitely not forget the legal aspects of running the business. Startups must ensure that the business complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, including tax registrations, business permits, and product quality certifications. Complying with safety and quality standards will build trust with customers.

Once all these areas are covered startups must plan for future. It is important to explore various expansion opportunities, in terms of introducing new product lines, distribution channels and entering new markets (both domestic and international). New companies cannot afford being complacent and must innovate continuously to stay ahead of their competitors. While starting a mattress business in India offers opportunities, it is important to carefully analyze the market, understand consumer preferences, and differentiate your products to succeed amidst competition.

Startups in the Indian mattress industry have played a significant role in shaping the overall Indian mattress industry, in terms of product innovation, pricing, customer experience etc.

Starting up in the Indian mattress industry: The challenge

While the Indian mattress industry offers a lot of scope for growth for new companies, it also offers a huge set of challenges, in terms of analysing the market, understanding consumer preferences and most importantly creating a product that would address consumers' unaddressed pain point.

There are several challenges that can impact the growth and success of a startup. The Indian mattress industry is saturated with well-established and renowned brands who have been constantly innovating to float new products in the market. These established players have loyal customer bases and strong brand recognition, making it challenging for startups to compete for market share.

Establishing manufacturing facilities or finding reliable suppliers can be a major challenge for startups. Establishing strong supplier relationships, sourcing quality materials, and maintaining consistent production can be difficult, especially with limited resources and budget constraints. Additionally, there has been increased focus on creating sustainable sleep products. This means, manufacturers have to ensure sustainability right from the initial sourcing stage. This could be expensive, especially for startups who would still



be working towards establishing themselves in the Indian mattress market.

Building brand awareness and earning consumer trust can be a significant hurdle for startups. Shifting the attention of a brand loyal customer towards a new brand could be the major hurdle for new companies. Meanwhile, operating in a price sensitive Indian market, and startups often face challenges in offering competitive pricing while maintaining quality.

Gaining access to distribution channels and establishing retail partnerships can be a big hurdle for startups. It could be quite challenging for new mattress brands to convince retailers and secure a shelf space or online visibility.

Logistics and timely delivery of mattresses is another big challenge, especially for startups that rely heavily on direct-to-consumer models. Ensuring smooth and efficient delivery across different locations is a complex process and may require careful planning and partnerships with reliable logistics providers. Maintaining consistent quality and obtaining necessary certifications is another big challenge for startups and may require additional investments and adherence to strict processes.

And above all educating consumers about the benefits of different mattress types, materials, and sleep technologies can be a challenge for startups, requiring extensive marketing efforts and educational content. Additional investment will be required for training and development of sales personnels who will be the voice of the brand for customers.


Road ahead for startups in mattress industry

Despite these challenges, startups in the Indian mattress industry have the opportunity to carve out a niche by offering unique products, leveraging e-commerce platforms, focusing on customer experience, and capitalizing on evolving consumer preferences. By addressing these challenges strategically and effectively, startups can gradually establish themselves and succeed in the market.

Startups must give importance towards educating the customers as they have started realizing the importance of a good sleeping surface but need to know about the feasible options available for them. *"Today's consumer is well-aware about the importance of buying a mattress but requires guidance on which mattress to buy as per their sleep patterns,"* explains Nirbhay Gupta, CEO of Coirfit Mattress.

Startups have been attributed for bringing in innovation to the mattress industry. This industry is open to fresh ideas and if new ideas make mattress buying process easier for customers, while keeping the quality intact along with a good price, then we would probably see many more new brands with different USPs in the market. With more players in the mattress market, the mattress industry will become more

Startups have been attributed for bringing in innovation to the mattress industry.

competitive and organized. With international brands eyeing the Indian market, startups have immense potential to grow through collaboration. 

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- According to Nasscom, India ranks third globally as a startup hub with more than 4,200 startups creating over 80K jobs.
- The Indian mattress industry offers significant scope for new players to enter and thrive. The growing market size, untapped market segments, evolving customer preferences, nation-wide reach through D2C model, increasing disposable income, advanced sleep technology and materials present enough scope for startups to venture into this industry.
- Startup owners must conduct a thorough market analysis to understand the current trends, competition, and consumer preferences in the Indian mattress industry. Identifying the target audience and their specific needs will help startups develop suitable products.
- Startups must ensure that the business complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, including tax registrations, business permits, and product quality certifications.
- This industry is open to fresh ideas and if new ideas make mattress buying process easier for customers, while keeping the quality intact along with a good price, then we would probably see many more new brands with different USPs in the market.

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Mr. Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India

King Koil started its journey in India more than a decade ago and the company is quite positive about Indian consumers who are now willing to invest on a premium mattress. **Mr. Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India** discusses about the growing demand for premium mattresses in India.

Premium mattress segment in India looks promising

Q Please share about King Koil's journey in India and how has the mattress industry changed over the years in India?

King Koil has been in India for over 15 years and has always positioned itself in the premium and luxury segment of the mattress industry. In the last few years especially after covid, there has been a positive change in buying pattern of customers towards premium and luxury segment compared to pre-covid times. Moreover, many other international brands and a few domestic brands have positioned in upper segment of the industry which has positively helped this segment to grow overall.

Q King Koil is associated with some of the biggest names in the hotel industry. Could you highlight your current product lineup and other upcoming plans for the hotel industry?

King Koil has been a preferred vendor to many top global hotel chains like Marriott, Hilton, Wyndham - Ramada, Hyatt, Accor Group, Radisson Group and others. We sell to these hotel chains to a majority level for their upcoming properties and in refurbishment stages.

Q How are other industry verticals contributing to the growth of King Koil in India?

King Koil is predominantly selling to HNIs through premium and luxury retailers, interior designers across India and Nepal. However, another most contributing vertical of growth for King Koil is the hospitality market where we supply to all leading top hotel chains like Marriott, Radisson, Ramada, Hilton, Hyatt, Novotel and others.

Q We see organized market segment giving tough competition to the unorganized players. What should the organized players in the mattress market do to increase their dominance in the overall mattress segment in India?

In a few decades, as India poised to become the third largest economy of the world and as the purchasing power of people will keep improving, it is imperative to state that branded and organised players will take a majority share in the mattress market compared to unorganised players. Organised players should follow an omni-channel policy as an important marketing strategy to outgrow less organised or unorganised competitors in this market.



Q King Koil's focus is on luxury and super luxury items only. What they have learnt in the past 10 years about how the consumers prefer the premium products and what is the scope to enhance the consumer experience.

With consistent focus on the premium and luxury segment, we have learnt that the market is niche in nature but still big to accommodate many players that can expand the market further. Just like in the luxury car market, we commonly see Mercedes, BMW, Audi and other premium cars on roads. Likewise, Apple iPhone sold more than 7 million units in India last year, so purchasing power with our target segment to buy premium or luxury mattresses is very much there. There is a huge scope to enhance customer buying experience at retail outlets with better display systems with mattresses, choice of free trials and returns like in online market, choice of custom-made size mattresses etc.

Q We have seen a lot of innovative sleep products coming from King Koil's stable. Could you please highlight some of the key initiatives taken by the company to bring in some more futuristic products?

King Koil strongly believes in taking a lead in the premium or luxury mattress market by upgrading existing products and launching new products which are technologically advanced with better sleep experience to end customers. Recently, we launched a product named TECHNOSLEEP which can customise the support of mattress on individual sides from soft to firm with a remote which is getting a good response, another technology we have is by the name, SLEEP ID, which helps to find a right choice of mattress for the end customers by answering some questions related to their body type and

sleep preferences, that is helping retailers to sell correct mattresses.

Q How has the demand for technology-based sleep products been after the pandemic? How are people embracing sleep technologies and what is the road ahead for these technology-based sleep products?

It is important that when the price segment in most consumer durable industries goes up, then technology comes as a natural feature to support the price points. So, using technology or high quality technically advanced raw materials becomes important in high price point products which has definitely helped King Koil in its successful journey in the market. Demand in high price point mattress products has improved more than 30 percent, post covid and customers are seen more serious about their sleep and buying a good mattress.

Q Please tell us about your contribution in mattress recycling. It would be great if you could tell us more about the 'Respun' initiative.

Being a part of prestigious ISPF - India, we support all decisions taken so far related to mattress recycling projects and contributed for the same. This is an excellent initiative by all the members to kickstart mattress recycling project which was unheard of, few years ago and holds a good value addition in our industry. 'RESPUN' is a new sustainable line launched last year by King Koil in USA which uses all recycled and recyclable materials in their RESPUN line of products. We are still learning from the response of this line and may introduce it in India in future. [CT](#)

How is the organized mattress sector stealing the share of unorganized sector?



For quite a long time, the mattress industry has been dominated by the unorganized market players. However, in recent years, organized mattress brands have been able to grab their share in the mattress market pie. Better business strategies, changing consumer mindset and effective brand building measures have been contributing towards the growth of the organized sector.

The dominance of the unorganized sector has always been a serious concern for the Indian mattress industry. In our previous editions, we have discussed elaborately about this issue and the advantages unorganized market players have over the established brands. Over the years, mattress makers have made deliberate efforts to stand strong against the unorganized players. It is now apparent that the efforts invested by mattress brands is now reaping some positive results. The organised sector is slowly increasing their presence in the mattress market pie. The unorganised sector in the Indian mattress market has the upper hand, but the growth rate as compared to the organised sector is very less. In the last five years, the unorganised sector has grown with the CAGR of around 9 percent in terms of value which is way slower than that of the organised sector, if we go by a Research and Markets report.

One thing is clear, while the unorganized players are still dominating the industry, the organized sector is reporting higher growth than before and looks promising to compete with the unorganised players. Needless to say, in the recent years, mattress brands in India have adopted various strategies to lure more customers, who earlier resorted to local dealers for a 'cheap and best' deal on mattresses or any other sleep products. Before we discuss about the strategies adopted by organized mattress brands in stealing their share from the unorganised players, it is important to analyse what made the local brands preferable for most customers and how could the local mattress players address customer requirements?

The primary reason for the dominance of unorganized players in the mattress market is due to the large presence of small-scale and family-owned businesses in the mattress segment.

The unorganised sector typically consists of small mattress manufacturers and retailers who operate on a small scale, often locally or regionally and they lack proper branding, marketing strategies, or standardized production processes compared to their counterparts in the organized segment.

These businesses often have lower operational costs and can provide mattresses at lower prices compared to organised sector players making themselves attractive for the price sensitive Indian consumers. Meanwhile, their quick adaptability and flexibility to changing consumer demands allows them to cater to specific consumer needs. They can easily roll out new products as per local preferences as they are not bound by any preset processes. Besides that, the unorganized sector owns a widespread network of retailers and distributors, especially in semi urban and rural areas, making it easier for them to sell the products directly to their target audience.

