Foreword

A customer getting her order in Leh in months when Leh is usually cut-off from the mainland; an Amazon service partner empowering an island community in Majuli by taking e-commerce there; a woodcutter in Shimla supplementing his income by partnering with Amazon to help in last mile delivery — these are just some of the many stories we get to hear every morning. Each story is that of an empowered life and a transformation in itself. To think that Amazon India has played a role is humbling to say the least.

As we celebrate our 5th anniversary, introspect on the journey thus far, and plan for the future, one thing remains constant — our approach of obsessing over customers, innovating on their behalf, and thinking long-term. We are excited that our approach naturally aligns with the priorities of ‘New India’. And we are fortunate that we have committed partners in government institutions, small & medium businesses, micro-entrepreneurs, mom and pop stores, home entrepreneurs, and many others in this journey to build a modern and digital India.

Over the past five years, 40% of our investments have been in infrastructure, skilling initiatives, and technology-led innovations to grow the new digital opportunity for customers and small-medium businesses alike. For example, today we have 67 Fulfillment Centres across 13 states helping thousands of sellers provide a trusted, reliable, and fast delivery experience to customers anywhere in India. Our Project Udaan is empowering small corner stores to be digital assistants to first-time online shoppers in lower tier geographies, while thousands of our I Have Space partners like local kirana stores, stationery shops, and even bakeries are helping us in last mile delivery. Similarly, our seller-focused innovations such as Easy Ship and Seller Flex built using our sophisticated technology processes are helping solve logistics and fulfillment needs of small businesses to thrive in the new digital economy.

Today, customers in 99.7% PIN Codes are shopping with us. Over 32,000 Indian exporters are offering 90 million+ Made in India products to global Amazon customers. The Amazon Launchpad program is enabling tens of thousands of innovative products from Indian startups reach our customers. Similarly, our partnerships with several state governments and co-operatives are skilling thousands of weavers and artisans in digital tools and helping them revive several dying arts and crafts of India.

Our efforts are not only empowering Indians in remote locations digitally but are also creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs. We also realise that one of the core pillars for empowerment and a healthy digital future is financial inclusion and a cashless economy. Our efforts with Amazon Pay and unique innovations like cash loads at doorstep are already showing significant promise.

The stories of change that you will find in this book are just a small representation of the transformation that we are witnessing in the country. We remain committed to India in the long-term and will continue to invest in our vision of transforming the way India buys and sells and thereby transform lives.

We realise that we are just getting started and it’s still Day 1!

Amit Agarwal
Senior Vice President and Country Head
Amazon India
Revival of Indian Handlooms and Handicrafts

Innovating for new India

Entrepreneurship & Economic Impact

Content Creation & Consumption

Ecosystem Empowerment

Revival of Indian Handlooms and Handicrafts

Innovating for new India
3.4 lakh+ sellers offer 170 million+ products to Indian customers

50%+ sellers are from Tier II and below cities and towns

32,000+ Indian exporters offer 90 million+ Made in India products across 11 Amazon marketplaces

200% sales growth by global sellers in the last 2 years
Taking farmers from local *haats* to Indian homes

How the Shillong-based Amazon Seller, Zizira, became an online hit with their fresh, local produce sourced from Meghalaya’s farmers

Khraw  
Member, Team Zizira

Meghalaya:  
Paving a spice route through Amazon.in

Farmers like Gabriel once had to travel miles over difficult, hilly terrain to reach the nearest weekly markets. Often, they would return with unsold produce that would eventually go waste. Thanks to Zizira, Gabriel’s indigenous produce now reaches pan-India homes that consume as much as he can produce. This wonderful opportunity has transformed the modest farming community from India’s far-flung corner by empowering them with a wider reach and consumer base. This is the story of how the Shillong-based Amazon Seller, Zizira, became an online hit with their fresh, local produce sourced from Meghalaya’s grassroots — the farmers.
Selling like hot peppers
A journey that began with a handful of local farmers near Shillong, has today been joined by over 100 farmers from across India’s North East region. Manned by a full-fledged team of Shillong natives with skills ranging from sourcing, packaging operations & marketing, team Zizira has a vision. They aim to take the unique agricultural produce from the North East to the borderless world of online shoppers. Beginning with a few tried and tested products like the famed Naga chilli or ghost chilli pepper, Bhut Jolokia, and wildflower honey, today Zizira’s gourmet grocery shelves have swelled with many more products.

Beginning from scratch
The team has seen a steady rise in sales over the years, however, the going had not always been smooth for Zizira. The team had initially set up an online store on their own that did not work out. Having tasted failure early in their journey, the team today is more determined than ever to make their business a success. Shares Ibanshara, “We launched our own portal, ‘The Zizira Store’, which was not successful. That’s when we reached out to Amazon.”

Advantage: Local rural economy
Piper Longum is one of Zizira’s top selling products. Other top sellers are the super-hot Bhut Jolokia, the Khasi black sticky rice, and Lakhdong turmeric power. Their hard work, meanwhile, has been benefiting the lives and livelihoods of farmers from the region by connecting them directly with their consumers — sans any agricultural intermediaries.

About Zizira
- **Speciality:** Farm products, spices from North East
- **Started with Amazon:** October, 2015
- **Growth story:** From a small beginning with a handful of local farmers to an online presence with products sourced from a 100+ strong farmer community
‘Make in India’ business goes full throttle

Entrepreneur Manjeet Singh’s decision to go online and spin a success story was a befitting reply to tackling stiff competition.

Manjeet Singh
Tronica

About Tronica

Started with Amazon:
April, 2015

Speciality:
Electronic items

Growth story:
From selling one or two pieces a week to a multifold turnover in just 15 months on Amazon.

Delhi:
Tackling stiff competition from China and propelling ‘Make in India’ initiative.

Home theatre systems

Representative image
At a time when the market was getting flooded with ‘Made in China’ electronic goods, a Delhi-based entrepreneur combined his childhood passion for electronics with his will to take competition head on. It was anything but easy — there was a surplus of low-cost, ‘foreign-made’ products that confronted Manjeet Singh. Not one to be deterred by challenges, he went ahead with creating a range of quality electronic goods from a small rented room in his neighborhood. His love for all things electronic prompted him to take baby steps in the manufacturing journey, beginning with small cassette players and moving on to VCD and DVD players. The unit now manufactures MP3 players, car stereos, as well as home theatre systems under the brand name Tronica.

Years later and in keeping with the times, Manjeet empowered his nearly two-decade-old Embee Enterprises with an online marketplace presence through Amazon India. “The generous response to ‘Made in India’ products and my brand Tronica was overwhelming and opened a treasure trove of opportunities for indigenous businesses like mine,” he states.

Having learnt from his earlier inability to price his products as low as its Chinese counterparts, the Delhi-ite decided to test the online market with a new strategy. “I wanted to see how the market responds to my products and kept the price to a minimum,” he states. The result — a flurry of orders from all corners of the country. Along with an electronics category, he also began to store cables, mobile accessories, as well as handicrafts and gift items.

The generous response to ‘Made in India’ products has opened a treasure trove of opportunities for indigenous businesses like mine.
Taking a chance on chance encounters

How a 19-year-old CA dropout decided to start a beauty products business online

Yash Hisaria
St. D’Vencé

A CA dropout in his late teens, Yash Hisari always wanted to do something different, but like any average teenager he didn’t know what, how, and when. His mind was swirling with ideas and as he explored many of them in his head, ‘retail therapy’ was what he took to when he felt he had hit a dead end. He didn’t know that this very dead end would open the doors of opportunity!

Taking a chance on chance encounters

Palghar: A ‘sell online’ button that turned a student into a businessman

With the Amazon Seller App, I have been able to manage my online business from virtually anywhere.

Yash Hisaria
St. D’Vencé

With the Amazon Seller App, I have been able to manage my online business from virtually anywhere.
A whim that matured into a business idea

One fine day, when Yash was shopping online, he found that he just couldn’t ignore the ‘sell online’ button. Yash looked around his house, found an unopened tube of sunscreen, decided to sell it online, and made his first successful sale as an online seller. After that one incident, the clouds parted. He knew right away what he had to do; get the buy-in of a trusted manufacturer and allow online selling to do the rest. This was how Yash started off on his entrepreneurial dream — equipped with a single vendor, a line of moisturizers, and an e-commerce platform.

Exploring entrepreneurship

“The decision to sell on Amazon was a very natural one, thanks to how popular it is,” he recalls. What he discovered thereafter would seal his bond with the e-commerce giant for years to come — his products took to sales much better on Amazon compared to his existing site. But he wanted to offer the Indian market international beauty products and hence spent the next few months improving the quality and consistency of his product line. He subsequently launched St. D’Vencé and has not looked back since then.

Playing the long-game

Today, he has set up a manufacturing unit in Palghar, Maharashtra and eliminated the multi-vendor model — all thanks to the profits reaped over a course of seven months. He gushes humbly to inform that he’s now back on the educational bandwagon — exploring a degree in Business Administration and managing his business with the help of Amazon. “With their Seller App, I have been able to manage my online business from virtually anywhere,” he says.

About St. D’Vencé

Speciality: Beauty and cosmetic products

Started with Amazon: July, 2014

Growth story: From selling a single sunscreen lotion online to setting up a beauty brand that has in seven months given a ₹2 crores turnover

St. D’Vencé’s line of moisturizers

Inside the production facility

The manufacturing plant in Palghar, Maharashtra

St. D’Vencé’s line of moisturizers

St. D’Vencé's line of moisturizers

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Super entrepreneur, mother, and wife

How a small-town mother realised her dream of starting a business while nurturing her family

Priya
Super India Emporium

Panipat:
Everything’s possible for this mom
When Priya moved to Panipat, after completing her graduation in Delhi University, little did she know how her life was going to change! Marriage and later motherhood meant she was busy 24x7. Doing something for herself crossed her mind, but she never had time to focus on that aspect. There were things she wished to do, goals she needed to accomplish — both as an entrepreneur and as a mother. The perfect ally was then found in her husband, who after listening to her dreams, supported her.

Any woman can set up this business from the comfort of her home.

Work from home
Being a mother and a wife meant that Priya was required to spend many hours within the confines of her house. But she used this to her advantage — who better to know, understand, and sell home linen than a homemaker? She decided to host a one-stop shop for bed linen, curtains, carpets, and a wide range of other home textiles online. With her husband’s encouragement and support in tow, Priya launched Super India Emporium on Amazon.in.

