

Significance of ENGINEERED FLOORING in India!



Sucupira Naturalé

Flooring in India

Not much had been happening in the flooring industry since the early 1960's, when Ceramic tiles were first introduced in Europe. But a whole new type of flooring stormed the global scene in 1987 when a Swedish producer of laminates launched the world's first laminate flooring.

Today about 500 million sqmt of laminate flooring and another 120 million sqmt of engineered wood flooring are consumed annually.

As awareness about different products increases, customers want to move away from conventional material like stone, mosaic (terazzo), ceramic tiles, carpets, etc. to newer more versatile material such as laminate and engineered wood floorings. It is important to note here that India is a tropical country. People still prefer cold hard floors, which continue to drive demand for the traditional materials. As far as wood-based floorings are concerned they are currently niche, albeit a growing one!

The Global Flooring Market, as measured by per capita consumption, stands at around 6 Billion sq m p.a. with the developed countries accounting for about 5 sqm per capita.

India, by those standards is still a growing market with a per capita consumption of around 1 sqm. This one billion sqm flooring market is dominated by cold hard floors such as ceramic tiles, stones etc and wood based floors currently only account for about 1.5% of this. If past consumption patterns are observed then **wood flooring should take in about 15% of the market or almost 10 times the current size.** The current growth rate of about 20% pa in this category is a good indicator of things to come.

Off late, the industry has noted the entry of high-profile manufacturers like Greenlam Industries with Mikasa, their engineered wooden flooring. Their entry will push the market both ways – vertically as well as horizontally. This is opening up the market for serious producers; who can now fulfill the demand of customers who were always willing to buy locally sourced quality products. This trend will not only push the demand, we can expect a more organized wood flooring industry system to emerge too.

Materiality

Engineered wood floors are real wood floors made up of various layers of hard and soft wood as opposed to laminate floors which are only “printed pictures” of wood patterns and structures on chemically hardened paper. A multi layered construction has given us the modern wooden floor, the engineered wood floor. The different layers being arranged at cross grain to each other impart stability to the wood planks. Wood by its nature is alive to changes in humidity and temperature conditions. An engineered wood plank remains stable in most conditions without the joints ever opening up.

The principles for sourcing exotic wood species from around the world are set by Mikasa ADD (Availability, Design and Durability). Mikasa the first engineered flooring brand produced out of India is made using ethically sourced raw material from the world over.

The HDF core conforms to E1 grade and all the lacquers and stains

are water based, making these floors practically VOC free and healthy to live. With more than 100 products crafted from exotic woods like *Oak, Wenge, Sapele & Ash*, just to name a few, the consumers are spoilt for choice. By far this is the largest offering of engineered wood flooring product in India by any brand. Technology for joining the planks together is reflected in the glue less joint *PlankLoc* making the installation process very simple and leaving no mess behind.

Market & more

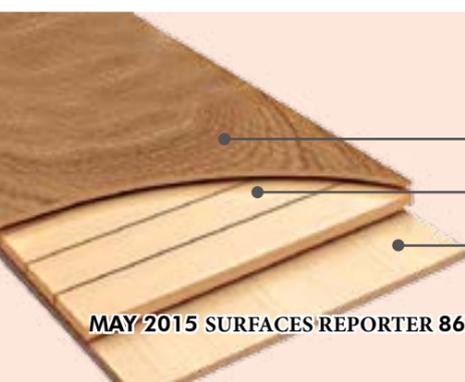
A quick snapshot of the Indian market shows us that the North considers wood a novelty. The demand there is quite good because of the continuous construction activity. South is a fast growing market as buyers there know the use of wood inherently. West likes the practicality of wood while the East likes the products in pockets.

When any new product is introduced, manufacturers have to support this with very strong after sales service. They need to invest in training of their installers, and on people who will have to maintain the products in the long run. Therefore, it is quite important to have well-trained people to do proper installation as well as to make sure that the floor is maintained well. The spokesperson of Mikasa responded promptly to talk about maintenance and supply. **“Engineered wood floors need to be resanded and polished after about 10-12 years of usage as opposed to solid wood floors which require a more regular maintenance program.** These wood-based

products are sensitive to atmospheric changes, and behave differently with variations in temperature and humidity. So, proper installation is imperative, leaving the right expansion gaps. The products should have the appropriate abrasion and wear resistance depending on where they are installed. Enough products in the engineered flooring category exist today from veneer thickness starting from 0.6mm going up to 6mm. Mikasa has launched products from a wear layer of 0.6mm to a wear layer of 3mm, offering warranties of upto 30 years. Customers who want to replace their flooring every ten years can install floors with veneers between 0.6 to 2mm thick veneers. Thicker and bigger planks last longer, even good for 35-50 years and beyond.”

He further added, *“Laminate floors had been introduced to India two decades back, and since then, the installers have done 30-35 million sqm of installations and are well trained in the installation techniques of laminate flooring. The need of the hour is to refresh their knowledge about the new products even if the basic techniques remain the same.”*

The retail of Wood flooring is also evolving. It is currently driven by the knowledgeable individuals who are personally attending to customers and advising them about the right products. Mikasa is working closely with their partners across the country in creating experience zones for the consumers to get a real feel for the products before buying.



Real Hard Wood

Stabilizing Core

Balancing Layer

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About Mikasa

Greenlam Industries Limited has been beautifying spaces for years by infusing creativity into every piece of work and turning it into sheer pieces of beauty and brilliance. A name to be reckoned with in surfacing products in more than 100 countries, Greenlam Industries Limited is standing tall with its guiding philosophies – innovative technologies and creative solutions. Carrying the legacy forward, Greenlam takes pleasure in presenting Mikasa real wood floors, produced in India for the first time at its fully integrated plant at Behror, Rajasthan. Mikasa draws inspiration from the Latin phrase “Mi Casa, Su Casa”, which means “My home is your home”; a warm and welcoming gesture for people to feel at home in any home. Both their floors and their vision seem to embody this open-armed welcome that evokes free-flowing contours of peace, health and comfort.