However, in the recent years, the key players and new

Over the years, mattress makers have made deliberate efforts to stand strong against the unorganized players. It is now apparent that the efforts invested by mattress brands is now reaping some positive results

brands in the organized sector have been taking cognizance of the wider reach and popularity of the unorganised segment. The organised sector has been making deliberate efforts to match up with the consumers' needs, thereby, grabbing a bigger share in the Indian mattress market.

Shaking dominance of unorganised sector

The key players and startups in the organized sectors should be credited for their efforts towards giving a tough competition to the unorganized segment. In the recent years, players in the organized segment have increased the business focus and investment towards creating better value for their mattress products through effective marketing campaigns, innovation, quality control measures, better innovation through research and development (R&D) and strengthening their distribution channels. The organised sector is also providing employment opportunity to graduate youths of the country. Various market forces, changing consumer preferences and increased disposable income of Indian households are some of the reasons that steered growth for the organized sector. Let's analyze some of the reasons that has contributed towards the shaking dominance of the unorganised sector.

- **Pandemic as a catalyst:** The pandemic did affect many businesses but, in many ways, it did change the course of business in every sector. The mattress industry witnessed a change in consumers' perception post pandemic. The price sensitive customers became more health conscious and they understood the importance of sleep for better health. Consumers have now started investing on good mattresses. Besides that, they are educating themselves about the materials that goes into making different mattresses.
- **Increased focus on Branding and Marketing:** Organised sector companies are investing in creating strong brands and effective marketing campaigns to build consumer trust and awareness. This includes advertising through various channels such as TV, print media, digital platforms, and social media to reach more audience. By promoting their brand reputation, reliability, and quality, they aim to differentiate themselves from the unorganised sector players.
- **Product Differentiation and Innovation:** Companies are focusing on developing mattresses with unique features, technological advancements, and improved materials to set their products apart from the unorganised sector's



offerings. This includes innovations aimed at addressing specific consumer needs such as orthopaedic support, temperature regulation, and anti-microbial properties. *"The organised mattress sector is witnessing rapid growth, driven by increasing awareness of sleep health and the availability of high-quality mattresses at affordable prices. We recognise the importance of understanding and adapting to changing consumer behaviour. By staying updated with market trends and consumer preferences, we aim to better serve our customers through product research and cutting-edge innovation,"* says Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co.

- Standardization and Quality Control:** Organised sector companies prioritize quality control measures and adhere to standardised manufacturing processes to ensure consistent product quality. By offering mattresses that meet industry standards and certifications, they aim to build trust among consumers who may have concerns about the quality of unorganised sector products. *"Our motto has always been to help a consumer understand the importance of sleep. If you don't sleep, you feel tired, irritated, demotivated, and less productive. Not sleeping hampers your entire day and your health and life in the long term. Coirfit's future plans revolve around addressing these sleep requirements comprehensively. We aim to continue innovating and introducing sleep products that cater to a wide range of needs, preferences, and budgets. Our focus will be on incorporating advanced technologies, sustainable materials, and ergonomic designs into our products. Additionally, we plan to enhance our customer support and after-sales services to ensure a holistic sleep solution for our customers. We spend 25 years of our life sleeping, so why not do it the right way with Coirfit,"* says Nirbhay Gupta, CEO

The unorganised sector in the Indian mattress market has the upper hand, but the growth rate as compared to the organised sector is very less.

of Coirfit Mattress.

- Emphasis on Omni-channel presence:** To compete with the extensive local distribution networks of unorganised sector players, mattress companies are focussing on having an omni-channel presence of their business across the country. Established brands are working on their online presence to reach untapped markets. Meanwhile D2C brands are investing on the offline route. *"Organised players should follow an omni-channel policy as an important marketing strategy to outgrow less organised or unorganised competitors in this market,"* says Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India.
- Competitiveness:** Organised sector players are also focusing on offering competitive pricing to challenge the unorganised sector's advantage in terms of affordability. By leveraging economies of scale, efficient production processes, and supply chain management, they aim to offer mattresses of comparable quality at competitive prices.
- Consumer Education:** Many organised sector companies are investing in educating consumers about the importance of quality mattresses and the potential health benefits of sound sleep. This includes initiatives such as workshops, public awareness campaigns, and collaborating with healthcare professionals to highlight

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the advantages of investing in premium, well-constructed mattresses. Earlier mattress brands tried to market their product features but now their marketing campaigns are focussed on promoting the idea of 'Sleep'. Brands have been effectively communicating the idea and importance of good sleep through their marketing campaigns planned for various communication channels like print, broadcast and social media. The idea of sleep strikes a chord with the millennials who are largely sleep deprived. Road ahead for organized sector

Various research reports and industry leaders are quite optimistic about the growth of the organised sector. There is an immense scope for the organised sector to grab a bigger share in the mattress market. Consumers are demanding quality sleep products more than before and this demand will make way for better quality mattresses and sleep products in the Indian market.

Unexplored markets in tier 2 and tier 3 cities will allow mattress companies to expand their consumer base. Meanwhile, the growing adoption of D2C model by mattress companies will allow mattress brands to offer sleep products at prices suitable to larger number of consumers. Ideas like 100-day trial period will encourage people to try out new mattresses with better technologies and fabrics.

"In a few decades, as India poised to become the 3rd largest economy of the world and as the purchasing power of people will keep improving, it is imperative to state that branded & organised players will take a majority share in the mattress market compared to unorganised players," explains Archit Gupta from King Koil.

Numerous strategies adopted by mattress brands will enable organised sector companies to establish a stronger market presence, build their brand awareness and provide consumers with a wider range of choices, competitive prices and quality assurance. These measures are likely to reduce the dominance of unorganised sector in the Indian mattress market.

"Prior to the introduction of GST, two-third of the mattress industry was dominated by the unorganised segment. After the implementation of GST and increased health consciousness among people post pandemic, nearly 60 to 65 percent of the mattress market is commanded by the organized sector. We are expecting that in the next five years, the organized sector could go upto 80 to 90 percent," explains S Sundaresan, Secretary at Indian Sleep Product Federation (ISPF).

Going by a report by Makreo, *"The India mattresses market is expected to register a CAGR of 11.43 percent during 2021-2026."* The report also states that the organized mattress brands will outperform unorganized players in the coming years due to lower prices, increased health consciousness, a diverse portfolio of branded mattresses, and the entry of new players into the organized segment.

Numerous strategies adopted by mattress brands will enable organised sector companies to establish a stronger market presence, build their brand awareness and provide consumers with a wider range of choices, competitive prices and quality assurance.

In a nutshell, the organized segment in the Indian mattress sector is on track to grab a bigger share in the market. With the change in consumer mindset, better standard of living, the organised segment is only going to get bigger in the coming years. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- In the last five years, the unorganised sector has grown with the CAGR of around 9 percent in terms of value which is way slower than that of the organised sector, if we go by a Research and Markets report.
- The organised sector has been making deliberate efforts to match up with the consumers' needs, thereby, grabbing a bigger share in the Indian mattress market.
- In the recent years, players in the organized segment have increased the business focus and investment towards creating better value for their mattress products through effective marketing campaigns, innovation, quality control measures, better innovation through research and development (R&D) and strengthening their distribution channels.
- To compete with the extensive local distribution networks of unorganised sector players, mattress companies are focussing on having an omni-channel presence of their business across the country.
- Going by a report by Makreo, *"The India mattresses market is expected to register a CAGR of 11.43 percent during 2021-2026."*
- The organized segment in the Indian mattress sector is on track to grab a bigger share in the market.



Mr. Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co


Wakefit has established a strong presence in the Indian mattress market by leveraging the D2C model. **Mr. Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co** shares the company approach towards understanding consumers first.

It's important to adapt to changing consumer behaviour

Q How was the last financial year for Wakefit and what are the company's future plans in the mattress segment?
Wakefit.co clocked in revenues of Rs. 825 crore in FY 2022-23 as per the provisional unaudited financials, registering a 30 percent Y-o-Y growth compared to FY 2021-22. The organised mattress sector is witnessing rapid growth, driven by increasing awareness of sleep health and the availability of high-quality mattresses at affordable prices. By staying updated with market trends and consumer preferences, we aim to better serve our customers through product research and cutting-edge innovation.

Q What challenges did you face while operating in a D2C model?
During the first few years of our inception, the primary challenge was to build customer trust in a brand that was new in the market. The notion of shopping online for mattresses and other sleep and home solutions was a novel concept that needed awareness and education to drive customer adoption. Chaitanya, my co-founder, and I visited close to 100 customer homes personally, which helped assimilate valuable insights on customer needs, requirements, and pain points, helping us develop products and processes that would help us excel in the D2C market.

To address this challenge, we pioneered the '100-Day Buy and Try' concept and roll-packing of mattresses. The '100-Day Buy and Try' model for mattresses allows customers to experience our products for 100 days and return them hassle-free if unsatisfied, along with a 10-year warranty. We always aim to execute informative, quirky, and out-of-the-box campaigns that resonate with the emotions of our customers.

Q Wakefit eventually forayed into the furniture business. Please tell us about your furniture segment. What has been the contribution of the mattress segment and furniture segment to your overall revenue in FY 23?
In 2020, we forayed into the home solutions space. Since then, our aim has been to revolutionise the fragmented segments of the home solutions space and create a one-stop-shop for everything home in India. Over the years, we have seen favourable growth in our home solutions line, and today, it contributes to over 25 percent of the overall revenues. The sleep solutions business still accounts for the majority of our revenue, at around 60-65 percent, with the remainder coming from our accessories business. 

Mattress companies riding high on R&D

The Indian mattress industry has witnessed the emergence of new products packed with advanced raw materials and technology. Manufacturers are not shying away from investing the right amount of financial and intellectual resources towards their R&D initiatives. This article explores the areas in which mattress companies have been investing their efforts and resources.



The Indian mattress industry is in its growth phase and it is interesting to watch how the organized market players are giving their business strategies a serious push to compete against the unorganized local players. No matter, how effective the marketing campaigns or brand building measures are, it all zeroes down to the product quality. Indian consumers are now willing to pay a good price for good quality mattresses and sleep products. In order to come up with better quality sleep products, there is need for increased investment on Research and Development (R&D). R&D has been an integral part of the mattress industry. The industry has grown because of the required research initiatives taken up at various phases. In our last issue, we had covered about the various phases of the mattress industry. In 1950s and 1960s, people were introduced to the idea of mattresses. During this period, the Indian mattress industry was largely characterized by the use of natural materials such as cotton, wool, and reed. Then, came the 1970s, wherein, the Polyurethane (PU) foam made an entry to the Indian mattress market. The 1980s witnessed the growth of the modern mattress industry. In the 2000s, the Indian mattress industry had various types of mattresses, namely, PU foam, rubberized coir, spring mattresses, air beds, water beds. And now after 2020, we have been witnessing the growth of organized segment in the mattress industry.

