

[Startup Bharat] How This Microsoft Incubated Startup is Bootstrapping From a Small Town in India

Blinkstore is an online e-commerce store builder vertically integrated with print-on-demand and shipping. It enables creators to launch their merchandise store online within 10 minutes at 0 expense.



Delhi, India Mar 24, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Creator economy is ~\$104 Billion markets globally. With Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and many creator-focused platforms enjoying their highest number of users by country from India, India commands a huge part of the global creator economy.

In the last 2 years post-lockdown, we've seen a surge in the number of startups catering to creators in helping them monetize their audience and skills. But there was a big problem that Indian creators faced in launching their own merchandise online, which no one was solving in India. For small and big creators in India, starting their own merch remained a technically and operationally challenging task.

This struck IIIT, Vadodara graduate **Mofid Ansari** and **Rajat Dangi**, who are both second-time founders. Mofid and Rajat have previously has co-founded a creator economy startup. And **Madhurendra Sachan**, who was running a successful enterprise security company in Noida as founder and CTO. They decided to come together in April 2021 and build [Blinkstore](#) to solve for India's 1 million+ creators.

"I noticed that content creators, artists, and designers in India were missing a key part of monetization opportunity by not launching a merch store for their fans and followers. The key problem was the lack of an affordable solution that requires low technical know-how. After researching and talking to hundreds

of creators over a period of 3 months, I developed the conviction that it is a real problem and started building the MVP.”, **Mofid Ansari**, Co-founder at Blinkstore.

Bootstrapping From a Town and Creating Jobs For The Local Talent

Mofid moved to his hometown near Gorakhpur in April 2021, following the footsteps of [Zoho founder](#) with an aim of nurturing and providing opportunities to people there. He has built a small team by training the local talent and mentoring them within the startup.

“The startup sector’s growth in India should have a grassroots impact on the living standards of people of India. My aim is to create many job opportunities for the youth in the small towns of India. It is our responsibility to include everyone in the progress India is making in the tech sector”, said Mofid.

Mofid operates from an office that he rented in his hometown. And the other co-founders work remotely from different parts of India. The reason they are able to successfully build a startup while working from home is that they are all friends for the last 6 years and have built several side-projects and products together.

Blinkstore team told us that they are on a mission to help more than 1 million creators and individuals start their online business in India. And that their platform will empower many Indians in creating an added source of income in their life.

Democratizing Creator Commerce For India

Creator commerce in India still remains limited to creators with financial means and technical know-how. It usually costs at least \$29 per month to create an e-commerce store and takes 1 to 2 months in partnering with print-on-demand suppliers and setting up the shipping. The creator commerce ecosystem is broken into parts and a limited number of creators were capable of breaking that barrier. But Blinkstore democratizes the commerce for creators with its free forever no-code platform.

“Our mission is to create a complete ecosystem of creator commerce in India. Where the first layer is storefront creation, and our aim is to make it as powerful as Shopify with all e-commerce features. The second layer is integrations with print-on-demand services, shipping, and 3rd party partnerships to enable creators to sell anywhere on the Internet. This leads to the last layer which is monetization for creators.”, says Madhurendra, CTO, who is architecting the tech behind Blinkstore.

Profitably Bootstrapping

The startup is still in the very early stage of its journey and the fact that it is operationally profitable at this stage is phenomenal. The profitability also allows the team to focus on building a truly remarkable product at their own pace and stay bootstrapped for a longer duration.

The team mentioned that their next milestone is to cross the Rs. 10 Lakh monthly recurring revenue from the current Rs. 1.8 Lakh monthly recurring revenue. The projected annual recurring revenue for Blinkstore is well above Rs. 1 Cr. in their Beta phase.

Given that Blinkstore is co-founded by 2nd-time startup founders, their conviction and confidence in bootstrapping it profitably to a large scale are strong. We rarely see profitable startups at the early stage in growing economies, and their profitability proves the strength of the business model and the product.

Backed by Microsoft Startup Hub, Razorpay, and Nasscom

In February 2022, Rajat Dangi, Ex Co-founder and head of product and marketing at Hapramp joined Blinkstore to spearhead growth and retention. Rajat is currently working on Blinkstore from his hometown near Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

Rajat explained that the initial challenge was in creating awareness among the potential users about Blinkstore. “A lot of creators also think that Blinkstore is too good to be true since we offer the complete platform for free forever”, said Rajat while talking about how people are responding to Blinkstore in the market. The growth so far has been organic and the team is doubling down on organic growth channels moving forward.

The product’s adoption, revenue, and growth in the last few months have led Blinkstore to India’s top incubators. Blinkstore has gotten incubation at [Microsoft Startup Hub](#), [Razorpay Rize](#), and [Nasscom 10000 Startups](#) incubator as of now.

Blinkstore For Startups, Colleges, NGOs, and Communities

The startup provides a [print-on-demand product catalog of 30+ products](#) at present. The platform is suitable for building official merch for any use, building a dropshipping business, and launching a fundraising campaign for NGOs and colleges.

As of now, various colleges and startups are utilizing Blinkstore for running and managing their official merchandise stores online. This also takes away the hassle of managing inventory, printing products, and shipping to the employees, users, and students.

The startup’s infrastructure is readily available for anyone to experiment with their unique use cases. This makes Blinkstore a versatile and powerful ecosystem for creator commerce and print-on-demand businesses.

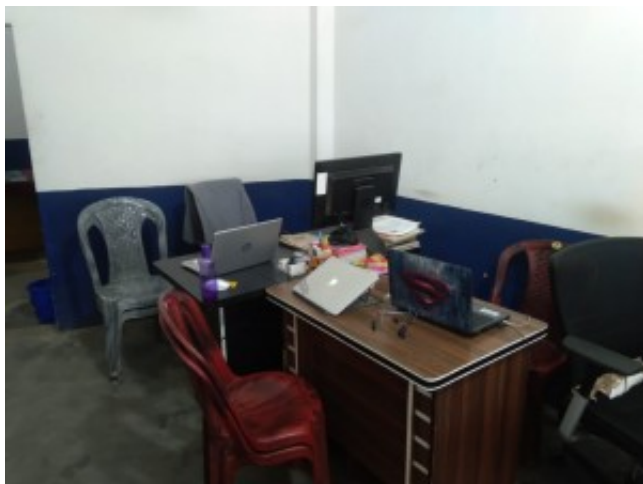
Market and Future

According to [IBEF \(India Brand Equity Foundation\)](#), the Indian E-commerce market is expected to grow at \$111.40 billion by 2025 from \$46.2 billion as of 2020. By 2030, it is expected to reach \$350 billion.

As per Nasscom’s report, despite COVID-19 challenges/disruptions, India’s e-commerce continues to grow at 5%. With apparel making about 40% of the total e-commerce market in India. Blinkstore predicts that a major part of e-commerce growth will come from growth in D2C brands, creator commerce, social commerce, and small & independent brands.

Blinkstore is aiming to become an important player in the creator and social commerce space by growing the catalog size from the current 30 to 200+ in the next year. The team aims at keeping itself lean and agile and maintaining a high standard on impact-to-person ratio.

“We think that creator commerce is still new in India. In the USA, a single creator can build a million-dollar merch brand. We are confident that India and Indian creators will reach that stage. Blinkstore just needs to stay in the industry and evolve with it to become a billion-dollar company and power various million-dollar individual stores through its technology.”, said Mofid.



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