

CRAFTING SUSTAINABILITY: JAIPUR RUGS' ARTISAN EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract: This study delves into Jaipur Rugs' innovative "MANCHAHA" initiative, showcasing its impact on sustainable development goals (SDGs) through a qualitative case study approach. By engaging underprivileged weavers and artisans in remote areas and facilitating their access to global markets, Jaipur Rugs empowers marginalised communities. The "MANCHAHA" collection creatively repurposes waste yarn into unique carpets, aligning with sustainability objectives and promoting weavers' talents. Despite initial challenges, the initiative has garnered global recognition and positively impacted SDGs such as Responsible Consumption, Gender Equality, and Poverty Reduction. The study underscores Jaipur Rugs' model of merging traditional techniques with innovation to drive societal advancement and sustainability. Theoretical implications highlight stakeholder engagement, while practical implications emphasise inclusive value chains and corporate social responsibility in achieving SDGs through innovative and sustainable practices.

Keywords: Innovation; Sustainability; Livelihood; Traditional Technique; Artisans; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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Creando sostenibilidad: El empoderamiento de los artesanos de Jaipur Rugs

Resumen: Este estudio analiza en profundidad la innovadora iniciativa "MANCHAHA" de Jaipur Rugs, mostrando su impacto en los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS) a través de un enfoque de estudio de caso cualitativo. Al involucrar a tejedores y artesanos desfavorecidos en áreas remotas y facilitar su acceso a los mercados globales, Jaipur Rugs empodera a las comunidades marginadas. La colección "MANCHAHA" reutiliza de manera creativa el hilo de desecho en alfombras únicas, alineándose con los objetivos de sostenibilidad y promoviendo los talentos de los tejedores. A pesar de los desafíos iniciales, la iniciativa ha obtenido reconocimiento mundial y ha tenido un impacto positivo en los ODS como el consumo responsable, la igualdad de género y la reducción de la pobreza. El estudio destaca el modelo de Jaipur Rugs de fusionar técnicas tradicionales con innovación para impulsar el avance social y la sostenibilidad. Las implicaciones teóricas destacan la participación de las partes interesadas, mientras que las implicaciones prácticas enfatizan las cadenas de valor inclusivas y la responsabilidad social corporativa para lograr los ODS a través de prácticas innovadoras y sostenibles.

Palabras clave: Innovación; Sostenibilidad; Medios de vida; Técnicas tradicionales; Artesanos; Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

1 INTRODUCTION

Since a very long time ago, India has produced carpets, which have helped the country's economy by giving millions of people jobs (Roy, 1999; Berger, 2005). Additionally, it aids in boosting exports and bringing in foreign currency (Ghouse, 2012). Indian carpets are in high demand abroad and are sold at numerous prestigious retail locations worldwide (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). While the rug industry might not be a focal point at green summits, it's estimated to discard yarn worth billions annually, leading to excess material being incinerated or disposed of in landfills (Doron & Jeffrey, 2018; Simon et al., 2023).

Although several cutting-edge ends use for recycled carpet have increased in recent years, overall carpet recycling remains low since about 9% of carpet trash is used for energy recovery (EPA, 2015). The fact that recycling and energy recovery work together to divert garbage from landfills is nevertheless a significant step forward. Thus, many innovative initiatives have recently been introduced into traditional practices to reduce waste and produce high-quality, sustainable, and efficient carpets (Kumar et al., 2020). Examples of these initiatives include using sustainable materials, digital design and production, modular carpet systems, dyeing techniques, antimicrobial treatments, smart carpets, recyclability, and the circular economy (Luqmani et al., 2017; Parvaresh & Amini, 2024).

However, landfills encounter environmental issues due to the massive amount of carpet waste produced throughout the production process. They are often burned when not taking up landfill space, which releases potentially dangerous greenhouse emissions (Yadav et al., 2023). To reduce wastage during the production process by innovatively utilising traditional practices, the Jaipur Rugs introduced the MANCHAHA initiative.

One of India's biggest producers of hand-knotted carpets, Jaipur Rugs, is attempting to reduce waste by using the extra yarn to create novel goods under the MANCHAHA initiative. More than 40,000 craftspeople, 80% of whom are women, are employed by the enterprise, which has a presence in 600 villages across five states.

Nand Kishore Chaudhary, the founder, began his journey with a ₹5,000 loan from his father. He started with 2 looms and 9 weavers while working as both a contractor and a manufacturer. Although he received positive feedback from exporters and weavers, societal acceptance was lacking. After nine years, he and his brother launched their own rug business in Jaipur in 1986. Jaipur Rugs gained recognition for its innovative business approach and was featured in Outlook Business. Many weavers, including Bimla Devi, earned accolades, such as the German Design Award.