The remarkable milestones achieved in the mattress industry could not have been possible without appropriate research and development. In every phase, mattress manufacturers realized the demerits of the existing sleep product and that triggered them to come up with something better. The shortcoming of one product made way for more research for the next product. The Indian mattress industry has gone through numerous phases of R&D to deliver the acceptable mattress products.

Current state of R&D in the Indian mattress industry

In order to meet the growing consumer requirements, it is quintessential for mattress manufacturers to invest the required financial and intellectual resources for enhanced research and development. R&D activities are important to develop innovative sleep products that offer improved comfort, support, durability, and sleep health benefits.

Through well-structured R&D, the Indian mattress industry has been able to roll out mattresses and other sleep products with advanced materials and technologies. While the manufacturers have successfully launched memory foam, latex, polyurethane foam, and coir mattresses with better features for body support, pressure relief, and temperature regulation, they are also focussing on creating better value out of these materials and create more sustainable products that will last longer.

R&D is not only restricted to the raw materials used in production process. Manufacturers are researching more on better and efficient manufacturing processes and ways

In order to come up with better quality sleep products, there is need for increased investment on Research and Development (R&D).

to create customised mattresses. Each consumer's need is different and hence, through customisation, mattress brands will be able to lure more customers towards their brand. *"Our manufacturing facility has a testing laboratory with capabilities for temperature testing, pressure testing, and humidity mapping, among other things. A lot of our capital is invested in R&D at the product development stage. Leading with research and innovation, world-class machinery, and automation in the production process, our aim is to provide innovative products at affordable prices to the 'progressive yet practical' audience of today. With our focus on backward-integrating our operations and setting up state-of-the-art mattress and furniture factories, we ensure that we keep a razor-sharp focus on R&D and innovation,"* explains Ankit Garg, CEO and Co-founder, Wakefit.co.

There has been increased focus on every aspect of the mattress to suit the sleep requirements of most consumers. Manufacturers are not shying away from investing a substantial amount towards R&D. As Nirbhay Gupta, CEO of Coirfit Mattress explains, *"Our dedicated R&D team works consistently to develop path breaking innovations that enhance the comfort and quality of our sleep products. We invest a substantial amount in R&D to ensure that we offer the best mattresses to our customers. From inside material to outside fabric, our R&D analyses each and every miniscule aspect that goes into making a mattress. This is what allowed us to be pioneers and the first mattress brand in India to launch revolutionary products like Nano pocket mattress, Charcoal mattress, Grid mattress, Gold infused mattress and the list goes on."*

R&D efforts are being made to develop smart mattresses that incorporate technology like sensors, sleep trackers, and adjustable firmness settings. These mattresses should be equipped with the right technology to provide real-time feedback on sleep patterns, offer personalized sleep recommendations, and even adjust the mattress's firmness and support based on individual preferences. The demand for smart mattresses is still in its initial phases but this demand will only hike with consumers willing to pay a higher price for it, if it is equipped with better technology and other advanced raw materials. As explained by Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India, *"It is important that when the price segment in most consumer durable industries goes up, then technology comes as a natural feature to support the price points. So using technology or high quality technically advanced raw materials becomes important in high price point products which has definitely helped King Koil in its successful journey in the market. Demand in high price point mattress products has*



The Indian mattress industry has gone through numerous phases of R&D to deliver the acceptable mattress products.

improved more than 30 percent post covid and customers are seen more serious about their sleep and buying a good mattress."

Role of startups in steering R&D

Startups have significant contribution towards steering innovation through increase research and development efforts. They have challenged the traditional ways of business in the mattress industry by bringing in fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and disruptive technologies. Their R&D efforts had also influenced the established players to start a new trend in the industry. They got some variety to the mattress industry by developing unique and niche products that cater to specific consumer needs, such as orthopaedic mattresses, eco-friendly mattresses, or mattresses for specific medical conditions. Innovative features like cooling technologies, customized sleep solutions, and smart mattresses with integrated sensors and tracking capabilities are now the latest trends in the Indian mattress industry due to some startups who thought 'out of the box'.

Their R&D efforts have pushed the boundaries of innovation as they did not shy away from collaborating with technology companies to bring technological advancements to their products. Meanwhile, they are pioneering environmentally friendly alternatives, such as organic cotton, bamboo, or natural latex that would last longer and suit

the growing need for eco-friendly sleep products among consumers. Startups are also focused on leveraging the right technology in the manufacturing processes that would help them optimize supply chain management, reduced material wastage, and enhanced production capacities. Their innovative manufacturing practices have enabled faster prototyping, more iterations, and faster market launches.

They have also worked on ways to understand their consumers' pain point in a better way. Ankit Garg of Wakefit, the company that pioneered the '100-Day Buy and Try' concept and roll-packing of mattresses, says, *"We noticed that in the traditional mattress market, there was little to no innovation in the product that was being sold; it was highly overpriced, and the sales representatives of retail stores had no knowledge of the science of sleep. The lack of transparency and high markups on mattresses further fuelled our determination to offer a better alternative to consumers. Our customer-centric DNA and a keen eye on R&D and innovation enabled us to establish Wakefit.co as a leading player in the Indian D2C market."*

Startups in the Indian mattress industry have brought agility, disruption, and innovation to the R&D landscape. By challenging traditional norms, embracing sustainability, leveraging technology collaborations, and focusing on customer-centric solutions, startups have paved the way for



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R&D is not only restricted to the raw materials used in production process. Manufacturers are researching more on better and efficient manufacturing processes and ways to create customised mattresses.

will conduct thorough research, surveys, and user testing to gain better understanding about consumer preferences and expectations.

It would be right to say, in future R&D will drive further innovation and advancement in the Indian mattress industry. With a focus on advanced materials, sustainability, customization, health-centric features, comfort, and consumer feedback, R&D will continue to drive the growth and transformation in the industry. [CT](#)

the industry's growth, setting new benchmarks for R&D in the mattress market in India.

Road ahead for R&D in mattress segment

R&D efforts and initiatives in the Indian mattress industry will continue to grow. Established mattress manufacturers and startups are prioritizing their R&D efforts to stay ahead in the competitive mattress market. Mattress companies will increasingly divert their resources towards researching on advanced materials and technologies in mattress manufacturing. R&D spendings are likely to increase due to

- Integration of technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and Internet of Things (IoT) into mattresses.
- Enhanced customization and personalization suiting the individual requirements.
- Health centric features to address sleep related issues.
- Enhance the antimicrobial, hypoallergenic, and orthopedic properties of mattresses.
- Sustainable and eco-friendly sleep solutions.
- Innovative designs and construction techniques that offer better support, pressure relief, and temperature regulation.

In coming years, the Indian mattress industry will witness more collaborations and partnerships between mattress manufacturers, startups, technology companies, and research institutions. These partnerships will encourage more R&D efforts through shared knowledge, resources and funding. R&D activities in the mattress segment will largely be driven by consumer insights and feedback. Manufacturers

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- R&D has been an integral part of the mattress industry. The industry has grown because of the required research initiatives taken up as various phases.
- R&D activities are important to develop innovative sleep products that offer improved comfort, support, durability, and sleep health benefits.
- While the manufacturers have successfully launched memory foam, latex, polyurethane foam, and coir mattresses with better features for body support, pressure relief, and temperature regulation, they are also focussing on creating better value out of these materials and create more sustainable products that will last longer.
- Startups have significant contribution towards steering innovation through increase research and development efforts. They have challenged the traditional ways of business in the mattress industry by bringing in fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and disruptive technologies.



Mr. Nirbhay Gupta, CEO of Coirfit Mattress

The growing demand for quality sleep products will pave way for new mattress technologies, says **Mr. Nirbhay Gupta**, CEO of Coirfit Mattress. He shares his views on the success of the company's D2C model and effective ways to recycle coir mattresses.

Innovating to cater to evolving customer needs

Q Please tell us about your journey in the mattress industry since the late 70s and in what ways has the mattress industry in India changed over the decades?


Coirfit was established in 1986 and our journey started with a focus on traditional coir mattresses. Over the decades, we have witnessed significant changes in the industry. The demand for quality sleep products has grown exponentially, leading to the introduction of several new mattress technologies and materials. Coirfit has adapted to these changes by constantly innovating and introducing new products to cater to evolving customer needs. Currently, we have more than 2 million customers, 10000+ 5-star reviews, 900+ retail stores all over India, 10+ certifications which means each of our product and raw material is certified. We are proud to say we have increased our production capacity and easily produce up to 2000 mattresses each day.

Q In 2006, Coirfit had adopted the Direct to Consumer (D2C) model for the first time. What challenges did you face during those days when you approached customers through this model?

Adopting the Direct to Consumer (D2C) model in 2006 posed several challenges for Coirfit as big e-commerce websites were not in play and online buying was not a trend or a favoured option. Other challenges were high shipping cost and getting appropriate delivery partners.

Customers always have a mindset to feel the comfort and support of the mattress before purchasing. Online model completely eliminates this process so building trust and convincing customers to make such a significant purchase without physically experiencing the product was also a significant hurdle. With effective marketing strategies, transparent communication, and a focus on customer satisfaction, we were able to overcome these challenges.

Q What is your view on the Recycling of Coir mattresses? How can this be effectively carried out?

About 1,300 tons of cotton fibers and coir are extracted from discarded mattresses, annually. So, we strongly believe that the recycling of coir mattresses can contribute to a sustainable environment. Coir mattresses can be effectively recycled by implementing proper collection and recycling processes. We are working towards collaborating with organizations specializing in mattress recycling. By raising awareness and providing convenient recycling options, we strive to ensure that discarded coir mattresses are effectively recycled and their materials utilized in making more eco-friendly products like cocopeat, coir mats, etc. 

Sustainability in mattress industry: More than just a 'buzzword'

Sustainability is more than just a trend in the Indian mattress industry. With growing demand for mattresses among Indian consumers, manufacturers are working on several initiatives towards ensuring sustainability in their entire production lifecycle.



The Indian mattress industry has been making several efforts to increase the demand for mattresses among consumers. Most of the market research reports claim that the Asia Pacific region is quite promising to drive growth for the global mattress market. Manufacturers in countries like India, China, South Korea, and Japan have quickly adopted new materials, construction techniques, and sleep technology in their mattress offerings, if we go by a report from Brainy Insights. Additionally, the rise of e-commerce platforms and the development of a robust retail infrastructure have made it easier for mattress companies in the region to reach a broader customer base. India is a promising growth region for global mattress industry. Mattress manufacturers have been leveraging several technologies to deliver unique sleep products. Coupled with other factors like the adoption of D2C model for wider consumer base, consumer education about good sleep and growing consumer awareness about good quality sleep products is driving growth in this segment. This means, in the coming years, there will be more demand for good mattresses and hence, ensuring sustainability at all levels of mattress manufacturing is quintessential among Indian mattress manufacturers. While recycling of mattresses or other sleep products is important, companies have realized that sustainability must be ensured right from the material sourcing stage.