Diwali changed her fortune
When Priya first listed her products, she didn’t expect much. But come Diwali, her sales began to rise. She says, “My husband and I packed all the products ourselves, sometimes well into the night and early mornings. And look around now, my workforce has filled my entire house with products ready to be shipped. Even though this occupies a lot of space, I don’t mind it one bit.”

Ease of business
Priya confesses that one of the biggest benefits of selling on Amazon was that she didn’t have to worry about finding customers. Her only priority was to ensure quality products. After that, customer reviews boosted her products to the top of search results! She adds with a smile, “I never imagined that I could stay at home, care for my baby, and handle a business with a monthly turnover of ₹50 lakhs! But I am an earning homemaker, so I can say with confidence that any woman can set up this business from the comfort of her home, with the added bonus of working on her own schedule.”
Chennai:
A news article on eco-friendly plates led to a sustainable dream being realised for this Indian exporter

From banker to brand ambassador of sustainable living
Roli Bhat’s career is what entrepreneurial dreams are made of

Roli Bhat
Adaaya

TAMIL NADU
Chennai

About Adaaya

Speciality:
Global seller of eco-friendly products for sustainable living

Started with Amazon:
2016

Growth Story:
A startup of two that today employs 19 people, majority of them women, and gets 15% of its orders from Amazon and is targeting $2 million in sales

Chennai:
A news article on eco-friendly plates led to a sustainable dream being realised for this Indian exporter
Up until four years ago, Roli Bhat had a predictable life, a predictable income, and a seat at the table in Citibank. But a news clip about a global retailer hunt for eco-friendly plate suppliers led to some extensive research that revealed to Roli that there was a huge market in the West for eco-friendly dinnerware. That news clip became the turning point of Roli and her husband T Harsh’s careers and lives! And they haven’t looked back since.

Tough start
Soon after, the husband-wife duo launched Adaaya Farm in a bid to replace plastic food disposables with a more sustainable alternative — Compostable Palm Leaf or Areca dinnerware. Roli says, “We were keen on exports right from the humble beginnings of Adaaya. We knew that it was going to be a tough nut to crack, with cold calls across time zones in Asia and the US. Thanks to the uncertainties of being a small business in the world of exports, we toyed with the idea of signing up on Amazon.com.”

The sale begins
All the couple knew about an Amazon export partnership was that Adaaya would have to courier its products to Amazon US and that the company would do the rest. What they did not know was that in about 10 days after they signed up, their products would be sold out in the US! For the first time in two years, Adaaya was selling its eco-friendly dinnerware directly to consumers in the US.

Product improvement
Continuous product improvement on the back of direct customer feedback has translated into sound business growth for Adaaya. An approximate 15% of the company’s total sales — that is, approximately 500 orders a month — comes from Amazon. The proud entrepreneurs say, “Adaaya is now a full-fledged business with 19 employees in its factory, most of whom are women. We are already targeting sales worth $2 million in the near to mid-term. Sustainable lifestyles, sustainable job creation, and the highs of being a recognised brand outside the domestic market mark Adaaya’s two amazing years with Amazon.” And Roli and Harsh couldn’t be more thrilled about it!

“We were keen on exports right from the humble beginnings of Adaaya. We knew that it was going to be a tough nut to crack...we then toyed with the idea of signing up on Amazon.com.
A global knitwear brand, all the way in Tiruppur

How VG Sivaraj’s business transformed from traditional garment export to an international T-shirt brand that was all the rage

VG Sivaraj
Espresso

Tiruppur:
A factory shutdown gives birth to a new T-shirt brand

This forced year-long break due to the shutdown (of factories) gave me a reason to rethink my business strategy for the post-Internet era.
the shutdown gave me a reason to rethink my business strategy for the post-Internet era.” Sivaraj wanted to take advantage of the newfound ease of doing business and the immediacy with which a good business can take off online. That’s the story of how coffee lover Sivaraj founded his online T-shirt brand, Espresso.

Going global
Further inspired by the ROI and convenience of doing business online, Sivaraj signed up with Amazon in 2015 and started selling Espresso T-shirts directly to consumers in the US. Initially, Espresso sales amounted to about $25-30 per day. But there was a spike on Prime Day and it was no small, unnoticeable spike. Espresso clocked orders worth $10,000 in a single day!

“It was a day that changed Espresso forever. Since then, there has been no looking back for us,” Sivaraj says. He further adds that he religiously reads reviews and uses all the feedback in continuous product improvement.

Expanding turf
It is little surprise that with Sivaraj and his team’s ethos and hard work and easy access to a much larger volume of international customers, Espresso now records an astounding turnover of 100 orders amounting to $800-1,000 per day. Motivated by the success of his homegrown brand, Sivaraj is now looking to expand his business with Amazon in the UK as well. Exciting times ahead!

About Espresso International

Speciality: Global seller of T-shirts

Started with Amazon: 2015

Growth story: From orders that gave $25-$30 in sales today they clock sales of 100 orders a day with a turnover of $800 a day

Tiruppur, a nondescript town in Tamil Nadu, has been a global garment export hub for many years now. Nearly every large global fashion brand has a deep trade relationship with the town. It was therefore natural for VG Sivaraj, a resident of Tiruppur, to set up a small garment export company with just ₹50,000 and 1,000 sq ft area of space. That was 1999 and Sivaraj’s business saw reasonable exports and success for the next 13 years.

The shutdown that sparked an idea
Cut to 2012, several factories in Tiruppur shut down in a dyeing pollution case. An incident that seemed unfortunate for many residents and businessmen of Tirupur marked new beginnings for Sivaraj. “This forced year-long break from work due to the shutdown gave me a reason to rethink my business strategy for the post-Internet era.” Sivaraj wanted to take advantage of the newfound ease of doing business and the immediacy with which a good business can take off online. That’s the story of how coffee lover Sivaraj founded his online T-shirt brand, Espresso.
From a family business in electronics to exporting Indian herbs globally

How Manish Jain overcame roadblocks and chased his own dream to become a successful global seller

Ahmedabad: A mother’s support took this business idea to fruition globally

About Herbs & Crops

Speciality: Global seller of organic herbs for cosmetic, healthcare industry

Started with Amazon: 2016

Growth story: From 2016 till date, a 200% growth in business
Every year, millions of young people leave their hometowns in search of education, livelihoods, or better career opportunities to big cities. And life can be even harder for those who stay back and try to break away from the beaten path; but some do manage to find a way to pursue their own dreams.

A different path
This is the story of one such entrepreneur, Manish Jain from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The Jain family traded in electronic retail for generations and Manish too was expected to follow suit. “I was free spirited and not at all keen on spending my entire life inside a shop. I needed to do something more exciting, something bigger,” he says. All Manish had was a 200 sq ft office and the tenacity to research, dive deep, and bring an idea to life. Markets around the world were opening up for everything natural and organic, and Manish knew that natural herbs had a huge demand in multiple industries. That’s how Herb & Crops Overseas was born in 2013.

Support from mom and Amazon
When Manish received his first export inquiry, he singlehandedly managed the entire order — from packing and documentation to delivery logistics. After initial luck, things started to get difficult. It didn’t help that he had little support from his family who saw little value in his venture. But Manish’s mother remained his staunchest supporter, which gave him confidence to sign up with Amazon in 2016. Herbs & Crops’ sales soared, especially during Amazon.com’s Cyber Monday and Black Friday sales periods.

On the growth path
Two years down the road, the company has had 200% growth in business. Herbs & Crops has expanded its presence not only to India and the US, but also to Japan and UK. “I couldn’t be happier that I was able to prove my family wrong and make my mother proud. I have been able to singlehandedly turnaround my business and create an internationally sought after natural herbs brand in the bargain, thanks to Amazon!” Manish concludes.
The power of first

Satveer Singh, a young entrepreneur from Adampur, Punjab, has empowered his two-decade-old offline business with a sound online presence.

A simple “why can’t I” was the propelling moment for Satveer Singh from Monu Garments. For the young entrepreneur from Adampur, Punjab, it was about ‘what next’, in other words, taking the business to a higher level. With a will to explore the endless possibilities of e-commerce and the irresistible potential of being the first in his town, Satveer took the plunge to shift his already flourishing offline business to an online marketplace. And the rest, as he says, “is a dream run that I love to relive over and over again.”

About MG Enterprises

- **Speciality:** Knitwear and garments
- **Started with Amazon:**
  - February, 2015
- **Growth story:**
  - Four years to establish the physical store in Adampur,
  - four months to become a thriving seller on Amazon

Adampur: Making the most of offline and online to become the first online seller in Adampur, Punjab.

Satveer with his family
From 2000 for nearly two decades now, Monu Garments has been doing brisk business selling Vardhaman wool and children’s apparels. Reminiscing how his father, then in the Indian Army, wanted to set up a shop for his mother, who was very good at knitting sweaters, Satveer says, “She wanted to stay busy and he was more than happy to help her do that.” It took a good four years for the business to get rolling, the inventory to keep changing, and a steady queuing of customers.

As he watched the world around get busy with online purchases, Satveer paused and pondered, “If there were so many buyers, there had to be an equal number of sellers. I knew it was time to take my store online,” says the young entrepreneur. A flurry of research later, he registered his business on Amazon’s Seller Central. The exhilaration at being the first in his town to be associated with a multinational company was the beginning of many firsts. “Our account went live at night and when we checked the next morning, we had our first order,” states Satveer. And the feeling of empowerment only goes up many notches with every new product listing and subsequent orders. Going from an offline store catering to local customers to an online presence with a pan-India customer base has been Satveer’s biggest high. “I have no words to express my happiness, and I only have Amazon India to thank for that,” he signs off.

Our account went live at night and when we checked the next morning, we had our first order. That was quick!
Threading together their own success story

How these siblings shaped a successful ethnic apparel enterprise — a stitch at a time

It was backbreaking work for the eight sisters of the Donga family from Surat, Gujarat, who had immense talent in tailoring. They excelled at embellishing sarees and women’s ethnic wear like kurtis, lehenga cholis etc., but the talent didn’t result in a significant contribution to the household’s income. That was when their younger brother, Ravi, introduced them to the world of e-commerce and online selling.

Surat: A raksha bandhan gift transforms lives
A brother’s Rakhi wish transformed a business

Fired by a desire to gift his hardworking sisters something worthwhile for the festival of Rakhi, Ravi finally hit upon the idea of online retailing. Determined to find an avenue that would help him earn enough to buy his sisters’ gifts, he says, “I remember that I used to sit online and endlessly research all viable possibilities. And that’s when I learnt about Amazon’s success stories.” For Rakhi that year, Ravi achieved his dream of finding a gift for his sisters that would touch their hearts. What began as an idea to give something back to his sisters eventually became the answer to end his family’s financial difficulties.

