

FRONTLIST

APRIL 2022

EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022

Here's a Sneak Peek
at PVLFF Excellence Awards Night



Featuring eminent personalities on the
World Book and Copyright Day



International Federation of
Reproduction Rights Organisations

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS



WELCOME MESSAGE

Greetings Everyone :)

March had been a rapturous month full of high spirits. With spectacular events organised by Frontlist like PragatiE Vichaar 'Break The Bias', PragatiE Vichaar 'Poetry Festival', and PVL Excellence Awards, we are on cloud nine with their enormous success.

We received the love in abundance and warm cheers from the Publishing Industry. I'd like to extend my wholehearted thanks to everyone for their priceless contributions to making the PVL Excellence Awards an immensely successful event.

As I announced at the beginning of 2022, we will be coming up with a myriad of surprises and events. I am extremely proud to share that we have come a far way, we have completed three splendid events up already this year.

Now, get ready to join us in this exciting journey as I am thrilled to announce we're organising events for the occasion of Hindi Diwas, Mother's Day and Father's Day in the upcoming months. We are very excited to have Disha Publications as our partner/organiser for the Mother's Day and Father's Day Events. Stay tuned!

IRRO is coming up with the one-day virtual event on World Book and Copyright Day on 23rd April and we are thrilled to announce that we are the Exclusive Media Partner in this event.

While checking this edition out, you will see varied perspectives from across the world. We are very excited to bring to you interviews with leaders from India and around the globe on the subject of Copyright and Intellectual Property Laws in the Publishing industry on the occasion of World Book and Copyright Day. A special thank you to the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO) for providing admired and utmost support for the completion of this edition.

We, Frontlist would never be able to climb this summit without the deference of the Publishing Fraternity. Our heartiest gratitude will invariably be with them.

As always, we are always open for collaborations.

Write to me: navita@frontlist.in

Navita Berry
Business Head

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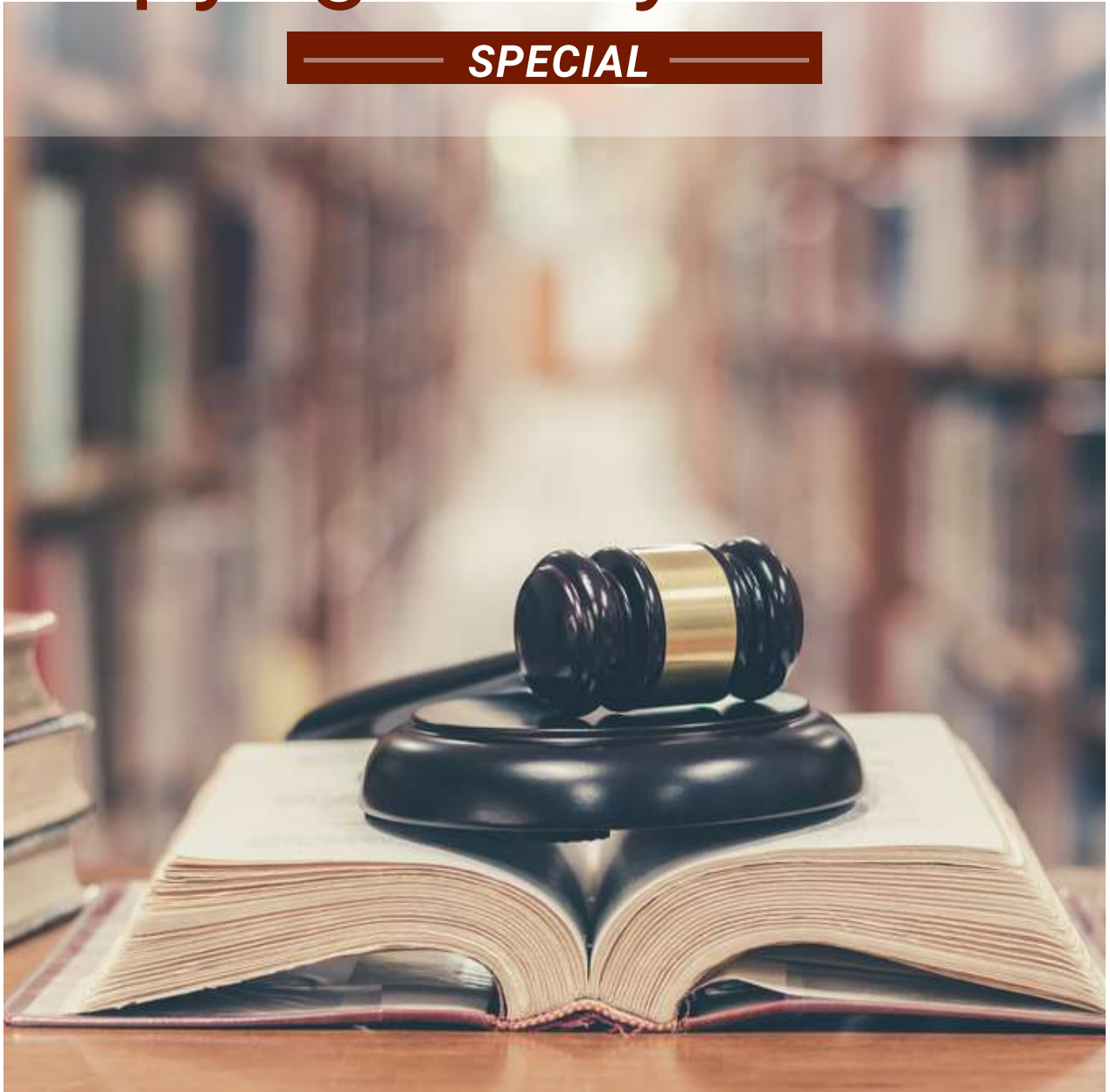
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World **Book** and Copyright Day 2022