Many mattress manufacturers in India are shifting towards using sustainable and eco-friendly materials in their products. Natural and organic materials like organic cotton, bamboo-derived fabrics, natural latex, and coconut coir are being used as alternatives to synthetic materials. These materials are biodegradable, renewable, and have a lower environmental impact. Issues like climate change, global warming has pestered us to realize the importance of creating sustainable solutions around us. Businesses are willing to invest in research and development to create sustainable solutions in their respective market segments. Sustainability is important for environmental protection, resource conservation, social responsibility, health and well-being, future proofing while maintaining economic advantages.

Several mattress manufacturers in India have obtained certifications like Global Organic Latex Standard (GOLS) and Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), which ensure that the mattresses are made of organic and sustainable materials and meet specific environmental and health criteria. These certifications guarantee that the mattresses are free from harmful chemicals, VOCs, and other substances that can be detrimental to the environment and human health. Manufacturers are adopting energy-efficient production processes to reduce their carbon footprint. This includes using energy-efficient machinery, optimizing production lines, and incorporating sustainable practices in their manufacturing facilities. Many mattress manufacturers have implemented environmental management systems to ensure responsible use of resources, reduce waste

While recycling of mattresses or other sleep products is important, companies have realized that sustainability must be ensured right from the material sourcing stage

generation, and minimize their impact on the environment. These systems promote sustainable practices throughout the production and supply chain.

Mattress Circular Journey (MCJ) programs and recycling initiatives allow customers to return their old mattresses for proper disposal or recycling when they purchase new ones. The collected mattresses are then dismantled, and various components are recycled or repurposed to reduce waste. Many Indian mattress makers have collaborated with Indian Sleep Product Federation (ISPF) to offer convenient solutions to consumers to dispose their old mattresses in the safest manner.

Growing importance of sustainability in the mattress industry

What happens to our old mattresses, when we give it to some local recyclers or raddiwala. These mattresses eventually end up in some landfills. The traditional mattress industry is to be held responsible for tons of chemical emissions and other pollutants that has serious damaging effects on our planet. Sustainability is not merely a country's problem or an individual's responsibility. It is a global issue and must be addressed through well collaborated and cohesive efforts. The growing adoption of ESG practices among various business groups gives us an impression that businesses are no more only focussed on their profits and growth but they are also deeply thinking about their responsibility towards the environment.

A large number of Indian consumers are looking at buying mattresses or sleep products from reputed brands because they understand that these brands will ensure good product quality and safety. Mattresses have significant impact on one's health and these days consumers are interested in knowing the materials that goes into making their sleep surface. Meanwhile, businesses are also paying attention to sustainability to ensure safety for their consumers and workers who are involved in production of mattresses.

Like their global peers, Indian mattress makers are also taking several initiatives towards ensuring a holistic approach towards ensuring sustainability in mattress production. Companies are employing sustainable measure right from the raw material procurement stage. *"Sustainability is a policy adopted by all mattress manufacturers, who are now trying to ensure sustainability at the design stage itself. They ensure that all raw materials used are sustainable,"* explains S Sundaresan, Secretary of Indian Sleep Products



Federation (ISPF).

Manufacturers are now prioritizing sourcing materials from responsible suppliers who adhere to ethical labour practices and use sustainable raw materials. Manufacturers are increasingly opting for natural and eco-friendly materials like organic cotton, natural latex derived from sustainable rubber tree plantations, coconut coir, and bamboo-derived fabrics in their mattress manufacturing process. Mattress makers are making deliberate efforts to avoid using harmful chemicals in their mattresses. Instead, they are actively exploring the option of low or zero VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) materials that will ensure the mattress is free from toxic substances and does not lead the product to off gas.

Ensuring energy efficient manufacturing process and creating long lasting products will ensure lesser waste generation. *"The more you remove the old mattress from this ecosystem, more new mattresses will be sold"* explains Sundaresan.

Effective recycling methods to ensure sustainability

Effective recycling and waste management practices will contribute a lot towards creating a sustainable ecosystem in the mattress manufacturing ecosystem. Manufacturers are resorting to responsible waste management practices and are following a structured procedure for mattress recycling. When it comes to coir mattresses, Nirbhay

Gupta, CEO of Coirfit Mattress explains, *"About 1,300 tons of cotton fibers and coir (coconut fiber) are extracted from discarded mattresses annually so we strongly believe that the recycling of coir mattresses can contribute to a sustainable environment. Recycling coir mattresses can be effectively carried out by implementing proper collection and recycling processes. We are actively working towards creating partnerships and collaborations with organizations specializing in mattress recycling. By raising awareness and providing convenient recycling options, we strive to ensure that discarded coir mattresses are effectively recycled and their materials utilized in making more eco-friendly products like cocopeat, coir mats, etc. Overall, the recycling of coir mattresses is a valuable step towards creating a circular economy and reducing waste. By implementing efficient collection systems, appropriate disassembly techniques, and finding new markets for the recycled coir, the process can be effectively carried out, benefiting both the environment and the economy."*

Manufacturers are implementing recycling initiatives and collaborate with recycling organizations to establish mattress take-back programs. These programs ensure that mattresses are properly disposed of or recycled, reducing the amount of waste going to landfills. *"All reputed brands have now collaborated with ISPF towards promoting sustainability. Now, 'mega exchange programs' are also being initiated, in which, brands are giving discounts to consumers who are ready to give back old mattresses. So, now when consumers buy a new mattress and exchange their old on, they are entitled to get a flat*

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discount. Brands will now collect the old mattress, recycle it and use it. Currently, this project is in a pilot stage and is being carried out in Bangalore. Sometime, early next year, this initiative will be rolled out in other cities," explains Sundaresan.

Brands are increasingly looking at utilizing the recycled materials to create new line of sleep products. One such initiative is King Koil's 'Respun' initiative, which was launched last year by King Koil in USA. In this initiative, all recycled & recyclable materials are used towards producing the company's RESPUN line of products. *"We are still learning from the response of this line and may introduce it in India in future,"* says Archit Gupta, Managing Director of King Koil India.

Last year, Duroflex had revamped and extended its eco-friendly range of mattresses and sleep accessories named Natural Living. The company had introduced mattresses, mattress toppers, pillows, and bed linens made entirely of natural materials - 100 percent Natural Latex, Rubberised Coir, Cotton, Tencel, and Ethicot.

Road ahead for sustainable sleep products in India

The Indian mattress industry is actively working on raising awareness and educating consumers about the importance of sustainability. Companies are sharing information about their sustainable practices, eco-friendly materials used, and the benefits of choosing sustainable mattresses. With the effects of climate change becoming more apparent every passing year, sustainable products and recycling initiatives will become a regular practice in the entire mattress production lifecycle.

"Companies are increasingly becoming conscious about

sustainability because a bigger set of customers understand sustainability better. More than, technology enables sleep products, consumers are showing more acceptability towards sustainable sleep solutions," explains Vijay Palanna, Director, Empulse Research and Data Analytics. The Indian bedding industry is working cohesively to create more sustainable and chemical free products that will contribute towards waste reduction and make recycling processes easier. As sustainable products and initiatives appeal to consumers more, manufacturers will be now have an additional responsibility towards their consumers to adopt a holistic approach towards sustainability. Additionally, they also have to showcase their certifications that would prove their commitment towards sustainability. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- In the coming years, there will be more demand for good mattresses and hence, ensuring sustainability at all levels of mattress manufacturing is quintessential among Indian mattress manufacturers.
- Businesses are willing to invest in research and development to create sustainable solutions in their respective market segments.
- Like their global peers, Indian mattress makers are also taking several initiatives towards ensuring a holistic approach towards ensuring sustainability in mattress production.
- Manufacturers are implementing recycling initiatives and collaborate with recycling organizations to establish mattress take-back programs.
- Companies are sharing information about their sustainable practices, eco-friendly materials used, and the benefits of choosing sustainable mattresses.



Mr Remy Tack, CEO of Global Textile Alliance (GTA)

In an exclusive interview with Comfort Times, **Mr. Remy Tack**, CEO of Global Textile Alliance (GTA) shares about the growing Indian mattress industry and how the organized sector should work towards building awareness on the importance of sleep.

'Organized sector should make consumers aware of the importance of sleep'

Q You started your Indian operations in 2012. What was the market size when you entered at that time and how much has it grown now?

The market has grown in a big way. When we started, a lot of the market was done with the typical printed fabrics but today the market has matured and we are buying a lot of jacquard fabrics, knitted fabrics and the market in general has grown in size. Some of the players that were back then have become bigger and many new players that have come into the market. We also consider that the unorganized market has grown a lot. Looking at the organized and unorganized market, the market has grown in very large way.

Q As an industry expert, going forward, what kind of innovation you think that the industry will see?

It depends from country to country but in India, we need to be price conscious for the consumer. The innovation that are there in the market today and the innovation of the future will also become more available for the Indian markets. Again, it depends on the maturity of the markets and the market being able to accept the price points of innovation that today are higher in other parts of the world like Europe and America.

Q In the last 11 years of your presence in India, how are you finding the Indian market?

I have always been impressed the resiliency of the Indian market and the Indian consumers. It is important for the organized sector to make sure that the consumer understands that they need to invest in their sleep. In India, the consumer at this moment is not educated enough on the importance of sleep. It is important for consumer, the industry and the government to bring up a message to consumer that how important sleep is and to put the right value to sleep. I see the biggest risk in the market as the organized sector is becoming big in the market and all the bigger professional companies are struggling on how to deal with this unorganized sector. It is



important to keep the vision ahead as India is growing, the middle class and the upper class are growing and we need to tell the consumer clearly, invest in your sleep. I think this is the biggest challenge ahead of the market i.e. to make sure that we teach the importance of sleep.

Q Can you share some of your sustainability efforts? How is GTA working in that direction?

Sustainability is going to be a huge push going forward, globally with in our opinion Europe taking the lead. It is hard to talk about sustainability because sustainability is so broad. For our group, both in textiles and latex business, we want to be the market leader in sustainable solutions for our customers. We will have the sustainable products ready, we already do, and soon as the customers and the market are ready, we are able to supply it. Another thing that we work on a lot is how do we improve our processes. We have something in our group that is called 'act for home' textiles and that really suggests that whenever we are making decisions, we also think about the future. We have all the options but there is no point trying to be quicker than the markets. The consumer is getting more conscious and we have to make sure that the consumer has the option. Over the next decade, I do believe that our industry will become extremely green and there will be a lot of options.

Q Could you please highlight what challenges the industry may face in future and how can one navigate

those challenges?