Vatsla goes online

Acting as the enabler for the inherent talents of his sisters, Ravi decided to leverage their traditional creations. The beautiful ethic wear that the sisters Daya and Gulab laboured over each day helped them instantly choose their own product category. Once they finally registered themselves on the Amazon’s seller platform in 2014, there was no looking back for the family. Today they employ a team of 35 workers at their small manufacturing unit, clocking a monthly turnover of nearly ₹80 lakh as of August, 2017. From an inventory of a single kurti design, stitched by Gulab and Daya when they started out, today their women’s ethnic wear brand boasts of almost 1,500 unique designs!

With the help of Amazon’s seller platform, an unorganised household tailoring business of a middle-income family from Surat into an online enterprise that was a raging success!

“I feel empowered every time a new order comes from Amazon. It means our business is succeeding.”
— Daya, sister of Ravi Donga

About Vatsla

Speciality: Ethnic wear — kurtis, lehengas

Started with Amazon: August, 2014

Growth story: From two sisters stitching clothes to employing 35 workers crafting over 1,500 designs, clocking a monthly turnover of ₹80 lakhs as of August, 2017
Ecosystem Empowerment
80,000+ women entrepreneurs reached through Amazon Saheli

70 villages near our Fulfillment Centres benefit from the Community Centre initiatives

350 Service Partners in 320 cities across India enabling last-mile delivery

Amazon Cares has touched the lives of 2,60,000+ beneficiaries

30+ deaf associates work for the first 'silent' delivery station in Mumbai
Amazon Saheli: Empowering women entrepreneurs across India

The dedicated online storefront — The Saheli Store — features traditionally and innovatively handcrafted office products, shoes and handbags, clothing and accessories, jewellery, home and kitchen, luggage and bags, and home décor artifacts locally created by women entrepreneurs across the country.

How the Saheli program is helping women across India hone their craft and leverage it for sustainable livelihoods

Skills like embroidery get a new lease of life under Amazon Saheli

At SEWA, we believe in young women’s entrepreneurship using e-commerce. With minimal cost, e-commerce gives you reach to newer markets nationally and internationally! It builds economic security, and brings dignity and self-respect to young women entrepreneurs. SEWA is happy to partner with Amazon, which shares the same vision.

— Reema Nanavati, Head – SEWA
Amazon launched its special marketplace for women entrepreneurs in November, 2017. Today, women make and sell everything from diaries and notebooks to incense sticks, bread bins, and men’s clothing to sarees on the Saheli marketplace. These products come from seven partner NGOs around India that reach 80,000 women artisans across the length and breadth of the country.

Amazon Saheli has been set up in partnership with the pioneering social organisation, Self Employed Women Association (SEWA) and Impulse Social Enterprise, among others. The storefront offers the women entrepreneurs and artisans who work with these organisations access to Amazon’s global marketplace, as well as to the logistical infrastructure of the e-commerce behemoth.

To handhold women artisans and organisations through this entirely new experience, initial training workshops are conducted on how to manage their businesses online. In addition, a dedicated account manager is assigned to new Sahelis, to help them kick-start their enterprises. The benefits that an Amazon Saheli reaps from the partnership are myriad. Apart from their products being highlighted in a separate storefront, product photo shoots and cataloging services come free as a part of launch assistance provided to every partner associated with Saheli program. The program also provides tools and reports to help them save time and bandwidth on managing their online businesses and focus more on creativity and product innovation.

About Amazon Saheli

- **Number of women impacted:** 80,000
- **Launched by Amazon:** 2017
- **Speciality:** Empowering women entrepreneurs and artisans with access to global customers, a separate storefront for product visibility, imaging and cataloging assistance free of cost, training support, and ongoing assistance from a dedicated Account Manager to manage their online store on Amazon.in

Amazon Saheli: Where women entrepreneurs adapt to online selling
Marching ahead with ‘Amazon Saheli’

The amazing ‘rags to riches’ story of a gritty entrepreneur

Ahmedabad
GUJARAT

Ahmedabad: A ‘Saheli’ program that helps women like Paliben become self-reliant

About Gitanjali Stationery

Speciality: Handmade stationery products

Started with Amazon: 2016

Growth story: From a rag picker to an entrepreneur making stationery products and training other women to do the same

Today’s self-employed entrepreneur, Paliben, has clambered up from an enormously impoverished background to ensure a prosperous future for her children. It has been a story of grit and sheer tenacity for this 45-year-old master trainer of waste recycled products. She had begun by collecting rags and waste paper from textile mills and offices in Ahmedabad before recycling them into quilts and stationery products — barely earning enough to make ends meet.

Paliben uses a paper-cutting machine
Creating products from recycled waste

Paliben’s life took a positive turn when in 2016, she was spotted by the Ahmedabad-based Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), known for their work with poor, self-employed women workers like her. They trained her to craft sustainable products out of waste paper. “After joining SEWA, I soon realised that I have a natural flair for making things out of paper,” smiles Paliben. Paliben is the main driving force behind the recycled stationery brand. She has a group of women working under her to create and sell block-printed cloth covered diaries, foolscap and spiral-bound notebooks, Khadi paper bags and Khadi paper folders, etc.

“Currently, I am a master trainer at Gitanjali Cooperative. I develop new designs for stationery products and train hundreds of waste recyclers like me,” she shares.

Expanding with Amazon Saheli

Gitanjali Stationery reached new heights when it joined Amazon Saheli as a partner. Before joining the program, the extent of Gitanjali’s reach was only across Ahmedabad. Now its reach has expanded multifold, with orders pouring in from all over the country. Amazon Saheli empowers women entrepreneurs across India by getting them into the e-commerce fold, displaying their handcrafted products on the Saheli Store for online shoppers, and helping them manage their online businesses seamlessly. Partner organisations of Amazon Saheli include SEWA, Impulse Social Enterprise, GreenBug, Taragram, Tee-tote-ler, Mann Deshi, and Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs (COWE).

I am very proud of all that my mother has achieved in life. We have seen everything that she had to go through over the years to give us an education and a better future.

— Daughter of Paliben
Storming the male bastion

An equal opportunity initiative launched in early 2016 helps transform the lives of women; creating unique employment opportunities and enabling them to become achievers in their own right.

“Partnering with Amazon has been one of the best decisions of my life. It has also helped me create an identity and earn respect.”
— Jamuna Rani, Sarini Associates
At a time when more women are joining the workforce and creating a niche for themselves, Amazon India’s only-women delivery centres stand out as shining examples of transforming lives and nurturing achievers. As part of the equal opportunity initiative launched in 2016, Thiruvananthapuram and Chennai played host to delivery centres managed and run exclusively by women.

A work day looks no different for the women manning these centres, be it sorting packages to whizzing off on two-wheelers to deliver them within a 2-3 km radius. With the trademark delivery bags in tow, the women delivery associates have arrived and how. For Divya Syam, managing the Thiruvananthapuram station and Jamuna Rani, in-charge of the Chennai station, breaking through a seemingly male bastion is only the first rung of the ladder. Jamuna feels that the term ‘woman delivery associate’ is new and she wanted to prove herself capable of this unique challenge. The will to do something different, a passion to fulfill desires, and a little effort is all that’s required, she feels.

Divya is brimming with pride when she says, “I am glad to set an example for many women in the country.” A supportive team is what counts and Divya’s team is no different. “With the support of dedicated delivery associates, I am certain of overcoming all hindrances,” she says, urging women to ‘go beyond their comfort zone and explore the joys of entrepreneurship.’ One such tale is that of Srikumari. Notwithstanding the apprehensions of a traditionally unfeminine role and the challenges of the job, she stepped out of home to earn a living for the first time when her son, also an Amazon Delivery Associate, filled her in about the opening. What makes it even better is a supportive family. ‘Thanks to my added pay cheque, we repaid our loan before time. I like the fact that I can now support my family in a more meaningful way,’ she signs off.

“I like the fact that I can now support my family in a more meaningful way.”
— Srikumari, Delivery Associate in Chennai
Turning a tier IV town into the ‘Island of Opportunity’

How Rupak Chandan ushered the concepts of choice and access into Majuli Island

With approximately 400 sq km of area and a population of 2,00,000, Majuli Island might be the largest river island in the world, but until two years ago, shopping for things like schoolbooks, laptops, and shoes was a task in itself. It didn’t help that the island is connected to the mainland only via ferries, making last-mile deliveries into the island a logistical nightmare. But all of that changed in 2016 when Rupak Chandan — then a graphic designer and publisher — discovered the Amazon Service Partner Program, an Amazon India program that facilitates deliveries to tier III and IV towns with the help of local logistics and transportation entrepreneurs. Rupak decided to bring the convenience of online shopping to Majuli Island and over 20 other PIN Codes in and around Jorhat, the second largest city in Assam.

About Monica Enterprises

- Speciality: Last-mile delivery in Majuli
- Started with Amazon: 2016
- Growth story: From 2 delivery boys to a team of 40, Monica Enterprises has not just helped grow business, but has helped generate employment and transform the lives of youth of Jorhat
Majuli shops online
Rupak launched Monica Enterprises in a 400 sq ft space with two delivery boys. But the convenience of last-mile delivery along with flexible payment options ensured that the residents of Majuli enthusiastically took to shopping online. From school teachers to homemakers, everyone in Majuli is now in on the secret to wider choices that Indians on the mainland take for granted. Today, Rupak’s company delivers an average of 30-40 orders per day in Majuli alone, he employs 40 delivery boys and works out of a 1,000 sq ft office space in Jorhat.

Customer first, always
However, this success was not without hardships. Rupak says, “Monsoons are the hardest. Ferry service to Majuli is limited and we quickly run out of time on our daily delivery schedules.” Throughout monsoon, they continue to do multiple ferry and boat rides everyday. In their two years of service, he says, “We are working hard for every single delivery commitment in Majuli.” Rupak is proud of the way he has managed to grow his business, generate employment, and transform the lives of Majuli residents. He beams, “To the world, Majuli is the largest river island. But to me, it has been the Island of Opportunity.”

