

>KDP IS A BIG WIN FOR AUTHORS AND READERS. BOOKS CAN GO LIVE IN ONE DAY. KDP IS GOOD FOR READERS BECAUSE THEY GET BOOKS AT LOW PRICES
> SPOKESPERSON, Amazon.com

CHILD'S PLAY

WRITE MOVE Young authors are easily self-publishing their books, which are hitting the stands in a big way, and retaining the rights by paying a meagre sum for printing, cover design and editing

Deepshikha Bhattacharyya
deepshikha.bhattacharyya@hindustantimes.com

He is 14 years old and already has two books to his credit. Thanks to self-publishing, more and more young authors are giving well-known writers a run for their money.

Rishav Ghosh, a student of St Mary's Dum Dum, hardly has time for cricket or other games and hobbies boys his age are busy with. He is actually on a deadline, giving finishing touches to his latest book Eighteen Scars.

Self-publishing through various websites, which is already popular in the US and other countries, is fast gaining popularity in India. And Kolkata is not lagging behind. More and more teen and even younger authors are opting for self-publishing their books.

Self-publishing on print is easy and an e-book is even easier. And there are hosts of websites that will let you do so. It allows authors to call the shots, retain the rights of the book and take home a bigger royalty than a traditional publisher would give you — if your book sells.

"Rishav used to write in Ananda Mela. He loves reading and writing. He even has his own library at home. Last Christmas, he wrote Sanjeevanir Sandhane (in Bengali). We decided to publish it. We didn't want to go to a well-known publisher and play the waiting game. We decided to self-publish and save time and chose Power Publishers. His next book, Eighteen Scars, is due now. Last time, we spent about ₹30,000 but this time we have kept a budget of ₹60,000, as we want to spend on publicity. We see it as an investment for Rishav's future," says his mother Sonali.

An ecstatic Rishav says, "This time, we will opt for both the formats — print and e-book. My relatives living in different parts of the world can buy it if it's available in the e-book format."

Rishav, who loves to read mystery and is a Sunil Gangopadhyay and Amish Tripathi fan, is determined to be a writer. He says, "I want to become a writer and this is the first step."

Abhirup Ghosh's story, too, is similar. Ghosh has written Destiny Calling and Romancing The Pujas (Discovering India (A journey in verse)). "I decided to self-publish my e-book through Amazon as it made sense to do so. Especially, since the publication of my first book Destiny Calling. It was published by Sparrow and had been a tedious and unrewarding process. The response to my second book was positive and I really liked the reach the platform offers," says the 19-year-old studying law at Symbiosis Law School (Pune), who hails from Behala. Abhirup wrote his first book (Destiny Calling) at the age of 15.

Over 1.5 million Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) books have been published on Amazon and the number keeps growing. "KDP is a big win for authors and readers. Books can go live in one day. KDP is good for readers because

they get lower prices, and also get access to diversity," says a spokesperson from Amazon.

But a lot of young authors and their parents often opt for self-publishing through print. Sreejita Biswas, the 11-year-old author of The Underwater Adventure of Sophiana, too, decided to do so. "It's great holding a copy of your child's book in your hand," says Sanchita Biswas, Sreejita's mother.

In the last five

years, print-on-demand technology and a growing number of self-publishing companies, whose books can be sold online, have given writers the power to become a 'published author'. Most self-publishing companies charge fees for services that include printing, editing, jacket design and distribution.

But if you don't want to invest much, publishing in the e-book format is the best option. Like nine-year-old Aamani Gurajada's parents did. Aamani's mother, Rasana Atreya, who herself is an author, decided to go for publishing the book via KDP.

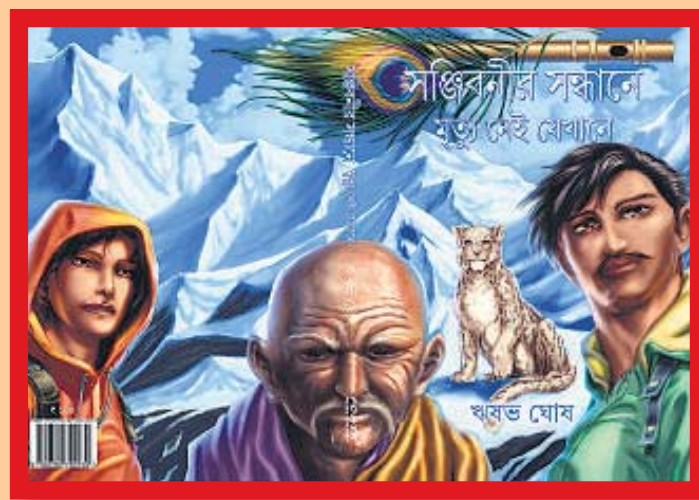
Aamani's book, The Mosquito and the Teapot, whose cover design and illustrations have been done by her 11-year-old brother Sunaad, has got great reviews online.

"People who've read the Mosquito and the Teapot have left very positive reviews," says Rasana.

