

novel initiative

Weaving a better life through looms

Jaipur Rugs collaborates with 100 inmates of Jaipur, Bikaner and Dausa Central Jail for a special collection



Rugs from the Freedom-Manchaha collection

CARPET WEAVING IS a lengthy process that consumes several months, but it is also the one that requires concentration and skill. Thus, keeping the weaver intensely occupied as they channel their inner creativity while also ensuring a livelihood for themselves and their family. It is with this intention of creating livelihoods and putting the idle minds of those who are behind bars serving life sentences that Jaipur Rugs, one of India's largest manufacturers of hand-knotted rugs, conducted carpet weaving workshops for 100 inmates of Jaipur, Bikaner, and Dausa Central Jail. They provided inmates with training, looms and surplus yarn leftover from production in a wide range of colours. The result is Freedom-Manchaha collection where each rug boasts of a unique design language, capturing the thoughts of its maker and featuring their observations of the world as they know it.

Made from wool and bamboo silk over a period of three-six months, each rug features a distinctive design. While some present floral and geometrical patterns, others bring rural life to weaving as they create a woman churning milk or small hut-like houses under a bed of stars or a wide field lined by electrical towers and trees. Their creation comes to life in hues of blue, orange, grey, yellow, green and red.

"Crime tends to go hand in hand with poverty and illiteracy, and imprisonment makes the lives of the families even more difficult, especially if the one incarcerated is the breadwinner. One way to change this destructive cycle is economic empowerment," shares 67-year-old NK Choudhary who founded Jaipur Rugs in 1978, adding, "Under the Manchaha initiative, weavers get to design their own rugs. We believe that the capacity to imagine brings motivation, which then adds to the prestige and prosperity of individuals if nurtured appropriately."

These inmates have now become a part of the Jaipur Rugs Artisan Network and like all artisans, they get paid on a monthly basis. The remuneration is credited directly to their bank account to make it easy for them and their family to have access to the money.

When asked about his learning from the entire process, Choudhary quickly adds, "It has taught us that given the right platform and opportunity and a little faith, anyone can transform their life. The zeal to learn, grow and most importantly heal by being a part of something meaningful is there in each individual."



The collection is made from wool and bamboo silk

The collection is available online.

Price: ₹ 66,200 upwards.

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