We are working hard for every single delivery commitment in Majuli.
No island too far, no corner too remote

How Sahiba Mullah partnered with Amazon to bring Andaman & Nicobar Islands into the online shopping fold

Sahiba Mullah
Apt Logistics

Even as the Indian mainland made the most of the convenience and choice that online shopping offered, there was one place in the country that remained a virgin island till very recently. This archipelago of 300 islands and almost 4,00,000 inhabitants was far from the e-commerce radar till as recently as 2015! Brands and products — at least the ones that did reach the islands — had to be sourced from the mainland and were often months behind schedule.

But all of that changed when islander Sahiba Mullah, the director of Apt Logistics, decided to bring Andaman & Nicobar Islands into the online shopping fold. She started studying the viability of online shopping on the Island and coincidentally, this was around the same time Amazon too was tinkering with the idea of expanding its network into newer, previously unchartered territories.
All it took was intent
With the stars aligned as they were, Sahiba's Apt Logistics and Amazon formed a match made in heaven. By July 2015, Amazon and Apt Logistics had already set up a delivery station in Port Blair and flight deliveries started from Chennai to Port Blair. Amazon pioneered Cash On Delivery and door delivery on the Island, thus addressing potential reservations against online shopping. From chips and spices to brooms and ladders, there was little that the islanders didn't order online as soon as the service started. And the impact of online shopping reaching the shores of Andaman & Nicobar was hardly limited to convenience. From delivery associates to the workforce of Apt Logistics, there has been high volume employment generation on the islands.

The impact — in numbers
From 3 to 12 delivery associates and 20x growth in deliveries to the customers in Andamans — all of this in just over two years! The last two years have seen Andaman & Nicobar Islands wield the power of the Internet to make lives just that much more convenient and shopping lists, just that much more vibrant.

"The impact of online shopping reaching the shores of Andaman & Nicobar was hardly limited to convenience...there has been high volume employment generation on the islands too."
The silent delivery station
An innovative courier services firm transforms lives

A steady source of income, incentives to achieve more, ongoing training to excel at their jobs — but above all, a life of dignity. That is what Dhruv Lakra, the founder and owner of Mirakle Couriers, ensured for his hearing and speech impaired staff from Mumbai’s low-income families back in 2009. India is home to millions of perfectly capable youth with hearing loss problems who remain unemployed because of their physical disability. This is a rare story of how a young man’s innovative idea transformed many lives in his city, after joining Amazon’s Service Partner Program.

“
A chance encounter with a deaf boy in a bus who was anxious about not missing his stop, and then immediately upon reaching home, meeting a courier delivery agent at my doorstep, gave me the idea of launching a courier service employing the hearing and speech impaired.

— Dhruv Lakra, Mirakle Couriers
Empowering the disadvantaged

Mirakle Couriers began with Ganesh, the firm’s first deaf employee, and 10 shipments. The firm gradually scaled up to 5,000 shipments in a couple of years, assisted by more hearing-impaired employees. “I realised that courier agents do not need to communicate verbally with customers, making it a perfect job opportunity for the hearing and speech impaired,” shares Dhruv.

Their journey, however, was replete with challenges along the way. Despite their professional capabilities, the services of Mirakle Couriers remained under-utilised for many years. Their heart-warming tale finally took flight after the organisation partnered with Amazon for delivering packages in Mumbai under the Service Partner Program.

Expansion with Amazon

What started out as a pilot project for Amazon in May 2016, with four delivery associates and one delivery station, has today grown to 70 delivery associates delivering over 65,000 shipments per month from three stations in Mumbai. Amazon conducts regular classroom and on-ground training workshops for the delivery associates. The training also includes a buddy program, where new recruits shadow their experienced colleagues before starting off on their own. Employees like Ganesh and Mangesh today earn five-figure monthly salaries, along with provident fund and medical insurance.

Take the case of Mangesh, whose parents are uneducated and unskilled laborers working as domestic help and cleaners, earning less than ₹5,000 a month. With his steady employment at Mirakle Couriers, Mangesh today earns more than his parents ever did. He aspires to educate his baby daughter and wants to make sure she completes her education, unlike him.

About Mirakle Couriers

- **Speciality:** Deliveries using differently-abled associates
- **Started with Amazon:** 2016
- **Growth story:** From four delivery associates to 30 delivery associates including a delivery station run exclusively by them in Mumbai
Walking the talk on women’s empowerment

How Amazon Community Centres are creating a ripple effect of change for the women in their vicinity

“I started with basic stitching and sewing. Today, I run my own business. My life, and that of my children, looks nothing like what it did just a year ago. For once, our future looks bright. I couldn’t be more grateful!”
Amazon India has built Community Centres near its Fulfillment Centres around the country. Usually on the outskirts of metros, these centres are platforms for anyone from the community to come together, learn basic skills like computers, sewing, access the Internet and other digital education aids like LCD screens, DVD players, and e-content.

Women of the community often frequent Amazon Community Centres and that has opened many doors for them.

**From basic livelihood skills to digital learning**
A large part of the social initiatives at the Amazon Community Centres focuses on empowering women through skill development and providing exposure to learning tools.

Skills include everything from sewing and reading to basic math and computer training that makes them employable for banks, shops, and local businesses. This in turn, ensures financial freedom not just for the women but also their families.

One such example is the story of Meena, a young widowed mother of three from Haryana. Meena found out about the Amazon Community Centre from an erstwhile employee. She met the coordinator and learned more about the skill development opportunities the Centre offered. Soon, Meena polished her basic sewing skills and started stitching bags and blouses for customers. But she didn’t stop there. She brought more women from the community into the fold, taught them what she had learned on the Community Centre sewing machines, employed them full-time, and progressed, together with other women in the community, into a small-scale entrepreneur. Today, Meena actively contributes to her household income, pays for the education of her three children, and is a truly strong and empowered woman in her community.

This is just one of the many stories of empowerment from Amazon Community Centres. From educating young girls through the Early Childhood Development Programs to basic English language training, Amazon Community Centres are transforming the lives of women and in the process, uplifting entire communities.
Innovating for new India
15,000 *Udaan* (assisted shopping) points across 21 states

17,500 *I Have Space* stores in 225 cities

30,000+ innovative products across nearly 30 product categories from over 300 startups with 30,000 products on Amazon Launchpad
Mohammed Naved of Bijnor district in UP was happy with his sub-5K smartphone. His days looked the same — some WhatsApp forwards, a little Facebook browsing, the usual. “But I soon discovered that with a slightly more expensive phone, I could stream news, music, and movies and learn a whole lot more about the world on my smartphone,” he says. That’s how Naved met Amazon in his village, bought a brand new smartphone, and his worldview and his horizons expanded that much more. All thanks to the access and convenience of online shopping that he discovered in the lone village banking correspondent outlet — now also an Udaan point.

In close to five years that Amazon has been in India, we have seen a multitude of shoppers like Naved buy from our platform. It is clear that beyond metro cities, small town India is ready to wield the power of convenience and choice, pricing, and accessibility that comes with online shopping. However, a lot of these customers have shopped from trusted stores and individuals for generations. Touch and feel before investing in mid-to-high budget products continues to be important for them. They see the benefits in online shopping but its novelty also leads to some lack of trust. The roadblock is often compounded by issues like lack of digital access, language barriers, and the complexity and novelty of online payments among a target group where even offline banking penetration is low. To counter these exact barriers, we launched the assisted e-commerce program — Project Udaan — in 2015.

Udaan brings together several aspects of enabling digital commerce via assisted shopping beyond metro cities, including skill development, self-employment, and in several cases, even Amazon Pickup, i.e. select offline stores where customers can choose to have their orders delivered. All of these go hand in hand in introducing online shopping to new consumers who have heard of Amazon but haven’t experienced the convenience of shopping on it first hand.

Partnering with the offline retail ecosystem to bridge the trust gap

Project Udaan works with small entrepreneurs in these towns — mom & pop...
stores retailing electronics, mobile phone recharge, banking, etc or entrepreneurs looking to set up exclusive Udaan Points. We equip these offline stores and entrepreneurs with content and tools that train them in assisted online shopping. These training materials include skills like searching, browsing, and navigation on Amazon.in, helping customers set up Amazon accounts, check outs, payments, answering status and delivery queries, and refunds and returns if required.

Customers have existing relationships with stores that are selected as Udaan Points. So when they get online shopping and payment assistance from Offline Associates at these Udaan points or are able to pay Cash On Delivery, it becomes easier for them to shed their inhibitions about shopping and paying online. Today, Amazon works with 12,000 such stores across 21 states and 3,000 PIN Codes to bring multitudes of new customers into the online shopping fold.

From logistics and retail startups and small businesses to hundreds of mom and pop stores across the country, Project Udaan is creating a sound, self-sustaining retail ecosystem whose very nature is inclusive and mutually beneficial. And with a diverse range of orders — Adidas shoes, designer wear, Apple Watches, and Amazon Pantry, and even Pedigree pet food — coming in from far flung towns, it is evident that Project Udaan is meeting its objective of making online shopping the new normal in India.

### About Udaan

**Speciality:**
Udaan helps in bringing the joy of shopping on Amazon to new customers who have never shopped online before and also helps upskilling local businesses in digital commerce.

**Launched by Amazon:**
2015

**Growth story:**
From a pilot project in one city, Amazon now works with 12,000 such stores across 21 states and 3,000 PIN Codes.

### Micron

Many of our India-centric innovations are first on the mobile, to cater to India’s uniquely mobile-first consumers. The country has witnessed mobile adoption at a huge scale, however a large percentage of users have better access to low-end devices. To address their unique needs, we developed Micron — the low-latency lite mobile app aimed at enhancing the shopping experience for customers using low-end smartphones. This has made it easier for us to penetrate deeper into tier III and below geographies.
Amazon’s *I Have Space* (IHS) program handles a significant chunk of its logistics solutions in India’s small towns as well as metro cities. It is instrumental in fulfilling customer promises as well as in transforming lives across the country.

**Our partners in success**
At the heart of Amazon’s successful delivery strategy lies its last-mile connectivity program — IHS. What began with 2,500 neighborhood stores, now has over 17,500 stores. Its program partners are local entrepreneurs — general store owners, kiosk owners, mobile accessories, repair and recharge shopkeepers, grocery store owners, vegetable vendors, etc — who are not only familiar with their neighborhoods, but also enjoy the goodwill of their communities. This makes them excellent choices as local point-persons for the delivery and receipt of customer packages in small neighborhoods. What attracts such partners to the program is the opportunity to earn an extra income that often almost equals their primary income.