To me the biggest thing in India is the unorganized sector and how we deal with the unorganized sector. We need to make sure that the consumer understands that they need to invest in their sleep. This year it seems like to me, the industry is either flat or either has experienced some degrowth, which is not abnormal, if you compare with the global issues that are going on. It is important not to also panic in the area of degrowth and to focus on the market, the consumer and on the long term because the long-term potential in India is very big that is why we invested here 11 years ago.

Q What are your plans for India in the coming years, in terms of expansion, product launches and other initiatives?

To be honest, there are no real investment plans on the table. When it comes to investments towards our customers, our goal is always to supply our customers with the best balance of great quality, service, know how at a good price and we will continue to do so and lead efforts there to get better for our customers. The team needs to work together and that is what we always try to do and look at the solution for the customer. We invite our customers to our showrooms and factories around the world. We try to bring as much value as possible to our customers. We are very thankful for our customers and our team locally. We have a very good team in Coimbatore and Ambala. We are looking forward to our next decade in India. **CT**



#phenkonahirecyclekaro

Mattress Recycling- From 'Linear' to 'Circular'

With the Indian mattress industry recording better sales numbers each year, it is essential to take cognizance of safe and effective mattress recycling methods. Consumers, manufacturers and recyclers have to work cohesively towards devising sustainable and environment-friendly recycling methods.

The Indian mattress industry is growing with consumers demanding better quality mattresses and other sleep products. Backed by better income levels, Indian consumers, these days are not only willing to buy good quality mattresses but they are also looking at effective and safer ways to recycle their old mattresses. While they resort to the local recyclers to take away the old mattresses, there is no assurance of these recyclers deploying the correct method to recycle the mattresses. Mattress recycling is an area of serious concern both for the mattress industry and environmental activists, as these are bulky products and if correct methods of disassembling the raw materials does not happen, then these bulky wastes will end up in landfills and will take years to decompose.

Needless, to say, if the mattress was made with various chemicals, it will have a hazardous impact on our environment. Meanwhile, while handling the old mattresses during the disposal process, it would expose the scrap or junk dealers and their workers to the ill-effects of these hazardous substances.

Now, the big question is, if people buy mattresses and use it over for some years, where will these mattresses go? Are there enough mattress scrap dealers in this country? Do they follow the right method to disintegrate the raw materials of the mattress and recycle it safely? Most importantly, do mattress users or consumers know the right set of people who can handle mattress waste efficiently?

These are some hard questions that need an answer. When it comes to mattress recycling, a lot of mattress users in India follow a 'linear method' of recycling, in which, they handover the old mattresses, pillows and other sleep products to their domestic help or local scrap dealer, who don't have the know-how about the appropriate mattress recycling method. In India, mattress recycling is still in the stage of infancy and is yet to become regular practice among Indian consumers, mattress manufacturers and recyclers.

Mattress Recycling: Switching from Linear to Circular approach

In order to avoid the mattresses to end up at landfills that will in turn cause more environmental pollution, it is quintessential that mattress recycling in India adopts a 'circular' approach. In the circular approach, consumers hand over the old mattresses to retailers and buy new mattresses while availing some discounts on the new mattress. Recycling of mattresses have become more important now because with rising income levels and increased purchasing power among Indians, a greater number of mattresses are estimated to be sold in the coming years. While this may be good news for mattress manufacturers, they also need to figure out ways to ensure that old mattresses are discarded in a responsible manner. Effective recycling methods will divert a large amount of mattress wastes from landfills, thereby, preventing environmental pollution upto a great extent. With proper recycling methods, raw materials of the

Mattress recycling is an area of serious concern for the mattress industry, as these are bulky products and if correct methods of disassembling the raw materials does not happen, then it will end up in landfills.

old mattresses like steel, foam, wood etc can be procured and used to make new products. Additionally, it will create employment opportunities for those involved in various stages of recycling.

"The objective of circular recycling is the raw materials in the old mattress is recovered and repurposed. It also creates employment opportunities for many people who would be engaged in different stages of recycling. With recycling, you are preventing pollution and saving the earth. By removing older mattress, you are having an opportunity to use new mattresses," explains S Sundaresan, Secretary, Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF).

Many Indian mattress makers have collaborated with Indian Sleep Product Federation (ISPF) to offer convenient solutions to consumers to dispose their old mattresses in the safest manner. ISPF has collaborated with 'Kabadiwala' through which they aim to help the end consumers recycle old mattresses sustainably without affecting the environment.

The team of the 'Kabadiwala' goes periodically and collects the old mattress and brings it to a stockyard. They sort out the used mattresses and separate each component like Cloth, Foam, Coir and Spring etc and repurpose them. The objective of the ISPF #phenkonahirecyclekaro got phenomenal response from mattress users in Bhopal and Indore through a pilot project, wherein, people could handover their old mattresses to the Kabadiwala.

Mattresses or sleep products are not cleaned regularly, instead, their bedsheets or covers are changed after a few days. The weight of the mattress almost doubles after being used for ten years or so. Human body wastes like dead skin cells, hair, sweat etc. get deposited on the mattresses that in turn leads to growth of bacteria and fungi. Hence, there is a need to change the mattress every five years.

ISPF is creating awareness on the need to change mattresses every five to ten years (in case of premium mattresses). People will not hold themselves back, when it comes to recycling their mattresses if they get an opportunity to do so, thinks ISPF. Further ISPF is conducting various awareness programs to spread the message that there is need to replace old mattresses.

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When it comes to mattress recycling, a lot of mattress users in India follow a 'linear method' of recycling.

Collaborative efforts from consumers, manufacturers and recyclers

To ensure circularity in mattress recycling, mattress users, manufacturers and recyclers have to work collectively to build up a cohesive approach towards mattress recycling. Companies should look at employing sustainable measure right from the raw material procurement stage. While a lot of mattress makers are using sustainable products right from the assembling stage, it is yet to become a norm.

Manufacturing and selling more eco-friendly and sustainable mattresses will ensure that consumers buy these products and after using it for some years, they can hand it over to recyclers who can recycle it effectively without causing harm to the environment.

Additionally, sustainable material can be recycled and used for other different purposes. Manufacturers should opt for natural and eco-friendly materials like organic cotton, natural latex derived from sustainable rubber tree plantations, coconut coir, and bamboo-derived fabrics in their mattress manufacturing process. Instead of using harmful chemicals for mattress production, low or zero VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) materials should be used that will ensure the mattress is free from toxic substances.

Once consumers buy these responsibly manufactured mattresses, they can safely use it for some years and then exchange it with authorized retailers. "All reputed brands have now collaborated with ISPF towards promoting sustainability. Now, 'Mega Exchange Programs' are also being initiated, in which, brands will offer attractive discounts to consumers who are ready to give back the used mattresses.


So, now when consumers buy a new mattress and exchange their old one, they are entitled to get a bulk discount. Brands will now collect the old mattress, recycle it safely," explains Sundaresan.

Need for legislation

Mattress manufacturers in India are trying numerous methods to drive sales of their sleep products. With growing income levels of consumers and increased health consciousness, consumers will no more shying away from buying new mattresses. Manufacturers have also noticed a positive shift in consumers' attitude, wherein, they are no more lured by cheap products.

As mattress sales go up and a large population demands mattresses, it is high time that there are some clearly

mentioned rules with regards to mattress recycling.

As of now, there are no clear legislation mandating safe mattress recycling practices in India. The Extended Producers' Responsibility (EPR) that has been implemented in many countries, including India, encourages manufacturers to take responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products, from production to disposal, however, there are no clear rules with regards to mattress recycling. In the absence of clearly defined rules or legal framework, it becomes difficult to make safe recycling of mattresses a normal practice in India. Unless, defaulters in the entire mattress recycling process are penalized, it would be difficult to prevent mattresses from ending up at landfills. 

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Backed by better income levels, Indian consumers, these days are not only willing to buy good quality mattresses but they are also looking at effective and safer ways to recycle their old mattresses.
- In India, mattress recycling is still in the stage of infancy and is yet to become regular practice among Indian consumers, mattress manufacturers and recyclers.
- With proper recycling methods, raw materials of the old mattresses like steel, foam, wood etc can be procured and used to make new products. Additionally, it will create employment opportunities for those involved in various stages of recycling.
- ISPF has collaborated with 'Kabadiwala' through which they aim to help the end consumers recycle old mattresses sustainably without affecting the environment.
- The Extended Producers' Responsibility (EPR) that has been implemented in many countries, including India, encourages manufacturers to take responsibility for the entire lifecycle of their products, from production to disposal, however, there are no clear rules with regards to mattress recycling.



ELEVATING RETAIL SUCCESS: Consultative Selling Education Steals the Show at HGH, India Expo's "World of Sleep"

Empowering Mattress Industry Retail Partners Through Insightful
Consultative Selling

In a groundbreaking showcase of industry collaboration and innovation, the recent HGH India Expo witnessed an enlightening event that left a significant mark on the mattress industry. The event, hosted by the "World of Sleep," a visionary joint initiative by the Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF) and HGH India, unfolded as a pinnacle of knowledge exchange and empowerment for retail partners. Through consultative selling education, participants were equipped with the skills and strategies to excel in a rapidly evolving market.

Empowering Retail Excellence

The world of retail is in constant flux, particularly within the dynamic landscape of the mattress industry. In this ever-changing environment, staying ahead necessitates more than just product knowledge; it demands a comprehensive understanding of customers' needs and the art of guiding them towards the perfect sleep solution. This is where consultative selling comes into play, and the HGH India Expo's "World of Sleep" event delivered precisely that.

Collaborative Brilliance: ISPF and HGH India

The event's significance was elevated by the esteemed presence of Mr. Sundaresan, Secretary of ISPF, and Mr. Kalyan, Senior Professional Facilitator. Their commitment to driving industry progress was palpable, and their joint efforts to curate this event demonstrated a clear dedication to enhancing the capabilities of retail partners.

Session Overview: A Glimpse into Retail Transformation

Spanning across four days, each session held within the "World of Sleep" stall provided an intensive 15 to 20-minute immersion into the world of consultative selling. These sessions collectively saw the participation of around 300 retail partners from various mattress brands. The brevity of the sessions was a testament to the organizers' respect for participants' busy schedules while ensuring impactful takeaways.

Expert Facilitator's Insight: The Art of Consultative Selling

In the words of the expert facilitator, who guided these sessions with finesse and precision, *"Consultative selling isn't merely a transactional process; it's about understanding the unique narratives of our customers and crafting solutions that resonate with their individual sleep needs."* This insight set the tone for the sessions, where retail partners learned to transform from product-centric interactions to customer-centric engagements. The facilitator emphasized that *"genuine curiosity, active listening, and empathy"* are the cornerstones of effective consultative selling, fostering trust and loyalty among customers.