MANCHAHA, initiated by Kavita Chaudhary, the daughter of the company's founder and Design Director, began in 2018 and gained significant momentum during the COVID period. In this initiative, the company not only thinks of reusing the waste yarns from production but also increases the creativity of artisans and the ability to earn sustainable

livelihood using the old and traditional method of weaving carpets. Along with this, they started FREEDOM MANCHAHA, which was exclusively for prisoners in the Jails of Jaipur, Bikaner and Dausa districts in Rajasthan. This Jaipur Rugs initiative encompasses the sustainable development of artisans and also addresses key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Responsible Consumption and Production, Gender Equality, and Poverty Eradication, and other SDGs.

While numerous studies explore producing eco-friendly carpets and recycling used ones (Ghanbarzadeh-Shams et al., 2022; Luqmani et al., 2017; Thiry, 2004), limited research addresses recycling waste generated during carpet manufacturing, simultaneously enhancing company production capacity and artisans' creativity.

Thus, there are three main objectives for the research work. First, it aims to thoroughly evaluate the numerous aspects of the MANCHAHA initiative and their effects on society and craftsmen's lifestyles. Second, it tries to identify and analyse the initiative's varied impact on different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), illuminating how it contributes to societal transformation for the better. Finally, the study aims to critically assess the creative combination of the use of traditional methodologies and innovative practices impact on furthering the overall agenda of sustainable development goals (SDGs), thereby shedding light on the complex interaction between tried-and-true methods and cutting-edge strategies in fostering long-lasting and comprehensive progress.

The subsequent section of the paper delves into the landscape of relevant literature, tracing the developmental trajectory of the carpet industry while also exploring the intertwining concepts of sustainability and innovation within this sector. Subsequently, a comprehensive elucidation of the chosen methodology is presented, encompassing the adopted research method, and techniques employed for data collection and analysis. Following this, the section transitions into the presentation and discourse of the gathered findings, wherein the collected data is rigorously analysed and interpreted. Concluding the paper in the next section is a synthesis of the revealed findings, accompanied by insightful suggestions, implications, acknowledgement of limitations, and a contemplation of future research prospects

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Industrialisation plays a pivotal role in driving socioeconomic growth and development in emerging nations, serving as a primary catalyst for economic expansion. Among various cottage industries, handmade carpet production in India stands out prominently (Bano, 2015). After China, India is the world's second-largest carpet producer. The Indian market is projected to develop at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.5% from 2022 to 2027, reaching USD 10 billion (Carpet Planet, 2023).

The distinct weave of the handmade Indian carpet demonstrates its global competitiveness. The consistent growth in export value indicates significant sustainability potential for this firm in the forthcoming years (Bano, 2016). Even today, the handmade carpet industry continues to be distinguished and elegant. The handmade carpet market is primarily an export-focused, labor-intensive market (Gill, 2019). The core objective of

this sector is to engage individuals in specialised tasks like dyeing, designing, crafting carpets, and finishing. It operates as a skill-focused enterprise within its domain (Mishra & Ray, 2018). The handmade carpet market in India encompasses a range of economic, social, and national aspects (Yadav et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, it falls upon decision-makers and authorities to secure the sector's viability, given that the quality of life concerning handmade carpets (HCs) has declined over time due to factors such as the emergence of machine-made carpets and low wages etc (Bakan & Avinc, 2021). In order to improve the quality of HCs, it may be necessary to implement new policies for extending social support mechanisms. Handmade carpets are seen as significant items that reflect society's customs and traditions. As a result, investigating the potential of various regions for the manufacture of HCs could aid in the development of sustainable decision-making (Pourmoradian et al., 2021).

Sustainability is crucial to keeping the planet a healthy place to live and is also essential to the future success of forward-thinking businesses (Burke, 2021). Numerous businesses in the sector have turned to ecological principles as a marketing tool to distinguish their goods, a means to reduce expenses, a source of creative ideas for new product development, a way to create new revenue streams, and a crucial component of their business plans (Thiry, 2004). Many nations are implementing green incentives to promote ecologically friendly product design and recycling while lowering the volume of solid waste produced through disposal (Song & Zeng, 2015; Azevedo et al., 2021). Many industrialised nations have embraced the product stewardship principles, which require producers to collect and recycle some products at the end of their normal lifespan (Mayberry & Franken, 2004). The collection, handling, sorting, or processing of waste streams is not the business of the carpet industry (Franco et al., 2023). The carpet industry does not need to get involved in this line of business. Nevertheless, a whole trash infrastructure is already in place and is a logical fit in terms of logistics, technology, and economics (Peoples, 2006).