**Ease of delivery and pick up**
The program does not require any investments from the local partners, while ensuring consumer traffic to their own stores — translating into a win-win strategy for all. The IHS program requires local storeowners to deliver products to customers within a 2-4 km radius of their stores. In addition, their stores also double up as pick-up points for customers residing in the neighborhood. On an average, Amazon’s IHS store partners deliver between 20-30 packages a day, while earning a fixed amount per delivery in return.

**Growing footprint**
The innovative delivery program was launched in 2015, and today boasts of IHS partners in over 180 cities in India. Most IHS centers are located in tier II and III towns, such as Amritsar, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Kota, Vadodara, Bharuch, Nasik, Kolhapur, Belgaum, Tirupur, Warrangal, Vellore, Salem, Guntur, Raipur, Agra, and Dehradun, in addition to India’s leading metro cities.

More than successfully reaching customers in crowded neighborhoods, IHS has empowered local entrepreneurs to scale greater heights through its delivery platform.
God bless Amazon for giving everyone the opportunity to work hard and earn a good living.

— Rehman Khan, Timber store owner and IHS partner, Grant Road, Mumbai

Compared to how things were earlier, it’s been much easier to run the house since we started working with Amazon.

— Barsha Das, Grocery store owner and IHS partner, Jorhat, Assam

During peak times the amount of delivery increases considerably, so my household income increases as well. I’ve now been able to start investing in my own business. My daughter’s ambition is to become an IAS officer, and I will do my best to realise her dreams.

— Amreek Singh, Small store owner and IHS partner, Amritsar, Punjab

Partnering with Amazon has been one of the best decisions of our lives. We are very proud to have created our own identity. We are now recognised as Amazon Partners and that has also helped us attract more footfalls to our vegetable shop.

— Ganesh Rao and Chinna Rao, Vegetable vendors and IHS partners, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

About I Have Space

Speciality: Partnering with local stores for last-mile delivery solutions

Launched by Amazon: 2015

Growth story: What began with 2,500 neighborhood stores has today reached 17,500 IHS outlets in over 225 cities in India

What began with 2,500 neighborhood stores, now has over 17,500 outlets

Amazon’s IHS store partner

About I Have Space

Speciality: Partnering with local stores for last-mile delivery solutions

Launched by Amazon: 2015

Growth story: What began with 2,500 neighborhood stores has today reached 17,500 IHS outlets in over 225 cities in India

What began with 2,500 neighborhood stores, now has over 17,500 outlets

Amazon’s IHS store partner
Taking amazing reading experiences to every smartphone in India

Kindle Lite app, the lightest reading app for Android, is transforming how India reads. Read on to find out more.

About Kindle Lite

- **Speciality:** Lightest reading app on Android
- **Growth story:** Lakhs of downloads in the launch month
The uptake of eBooks and reading apps has been slow and steady at best in India. Users who have tried it, love the convenience of it and the easy access it brings to large online libraries. But patchy Internet speeds and low phone memories keep getting in the way of ubiquitous adoption.

Not anymore. In March this year, Amazon launched Kindle Lite, the lightest reading app for Android users in India. An India-first initiative, Kindle Lite uses less than 2MB of smartphone memory. To put this in perspective, the most popular social media apps claim as much 300-400MB space. That’s not all. Patchy Internet put the spanners in the works when the phone memory didn’t. But Kindle Lite works on 2G and 3G networks as well, so book libraries can easily travel wherever their users need to. Naturally, the response to the app has been overwhelming.

The best thing about Kindle Lite is that it offers all the Kindle features that customers have grown to love over the years, including personalised recommendations, seamless navigation and UI, Whispersync (syncing eBooks across devices), free eBook samples, and a vast library across English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, and Malayalam. In essence, Kindle Lite is designed for the amazing reading experience that Kindle offers, but on a low memory smartphone and in low network areas. It also allows users to start reading instantly, without having to wait for the full book to download. Kindle Lite App is available on Google Play Store along with the full Kindle for Android App.

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I discovered reading apps in college and instantly got hooked. But they were a pain when I travelled back to my hometown in the holidays. It’s a low network area and I couldn’t download anything new. All of that has now changed with Kindle Lite. I am on my third book this month!

— Kamakshi Kumar, Final year Literature student

No barriers to language

In keeping with the growing demand for regional books, Amazon now offers over 4,000 titles in five Indian languages (Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Malayalam, and Tamil) on Amazon.in online increasing readership and enabling more customers to find books easily.
Celebrating India’s entrepreneurial spirit with Amazon Launchpad
A global platform to help innovative startups showcase, sell, and scale

Amazon Launchpad: Solving sales, marketing, and distribution challenges that startups face in their early years

Introduced in India in December 2016, Amazon Launchpad is a global program that curates, showcases, and delivers innovative, often quirky products from startups to millions of Amazon customers around the world.

The central idea of the program is to solve the sales, marketing, and distribution challenges that many startups face in their early years. With Amazon Launchpad acting as a platform for sales and marketing, startup teams are able to stay focused on product development and innovation. At the same time, the program helps Amazon customers get access to a curated selection of innovative products that aren’t yet readily available in the market.

Amazon Launchpad has struck a cord with the startup community in India in less than two years since it was introduced in the country. We receive an average of 150 applications from startups a month, clocking in over 2,500 applications since 2016. Today, the 300 startups hosted on Amazon Launchpad include categories like drugstore, wireless, electronics, grocery, beauty and wellness, PC and toys, among others. Over 50 of these startups have now moved on to become part of global Amazon Launchpad marketplaces with customers in US, UK, Germany, France, China, and Japan, in addition to India.

About Amazon Launchpad

- **Speciality:** A crucible for Indian product startups that aligns with Startup India
- **Launched in India:** 2016
- **Growth story:** From 29 startups to 300 in 17 months, with the addition of 30 product categories, over 30,000 innovative products, and 50+ startups selling globally
Featured startup innovations on Amazon Launchpad:

**Miko**
- India's first companion robot for kids that chats about the world and adapts and responds to children's needs. Miko has a wide pool of age-appropriate worldly knowledge and safe fun for kids!
- **Date of Launch:** March, 2018
- **Growth:** 40X
- **Launched in India:**
  - Miko became highest viewed ASIN (Glance View) in toy category within 4 weeks of launch

**SleepyCat**
- The mattress of your dreams, packed in a bag! SleepyCat is making high end, luxurious memory gel, high-density foam mattresses more accessible.
- **Date of Launch:** August, 2017
- **Growth:** 125X
- **Launched in India:**
  - Seller offers 30 nights risk-free trial, Customers can claim refund if they are not happy with the product

**Ultracare Pro**
- An innovative pain management devices startup, Ultracare Pro manufactures portable physiotherapy machines to manage and cure minor body aches, injuries, and chronic pain.
- **Date of Launch:** July, 2017
- **Growth:** 3X
- **Launched in India:**
  - Compact and effective devices using ultrasound that make drug-free, cost-effective pain relief a reality

**Play Shifu**
- Designed by early childhood experts and parents, Shifu designs Augmented Reality-based interactive games to support learning and encourage curiosity among kids. Shifu aims to teach words, meanings, pronunciations, and spellings and develops cognitive skills and imagination among kids through real world knowledge.
- **Date of Launch:** December, 2016
- **Growth:** 56X
- **Launched in India:**
  - They have been featured in Limca Book of Records for their unique design of product

**Pee Buddy**
- An antidote to the lack of hygiene in public bathrooms in India, Pee Buddy is a portable female urination device to prevent infections. The startup also makes other feminine hygiene and care products like pain relief patches and sweat pads among others.
- **Date of Launch:** February, 2017
- **Growth:** 12X
- **Launched in India:**
  - They have been featured in Limca Book of Records for their unique design of product
Empowering sellers to go online, the Amazon way

Easy Ship
Amazon India, in its conversations with sellers around the country heard all about the pain-points of shipment and delivery in a geography as diverse and complex as India. That's why in 2014, Amazon India launched Easy Ship, a program in which Amazon picks up orders from sellers' doorsteps and feeds them into the Fulfillment By Amazon (FBA) channels. From 2,000 PIN Codes in 2014 to all serviceable PIN Codes today, Easy Ship has brought many sellers into the online selling fold by taking charge of logistical roadblocks. This India-centric program was such a resounding success that it is now being emulated in other Amazon geographies.

Seller Flex
Yet another India-centric and India-first innovation, Seller Flex was launched in 2015 to further ease operational challenges faced by online sellers. Seller Flex makes it convenient for sellers around the country to enjoy the business benefits of FBA without moving items out of their own warehouse. This reduces operational costs like transportation, storage, and reverse logistics while empowering sellers to cater to their customers faster, better, and more efficiently under the FBA service. This model enables sellers to stock their entire inventory in a single location and still list their full inventory on Amazon.in.
Amazon Chai Cart
In an effort to go hyper-local in connecting with neighbourhood businesses, Amazon.in tapped into the very Indian habit of conversations over chai. That’s how Amazon Chai Cart came about, yet another India-first initiative launched in 2015. It educated Small and Medium Businesses and sellers on the benefits of selling online and introduced them to specialised seller services that enable more sales and increased income on the Amazon India marketplace. Amazon deployed several four-wheeled mobile carts called Amazon Chai Cart that travelled through hundreds of business districts across India, and started empowering conversations with business owners, sellers, retailers, and SMEs over tea, cold water, and lemon juice.

Amazon Tatkal
A unique service-on-wheels, Amazon Tatkal enabled SMBs to get online and sell on Amazon.in, in less than 60 minutes. Amazon Tatkal helped the company to engage with thousands of entrepreneurs, artisans, manufacturers, and sellers around the country and set up their online stores on the spot. Amazon Tatkal was a specially designed studio-on-wheels offering a suite of launch services including registration, imaging, and cataloging services, as well as basic seller training. Specially trained company representatives educated sellers on the benefits of selling online and introduced them to the specialised seller services offered by Amazon.
Amazon Pay’s new cash load at doorstep feature has helped convert a host of Cash On Delivery (COD) shoppers to digital payment methods.

Amazon Pay Cash Load was launched during the traditional Diwali and Dussehra festive season of 2017 to offer online shoppers a hassle-free shopping experience. Amazon Pay Balance is a digital payment solution that allows online shoppers to transact easily on Amazon.in as well as on partner websites and apps. The feature lets consumers add funds to their Amazon e-wallets with top ups through credit or debit cards as well as through net banking. The latest feature now allows Amazon customers to top up their Amazon Pay wallets through cash payments as well.

