

carry on carrying

As the practice of babywearing catches on in India, *Child* discovers four local brands whose ergonomic wraps, carriers, and slings are finding takers fast. by **RITIKA JAIN**

THE TREND of wearing your baby or toddler is fast getting popular in urban India. The concept focusses on carrying your child close so as to encourage skin-to-skin contact, resulting in a range of benefits that ensure a healthier, happier baby. With ergonomic designs, soft fabrics and indigenous patterns, four Indian baby carrier brands are breaking new ground in the country.



Anmol's Rickshaw Warm Full WCSSC, ₹9,855.

* anmol

Founder Rashmee Gajra Bhatia, 41, mom to Miit, 12 and Dev, 8, Mumbai

→ product range

Anmol works with NGOs and handloom co-operatives, making

quality woven products to suit the Indian climate. Their range features hybrid wraps (soft, super supportive wraps with a little bit of stretch), soft carriers, woven wraps and ring slings. Their vibrant collection is mostly made from organic cotton or linen. The

yarn dyes are also baby-safe and the chances of colour leakage from them are minimal. The carriers go through standardised tests and if a label says 'upto 20 kgs', it's actually been safety-tested for carrying upto roughly 50 kgs.

Rashmee has also started a sling library in Mumbai, which provides support for users, irrespective of brand, and shows them how to use carriers properly. She emphasises that people should wear their babies from an hour to 12 hours in the initial 6-12 weeks and not just while going out. Thanks to them, Mumbai recently saw its first babywearing flash mob promoting awareness on the subject, where over 50 moms were seen grooving to Bollywood music, with their babies attached to them.

→ behind the scene

Rashmee Gajra had read that preemies who are carried tend to feed often and develop faster. But she couldn't find a good enough carrier for her firstborn, a preemie, despite trying everything that was available 12 years ago. When she was pregnant with her second child, she attended a breastfeeding support group where a travelling diplomat showed her how to use a wrap. That's what got her hooked. An architect by profession, Rashmee made her own wrap this time and carried her younger child for 2½ years. All the benefits of secure attachment she'd read about were showing in her younger kid's personality. The support group she had attended was impressed by how calm her baby was and asked her to make wraps for some members. She eventually launched Anmol in 2014.

FIND THEM HERE

anmolbabycarriers.com/
youtube.com/channel/UCZuAj5_QMDzalk3qN5Y2yA

* soul

Founder Chinmayie Dutt, 31, mom to Alaru, 8 and Adhya, 3, Bengaluru

→ product range

Their range includes everything from wraps, ring slings, full buckle, to Meh Dais and Onbuhimos (a Japanese wrap) that are styled to fit petite as well as plus babies. An art background strongly influences the founder's choice of designs ranging from simple textures and colours to those featuring Indian motifs. While the 100 per cent natural handwoven fabrics come from small-scale weavers across India, the jacquard fabrics are sourced from an eco-friendly unit run by weavers in South India. The price ranges from an affordable ₹1,500-₹4,000. In November last year, Soul organised India's first ever babywearing educator course. Their latest product, AnoonA is a

* KNOW YOUR CARRIERS

Here's a brief description of the various types available for you.

MEH DAI: This rectangular piece of fabric with 4 straps is especially useful if you plan to do extensive housework or go on hikes.

BUCKLE CARRIER: It's a modern version of the Meh Dai that secures Baby with buckles or clips instead of knots.

RING SLING: This rectangular piece of fabric threaded through two rings to create a seat and fasten the baby to your body, is especially beneficial when you're breastfeeding or socialising.

WRAP: A length of fabric that is tied around the baby and the caregiver.



→ Soul's latest product, AnoonA is an adjustable, safety-certified, infant-to-toddler soft structured carrier that offers up to five carry positions.

fully adjustable, safety-certified, infant-to-toddler soft structured carrier that offers up to five carry positions. They also make lifestyle accessories like bags, baby shoes, blankets and doll carriers.

→ behind the scene

Chinmayie's daughter Alaru was a high-needs baby who wanted to be carried constantly. So she bought a baby carrier by a well-known international brand. However, the imported and thickly padded carrier was sweaty and uncomfortable in the Indian summer. After 4 years, when she

was expecting again, Chinmayie was sure that she wanted to babywear extensively. She researched different kinds of baby carriers available and decided on a ring sling that she had to get from the US. Though she fell in love with it immediately, she recognised the necessity of an Indian version of this product to help mothers here. So she started Soul as a ring sling company in 2014, when her son was only a few months old. Adhya was the first ever Soul baby.

FIND THEM HERE *Find them here* soulslings.com/in/ youtube.com/user/soulslings



While highlighting modern Indian aesthetics, Kolkol is equally focussed on the safety of its carriers.

Kolkol Full Buckle standard, ₹5,500 onwards.

* kolkol

Founder Bayiravi Mani, 34, mom to Advait, 4, Chennai

→ product range

Kolkol originally started with the Meh Dai style of carriers and has now grown to offer three more styles—full buckle, ring sling and Onbuhimo. The carriers can be used for newborns till the age of 5 and range from ₹1,600-₹5,400. Kolkol employs easy-to-use, comfortable, breathable, 100 per

cent cotton fabrics, which are woven in India by craftspersons and weavers. Their Jodhpur range has beautiful hand-blocked prints and features only natural dyes. While highlighting modern Indian aesthetics, Kolkol is equally focussed on the safety of its carriers. They also make a range of cloth bags, cowls and suck pads.