SPECIAL





Photographer's name: Finn Ståle Felberg

MR. YNGVE SLETTTHOLM

President, IFFRO

Yngve Slettholm (b.1955) joined Kopinor as Chief Executive Officer in 2006. He holds a PhD from State University of New York at Buffalo and is a well-known composer. Prior to joining Kopinor, he worked as Assistant Professor at the Norwegian State Academy of Music, and served 12 years as Board Director of TONO (the Norwegian music performing rights society). In 2001–05, Mr. Slettholm was Deputy Minister (State Secretary) in the Ministry of Culture, whose responsibilities include copyright matters. In 2011, the Government appointed him to chair the Arts Council of Norway, a position he held until 2015. He has additionally held several honorary posts in the field of culture. In IFFRO, Mr. Slettholm served as Vice Chair of the European Group 2007–12. Slettholm was elected as Director of the Board in 2012 and 1st Vice President in 2015 and has served as IFFRO President since 2019.

Frontlist: What is IFFRO? How does it work?

Yngve: IFFRO is the international organisation representing collective management organisations in the text and image sector. With 155 member organisations around the world, 104 of which are national collective management organisations, IFFRO has members on every continent, including the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation, IRRO.

Collective management organisations, or RROs, as they are known in the text and image sector, enable access to copyright works in circumstances in which it would be difficult for authors and publishers to licence individually – situations, where there are many low values use made of a wide cross section of different works. Collective licences supplement and reinforce direct licensing by copyright owners, they don't substitute for it. These mass use situations occur frequently in the education, government and business sectors. A licence with a collective management organisation is a simple way for an organisation in these sectors to manage their copyright responsibilities.

Frontlist: Many people are still unbeknownst to the copyright values. On the occasion of World Book and Copyright Day, what new will IFFRO be bringing for the Publishing and Author Community?

Yngve: IFFRO strongly supports World Book and Copyright Day, as it is a great way of highlighting copyright and educating the general public about the importance of the copyright ecosystem. We aren't planning specific activities this year. But we will, of course, support our members' campaigns to mark this important day, such as the activities going on in India.

Frontlist: How can we achieve sustainability in the Book Sector? Give an answer based on your experience.

Yngve: The past two years have been very tough for the book sector. I think that the key for the future is having sustainable and diverse income streams – which is why collective licensing is so important to both authors and publishers.

As an example, during the pandemic, many collective management organisations provided financial support to their members, enabling them to get through those hard times. As a result, resilience and sustainability became increasingly important.

Frontlist: How can we use new digital technologies to foster the publishing ecosystem?

Yngve: Digital technologies democratise publishing and also make it possible to reach new audiences around the world. This is great news for current and aspiring authors and publishers, as it makes books that may not have been economically viable in a national market, much more attractive when the titles can be made available around the world.

The downside, of course, is how much easier digital technology makes piracy and unauthorised use – all the more a reason for a strong collective management sector. IFFRO's member in Spain, for example, has been active in working with messaging services to stamp out piracy on their networks, and IFFRO's member in Brazil has worked closely with the largest online marketplace in Latin America to reduce the online availability of pirate books.

Frontlist: A year is going to be complete since IFFRO launched the first of its 'How would Re: Start Conversations Events with EVA, EWA and FEP'. Has the initiative behind this been successful? What do you think about this partnership?

Yngve: These events have been very successful. It is important to strongly communicate what the book sector has been doing to improve access to their content and respond to the pandemic. A key to IFFRO's success has been stakeholder partnerships with organisations representing authors, publishers and visual artists – including the three European organisations - EVA, EWC and

FEP. We are focused very much on building and deepening our collaboration with those organisations and other organisations representing authors, visual artists and publishers internationally.