Customers can either pay an Amazon delivery associate additional cash while receiving their delivery, or alternatively, they could also receive their balance change from a COD transaction into their Amazon Pay accounts. The cash load is instantly updated on a shopper’s account, along with SMS notifications as well as email alerts with their transaction details. India’s e-commerce space has traditionally seen shoppers being wary of online transactions, many preferring to transact through cash at their doorstep.

Amazon seeks to enhance customers’ payment experiences and increase their preference for digital payments. With Amazon Pay Cash Load, customers across India can now easily load India at their doorstep once and pay digitally.
I prefer to shop with Amazon Pay balance because it is really very easy to use and it works very fast when it comes to fee processing or fee refund as compared to online transactions with debit/credit cards or even net banking.

— Shashank Shah, 40-year-old Mumbai-based businessman and Amazon customer

I prefer to shop with Amazon Pay Balance, especially for flash sale items, because I know my transactions will go through 100%.

— KJ Rajesh, 30-year-old Mangalore-based IT professional and loyal Amazon customer

• Removes hassle of managing change for Cash On Delivery customers
• Promotes digital inclusion
• Saves time for delivery associates and customers
• Enables customers to top up their balance using cash and avail digital services such as Mobile Recharges, Food Delivery, Ticketing
• Helps cash customers migrate to digital payments, promoting the vision of cashless society
3X growth in Indian titles available on Kindle Direct Publishing in the last two years

15,000+ Alexa Skills to choose from

100% growth of Indian authors on Kindle Direct Publishing in the last two years

At less than 2MB in size, Kindle Lite for Android is the lightest reading app and an India-first product

Tens of millions of songs on Amazon Prime Music in over 10 languages including English, Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, and more
Alexa is the brain behind the Echo family of smart speakers. It uses conversational AI to answer questions, play music, turn lights on and off, check the weather, deliver sports scores, and more. Developed in the US over three years ago, Alexa was introduced to Indian consumers in 2017. What we knew for sure at the time was that Alexa had to sound Indian, speak Indian, and be Indian in order to become a part of the daily lives of Indian users.

Getting desi— one utterance at a time
Alexa had to understand local context and learn more about the things that mattered most to Indians, including history and pop culture, holidays, traditions, and more. Alexa can now answer questions about cricket and Bollywood and can even crack a few Rajnikant jokes! She speaks and understands English with an Indian accent, but we've also taught her Hindi and regional language phonetics so she can pronounce names of important places, people, events, and common phrases. We trained Alexa's speech recognition technology to understand most Indian accents.

Indian content galore
Many developers have developed Alexa skills with even more desi flavors, enabling customers to listen to Mann Ki Baat by Prime Minister Modi, devotional songs like Hanuman Chalisa, Gayatri Mantra, find diverse information ranging from PIN codes and Indian presidents over the years to railway PNR status. They can even play Mahabharata and General Knowledge quizzes. Royal Challengers Bangalore, Kolkata Knight Riders, and Mumbai Indians have also launched their very own Alexa skills on the sidelines of IPL 2018. And that's as desi as it gets! Today, customers in India can choose from over 15,000 skills from the Alexa Skills Store.

Towards meaningful tech
At Amazon, we truly believe in the power of technology in creating meaningful, rich lives. We are achieving this by slowly replacing screens with voice commands, thereby bringing more people into the fold of technology-led transformations.
Alexa goes to school

How a schoolteacher in Maharashtra is using Alexa to help students learn with just their voice

Book a cab, call a friend, find the latest cricket score, play your favorite song. Alexa allows all this and more with just a simple voice command. But a schoolteacher in Waruda, Maharashtra is using Alexa in a rather unique manner — to impart lessons to students beyond the traditional curriculum.

Game changer in education
Amol Bhuyar, a schoolteacher, realised early on that Alexa could be a game changer for education and the overall scope of learning it presented. According to him, all he needed was to get creative in this pursuit.

First, he invested in an Amazon Echo device. However, in order for his students to relate better to Alexa, Mr Bhuyar covered the device in the form of a robot, which looked like an actual human being. This was inspired by Sophia, the first robot to get Saudi Arabia citizenship in 2017. Mr Bhuyar decided to give Echo a human form. He roped in the school headmistress, Ms Sushma Kapase, and they each contributed ₹5,000 to build a mannequin around Echo. Armed with a power bank, a mannequin, an Echo smart speaker, and a mobile hotspot in the absence of wireless Internet infrastructure, Amol was now ready to debut Alexa into the classroom.

Kids get curious
Mr Bhuyar knew he was on to something but nothing prepared him for the wildly enthusiastic response from his students for Alexa. The moment Alexa started to answer questions, students were completely taken aback by the speed and clarity of her responses. He knew that he was tapping into an ocean of curiosity and Ms Sushma was equally delighted. Alexa understands only English, thus making the school’s highly engaged students more fluent in the language. Throughout the day, students asked Alexa questions on History, Geography, Sports, Science, General Knowledge, and more. “Their learning process has become so much more interactive than before and they are learning a lot more than whatever is in the books — all on their own accord. Parents too are thrilled at this learning innovation that was unknown and unheard of in our small town,” says Mr Bhuyar.

About Alexa

Echo Devices:
Human-like interactions that break down barriers to adopt technology

Alexa is setting a great example of what’s possible with tech-led learning. She has become very popular around the vicinity and even has visitors every now and then!
A revolutionary new avenue for authors, especially first timers, was created with the launch of Amazon’s Kindle Direct Publishing or KDP platform nearly a decade ago. It gave storytellers more control, more flexibility, and more choice over how to go about publishing their stories. With the launch of the Kindle India Store in late 2012, KDP became widely known to several independent authors and publishers across India.

The attributes that KDP has going for it over conventional publishing are that it is a free publishing service for authors on Amazon, it is fast, and it is hassle-free. The speed to publish and reach readers worldwide is one of the highlights of choosing to self-publish on KDP. The Kindle eBook of a first-time author becomes available on Amazon immediately after it is published and submitted by the author. The instant global reach of new books on KDP is unprecedented as well, with debut authors sitting in India instantly reaching readers across the world. The eBooks are available on all Kindle eReaders as well as the free Kindle App for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices.

Editing KDP books on the go is another remarkable feature, where corrections appear instantly on the bookshelves, unlike traditional publishing where it takes months for edited editions to reach the bookstores. KDP includes a variety of useful features, such as free file conversion, sales tracking, and additional tools to help authors format specific genres like children’s stories and textbooks.

Kindle Direct Publishing is arguably the best thing that has happened to storytellers around the world since the Gutenberg printing press.

Reaching readers instantly through Kindle Direct Publishing

Have story?
Will publish!
I thought this would be complicated [publishing on KDP] but I decided to try it out and it was so easy I could not believe it! A few minutes on my computer, and after 14 long years my first book was out there for the world to read!

“KDP is a great platform for indie authors. Self-publishing gave me complete control over the cover design, book pricing, release timing, and so on. The KDP team was very responsive when I had questions. It was a great experience.”

— Sudha Nair
Best-selling author and joint winner, inaugural KDP Pen To Publish Contest

“You get direct feedback on your book from your readers and reviewers. There is great clarity on the financial aspect, where you can clearly see how much your book is earning. Kindle is also a great platform for spreading your work across geographies, which is very difficult for first-time authors to achieve via traditional publishing methods.”

— J Alchem
Best-selling author and joint winner, inaugural KDP Pen To Publish Contest

— Sundari Venkatraman
Best-selling indie author

About Kindle Direct Publishing

Speciality:
A self-publishing platform for writers

Launched in India:
2014

Growth story:
In two years the number of Indian titles available on KDP has tripled, while the number of Indian authors on KDP has grown over 100%
Revolutionising entertainment for and by Indians — in ways that matter

From bringing a world of content to Indian viewers to taking Indian narratives to the world, Prime Video is changing the face of entertainment in the country.

In 2016, Amazon Prime Video made its foray into India. It wasn’t something the country was not already familiar with — a device agnostic streaming app with new and exciting shows from around the world. But what set Prime Video apart were its accessible pricing and its revolutionary perspective on Indian content.

A world of content for the Indian viewer with content tie-ups with studios and creators around the world, Prime Video brings a host of international content to India. This includes critically acclaimed Prime Originals such as *Man In The High Castle, Goliath, Sneaky Pete, Mozart In The Jungle, The Marvelous Mrs Maisel* among many others. Hollywood blockbusters such as *Wonder Woman, Spider-Man: Homecoming, Annabelle: Creation* as well as popular international shows like *Suits, Grey’s Anatomy, Mr Robot, Young Sheldon, Two and a Half Men* are all part of the Prime Video kitty. Studio partnerships include names like Warner Brothers, Paramount, Lionsgate, CBS, and others to release movies and shows exclusively on Prime Video.

But that's not all. Amazon has been hard at work with Indian studios as well, and hosts many of India’s top money-spinners over the years including *Padmaavat, Golmaal Again, Tiger Zinda Hai, and Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety*. Prime Video has deals with Yash Raj Films, Dharma Productions, T-Series, Excel Entertainment, and many others for their selection of past and upcoming movies. Other partnerships include Green Gold Animation and Japan’s Asahi Corp for kids’ content as well as top Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Bengali studios for top regional content tie ups.

Prime Video hosts content in as many as five Indian languages. The sheer diversity of content ensures that no matter what language or genre Indian viewers want to watch, it is available on Prime Video.

Taking Indian narratives to the world and offering a humongous content library to Indian viewers is just one part of what Prime Video is doing in India. The other is engaging and promoting leading Indian entertainment talent and creators. In just 6 months after its launch, Prime Video signed up 14 of India’s top comedians for Comedy Stand Up Specials. This deal included names like Biswa Kalyan Rath, Kanan Gill, Zakir Khan, and Kenny Sebastian among others.

Prime Video is also collaborating with names like Farhan Akhtar, Kabir Khan, AIB, Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti, and many others for a variety of Original series across genres including drama, comedy, psychological thrillers, biopics, sports drama, political satire, etc.

Amazon Prime Originals from India — *Breathe, Inside Edge, The Remix* — have opened to rave reviews from audiences. With so much unique content and the latest in entertainment
Writing and directing *Breathe* has been an exhilarating experience. In today’s times, the new, young, empowered, and evolved audience likes to exercise their power of choice as to what they want to watch. This new transformed audience is constantly looking out for some great compelling and gripping content on this medium, which pushes and compels makers like me to work really hard and explore more compelling stories.