However, the definition of sustainability used by the carpet business considers human endeavours to be both a part of and reliant upon the natural world (Mead et al., 2022). The majority of definitions emphasise that in order to be sustainable, decisions must take into account how activities affect the environment, the economy, and society (Hurd, 2004). The economic aspect of sustainability focuses on how an organisation's actions affect not only its stakeholders but also local, national, and international economic systems (Epstein, 2018). The environmental side, however, is more concerned with the expansion of ecological consciousness as well as advancements in energy efficiency and other sustainability-related issues (Green growth, 2002).

Sustainability remains a global concern demanding innovation. Despite numerous organisational pledges to innovate for environmental, social, and economic sustainability, a discernible behavior gap persists (Luqmani et al., 2017). Hansen et al. (2009) used the term "sustainability-oriented innovation" (SOI) to characterise innovation that results in increased sustainability. Numerous leading global businesses have readily adopted this perspective, pledging in their annual reports to promote goals such as environmental

sustainability, well-being, and social equality through their core business operations, supported by their shareholders (e.g. (Chevron, 2015; ExxonMobil, 2015; Microsoft, 2015).

Several requirements need to be met by a more thorough definition of SOI (Sustainability-oriented Innovation). It ought to include fresh concepts that are generated both internally (in the form of ideas) and externally (assimilation of ideas) (Kemp & Pearson, 2007). It should also contain previous concepts that have a fresh application (March, 1991). It should cover the entire spectrum of innovative products, from incremental (step-by-step) improvements to completely new business models (Bessant & Tidd, 2007). It should apply to all imaginable innovation types, including those in organisational structures, social institutions, processes, and products. The concept of SOI should also include innovations that improve social, environmental, and financial results in order to assure sustainability (Bos-Brouwers, 2010; Schiederig et al., 2012) or those that, in contrast to other options, lessen the negative effects of these.

With the growing concern about sustainable development, accompanied by stringent government requirements, industries are being pushed to take ownership of their own goods over their entire lifecycles (Govindan et al., 2020). The practitioners are likely to optimise their medium-term plan in a specific logistics network given the vital role of the carpet industry in many nations and the worth of recovered carpets throughout forward and reverse supply chains (Ghanbarzadeh et al., 2022). Usually, Post-consumer carpet is frequently used to make engineered plastic resins, as well as to make new carpet fiber and carpet backing (Rogoff, 2014). Handmade carpet manufacture generates a significant amount of trash, including damaged and off-cut pieces. This garbage frequently ends up in landfills, which exacerbates environmental issues (Fashandi et al., 2019).

In today's environmentally conscious society, combining history, cutting-edge design, and sustainability results in an ideal combination that reduces waste and supports livelihoods (Hariram et al., 2023). While the rug industry might not be a focal point at green summits, it's estimated to discard billions of dollars worth of yarn annually, often resulting in the excess being incinerated or deposited in landfills (Kumar, 2022). Attention should be given to the transformative approach, which seeks a comprehensive transformation in the production and consumption systems, in addition to the dominant approaches of the innovation systems, to ensure the sustainability of the handmade carpet industry (Yadav et al., 2022).

3 METHODOLOGY

Research using case studies entails "an intensive examination of one unit with the aim of comprehending a broader class of (similar) units... observed at one point in time or over a limited period of time" (Gerring, 2004). Therefore, case studies give the researcher a chance to have a comprehensive grasp of the study problem and can help in characterising, comprehending, and elucidating a research problem or scenario (Gerring, 2006; Easton, 2010; Swanborn, 2010). As an instrument for organisational learning and assessment, the approach is well-liked by researchers in addition to being extensively employed in academia (Baskarada, 2014).

Thus, the case study method has been used in the study in accordance with the qualitative approach because it aids in achieving the goals of the investigation, i.e., studying the impact of the initiative MANCHAHA on society and artisans' livelihood and the contribution of traditional methods and innovation on sustainable development goals (SDGs). The study employed the inductive single-case research method, collecting data through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews. The FGD method was used to collect the data from artisans as it helps in identifying the important theme, noteworthy quotes, and any new and unexpected findings (Suzuki, 2005; Breen, 2006; Olabisi, 2014; Shephard et al., 2021). The FGD guide was used to cover aspects like when they are working in the company, their experiences, what the traditional techniques they are using while weaving carpet, what they know about MANCHAHA, what their perception and experience of it, what changes happened in terms of socio-economic status and overall empowerment, how it's leading to sustainable livelihood. The FGDs approach was used to understand weavers' perspectives on Jaipur Rugs and the new project, MANCHAHA, and semi-structured interviews with different Jaipur Rugs department executives. The subject experts validated the questions used in semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview has been done to comprehend the thought process and procedure for MANCHAHA, insights into how this initiative came into existence, what was the thought process and what kind of reaction they experienced from artisans on it and the contribution to sustainable livelihood and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The research has been conducted at the headquarters of Jaipur Rugs and Aspura village, situated in Rajasthan's Sikar district. In this village, the majority of the women are weavers, either independently or for Jaipur Rugs. The researcher also went to the company's warehouse and finishing facility to better understand the entire process and the perspectives of those involved at each stage. The focus groups were held in the villages where the looms were installed, and a semi-structured interview was held in the Jaipur Rugs headquarters, warehouse, and finishing center.