Fostering Lasting Relationships

Beyond the individual skill development, the event fostered a sense of community among retail partners. Shared experiences and newfound insights created a platform for networking and collaboration, as professionals from different brands exchanged ideas and strategies for success. The

event's ambience promoted unity and a shared commitment to enhancing customer experiences across the mattress industry.

A Glimpse into the Future

The consultative selling education provided at the HGH India Expo's "World of Sleep" event marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of the mattress industry. By equipping retail partners with the tools to engage customers meaningfully, the event not only enhances business growth but also elevates customer satisfaction. As the industry marches forward, such collaborative initiatives are bound to shape its trajectory and ensure that customers' sleep experiences are truly exceptional.

In retrospect, the consultative selling education sessions orchestrated by ISPF and HGH India stand as a beacon of educational innovation within the mattress industry. The event serves as a reminder that knowledge-sharing and collaboration are catalysts for transformation, and the impact on the retail partners will undoubtedly ripple throughout the industry, elevating standards and customer experiences to new heights. 

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Transformative Learning in Minutes

Participants delved into the intricacies of consultative selling, a customer-centric approach that shifts the focus from mere transactions to building relationships. The sessions unfolded with insightful discussions on understanding customer preferences, aligning product features to individual needs, and effectively addressing concerns. In the consultative selling sessions, participants understood the paramount importance of sleep as a cornerstone of human health and cognitive prowess. Beyond its restorative function, it was explained how sleep profoundly influences memory consolidation, neural adaptability, and hormonal equilibrium - all pivotal factors for learning and emotional resilience. The discussions illuminated how sleep deficiency correlates with adverse outcomes, emphasizing the significance of integrating this understanding into customer interactions. By doing so, ISPF demonstrated its commitment to enhancing well-being and performance through the products and services. Retail partners were empowered to ask the right questions, actively listen, and craft personalized recommendations that resonate with customers on a deeper level.

World of Sleep pavilion brings the Sleep industry together

World of Sleep is a platform for Indian and global sleep product manufacturers to showcase their latest innovations in sleep products and discuss about the latest trends in the Sleep products industry. The forum got a good response from manufacturers, retailers and industry leader this year.



Everyone knows that sleep is quintessential for healthy living for better brain performance, better mood and healthy living. However, despite knowing this fact, sleep is not taken very seriously by most of the Indians. A large set of people in India do not have an appropriate attitude towards sleep. Ensuring a mandatory sleep routine, environment and clocking the right number of hours for sleep is yet to become a culture among most of the Indians, especially millennials.

To address this concern, HGH India and ISPF collaborated to create 'World of Sleep', an initiative that focuses on promoting good quality sleep, and thereby a healthier lifestyle. World of Sleep (WOS), advocates the importance of sleep products and accessories to enhance sleep quality by highlighting useful information and insights that will allow people make the right choices regarding sleep. Meanwhile, WOS is a platform for Indian and global sleep product manufacturers to showcase their latest innovations in sleep products and discuss about the latest trends in the Sleep products industry. This platform is aimed at empowering the retailers with the right information in the business of Sleep industry. With the right set of knowledge and information about wide range of products in the Sleep industry, retailers can help consumers make some smart buying decisions.

The World of Sleep pavilion at HGH India was conducted from July 4 to July 7, this year at the Bombay Exhibition Center, Mumbai. The World of Sleep pavilion's mission is to provide useful information to retailers and channel partners on innovations in sleep products like mattresses, pillows, blankets and comforters. In addition to good quality

of these core sleep products, brands and manufacturers are discovering the importance of products like mattress protectors, sleeping bags, sleeping pods, sleeping gadgets and the right music, light, room temperature, colours, aromas and fragrances, air purifiers etc. in ensuring a good quality sleep. Important exhibitors like Sleepwell, King Koil, Spingwel, Spread home, Refresh, Sleep better and others exhibit their innovations and standard products to the industry. At the World of Sleep pavilion, manufacturers and brands get an opportunity to promote their innovations among retailers and distributors across India. Sleep experts carry out seminars covering areas like healthy sleep, sleep hygiene, reduced stress levels and productivity.

Meanwhile, this platform also gives good opportunities to retailers and sales personnels to learn new sales methods and gain better understanding about consumers. Retailers and channel partners are being sensitized to make consumers aware of the importance of sleep. In the sleep industry, the sales focus has shifted to selling the idea of sleep. Once people are aware about good sleeping habits, they will be able to choose the right sleep products for themselves.

Alongside, HGH India also recognizes the new growth opportunity areas in the Indian and global sleep industry. Every year, some product categories are brought under special focus in HGH India to help them develop and grow faster. In the latest edition of HGH India, the home textiles sleep products and Wall and Window solutions were identified as emerging long term opportunities in home textiles. **CT**





HGH India attracted over 41,000 visitors across all four days at its 13th edition event

The 13th edition of HGH India, a bi-annual trade show for Home Textiles, Home Décor, Home Furniture, Houseware & Gifts for the Indian domestic market, witnessed a footfall of 41,230 visitors. HGH India was held in Mumbai from July 4-7 at Bombay Exhibition Centre to facilitate sourcing and trends information for retailers, distributors and importers for the forthcoming festive season.

Trade buyers hailed from 600 cities and towns in India. 400 international visitors from 33 countries were also part of this four-day show, making it the highest number of visitors since its start in 2012. 700 brands and manufacturers from 32 countries showcased their products.

The World of Sleep pavilion in the event, a remarkable collaboration between the Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF) and the HGH India, captivated the attention of sleep enthusiasts and industry professionals alike. This event aimed to showcase a range of cutting-edge mattresses and sleep-related products, offering an immersive experience that left attendees in awe.

Among the featured mattresses, one couldn't help but be captivated by the Neuma by Duroflex. Its revolutionary design and advanced technology promised an unparalleled level of comfort and support. Equally impressive was the SideAlign by Nilkamal, which boasted a unique alignment system to ensure optimal spinal alignment during sleep. The Kingcoil firm's adjustable mattresses also garnered attention with their customizable features, catering to individual preferences and needs. Not to be outdone, the Recliner bed by Recliners India showcased its ability to transform from a bed into a comfortable recliner, providing the perfect blend of relaxation and functionality. The PosutrePro by Century further stood out, offering a breakthrough solution for maintaining correct posture while sleeping.

In addition to these exceptional mattresses, the event featured eight other top-of-the-line mattress products, further solidifying its reputation as a must-attend affair for those seeking the ultimate sleep experience. Each product on display highlighted the industry's commitment to innovation, ensuring that attendees left with a renewed appreciation for the art of sleep.

One notable aspect of the event was Sleepwell's introduction of their digital sales tool, a testament to the brand's forward-thinking approach in the modern age. This innovative tool demonstrated Sleepwell's dedication to enhancing the buying experience for customers, providing them with a seamless and informative digital platform to explore and purchase their products.

The World of Sleep pavilion didn't stop at merely showcasing products; it also aimed to educate and empower retailers and dealers. An enlightening training session was conducted by Mr. Kalyan Viswanathan and ISPF'S Secretary

Mr. Sundaresan, focusing on the importance of sleep and consultative selling. This invaluable session equipped attendees with the knowledge and tools needed to better understand the intricacies of sleep and effectively guide customers towards selecting the perfect mattress for their needs.

Overall, the World of Sleep pavilion served as a testament to the industry's unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence. By bringing together leading brands, cutting-edge products, and informative sessions, ISPF and HGH created a platform that celebrated the significance of a good night's sleep. This event not only delighted attendees but also highlighted the transformative power of quality sleep and the pivotal role mattresses play in ensuring our well-being. As the curtains closed on this remarkable event, the reverberations of its success will continue to resonate within the sleep industry for years to come.





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How long can you stay up?

We have all been taught, right from our childhood days, that an adult body requires 7 to 8 hours of sleep for healthy living. However, as is true for everything else, despite knowing the evil, we all tend to give in to worldly needs and the first casualty in this garb is our sleep. Almost all of us have memories of long study sprees during exams, when the 8 hours were shortened to 3-4 hours or even lesser. And then, there were those exams without a break in between! Ever wondered what could be the longest someone could have stretched his or her "wakefulness"? Well, as is true for any record, every

odd ought to be done under scrutiny, and the longest someone has gone without sleep, under monitoring, is 11 days, 25 minutes. This of course, is the documented record. A high school student, went straight 264.4 hours without sleep, that got him to the first place in Annual Great San Diego Science Fair in 1964. There are others with higher claims too, but none of them have been validated. While it may be good for setting records, do not try this on your own without medical supervision, as prolonged lack of sleep can have very serious effects on the human body!



If you claimed to have stayed awake like an owl... Think Again!

All human attributes are in some way or the other associated with some creation of nature. Eyesight of a hawk, power of a horse, speed of a cheetah and ability to stay awake... like an owl? Think again! Customary Indian metaphors have associated someone staying up for late hours with an owl. Further on, prolonged hours of sleep are also associated with laziness, sedentary lifestyles and an unfit body. However, contrary to common beliefs, it is not the Owl, that tops the list of animals that stay awake for long hours. There are many other animals and mammals who sleep much lesser. Goats, cows, deers, horses, elephants

and giraffes are animals that hold the distinction of sleeping the least with sleep durations ranging from 2.5 to 4 hours. Amongst all these, elephants have a unique way of sleeping. Their reduced hours of sleep are primarily due to excess hours, up to 18 hours at times, spent in grazing for food. As per recorded data, some have been observed to be sleeping only once every 3-4 days. They also have a unique way of sleeping, which is either resting on trees, termite mounds, etc. They avoid sleeping on their sides, and even if they do, it is for 30 minutes or lesser, lest they would crush their internal organs.

Babies sleep like a Tiger

You might have slept like a baby last night, but did you know there are others that sleep like human babies. On an average, a baby sleeps 16 hours every day. There are many animals that sleep around the same amount. Well to draw a tally, squirrels, cats, pythons and monkeys are close to this figure. The closest animal however in this tally is from the big cat family, our very own national animal, the panthera tigris. As per studies, tigers sleep for close to 15.8 hours per day. Sleep duration in mammals have large variations and are mostly dictated by physiological reasons. Human babies mostly spend large portion of the day (and lesser part of night) in sleep as it is essential for their initial development. They tend to sleep in short packets of 2 to 3 hours, post which their small tummies need nourishment. Tigers, like most of the predators, need long rest periods to digest the meat and complex nutrients of their prey. Another interesting trivia is that while we, the humans associate sleep with beauty and make it a matter of luxury, it is just the opposite for animals. In case of most animals, it is determined based on absolute necessity. This is because unlike the urban human, animals are most vulnerable while they are asleep. But having learnt that one of the fiercest animals of the jungle shares sleep habits with some of us, next time you can proudly claim, 'I slept like a tiger'.