Over and above this, working so closely with the team of Amazon Prime Video has been the most enriching experience. What really sets them apart is that the team of Amazon Prime Video truly maintains an ownership to the series, which makes the whole process of creating the content very collaborative and enjoyable.

Mayank Sharma
Director, *Breathe*

It’s an extreme pleasure to be associated with Amazon Prime Video for years now. During this association, I have witnessed the Prime Video to be the fastest-growing video-on-demand service globally. Amazon Prime Video has built a global video service that has appealed lots of people truly ‘transforming lives.’ One of the key services as a consumer I enjoy is the ‘subscription’. It’s flexible and incremental for consumers to add networks on an a-la-carte basis without having to buy into a larger bundle resulting to a good commercial deal. Looking forward to a long term and successful association.

Swapnil Joshi
Actor

The power and thrill of creating and running your own show is something every comic yearns for. Not only did Amazon Prime Video make that happen for me, they also accepted how wonderfully flawed *Pushpavalli* is. My career is now split as ‘Pre Pushpavalli’ and ‘Post Pushpavalli’ because that’s how much it has transformed since its release on Amazon Prime Video.

Sumukhi Suresh
Creator, *Pushpavalli*

It is rare to find a platform where everyone believes in an idea for all its merit. In a world where every emotion is exploited to win eyeballs, here was a brave team only concerned about the truth — music. It was an experience I’ve only desired but never encountered otherwise. Thank you everyone at Grey Matter and Amazon for pulling this together with such style and confidence. Had the BEST time ever!

Sunidhi Chauhan
Singer

From the minute I started working on this story, I knew the world of *Baahubali* can’t be encompassed into a film or two, simply because there’s so much more to tell and animation is another way to do that. We are happy to be collaborating with Amazon to bring *Baahubali — The Lost Legends* to audiences through Amazon Prime Video. The potential to bring stories like ours to audiences across the country through Amazon Prime Video’s growing digital reach has immense opportunity to connect and transform the lives of millions of people across the country in the years ahead and we are proud to be working with them.

SS Rajamouli
Creator, *Baahubali — The Lost Legends*

It is an extreme pleasure to be associated with Amazon Prime Video for years now. During this association, I have witnessed the Prime Video to be the fastest-growing video-on-demand service globally. Amazon Prime Video has built a global video service that has appealed lots of people truly ‘transforming lives.’ One of the key services as a consumer I enjoy is the ‘subscription’. It’s flexible and incremental for consumers to add networks on an a-la-carte basis without having to buy into a larger bundle resulting to a good commercial deal. Looking forward to a long term and successful association.

Prime Video: Changing the way we consume entertainment

Amazon Prime Video: Changing the way we consume entertainment

already delivered, collaborations with established studios, directors, writers as well as fresh cinema and TV talent around the country ensure that Prime Video has only scratched the surface of all that’s possible in revolutionising entertainment in India. Exciting times ahead!
Transforming good ol’ Indian TV

Just two decades ago, India waited with baited breath for Chitrahaar on Sundays, moved its TV antennas around to catch — usually by chance — some new show from across the border, and had access to one straightjacket news telecast a day. The content scene exploded with cable TV and 24x7 entertainment, but there was something amiss. Even two decades later, Indian viewers had little choice and flexibility in terms of what, where, and how they consumed their TV content. Corded viewing experience didn’t help with the flexibility. When they did have this choice, it came with prohibitive pricing, had little choice usually limited to English language content, and offered subpar viewing experience if the user didn’t already own a Smart TV.

Fire TV: Cutting the cord to change the way customers consume content

From corded TV experience to the flexibility of Fire TV, this is the story of putting choice and power back in the hands of the Indian TV viewer.
Amazon's Fire TV was designed to change all of this, in ways that worked for Indian consumers. Launched in India in 2017, the device is a plug and play TV streaming stick that does not break the bank. Priced at a nominal ₹3,999, Fire TV is truly democratizing access to content streaming.

More importantly, with the uptake of smart TVs still slow in tier II towns and beyond, the best thing about Fire TV is that all it needs is a TV with an HDMI port. It does not use much of the TV functionality and is a self-sustaining device in terms of processing power, UI, and speed.

With partnerships with TV channels, streaming services, content creators, studios, and others, Fire TV opens up a world of content to viewers through channel- and studio-linked apps. In the background, Amazon continues to work with various parties to bring more streaming apps to the device.

Vast choices aside, another reason why Fire TV is getting a lot of eyeballs in India is because it is extremely easy to use for everyone, including senior citizens who have been used to push button TV remotes all their lives. For one, the UI is smooth and intuitive, the remote is well designed and easy to navigate, and the installation is simply plug and play.

But what's really cool about Fire TV is that it has voice search that actually works and responds accurately to accents around the country.

Fire TV users have been carrying their device around them on their travels, plugging it into TVs and getting access to their favourite TV content, games, and music (through the Amazon Music app), no matter where they are.

Unlike a lot of streaming services that come and go from the market, Fire TV is a streaming device built for India without being linked to a single studio or channel. It brings Indian content, Indian music, and takes into account the challenges and needs of Indian viewers beyond just the metros. And that explains the enthusiastic response to the device around the country.
The Amazon community in India is widespread and truly diverse. It includes associates in Fulfillment Centres (FC), Regional Sort Centres (RSC) and Delivery Stations (DS) in not just metro cities but also some of the most remote parts of the country. In July 2017, Amazon India launched the first-of-its-kind radio channel as a communication and engagement tool that aims to connect every single one of the thousands of associates in FCs, RSCs, and DSs spread over 200 sites across the country. And this is the first-of-its-kind across the world for Amazon.

Amazon Radio is a one-stop shop for useful information in the form of capsules and non-stop music to keep spirits high when associates are at work. The radio program is available in five Indian languages — Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Marathi. There is also a specialised exclusive set of five local radio programs for the delivery stations given the nature of work of the delivery associates.
Engaging our diverse associate community
The information capsules on Amazon Radio have been designed keeping in view the diverse business needs of associates in FCs, DSs, and RSCs. These include company news, product launches, initiatives, Amazon trivia, health and safety tips, etiquette, best practices, familiarisation of industry-specific terminologies, and CSR news. Special capsules on SALE deals, messages from Amazon leaders, light bite-sized training modules, success stories from across the organisation are also broadcasted through Amazon Radio. This channel is also used to recognise the great work delivered by associates and teams.

'Amazon Radio Hotline' is the most popular activity among our associates. They get an opportunity to dial into a dedicated hotline number. The Radio Jockey on the other end interacts with the associate for a few minutes followed by a song request by the associate. This content is then curated and aired on the radio streams. Associates are always thrilled to hear their voice on the radio.

Your music — all day, every day
Apart from news capsules, Amazon Radio is designed to keep our associates company and raise the bar for their working environment. Keeping in mind the diverse demographics and language needs of our associates across India, Amazon Radio delivers foot-thumping music round the clock in five Indian languages — Hindi for North, East, and Central India, Hindi and Kannada in Karnataka, Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Hindi and Marathi in West India, and Hindi and Telugu in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

All our associates need to do in order to tune in is to open the device-agnostic Amazon Radio website and hook the device to the speakers. That's all it takes to get the party started!
Revival of Indian Handlooms and Handicrafts
On boarded **1,100 weavers, artisans, and cooperatives** across 11 states

1.5 lakh+ weaver and artisan households positively impacted

> If I can sell online, demand will go up... I can now train many young people in my village... This art will have a future.

— Abdul Gafur Khatri, Last living custodian of Rogan Art
And the weave goes on...
How technology saved the Pochampally saree

Nagula Ballya and Srikanth
Pochampally Ikat

About Pochampally Ikat

- **Speciality:** Pochampally Ikat fabrics
- **Started with Amazon:** 2016
- **Growth story:** From almost dying out to getting 11 orders a week at 20% higher returns, Pochampally weavers are now looking to go abroad. This is a result of direct sales on the online platform.
Ponder on what a traditional Indian attire is like and chances are you would have formed a picture of a saree with bright colours and intricate patterns. Now think of a saree that traces its origins to Pochampally — a village deep within the South Indian state of Telangana. You will be up close with a classic weave that has been practiced for centuries, the secrets of which is now globally known as the Pochampally Ikat saree.

A labour-intensive process
Weaving the Pochampally saree isn't easy. It takes a whole family of weavers 10 hours to convert individual strands of thread into the mesmerizing yards of a finished Pochampally saree. Despite all the hard work involved, the returns for these artisans were dwindling — leaving them to depend on traders and dealers to earn a living from their creations.

Tech saves the say
The art of the Pochampally Ikat saree was dying — until recently, that is. With the advent of technology, the reach of smartphones, the availability of the Amazon Seller platform, and the efforts of its training team, things have now changed. Master weavers at Pochampally, who are registered with Amazon, fulfill an average of 11 orders per week with 10-20% higher returns. The younger generation of weavers is thrilled. Srikanth, who is just 23 years old says, “Our marketing and sales have improved. We can now dream of selling our products across the world.”

Good returns
This has increased financial returns by up to 20% — which directly translates into more purchasing power for raw materials and added inventory. With greater financial viability, more and more of Pochampally’s weavers are returning to their roots — abandoning the rat race of city jobs to embrace their weaving ways again. What once was a dying art form, is now a thriving business enterprise.

Our marketing and sales have improved. We can now dream of selling our products across the world.

— Pochampally weaver
Making Assam mainstream, one Mekhela Chador at a time

How Ashwin Sethi took traditional Assamese attire to wardrobes around the country

Ashwin Sethi
S Kiran’s

Guwahati: Going back to roots and making a traditional Assamese outfit mainstream

The rest of India knows little about the culture and traditions, fabric and handicraft of the country’s North Eastern states. Assam was no different but Ashwin Sethi decided to do something about it. This is the story of how Ashwin — in partnership with Amazon — took Mekhela Chador, the traditional Assamese attire, to wardrobes around the country.

About S Kiran’s

- Speciality: Mekhela Chador
- Started with Amazon: November, 2015
- Growth story: From listing 15-20 Mekhela Chadors at start, to processing over 1,000 orders in just a few months

Crafted with quality fabrics and a human touch
Offline to online
Ashwin belongs to a business family that has lived and worked in Assam for five decades now. The Sethis run a textile trading business in Assam, own a few manufacturing units, and also have an offline store on a busy traders’ street — all of which focus on Mekhela Chador. Business was doing reasonably well thanks to the local demand in Guwahati. But Ashwin knew he could do a lot more now that the market was ripe with Indian consumers looking for new, contemporary ways to connect with traditional Indian styles and fabrics. And Ashwin saw this potential not just in Assam but around the country. That’s why he became a seller on Amazon, with an initial listing of 15-20 Mekhela Chadors on the marketplace.