The study's participants included weavers, department directors, and the chairman of Jaipur Rugs. Although the weavers varied in terms of their ages, levels of expertise, and literacy, the majority were illiterate yet were masters of the craft.

The research supervisor guided the FGDs and semi-structured interviews. After getting permission from the participants, the notes were taken throughout the discussion and recorded with a recorder. The narrative analysis method was employed to structure the acquired material, facilitating a deeper understanding of the situation and underlying themes. This manual analysis was conducted without utilising any software, and cross-checking of themes and codes was performed by the co-author. While member-checking wasn't feasible, validation was ensured by presenting summaries of each FGD and interview. This approach aimed to accurately represent participants' viewpoints in interviews and focus groups. The data collected has been validated using the triangulation method by comparing the insights of interviews with the data collected from the artisans and the news, magazines and books.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Process of MANCHANA

The MANCHANA is a Hindi word for "made from the heart." In the beginning, MANCHANA was initiated as a solution to wastage occurring during carpet making. But Kavita Chaudhary (Design Director) added creativity to that process. According to her, the weavers of Jaipur Rugs are better artists or creators than professionals. The MANCHANA initiative spearheads sustainability efforts by upholding various facets: preserving crafts, yarn, and artisan skills, maintaining a year-round livelihood, fostering a sustainable business model, and nurturing innovation in design (see Figure 1). Through these multifaceted efforts, the company actively upholds sustainability across different dimensions, ensuring the continuity and advancement of traditional crafts while supporting the livelihoods of artisans. The initiative not only maintains the integrity of artisanal skills and materials but also promotes a sustainable business model, fostering innovation in design and ensuring consistent year-round opportunities for livelihoods.

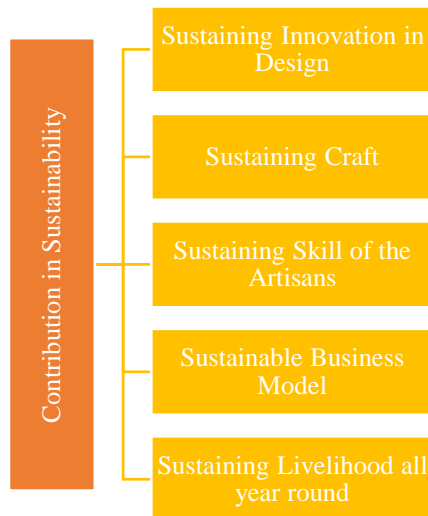


Figure 1. The new meaning of Sustainability

Source: The author(s)

Within the artisan sector, the MANCHANA programme demonstrates a diverse approach to sustainability. The promotion of creative design techniques in conjunction with customary crafts fosters the development and modern significance of handcrafted products in the face of shifting market conditions. Additionally, its commitment to maintaining and developing traditional craft methods emphasises care for cultural heritage and supports the sustainability of craftsmanship. Utilising focused training initiatives and capacity-building projects, the programme enables artisans to improve their skill sets and adapt to changing market conditions. The initiative's focus on developing sustainable business models is unique as it achieves a balance between preserving cultural traditions

and ensuring the economic sustainability of craftspeople. Furthermore, the initiative strengthens the resilience of artisan groups and promotes secure livelihoods by enabling year-round engagement in craft production. This all-encompassing strategy highlights the MANCHAHA programme as a key player in advancing sustainability in the artisan sector with regard to design innovation, cultural heritage preservation, skill development for artisans, economic empowerment, and livelihood security.

Apart from Research & Development department, a separate department was formed for MANCHAHA which is Design & Development and is led by Kavita Chaudhary. The MANCHAHA initiative extended beyond existing rural weavers, encompassing prisoners from Dausa, Bikaner, and Jaipur under Freedom MANCHAHA. Empowering their creative potential, it taps into rural India's untapped fashion, shifting communities from exploitation to empowerment. Each meticulously hand-crafted rug, comprising over 200,000 knots, encapsulates its creator's narrative, resonating with their emotions, aspirations, and individuality. This initiative transcends boundaries, providing an avenue for imprisoned individuals to express themselves artistically while transforming societal perspectives. By embracing these marginalised groups, MANCHAHA catalyses a transformative journey, reshaping communities and narratives from one of suppression to one of empowerment, where each rug becomes a canvas reflecting the intricate tales and personalities of its creators.

