



LD Thakho Thomas
Tribal Artist
Wooden Carpentry

‘It wasn’t possible for us to reach out to a larger audience without a digital platform’

LD Thakho Thomas, 31, has been working as a carpenter for the last five years, but over the last one month or so, he has got an additional four to five clients. This he says is because he has been able to reach out to a larger audience after he started his e-commerce through WhatsApp.

Before this, he would have enough clients to sustain him and would get enough work, but because of a lack of proximity with the outside world, he wasn’t able to reach out to a larger customer base. He has now converted his normal WhatsApp account to a business one to get more orders.



“I make all kinds of carpentry products, which includes almirahs, doors, chairs, tables, etc. Earlier, I would have limited people coming to me with work because we stay in a small tribal area, so we cannot really reach people and vice versa. But now we can send them pictures of our work on WhatsApp as well,” said Thomas, even as he adds that he wasn’t that tech-savvy before he attended the workshop Tribal Entrepreneurship Development Program (TEDP) organized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and the National Industry Body, ASSOCHAM.

He was selected for the program, under which he was trained to enhance skill sets and use digital marketing tools to amplify his business.

“I got mobile only a few years back, in fact in our region, Internet connectivity has arrived only say a year back or so. So, this kind of training is new for us and surely helps our business,” said Thomas.

Belonging to the Poumai tribe from Manipur, he creates all of his products only from wood. He decided to take up carpentry as a profession because he saw scope in it, and thus deciding to pursue it as a full-time profession he did a diploma-level course. He is the only person from his family who works as a carpenter, even as he has two people working under him.



“There is no one in my family to help me toward this. But then depending on the nature and load of work, I get helping hands accordingly. Some days there are some permanent people who help me with work, some days we require more people. Some employees leave, some stay, so the profits are not fixed. It depends on a monthly basis and orders. But the work fetches me well,” said Thomas.