Quality feedback
Some time around Diwali in 2017, Ashwin saw some Amazon TVCs and it struck him that by improving the range and quality of his offerings, his sales on Amazon could soar higher. Thanks to this change, Ashwin has already processed over 1,000 orders on Amazon in a few months. He says, “Through feedback and reviews on the site, Amazon has helped me keep a finger on the pulse of ethnic fashion consumers. The reviews make it easy to gauge the variety and quality of products we should be listing in order to meet consumer needs and consequently, grow our business.”

About 50% of these Mekhela Chador orders come from non-Assamese Indians around the country. Ashwin beams with pride, “We’ve managed to make our traditional outfit mainstream around the country and at the same time, we’ve managed to take Assamese people back to their roots. What a transformative journey this has been!”

We’ve managed to make our traditional outfit mainstream around the country and at the same time, we’ve managed to take Assamese people back to their roots.
There’s something truly mystical about Pattachitra art — one glance and you’re transported through time to a mythical world. It’s not just about the finished paintings of this traditional Odisha artform though, but more about how they’re made. Everything here is handmade — right from the paper itself, which comes from crushed tamarind seeds, to the paints, which often come from natural sources like fruit and flower extracts. Everything including the Pattachitra, metal work, stone carvings, jute products, silver filigree, and terracotta vases are unique in every aspect to Odisha. Despite all the uniqueness of the various handicrafts, trouble was brewing — supply exceeded demand. The inevitable eventually happened when craftsmen began seeking employment in bigger cities in search of more profitable ways of earning a livelihood. Odisha’s traditional art industry was slowly going extinct.

From Odisha, with love!

Haastika — turning traditional art into a sustainable industry

Biswajit Swain
Haastika

About Haastika

Speciality: Odisha handicrafts

Started with Amazon: March, 2016

Growth story: From a one-man show to 10 employees, Haastika is bringing Odisha’s artisans back in demand

Bhubaneshwar: Breathing life into Odisha’s traditional art industry

ODISHA

Haastika

Puri

Representative image
1,700 km away from his home town in Bhubaneshwar, Biswajit Swain was working as an IT professional in Delhi. But the plight of the artisans in his home state wasn't lost on him. He knew that if Odisha's traditional art forms had to survive, they would need to find a market beyond the local exhibition stalls. He looked to e-commerce as the solution. Along with a team of his close contacts in Bhubaneshwar, who travelled to various villages in Odisha and built a database of the products available, Biswajit started the Haastika online store on the Amazon Sellers platform in 2015. It started out as an on-demand business, with the Haastika team procuring, packaging, and shipping products only once they received orders on Amazon.

Revival
For Odisha's arts, the playing field had just been expanded beyond its physical boundaries. Haastika’s contribution to this was more than apparent. Through Haastika, Biswajit Swain has not only contributed heavily in saving Odisha’s traditional handicrafts industry, but also generated employment for others. Haastika currently stocks an inventory of over 1,000 products and the team has grown to 10 employees in the company’s home base, Bhubaneshwar. These men and women work hard day-in and day-out to bring the mesmerizing art of Odisha’s handicrafts to the world.

“Local artisans no longer had to rely solely on local sales channels, but are now exposed to buyers across India instantly.
— Biswajit Swain, Haastika
Tied Ribbons — opening doors for Indian art and handicrafts

Working with artisans from all across India, Priya Tyagi resolved to bring Indian art and handicrafts back from the brink of death.

Priya Tyagi
Tied Ribbons

Ghaziabad
UTTAR PRADESH

About Tied Ribbons

Speciality: Indian handicrafts

Started with Amazon: September, 2015

Growth story: With a team of 50 professionals, 12-20 of whom support 8-10 artisans each, Tied Ribbons has closed ₹14.5 crore in sales.

Ghaziabad: Reviving the livelihood of artisans in UP

Heritage meets modern aesthetics
With dwindling local demand and dying heritage of Indian art and handicrafts, many artisans in Uttar Pradesh had been struggling to make ends meet. This was especially true for artisans working with resin, wood, and iron, as these sectors faced competition from Chinese goods. But help is at hand thanks to companies like Tied Ribbons. Its co-founder, Priya Tyagi from Ghaziabad, was working in the corporate sector when she first started to notice the slow death of Indian handicrafts.

Reviving our heritage

Priya was tired of seeing the same mass-produced goods on the high streets. It did not make sense to her that the rich heritage of Indian art and crafts was getting lost in the maze of very expensive gift items and sculptures. Also, the cheaper goods had little sense of identity and didn’t sit well with Indian aesthetics. This is how Tied Ribbons was born in 2016. Today, Tied Ribbons, according to Priya, “has resolved to bring Indian art and handicrafts back from the brink of death. We work with artisans across Uttar Pradesh to innovate forms of traditional handicrafts that suit contemporary Indian aesthetics, and in the process, revive not just the craft but also the livelihoods of the artisans.”

Empowering artisans

There are many lives of artisans that Tied Ribbons has changed, but probably the most awe-inspiring story comes from Ghaziabad, where they helped carpenter, Devendra Kumar, find a respectable livelihood. His business was seasonal and earnings ranged from nothing to a couple of hundred rupees a day. Today, Devendra manages to support his family with an annual income of ₹15-20 lakhs. Tied Ribbons, which started with a close-knit team of 10 people today employs almost 50 full-time employees. The company’s larger ecosystem includes close to 15 artisans who, in turn, employ 8-10 people each. Women form a large part of this network. The company’s policy dictates that part of these women’s incomes goes to savings for their children’s education. And all this is paying off — in less than two years, Tied Ribbons has closed ₹14.5 crore in sales, thanks to its resourcefulness, creativity, and the reach it has found since making its way to Amazon.

“We work with artisans across Uttar Pradesh to innovate forms of traditional handicrafts that suit contemporary Indian aesthetics, and in the process, revive not only the craft but also the livelihoods of the artisans.”
Getting down to brass tacks
Of how an artifacts brand from small-town India doubled online sales

Gunjeet Singh
Two Moustaches

About Two Moustaches

Speciality:
Brass artifacts

Started with Amazon:
2016

Growth story:
Starting with a mere 12 artisans to 22 today, they see annual sales of ₹12 lakhs as opposed to the earlier figure of ₹50k as of 2017

Aligarh: Brass artifacts and artisans get a fresh lease as two brothers decide to do something niche
This is the unlikely story of how an engineering graduate from small-town India gave up his lucrative job to run a handmade artifacts business with his brother. Thereafter, with support from Amazon’s online seller platform and its global consumer reach, their modest business transformed into a success story — benefiting traditional artisans as well.

From modest sales of ₹50,000-60,000 annually, Gunjeet and Ravi Singh from Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh now enjoy figures of ₹14-15 lakhs after joining Amazon. As the story goes, while waiting for his inordinately long recruitment process with a reputed IT firm to close, Gunjeet felt pressured to discover a source of income. That was when he and his brother, Ravi, hit upon the idea of retailing handmade brass artifacts crafted by master artisans of Aligarh.

The category held multiple advantages for them. First and foremost being their location, and hence proximity, to the traditional artisan community of the Aligarh region. The products themselves, moreover, occupy a niche category and attract demand from consumers across the global marketplace. The brothers rightly felt that many discerning consumers, whether in India or overseas, did not enjoy access to this beautiful product category. This was the supply gap that Gunjeet and Ravi Singh aimed to fill with their exquisitely handcrafted products — and that was how their brand, Two Moustaches, was born.

Birth of a brass brand
What began with only about 30 product segments from the Two Moustaches brand on Amazon, has today grown to more than 500 Stock Keeping Units (SKUs). Behind this growth story, however, hangs another tale of Gunjeet going off to finally join his IT job, and Ravi staying back to handle their fledgling business. Growing disenchantment with his regular job eventually led to Gunjeet giving up his IT employment and coming back to join his brother for good.

From largely being an offline artifacts shop tucked into the by-lanes of Aligarh, Gunjeet and Ravi finally took the online plunge and became full-time sellers on Amazon. Their product categories include traditional brass figurines and idols, traditional brass lamps and lanterns, wall hangings, and various traditional Indian collectibles. Some of their best sellers are Victorian door knockers, hanging bells, and Buddha and Ganesh figurines, among many others.

Online retail drives offline business
After going online with Amazon, their production capacity had to be almost tripled to handle the demand. Consequently, the number of artisans they employed went up too. “Without my online sales, my revenues will simply drop by half,” shares Gunjeet candidly.

He adds, “Out of that online basket, most of our revenue (60-70%) is generated by Amazon.” Their reach has been unprecedented. It would not have been possible to take their artisan products to global consumers from their offline shop alone.

What next we wonder — bespoke brass artifacts?
Initially, we had employed about a dozen artisans, but now we have 22 brass artisans working for us. I think at least 10 more people were employed only because of the online success we found via Amazon.

— Gunjeet Singh, Amazon Seller
I had ordered a phone for my mother’s birthday and I was hoping that it would come on time. However, due to some courier network problem it was getting delayed. So I contacted the customer service and within hours, the Amazon Logistics and Station team came together and ensured that I get the delivery. Amazon itni raat ko aake product time pe deliver kar diya, that is really appreciated.

I never knew how useful Alexa can be until recently. My wife and I met with a major road accident and fractured our legs. As a result our mobility has been limited for 3 months. Echo dot/Alexa is doing an amazing job for us. We are heavily dependent on Alexa for switching on our fan, lights, A/C, TV, etc with our voice commands. I must thank Echo for the great service it is giving us 24/7 during the last one and half months.

I chose to shop with Amazon Pay Balance because it is really very easy to use and it works very fast when it comes to fee processing or fee refund as compared to online transactions using debit, credit, or net banking. My main complaint earlier was that my net banking transactions did not always go through due to OTP failures, after which I often had to wait for a week for refunds to get credited to the bank account.

I live in Leh and for 3-4 months a year we are cut off from the mainland. That makes a lot of items in Leh more expensive and often not available. With Amazon, we have more options and things are cheaper too. I have been shopping on Amazon for the past 3 years and anything which you wish to have in your house which is urgent and for which you cannot wait for 2-3 months, Amazon is the perfect place to shop for that.
It’s still
Day 1
Stories that Inspire

More such stories at:
amazon.in/blog