

## From ₹2 Lakh to Global Luxury: The Remarkable Journey of Mira Kulkarni and Forest Essentials

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In the year 2000, at the age of 45, Mira Kulkarni — inspired by the traditional Ayurvedic wisdom rooted in her home region of Tehri Garhwal — embarked on a bold entrepreneurial journey. Starting with just **₹2 lakh and two employees**, she began crafting handmade soaps and candles using cold-pressed oils, natural herbs, and traditional Ayurvedic methods.

Raised with a deep appreciation for Ayurveda and its time-tested benefits, Kulkarni saw a gap in the beauty market: while many Indians imported luxury soaps and skincare, there was little homegrown that married high quality with Ayurvedic purity. She decided to change that.

Starting the business as a small-scale venture — almost a home-made experiment — Kulkarni's first breakthrough came when a general-manager at a luxury hotel tried her soap and ordered it for hotel-room amenities. That marked a turning point: her products began to be recognised for their authenticity, quality and appeal.

### **Building a Luxury Ayurvedic Brand — From Soaps to Skincare Empire**

What began as simple handmade soaps soon expanded. Under Mira's vision, Forest Essentials grew its product line to include Ayurvedic skincare, haircare, body care and wellness products — always rooted in tradition but presented with a modern, luxurious sensibility.

### **Scaling Up: Hotels, Stores & Global Expansion**

Over time, Forest Essentials expanded its footprint significantly: supplying luxury hotels and spas, opening standalone stores, and exporting to markets abroad.

Today, the brand operates over **170 stores across India, GCC countries and the UK** — a measured but steady expansion reflecting its cautious “slow-grow” strategy. That validation from an international player helped boost credibility — locally and globally — enabling further expansion. Forest Essentials also began exporting to over 120 countries, blending traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with a global luxury positioning.

### **Philosophy, Ethos & Innovation**

According to Mira Kulkarni, the brand's core strength lies in staying true to Ayurvedic tradition while presenting products in a modern, premium format. This meant carefully sourcing natural ingredients, cold-pressing oils to retain potency, and avoiding shortcuts commonly seen in mass-market cosmetics.

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