Initially, the company, utilised leftover or unused yarn from completed carpets to provide weavers with the opportunity to weave their thoughts and designs. This approach facilitated the utilisation of surplus yarn, allowing weavers to express their creativity while contributing to the unique narrative woven into each rug. The process can be understood from the following Figure 2.

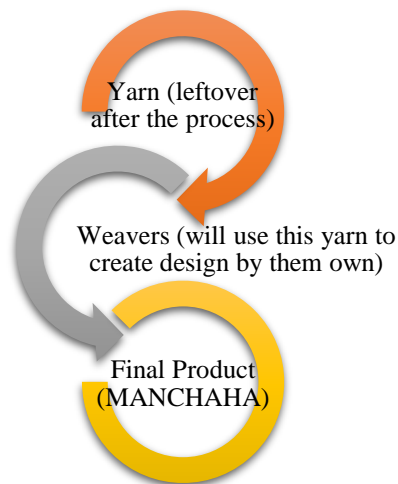


Figure 2. Initial stage process of the MANCHAHA initiative

Source: The author(s)

Subsequently, the company devised a method involving a complete restart of the carpet manufacturing process. Leftover yarn is meticulously categorised into three segments: 'unused yarn', 'to-be-processed again', and 'fully wasted yarn'. Unused yarn is combined with new stock for crafting new carpets and MANCHAHA creations. Yarn marked for reprocessing undergoes carding, spinning, and spooling before being repurposed for MANCHAHA creations. Lastly, yarn deemed fully wasted is sold to waste stores. This strategic approach ensures optimal utilisation of surplus materials while supporting the creation of new carpets and sustaining the MANCHAHA initiative. The updated process can be understood from the given figure 3.

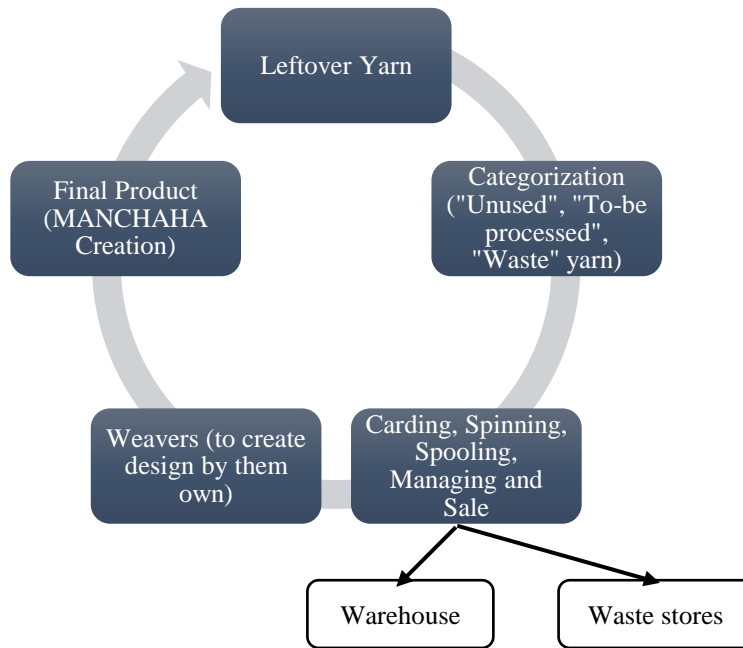


Figure 3. Updated process of MANCHAHA

Source: The author(s)

4.2 Traditional techniques, Weavers, Innovation and Sustainability

The Jaipur Rugs continue to make rugs using traditional methods from the beginning to the end of the process. The Katwari oversee the carding and spinning processes, after which the wool undergoes dyeing. Weavers utilise traditional looms for carpet weaving, followed by an intricate manual finishing process encompassing 18 stages. These include measurement, knot counting, pile height inspection, raffu (repairing), thukai (knot beating), kachi kainchi (first shear), sua birai (design correction), back-burning, back-burn cleaning, dipping, washing, khinchai (stretching), cutting, binding, pucci kainchi (final shearing), kalam birai (detailing), chinte nikalna (snipping visible cotton), and carving & embossing.

Each weaver undergoes a month-long training provided by the company. Subsequently, they have the autonomy to opt for employment with the business, pursue independent work, or engage with other contractors. During their training, weavers receive daily compensation (₹100/day), and upon formal employment with the company, they earn payment based on the number of lines of work completed (₹20/line). Before the MANCHAHA project, weavers received maps to guide their carpet weaving. However, with the inception of the MANCHAHA project, they were empowered to create their own patterns. This shift astonished the weavers, offering them a newfound sense of creative freedom and autonomy.