Frontlist: Kopinor has been working directly with RROs in developing countries. How much do these kinds of initiatives develop the text and image sphere across developing countries?

Yngve: Working with and assisting authors and publishers in developing countries is a central part of both Kopinor's and IFRRO's mission. Sharing knowledge and building collective management capacity in all countries around the world is important to both organisations.

In fact, Kopinor has taken a step further by developing a project in Malawi that includes both domestic textbook publishing and collective administration. Malawian pupils need learning materials that are adapted to local needs, but, due to many different factors, domestic production and dissemination of textbooks have been low. Through supporting and advising authors, publishers and other actors through the whole value chain to the printed and distributed books, Kopinor's goal has been to stimulate local authorship and publishing.

Frontlist: After having a music career, how did you end up in the world of Copyright matters?

Yngve: For many years, I was a rather prolific composer and associate professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music, along with being the Board Member of the Norwegian Performing Rights Society of Music. Then I was challenged to take up a political position as State Secretary (Deputy Minister) in the Ministry of Culture, also responsible for copyright matters. When the four-year term ended in 2005, I had to decide whether to continue with music or follow a different path, which made me end up as the CEO of Kopinor. That has been a most interesting and rewarding job, not only dealing with copyright, but also with cultural policy, organisational development, international relations and a lot of other exciting things – including IFRRO work.

Frontlist: The publishing industry has been working towards fending off copyright issues. Still, this problem is rampant. Share your thoughts on how can we overcome this matter.

Yngve: Education is critical. We need to educate the community that copyright is important and that its rules should be respected. However, education is not all that is needed – a supportive legal framework, strong government engagement and guidance on the issues are crucial as well.

Effective collective licensing systems are also important. That's where governments can make a difference – by clarifying what must be licensed. We made a submission to the law reform review in India to this effect last year.

New and innovative solutions are also being found – for example when an increasing number of governments around the world are introducing small private copying levies on devices to manage individual copying onto smartphones and similar devices.

Frontlist: In your tenure as the President of IFRRO, how much improvement have you witnessed to raise awareness and respect of the copyright values in the publishing industry?

Yngve: We have been successful in working with partners and stakeholders to raise awareness and respect for copyright values – however, there is still much to do. The pandemic has highlighted the fact that solutions can be found when they are needed.

I would like to encourage more collaboration and engagement amongst the different groups engaged in the copyright ecosystem – authors, publishers, libraries, educational institutions, and of course, collective management organisations. I believe solutions can be found through these groups working together to create mutually satisfactory outcomes.

Frontlist: How does IFRRO manage copyright regulations and create a worldwide way of working across boundaries, languages, and different cultures?

Yngve: IFRRO is very lucky to have engaged and active members – we have a number of technical and interest groups amongst our membership, where members meet to exchange information and experiences. We also have regional groups through which our members in a particular geographic region interact and engage. Also, repertoire exchange agreements between our members are very important as a means of representing foreign repertoire. This means there is also a great deal of contact, strong outreach, and one-on-one engagement amongst our members. These frequent interactions build community and overcome these language and cultural challenges.

Frontlist: The developing world has its own challenge with copyright laws. For example, India being a developing country, the government wants to ensure that the lowest cost literary work is available to its population. How do you implement copyright laws in such cases?

Yngve: We are aware of, and strongly regret the situation regarding educational copying in India.

We believe it is regrettable that the Indian government is focused on only one of many public interests that should be balanced in order to support a sustainable future and long-term access to quality copyright content by the population.

In my opinion, the government could look into approaches, like a stronger collective management sector that would not only enable access, but also reward and encourage Indian creators and publishers to create fresh and original works that speak to the Indian audience.

This can and has been achieved in many other countries around the world, and I see no reason why the Indian government should not be learning from these experiences. They should be used to create a uniquely Indian solution that benefits all sectors of the community.



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LAZARUS SEROBE

*Managing Director, DALRO
(South Africa)*

Lazarus Serobe was appointed MD of DALRO in December 2014. As a management consultant and arts activist, Lazarus Serobe was one of a handful of black executives who helped transform the South African recording industry. He was CEO at Sony Music Entertainment Africa until 2005 and at Warner Music Gallo Africa from 2008 until 2010. Born and schooled in Soweto, Johannesburg, he studied law at Wits University. He joined Sony as legal and business affairs director when the company was launched in post-apartheid South Africa in 1995 and became the CEO in 2000. In 2005 he launched Heita Records, a joint venture with Sony, who later bought him out. Heita was a success from the get-go, launching brands such as Malaika and housing songstress Sibongile Khumalo. When he took over at Sony, he brought South African house and Kwaito Artists into the corporate fold.