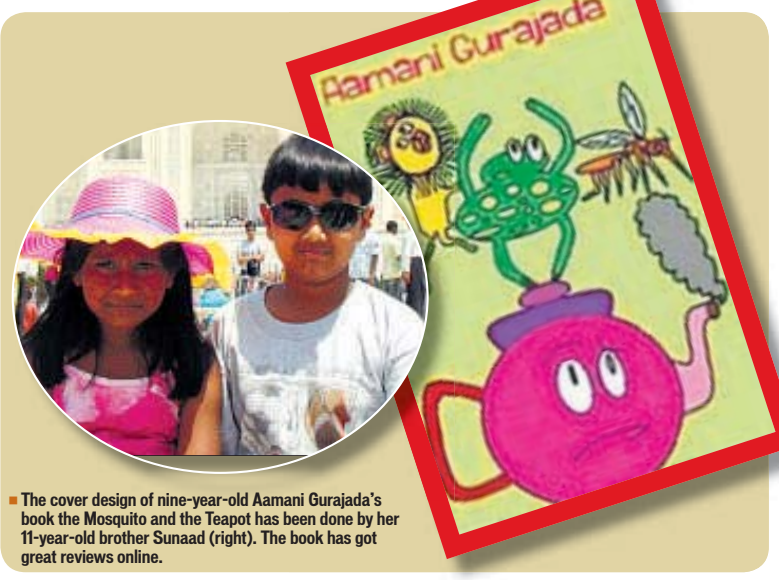
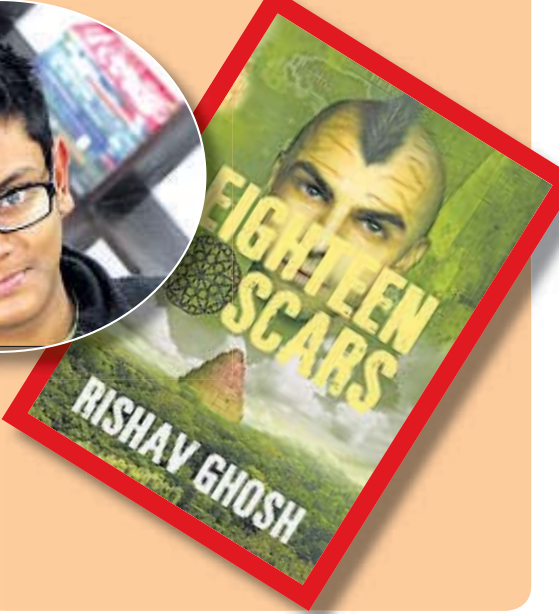
Adding a word of advice, she says, "It does not cost to self-publish on Amazon, smashwords.com and similar sites. Your main expenses should be for the cover, editing and formatting. I do want to point out that there are a lot of unscrupulous self-publishing companies, which unfortunately, by a couple of publishers, leading unwary writers to think it is okay to go with their publishing packages."



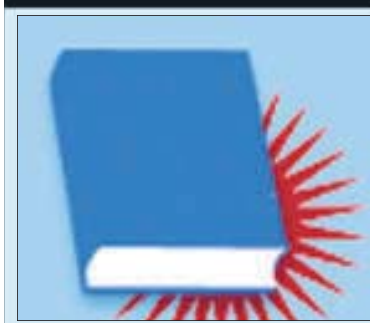
Eleven-year-old Sreejita Biswas is the author of The Underwater Adventure of Sophiana.



Rishav Ghosh, a student of St Mary's Dum Dum, hardly has time for cricket or other games and is on a deadline, giving finishing touches to his latest book Eighteen Scars. His other book Sanjeevanir Sandhane has already been released.



The cover design of nine-year-old Aamani Gurajada's book The Mosquito and the Teapot has been done by her 11-year-old brother Sunaad (right). The book has got great reviews online.



- SOME SELF-PUBLISHED BESTSELLERS:**
- Chicken Soup for the Soul
 - Fifty Shades of Grey
 - The Shack
 - The Joy of Cooking
 - Invisible Life

Ways to self-publish your book

PRINT ON DEMAND
Print-On-Demand (POD) publishing refers to the ability to print high-quality books as needed. For self-published books, this is often a more economical option than conducting a print run of hundreds or thousands of books. Many companies, such as Createspace, Lulu and iUniverse, allow printing single books at per-book costs not much higher than those paid by publishing companies for large print runs.

ELECTRONIC (E-BOOK) PUBLISHING
There are a variety of e-book formats and tools that can be used to create them. The most popular formats are .mobi, PDF, HTML and Amazon's .azw format. Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, and Smashwords offer online

tools for creating and converting files from other formats to formats that can be sold on their websites. Since it is possible to create e-books with no up-front or per-book costs, publishing them is an extremely popular option for self-publishers.

VANITY PUBLISHING
The term vanity publishing originated at a time when the only way for an author to get a book published was to sign a contract with a publishing company. It was extremely difficult for the typical unknown author to get a publishing contract under these circumstances, and many 'vanity publishers' sprang up to give these authors an alternative: essentially, they would publish any book in exchange for payment up front from the author.

PROS OF SELF-PUBLISHING

- The biggest positive is having control of every step of the process. You can set your own timelines, choose your own cover, and press the publish button yourself
- You manage marketing campaigns, check your sales figures, and decide on price-points. The ability to publish as quickly as possible is also a huge benefit.
- A big advantage of self-publishing is the financial reward.

CONS OF SELF-PUBLISHING

- Being your own boss can be difficult if you're not motivated and dedicated.
- It is difficult to get a printed novel into bookstores.