One of the weaver's group said- *"We were shocked when the corporation first told us about this effort, and we had no idea what to do or how to go about it. We didn't even touch the materials for the first 15 days."*

Another weaver's group said - *"We was completely perplexed as to how we could weave on my own without seeing the map and what to do if the pattern didn't work out."*

Later, after observing the weavers' trepidation, the company's representatives met with them to encourage them and reassure them that the company would not charge them anything even if the outcome was subpar. One of the weaver's group told- *"As a result of their explanations, we felt confident enough to begin weaving the rug. We began by using a small-size rug in the beginning (i.e., 90*150 cm)."*

Another group of weavers said- *"We (four weavers) were reluctant to begin the work even after we met with the company's members and their assurance, but they persuaded us to attempt, so we began weaving one large rug."*

Every weaver first had trouble deciding what to make since, while they knew how to weave a rug, deciding what to weave and how it should look was a hurdle. Weavers, however, took up the challenge and began working on it after meeting representatives and receiving assurances from the firm side that they would not charge anything or deduct any amount from their earnings, and the outcome was unimaginable for them. One of the weaver said- *"At first, I was scared and perplexed, but later I reasoned that if the business is insinuating it, then I should at least attempt. And I wove some illogical patterns out of several vibrant yarns. My first MANCHAHA rug included mountains, birds, random lines, and tea cups equal to my children's figures by imagining how they request me for tea every morning."*

Another group of weavers said- *"At that time, celebrations were in full swing, and we were weaving many sweets from our various festivals. In between weaving the Rajasthani sweets (ghewar, laddoo, sakarpara, and kaju katali), we weave random lines to create designs like mountains, forests, and other arbitrary shapes. We were terrified at first, but as soon as we began weaving the rug and the happy thoughts began to come to us, we were able to weave in an enjoyable way by incorporating all kinds of unexpected notions."*

Another group of weavers said- *"We were worried right away, and on top of that, although the three of us were accustomed to working together, utilising the map was the*

first time we were working without a predetermined layout. As a result, when we initially started weaving, our minds did not align, and the patterns we created made no sense. However, as time went on, we began to understand one another's viewpoints, and as a result, the patterns we created over time became more coherent."

Another weaver said- *"I've always liked bright colours and wanted to make a rug with them, and the MANCHAHA provided me with the opportunity to do it. I was relieved that my choice had become the preference of others."*

Like this, there are numerous stories behind each MANCHAHA rug collection. When given the opportunity to express themselves, the weavers mix a range of elements from their own cultures and surroundings, including personal experiences, into the weaving of their carpets. The final works are colourful creations that are inspired by a wide range of things, such as food and colour, flowers and animals, items and musical instruments, close friends and family members, dreams, and emotions.

WEAVERS INTERESTED IN MANCHAHA

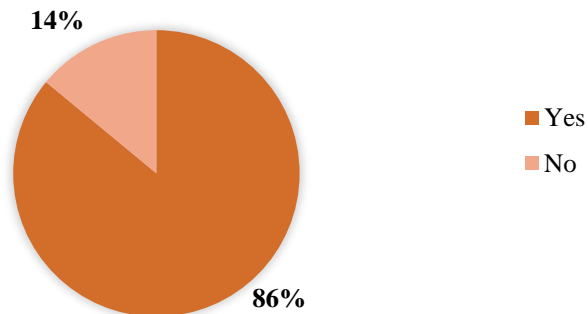


Figure 4. Weavers interest towards MANCHAHA creation

Source: The author(s)

Initially, the majority of weavers displayed hesitancy, but as they commenced their work, their perspectives evolved. As indicated in Figure 3, 86 percent of weavers are enthusiastic about completing MANCHAHA projects, while 14 percent prefer working with Maps. Those favoring Maps mentioned the convenience of following the predefined patterns without the need for additional thought or time. Conversely, 86 percent of weavers expressed a preference for weaving their own ideas, relishing the appreciation received for their originality and designs.

The company's conviction and the weavers' dedication led to numerous national and international accolades for both the weavers and the company. Bimla Devi and Kavita Chaudhary received the German Design Award, while Manju Devi was honored with three awards - Dezeen Awards, Kyoorius Design Awards and Future Design Awards, for the same design. Additionally, Jaipur Rugs recognised each weaver with a reward and a certificate of appreciation. In addition to weaver's earnings from MANCHAHA production, the company expresses gratitude to weavers by offering them gifts or products

of their choice from the profits they earned on every single creation. Weavers request various items such as refrigerators, mixer grinders, blankets, or silver and gold ornaments based on their individual profits from the creations. The company rationalises this practice, believing that direct cash disbursements might not be utilised effectively and could be mismanaged in families with toxic dynamics. Consequently, they opt to provide goods according to the weavers' needs and profits, ensuring a more impactful and personalised token of appreciation.