Daylight Savings can lead to poor sleep hygiene

Day light savings is a setting conveniently overlooked by watch owners of most of Asian, South American and African continents. For others, it is a yearly phenomenon which essentially results in advancing the clocks by an hour or so, around spring and summers, so that the daylight ends at a later clock hour during that part of the year.

While this simplistic definition may sound as a good option to many, particularly considering the productive hours of a day, it has certain pitfalls too. Most of us are aware, that our body and all associated functions follow a biological clock, also known as the circadian rhythm. Now, it is not too complicated an issue to understand, that this frequent shift of the clock will have certain ill effects on our body. Research shows that these shifts can adversely affect our moods, sleep patterns, appetite and almost everything that is regulated in

our bodies with exposure or absence of light. Records as per a 2020 study in the journal *Current Biology* also shows a 6 percent increase in car accidents, around the time when daylight savings time is implemented. Poor sleep hygiene can also aggravate anxiety and depression.

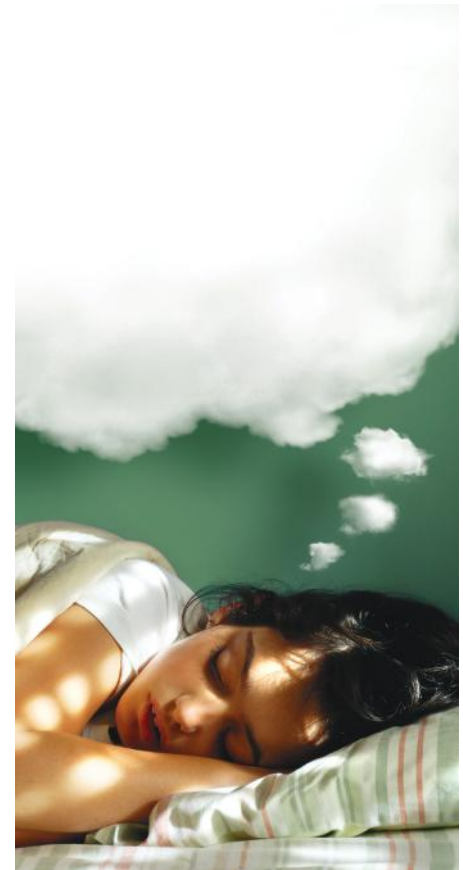
Although this seemingly productive measure was adopted in the last century with good intentions, it has witnessed enough opposition in the recent years. A poll conducted in 2022 showed 61 percent Americans favoured abolishment of Daylight Saving Time (DST). Well, while the decision whether to abolish or continue with DST would be taken when due, one ought to be prepared for DST when staying in countries or regions following it. Take adequate precautions such as altering bed times, taking afternoon naps, enhanced exposure to light etc to minimise effects of DST on your body.



Your furry friend could have sleep issues

If you are a pet owner and the idea of pets or animals suffering from sleep issues is alien for you, you must read on, for it is real. Animals suffer from sleep disorders, just as humans. They too have primary and secondary sleep disorders, narcolepsy, sleep apnea and other comorbidity induced sleep disorders. The existence of sleep

disorders was first studied in pet dogs and it has now been established with an amount of certainty that other animals, such as cats, horses etc. But dogs come very close to all the disorders that human beings are susceptible to. Two most dangerous sleep disorders are narcolepsy and cataplexy.



Dreams are inescapable

'Good night and sweet dreams,' is a very common pleasantry that we exchange with our loved ones on a daily basis. But is dreaming such a nice thing, that every single night you wish for it? Well, the answer is, dreams are inescapable. We as humans (and some of our friends from the animal kingdom too), in a good night's sleep go through phases, wherein, dreams ought to occur. On a broad scale, a typical 'sleep cycle' of a human consists of three Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) stages and an additional Rapid Eye Movement (REM) stage. These stages take upto 90 mins per cycle and occur 4 to 5 times in a night's sleep. It is in the REM stage that the brain activity is fastest and dreams occur during this time. Hence, it is obvious that every time you sleep, you are dreaming (with your brain working) about something or the other. It is just a play of our memory cells that we remember some and do not remember others when we wake up. Probably, that is why it is said to be positive, so that all you remember, are indeed Sweet Dreams

A photograph of a modern hotel room. Two beds with white linens and patterned runners are positioned against a dark wood headboard. A desk with a chair is visible on the left. The room is dimly lit with bedside lamps and a hanging light fixture.

Premium Mattress Sales- The biggest challenge for Retailers

While the Indian mattress industry is witnessing more sales, selling premium mattresses remains a big challenge. In a survey conducted by Comfort Times, it has been observed that retailers need to work hard to push the sales of premium mattresses. Manufacturers could groom their retail partners with appropriate training and development programmes

The Indian mattress industry is gradually getting onto a growth path and is witnessing a greater number of people buying mattresses. With the pandemic acting as a catalyst, the sale of mattress brands in the organized sector is growing and, in the forthcoming years, its market share will only increase. While the demand for mattresses is going up, manufacturers can't ignore a fact that India is still a price sensitive market. Majority of consumers either get lured by the cheapest price tag or in a best-case scenario, they look for products that offer the right 'value for money'.

Selling mattresses can pose challenges, particularly when dealing with premium options, according to retailers. The plethora of brands, models, materials, and consumer requirements compounds the difficulty of selecting the right mattress. In an effort to better understand how retailers in India are marketing premium mattresses and persuading customers to invest in them, Comfort Times conducted a survey involving prominent retailers. The survey was conducted by directly reaching out to retailers over a telephonic conversation, which allowed us to understand what they actually thought of premium mattresses; what approach have they adopted to make people aware of premium mattresses and what efforts are they making towards explaining consumers about its features and benefits.

The findings of our survey unveiled that a primary tactic employed by most retailers is emphasizing 'Comfort' as a pivotal selling point when enticing customers to opt for a premium mattress. However, the survey also revealed that retailers are not placing substantial emphasis on mattress certifications that substantiate claims of technical superiority, nor are they sufficiently highlighting the distinctive qualities of the materials utilized in these mattresses. There have been instances where retailers struggled to distinguish between premium and standard mattress offerings. Some brands do utilize natural materials and provide consumers with the option of a 100-day trial period, although this information often escapes the awareness of retailers on a larger scale.

In the realm of selling premium mattresses, retailers predominantly concentrate their efforts on promoting the brand name and the product's price point. We first tried knowing about retailers understanding about premium mattresses. The good part is most of the retailers could define the elements of a premium mattress. **73 percent** of the retailers expressed that premium mattresses should be made out of good and sustainable raw materials, provide exceptional comfort and support and holds a heavier price tag. (refer image 1).

46 percent of the retailers emphasized that people primarily look for premium feel of the mattress and they also give a lot of importance to comfort, ergonomics and aesthetics. One thing is clear that Indian consumers look for

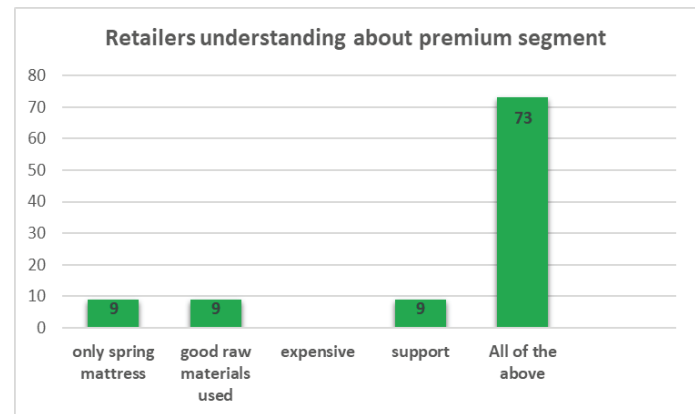


Image 1

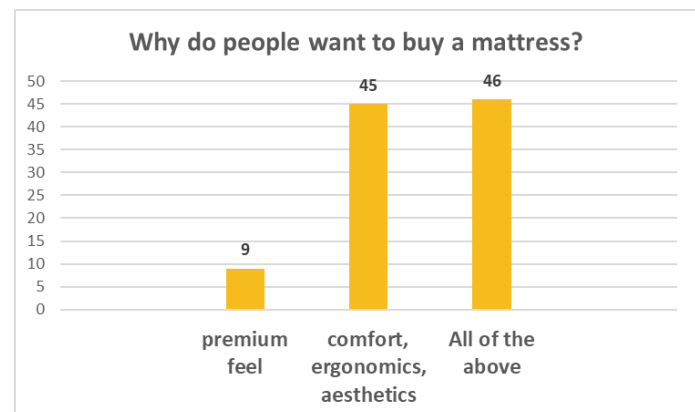


Image 2

maximum value from a product. They are willing to spend on a premium mattress, if they have all the key factors like comfort, ergonomics and aesthetics and luxurious look in the mattress. (refer image 2).

While there are some retailers who know the product really well and have been able to convince their customers but a majority of them either put the blame on the price point or the weaknesses of the product that failed to attract consumers' attention. There was a minority among retailers that replied positively saying that selling premium mattresses are not all that difficult. For instance, Lucknow based 33-year-old Sudhanshu Tripathi, Owner of Magenta Mattress says, "It's not much difficult to sell the premium mattresses as we are into this business from so long. Also, our premium mattresses are the most saleable mattresses."

Meanwhile, Pune based 33-year-old Bhaskar D, Owner of SleepRush Mattress says, "It's difficult and easy as well since it depends on the customer handling that how you convince a customer to buy one. Also, it depends on the brands promises of the quality, comfort and designs which helps in making a deal at the said price point."

46 percent of retailers firmly said that there are not many customers for premium mattresses as most of them shy



Selling mattresses can pose challenges, particularly when dealing with premium options, according to retailers.

away from paying higher prices for mattresses. However, we could hear from a lot of retailers citing other reasons, namely, demanding customers, who need all the high-end features in a premium mattress while having a reasonable price point. Meanwhile, some retailers also mentioned about the lack of skillset among various retailers to push the sales of premium mattresses. (refer image 3)

Most of the retailers expressed that manufacturers should stress more on manufacturing better mattresses by using good raw materials that would ensure comfort, good body support and premium feel of the mattress while maintaining good price points. Additionally, they also mentioned that mattress brands should dedicate more efforts towards establishing a strong brand presence through appropriate marketing and branding efforts.

73 percent of the retailers expressed that premium mattresses are primarily for higher income groups and only they can be the target group for luxury and premium mattresses. Besides that, if the premium mattress does not match up with all their requirements, then they settle for a mattress that provides basic comfort and is priced at an affordable range. (refer image 4)

Few practices followed by multi brand dealers came to light while carrying out the survey. One of them being, retailers pushing the most expensive mattress in their inventory, in case they do not have a particular brand that the customer is asking for. Additionally, it has also been observed that many multi brand dealers manufacture premium mattresses under their own brand name and they try to sell their brand to the customers. They offer the best price along with customisation and personalization of the mattress, making it a preferred choice for customers.

