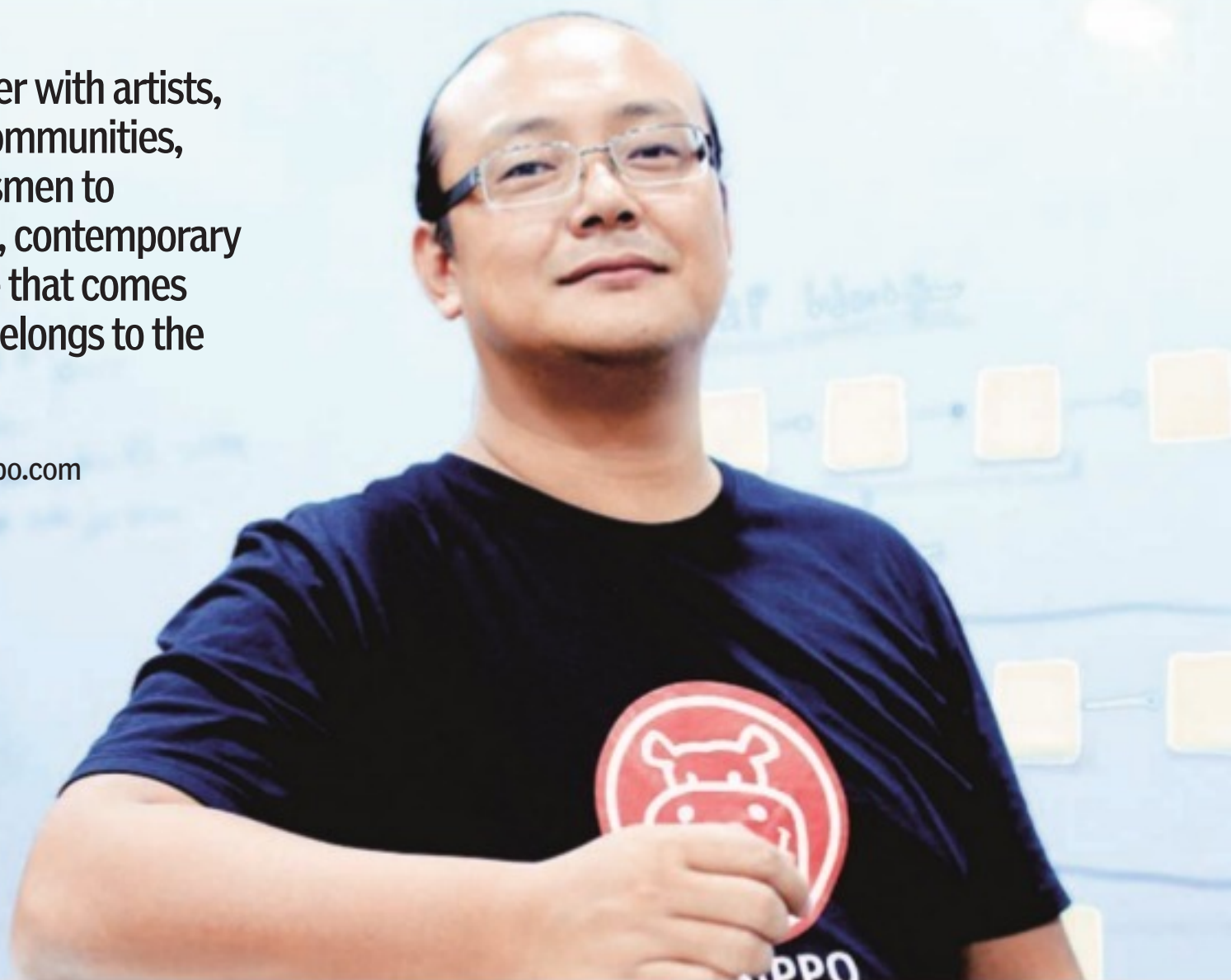


# A one-stop shop for handmade goods

“We partner with artists, artisan communities, designers, craftsmen to showcase a new, contemporary design language that comes from India and belongs to the world”

