

Start-ups debut online

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Entrepreneurs have taken the online platform by storm

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Bangalore: The startup wave in the city is steadily moving in the direction of e-commerce and online trade.

From online groceries, to online office supplies, to online services pertaining to building and designing homes, entrepreneurs are increasingly taking the e-commerce route while making their business debuts.

Zoffio.com, an online office supplies venture, started with an investment of \$20-25 million, is one of the newest ones to have taken root in the city.

There are several segments, like the office supplies market, that includes stationery, office machines and utilities, printers, paper products, which has tremendous scope online, says Vipul Jain, chief operating officer, Zoffio.

"Going offline for startups involves huge costs associated with retail and real estate. Also the assortment of products online is wider, while the potential in a place like Bangalore is high, thereby making perfect business sense," says Jain.

Experts say entrepreneurs are converting their ideas into online ventures, instead of getting into the brick-and-mortar game, not just to avoid real estate costs and other overheads, but also to capitalise on the booming \$10 billion e-commerce sector in India.

With technology seeping into every aspect of our daily life, and long commuting and

E-commerce in India is estimated to be around **\$10 bn** in size

The sector is growing at over **40%** per year

working hours making it impossible for consumers to spend time on shopping, several people in the city log onto websites to buy products and avail services.

"Customer demand for buying groceries including daal, vegetables online is growing rapidly," says Vipul Parekh, co-founder of BigBasket.com, an online grocery startup based in Domlur. He adds that BigBasket is seeing 25-30% monthly growth.

Chetana Anagol, a Silicon Valley techie who started an e-commerce firm Stunner-homes.com, says she realised that in Bangalore, there were no end-to-end services offering everything from construction to landscaping to interiors under one roof to people looking at building their homes.

"Such a service can have tremendous potential in the city since it has a huge chunk of NRI population looking at building and designing their homes. So the venture fits perfectly," says Anagol.

Moreover, talent, which is the key for any startup, is available aplenty. "Tech talent is primarily needed for running online ventures, and is readily available in Bangalore," says Parekh.

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