One more observation that came to light through this survey is majority of multi brand dealers (MBD) reported that around 15 percent to 30 percent of their sales is contributed by the premium segment. (refer image 5).

The survey had covered retailers across various cities in India and the primary sentiment of majority of retailers was 'consumers are not ready to spend on premium mattresses.' They rather emphasized that manufacturers should focus more towards making better premium mattresses while maintaining the price advantage. Retailers firmly believed that only the high-income groups are the potential customers as they have the capability to buy such costly

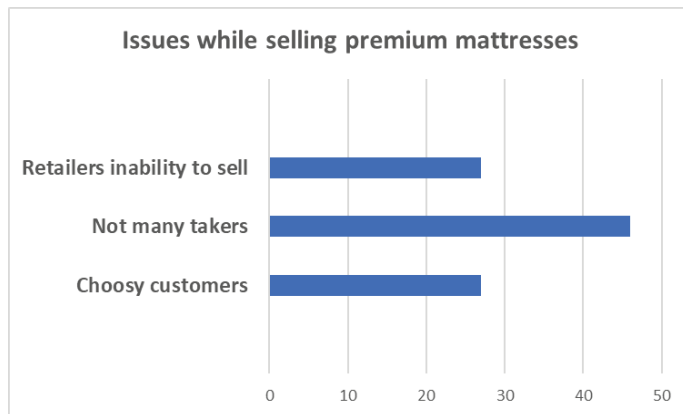


Image 3

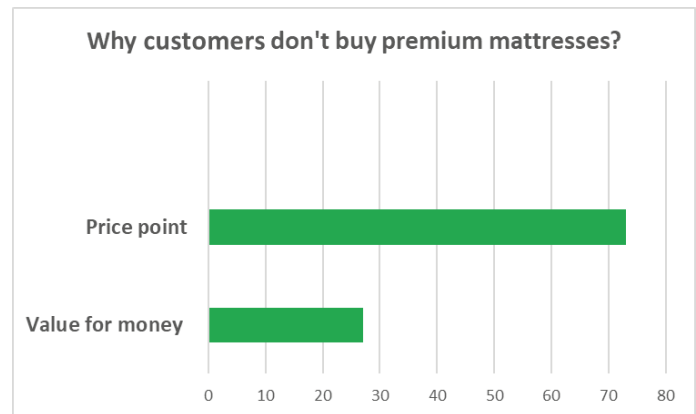


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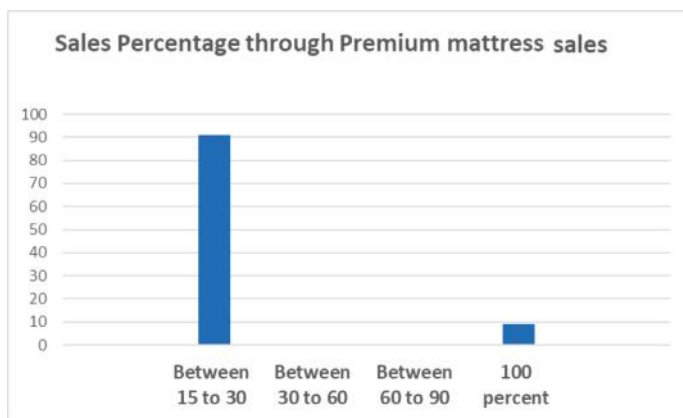


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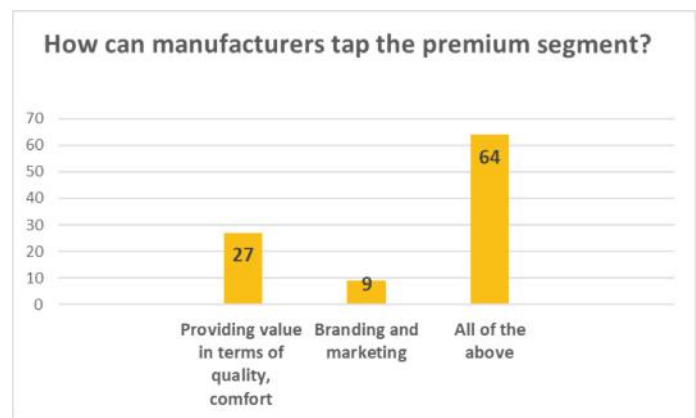


Image 6

mattresses.

This attitude of retailers could be detrimental to the demand for premium mattresses. Such presumptions on consumers would be refraining retailers from convincing customers about the features and benefits of premium mattresses. Mattress manufacturers have reported growth in sales, especially after the pandemic. Manufacturers have witnessed Indian consumers showing more inclination towards healthy living and are understanding the importance of good sleep. In such circumstances, if retailers do not take the initiative to push the sale of premium mattresses, it will be difficult for the mattress industry to innovate more in the premium segment. There is a need for the features and benefits of premium mattresses to reach the customers. For this, retailers have to be actively involved in the sales process.

How can Mattress manufacturers tap the premium buying segment?

We asked this question to retailers to understand more about their realisation of consumers pain points. Gurugram based 52-year-old Mini Bawa, Owner of MM Shoppee that deals exclusively with premium mattresses feels, "Mattress manufacturers needs to put the premium mattresses in the premium stores at premium locations, also they need to make the premium mattress look richer than other mattresses in the market. They need to make the

In the realm of selling premium mattresses, retailers predominantly concentrate their efforts on promoting the brand name and the product's price point.

advertisement more eye catching that doesn't go off from the peoples mind and the brand needs to have a premium image which can make the mattresses sell."

A lot of retailers suggested that mattress manufacturers can tap the premium segment by proving more value, in terms of quality and comfort and brands should also increase their branding and marketing efforts to get more of consumers attention. (refer image 6).

While discussing more about the mattresses that the retailers were selling, one thing was clear that a lot of them did not have the right set of technical knowledge about mattresses. Some of the retailers explained that consumers try the mattresses but if it does not meet all their criteria then they settle for a general mattress that is affordable. In cases like this, wherein, consumers are not clearly inclined towards the price advantage, retailers could push the idea of premium mattresses for better sleep quality. Instead,

they choose to retain the customer by offering affordable mattresses offering general comfort. This will restrict the purchase of luxury or premium mattresses and will result in less people using it and sharing their sleep experience with premium mattresses. If retailers do not try ways to push sales of premium mattresses, the premium segment of the Indian mattress market is less likely to pick up.

Emphasis on Retailers Training and Development

Mattress manufacturers are employing numerous resources towards offering various products across different segments while maintaining the price advantage and by ensuring wider channel reach. However, all these efforts will not reap rewarding benefits to manufacturers, if retailers do not push the right mattresses to the consumers. The mindset of retailers requires a major shift. They have to start considering themselves as 'ambassadors of good sleep' and ask the right questions to the customers without making them uncomfortable and understand their requirements. They need to put more efforts towards understanding the materials that goes into manufacturing a mattress and communicate the same to the consumers. With correct selling techniques and emphasizing on the importance of sound sleep, retailers will be able to sell a greater number of premium mattresses. If consumers get addressed by knowledgeable and enthusiastic retailers, they will have faith in the premium sleep products. Additionally, educating the retailers about having sleep experience center will also contribute towards generating more sales for premium mattresses. By just sitting on the mattress for few minutes will not give the real feel of mattress and instances like this will never allow customers to get the real feel of the mattress. Retailers (both multi brand retailers and in-store retailers) should be made aware of the importance to invest in a sleep experience center, wherein, consumers can spend some time on the bed and experience the quality of sleep. The sleep experience center should not just have a bed with the mattress laid on it. It should be designed like a real bedroom with the mattress covered with a good bed cover and the sleep room's interiors should be designed well and complemented with good lighting.

Meanwhile, potential customer should be given enough time to spend some time on the mattress alone. In the presence of sales staff, other customers, one may not get into that frame of mind to decide about a mattress. Many mattress companies have their sleep experience centers but it is often crowded and buyers do not get into the right frame of mind to decide on the right product. Mattresses are bulky and costly products, retailers need to prioritize that buyers will need strong and convincing reasons to invest in a mattress. Training retailers and insisting them to train their sales personnels is the primary solution to increase the sales of premium mattresses. Retailers should also increase their investment in providing opportunities for customers to experience premium mattresses. Manufacturers should also take necessary steps towards conducting training and development programmes across various cities for

Majority of retailers firmly said that there are not many customers for premium mattresses as most of them shy away from paying higher prices for mattresses.

the retailers. Training them with several appropriate sales techniques and lending thorough knowledge about the premium mattresses will help retailers reach out to maximum customers.

Conclusion

From the survey that was done on premium mattress retailers, one thing could be concluded that retailers need to put in substantial efforts to give premium mattress sales an aggressive push. Manufacturers could help them by maintaining effective communication with their retail partners and facilitating them with appropriate training and development initiatives. The mattress industry is growing but for increasing the acceptance of premium mattresses among Indian consumers, manufacturers and retailers must work together to ensure that premium mattresses reach a greater number of Indian households. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Some retailers who know the product really well and have been able to convince their customers but a majority of them either put the blame on the price point or the weaknesses of the product that failed to attract consumers' attention.
- Retailers expressed that premium mattresses are primarily for higher income groups and only they can be the target group for luxury and premium mattresses. Besides that, if the premium mattress does not match up with all their requirements, then they settle for a mattress that provides basic comfort and is priced at an affordable range.
- The mindset of retailers requires a major shift. They have to start considering themselves as 'ambassadors of good sleep' and ask the right questions to the customers without making them uncomfortable and understand their requirements.
- Manufacturers could help retailers by maintaining effective communication with their retail partners and facilitating them with appropriate training and development initiatives

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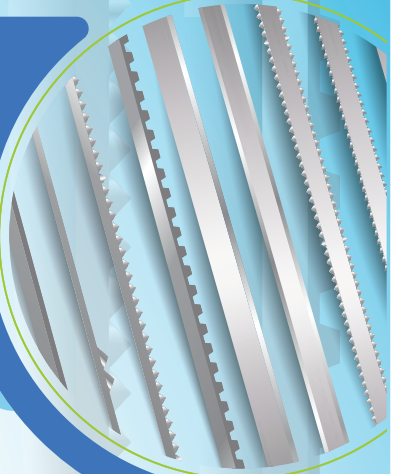


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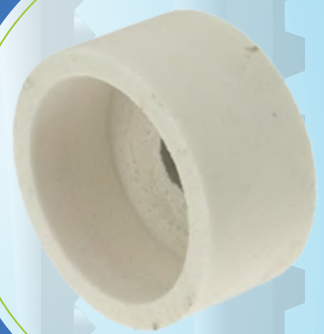
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