**KARMA BHUTIA,**  
Founder & CEO, iShippo.com



## Mahesh Kulkarni

WITH the Indian e-commerce industry showing signs of a phenomenal growth year on year (it is likely to be worth \$38 billion this year, a growth of 67% over 2015), a large number of new players are entering the market to test their fortunes. One such new entrant is Bengaluru-based iShippo.com, a marketplace for all handmade products.

iShippo.com is trying to be different from existing players like Amazon, Flipkart or Snapdeal in terms of products and the way it will reach out to potential customers. iShippo.com is founded by Karma Bhutia, a serial entrepreneur from Sikkim with over 20 years of experience in providing solutions for e-governance, mobile innovation, big data analytics, cloud computing among others.

Bhutia has invested around \$150,000 from his savings and contributed by his family and friends. Having launched the operations

about two months ago, he is now looking at raising \$2 million pre-Series A funds. iShippo.com is not like any other e-commerce player in the market. It is an online marketplace where people around the world connect both online and offline, to make, sell and buy handcrafted goods. “At iShippo, our attempt is to bring India a little closer to the world. We partner with artists, artisan communities, designers, craftsmen to showcase a new, contemporary design language that comes from India and belongs to the world,” says Karma Bhutia, founder & CEO, iShippo.com.

Bhutia is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Make in India campaign and he wants to not only promote handcrafted ‘Make in India’ product but also promote the heritage of India. He wants to help Indian traditional handloom artists and craftsmen and provide a sustainable business opportunity to them.

In just one year of its existence (started in April 2015) iShippo has

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been recognised as one of the top five e-commerce startups to look out for in 2016 by TechNewsToday, USA. It is also the only Indian e-commerce company registered to export handcraft all over the world. Bhutia is travelling to Birmingham in September this year to tie up with local channel partners for delivery of goods bought on his marketplace.

As with every startup, iShippo began from scratch. Bhutia got the support of Deepak Ramachandran, who is a co-founder and CTO, and a

small team. Today, it operates with a team of 25 young professionals. “As a platform we give value to artisans, customers, NGOs, self help groups. We are supporting hundreds of artisans who do not have access to modern markets and bridge the gap both economic and digital,” Bhutia said.

Currently, iShippo has 7,500 vendors, most of them are small, and sell over 5,000 products. Recently, the company tied up with the ministry of textiles, Export Promotion Council and Handicrafts Development Corporations in Karnataka, Sikkim among others for the promotion of local artisans and their products. For logistics, iShippo has tied up with Delhivery, Ecom Express, Parcelled, a hyperlocal start up and FedEx to reach out to 22,000 pincodes in the country.

Why buy on iShippo? Bhutia says unlike Flipkart or Amazon or Snapdeal, the company has not just tied up with artisans, but is also providing back-end support to them in terms of assisting them to get finance from banks and source raw materials among others. “We are building a community around artisans and designers. If somebody in UK or US or anywhere in the world sends a design for any product, we will send it to the concerned artisans and get their desired product manufactured and shipped to them,” Bhutia said.

For him, e-commerce is just not bringing vendors on his platform and connecting them with buyers, but also providing them a sustainable business model and create a steady revenue stream. Bhutia is confident that he can play a significant role in India’s e-commerce market as well as grab a portion of India’s handicraft exports in the long run. Last year, India exported \$5 billion worth of handcrafted goods. “Within the country, around \$2-3 billion market is available for us to exploit. Lot of this market is taken over by Craftsvilla, etsy.com, an US firm among others,” he said.

Another speciality of iShippo is that it will promote ‘Craftmark’ India Handloom mark through its tie up with the ministry of textiles. It is also promoting products with geographical indicator such as Chanderi sarees, Lucknavi saree, Naga shawl from Nagaland, Kolhapuri chappals, Channapatna toys and Ilkal sarees among others. “We work with clusters in Channapatna and Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation to sell their products and hundreds of individual artisans,” Bhutia added.

Going forward, this unique venture wants to sell ethnic and organic food products from different geographies on its marketplace.