→ behind the scene

With a two-month-old to care for while working from home

as a baker, Bayiravi discovered that ergonomic and affordable baby carriers were incredibly hard to find in India. It was this that motivated her to start her own brand with Indian fabrics in 2014. While both her businesses ran simultaneously for about 6 months, such was the response to Kolkol that she eventually decided to focus only on carriers.

FIND THEM HERE

kolkolbabycarrier.com

youtube.com/c/KolKolBabyCarrier

* cookiie pie co

Founder Shami Sayed, 68, grandfather to Annika, 4, Mumbai

➔ product range

Cookiie Pie Co, a family-run business based out of Mumbai, came into being with the arrival of Annika, Shami's granddaughter. Their range comprises soft-structured carriers, slings and wraps. Their carriers are also ergonomic, offering 'knee-to-knee' positioning, providing the optimal support for natural spine and hip development, soothing colic and stranger anxiety. All the products are detailed and made with individual care, not mass produced, involving the parents they are being made for—Cookiie Pie Co, as a brand, places importance on customer feedback,



Cookiie Pie Co carriers are known to ease crankiness, and aid neural development and respiratory health.

which they have used over time to improve their designs. It could be as minor as having a snap button replace a tie-up, all the while making sure that both the child and parent are comfortable and safe. These carriers are also known to ease crankiness, and aid neural development and respiratory health, keeping babies happier.

Social responsibility is at the heart of the brand—the

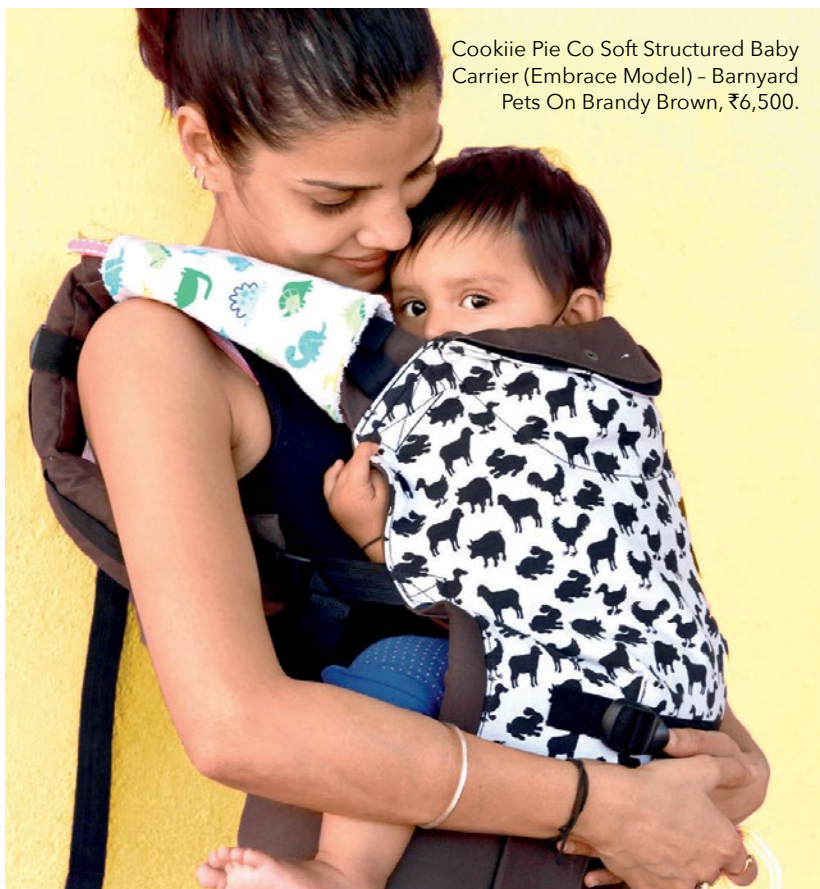
supply chain process is geared to support skilled local artisans by upholding fair trade principles and a sustainable work environment. Priced ₹250-₹9,000, their range features natural fabrics like linen, voile and cotton. All carriers are compliant with the ASTM F2236 (American Society for Testing and Material) certifications and CPSIA (Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act) regulations. The brand also offers *mulmul dohars*, full-sleeved bibs, organic teethingers, travel chairs, festive designer kidswear and hair accessories among others.

➔ behind the scene

When Annika was an infant, it was impossible to find a quality ergonomic baby carrier that would support the baby properly, while providing sufficient comfort to the parent over an extended period. Existing options in the carrier space were either pricey as they were imported, or not designed to suit the Indian climate and conditions, or just plain unsafe, with major disregard to the physiological development of a newborn. So the devoted granddad took charge of his granddaughter's carrier and made the first product himself at home for her after much research. As others observed the benefits of the product, the demand grew, and Sayed founded a full-fledged company in 2015.

Having lived in Oman for many years, he was well-aware of babywearing as a concept. He used to be a photographer by profession and liked to take up DIY projects as a hby. When a personal tragedy struck, his passion for starting the baby carrier business tided him through the difficult period.

FIND THEM HERE cookiiepieco.com
[youtube.com/
watch?v=HO1tIWkutxo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HO1tIWkutxo) ●



Cookiie Pie Co Soft Structured Baby Carrier (Embrace Model) - Barnyard Pets On Brandy Brown, ₹6,500.