The program has empowered rural individuals, many with minimal education, to amaze the world with innovative designs rivaling those of top global professionals. This unique social innovation not only revives the endangered ancient craft of hand-knotting but also reignites a passion for weaving through unrestricted creative expression. Its objective is to reshape the economy by nurturing confidence and providing a steady income. By classifying and using surplus yarn in the carpet production process, the company has made a big leap in sustainable material management. The organisation has exhibited an organised and effective approach to material resource optimisation through the implementation of a methodical framework that differentiates between "unused yarn," "to-be-processed again," and "fully wasted yarn." Using leftover yarn in a methodical way by carding, spinning, and spooling it to make MANCHAHA masterpieces is an innovative approach to sustainability that makes creative use of materials already in existence. This innovative approach to artisan craft production not only minimises waste but also conforms to the circular economy principles. Emphasising the efficient use of excess materials to promote the creation of new carpets and maintain the MANCHAHA initiative's sustainability, this creative strategy highlights the company's commitment to resource efficiency and environmental stewardship.

Also, this initiative significantly impacts various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both directly and indirectly.

Table 1: MANCHAHA's contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

S.No.	GOAL	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Impact	Way
1.	Goal 12	Responsible Consumption and Production	Direct	Reusing & revival from waste- Each rug is manufactured from leftover batches of hand-spun yarn, reducing industry-wide waste for which there was no fix.
2.	Goal 5	Gender Equality	Direct	A community's transformation from exploitation to empowerment- By providing employment opportunities to rural women and enhancing their artistic skills to survive.
3.	Goal 1	No Poverty	Direct	Using traditional and manual techniques and employing artisans from backward and rural areas.
4.	Goal 17	Partnership to achieve the Goal	Direct	Collaborating with other institutions and foundation to enhance their knowledge and skills, generate ideas and insights etc. Such as with Royal Rajasthan Foundation, Corporate Rebel Foundation and SIDBI, British Council.

5.	Goal 8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Direct	By providing the facility of work from home and full & productive employment throughout the year. Even during COVID pandemic also they provided the work to artisans at their door steps.
6.	Goal 2	Zero Hunger	Indirect	By providing sustainable livelihood all year round and opportunities to grow by enhancing skills through training.
7.	Goal 10	Reduced Inequality	Indirect	By sustaining the skill of the artisans and creating a sustainable business model, sustaining the livelihood all year round.

Source: The author(s)

4.3 *Taking to the next level*

The company's efforts didn't cease with the national and international recognition of weavers' raw ideas and designs. Presently, they've initiated collaborations with institutions and art colleges to refine and professionalise the weavers' concepts and designs. A select group of weavers, displaying eagerness to learn and exhibiting superior finishing in their patterns, were chosen by the company for these collaborations. Recently, the company engaged in a partnership with the Central Saint Martin College, University of the Arts, London for this purpose. Through these collaborations, weavers delve into the cognitive processes of professional degrees pursued by students, gaining insights from professionals' approaches. Simultaneously, university students grasp the significance of innate artistic skills through the weavers' experiences. Moreover, the organisation extends its collaboration to multiple foundations, providing corporate-level training to enhance skillsets. Through knowledge sharing, the organisation supports partnerships with organisations and art schools, which helps to professionalise the patterns created by weavers. Resources are effectively used to improve skills through targeted skill development programmes that are based on the competence of weavers. The esteemed collaboration with Central Saint Martin College offers novel insights into customary artisan techniques. The artisan community's professionalism and skill development are further enhanced by the establishment of a mutual learning platform and corporate-level training. The company maintains ancient traditions while adjusting to new market demands, guaranteeing cultural and economic sustainability, by investing in the professional growth and skill enhancement of weavers. Artists are more effectively prepared to survive in a cutthroat environment by working together with institutions, which also helps to create a culture of creativity and knowledge sharing. Together, these key programmes advance sustainability and innovation in the artisan industry, closing the knowledge gap between formal education and handicrafts for enduring resilience in a dynamic market environment. Also, these collaborations stand as an avenue for mutual learning, bridging the gap between artisanal craftsmanship and formal artistic education while fostering skill development at a corporate level.

5 CONCLUSION

Jaipur Rugs distinguishes itself through a business strategy that directly engages with underprivileged weavers and artisans in remote villages, facilitating their access to the

global market. The organization strives to strengthen and empower these underprivileged communities in addition to promoting general sustainable societal development. Introducing an innovative endeavor known as the "MANCHAHA" collection, Jaipur Rugs creatively hand-spins and weaves leftover yarn batches into carpets with unique designs. This initiative represents a significant stride towards the primary goal of empowering their artisans. Moreover, MANCHAHA not only aligns with the company's core objectives but also redefines the essence of sustainability, offering a fresh perspective on responsible practices within the industry. Through this venture, Jaipur Rugs not only uplifts artisans but also showcases a novel approach to sustainability in the domain of carpet weaving. Weavers initially encountered difficulties working under this initiative, but over time, they came to appreciate who they were and what their strengths were. The weavers' stunning talent is brought out with a little encouragement from the company. While 14 percent of weavers still wish to work on map patterns, 86 percent are interested in continuing under this initiative. This initiative brings appreciation and recognition to weavers at the global level. Beyond enhancing artisans' lives, MANCHAHA has significantly contributed to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Responsible Consumption and Production, Gender Equality, No Poverty, Reduced Inequality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Zero Hunger, and Partnership to Achieve the Goal. The initiative by Jaipur Rugs is an ideal instance of how innovation and traditional methods can be combined to achieve advancement and sustainability. It acts as a crucial role model for how businesses may use inclusive, creative, and socially conscious methods to generate value for stakeholders and society at large. Through MANCHAHA, Jaipur Rugs not only addresses societal challenges but also sets a precedent for businesses to integrate diverse strategies that uphold sustainability and foster positive impact across multiple SDGs.

In summary, this study has examined the complex assessment of Jaipur Rugs' MANCHAHA project, shedding light on its significant influence on society and the lives of artisans. By recognizing and assessing the varied consequences of this creative project on a range of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the study has emphasized the project's contribution to the improvement of society. Additionally, through a critical evaluation of the initiative's integration of innovative techniques and traditional practices, the study made clear the intricate relationships that advance sustainable development goals. Jaipur Rugs' unique approach to business involves empowering marginalized communities and fostering sustainable social development through its engagement with underprivileged weavers and artisans to get access to global markets. The brand's dedication to sustainability and community development is demonstrated by the MANCHAHA line, which transforms ethical business processes. Jaipur Rugs sets the bar for inclusive and creative methods that add value for stakeholders and have a positive social impact by showcasing the weaving talent of weavers and aligning with a number of SDGs.

5.1 *Implications*

5.1.1 Theoretical Implication

Jaipur Rugs' "MANCHAHA" mission and business model have important theoretical ramifications. It highlights the opportunity to promote sustainable livelihoods and improve societal well-being by fusing traditional handicraft with contemporary business techniques, dispelling the myth that economic growth and sustainable development are mutually exclusive. This accomplishment demonstrates how corporations may considerably contribute to both social and economic advancement by appreciating and utilising traditional talents. The case also emphasises the significance of stakeholder empowerment and engagement, highlighting the participation of all stakeholders as vital partners in attaining corporate goals, from low-income weavers to top management. This is consistent with ideas of stakeholder management and participatory development, indicating that a thorough strategy for stakeholder participation can promote long-term success and favorable results.

5.1.2 Practical Implications

The need of building inclusive value chains that directly involve marginalised craftsmen in order to promote their economic security and sense of self is highlighted by this case study. The "MANCHAHA" initiative offers inspiration for different industries to creatively repurpose waste materials and lessen environmental impact, aligning with the principles of responsible consumption and production within the SDGs framework. It serves as a leading example of innovative and sustainable and responsible consumption and production. The case also emphasises the need of corporate social responsibility in achieving the SDGs. Jaipur Rugs' initiatives highlight how companies can spur beneficial societal changes by empowering weavers, advancing gender equality, reducing inequality, and promoting good employment and economic prosperity. This strategy has strategic importance in addition to ethical value, particularly as consumers and investors are beginning to embrace socially conscious businesses.

5.1.3 Limitations and Future Work Scope

However, despite the "MANCHAHA" initiative's and Jaipur Rugs' extraordinary successes, this research has several limitations. First off, the study's primary use of a qualitative methodology may limit how broadly its conclusions may be applied. Aspura and Jaipur in Rajasthan are the research's primary geographic emphasis, which may limit the findings' application to other areas with differing socio-economic dynamics. The "MANCHAHA" initiative's assessment of its long-term viability and scalability also presents a difficulty and necessitates extensive monitoring and study. By utilising mixed-methods methodologies, future research projects may broaden their focus and provide a more thorough knowledge of the initiative's effects. Assessing the sustainability of the social and economic changes instigated by Jaipur Rugs, conducting comparative studies across various locations, and looking into potential obstacles and solutions for wider implementation could offer insightful information for academics and businesses aiming for inclusive and sustainable growth.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nisha Kumari and Manjushree Paruchuru conceived and designed the idea. Nisha Kumari, Bangar Raju Indukuri and Manjushree Paruchuru prepared the instrument to collect the data. Nisha Kumari did the field study, collected the data, and prepared the first draft. Bangar Raju Indukuri supervised and helped finalise the article.

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