Frontlist: What are your thoughts on the Author-Publisher Relationship in copyrighting?

Lazarus: It is a very important relationship as each relies on the other for a successful and sustainable outcome of their endeavors. Without an author, the publisher has nothing to publish, and without a publisher, authors would struggle to get their works distributed as widely as possible.

Frontlist: Being the Managing Director of DALRO, what are some

of the measures that the organization has taken up till now for copyright?

Lazarus: DALRO represents the rights' holders (authors & publishers) in the secondary use of their works and ensures that they get remunerated for such use by third parties.

Frontlist: What are some of the most crucial challenges that copyright faces in South Africa?

Lazarus: The most crucial challenge is the legislative process that seeks to introduce broad exceptions and limitations, plus 'American type' fair use provisions.

Frontlist: How does copyright law work in South Africa? What are some of the common penalties of copyright infringement?

Lazarus: Apart from very rare jail terms, there are no set penalties for Copyright Infringement. An aggrieved party would have to sue for damages suffered on each occasion.

Frontlist: Copyright is the most important tool of the entire literary policy toolbox, still, people often have free access to pirated content. What steps DALRO is taking against piracy?

Lazarus: DALRO is part of a broad network of copyright entities, including publishers, authors, music CMOs and others under the auspices of the Copyright Coalition of South Africa (CCSA) and the continent-wide Partners Against Piracy (PAP). These entities are at the forefront of copyright protection and anti-piracy efforts in the region.



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PAULA BROWNING

*Copyright Licensing, New
Zealand*

Paula Browning joined Copyright Licensing in 2010, having previously held management positions in the sport, education and commercial sectors. A qualified accountant and former School Executive Officer, Paula also Chairs the new creative sector alliance – WeCreate. As well as being a yoga addict, Paula is an avid reader and has a special interest in literacy for children with learning disabilities.

Frontlist: How is CLNZ working to safeguard the copyrights for New Zealand authors?

Paula: In conjunction with the Publishers Association of NZ and the New Zealand Society of Authors, CLNZ has an active programme of engagement and advocacy on copyright for authors and publishers. We also advocate for NZ Visual Artists' Rights. The CLNZ Cultural Fund invests in an annual report that demonstrates the value of the publishing industry in our country, and every second year, a report on NZ authors' earnings is published. We make written and in-person submissions to the government on the policy that impacts the authors' rights, including trade agreements, cultural policy, digital and internet policy and IP legislation. Where possible, we also connect with representatives of copyright user groups to discuss and try to find common ground on copyright and areas of copyright practice where we can share best-practice.

Frontlist: In your tenure as the Chief Executive of CLNZ, what new licensing schemes need to be introduced to promote the significance of Copyright matters?

Paula: CLNZ licensing schemes are available for all parts of the education sector, non-profit organisations, government agencies

and businesses. In the past year, we have commenced a new licensing scheme for NZ auction houses' use of artists' works in their sales promotions.

Frontlist: How do you define the relevance of Trademarks and their importance in the Publishing Industry?

Paula: Trademarks are not widely discussed in the NZ publishing industry, but a publisher's brand speaks to the quality of the work that they publish. This is especially relevant in non-fiction publishing (which we do a lot of in NZ) – readers know that they can trust the material published by a local publisher with a strong brand identity.

Frontlist: We are all very familiar with your penchant for literature for children with learning disabilities. What new opportunities would you like to initiate to ensure the copyrights of these group classes?

Paula: Authors, publishers and educators share a common goal regarding children, including children with learning disabilities – a desire for them to be lifelong readers and to learn. Sometimes a teacher will need a different format of a learning resource for a student, and an exception to copyright can be one way of making that resource. Unfortunately, that often means that only one student benefits. If the different format is sourced or requested through the author and publisher, it is often possible that more students can benefit and that the cost to the teacher or school is reduced. In my view, educators working with publishers and authors produce better outcomes for children than when copyright exceptions are used to produce learning materials.

Frontlist: Due to the emergence of the Digital Era, content consumption is drastically evolved, and it also augments pirated content. As an IFRRO member, what are your thoughts on this?

Paula: The upsides of digital content creation and distribution are significant, and consumers have never had more access to content from all over the world than they do in 2022. Unfortunately, this creates an expectation that "everything" should be available online. While the music and film/TV industries were first to be impacted by online piracy, the book world is, sadly, now in the same situation with pirate websites hosting massive collections of authors' work. When a book is freely available online, the author's and publisher's legal offerings via sales and libraries are undermined. As an IFRRO member, I'm interested in the sustainability and future of the publishing industry, and piracy has a direct negative impact on that.

Frontlist: On the occasion of World Book and Copyright Day, how are you conceiving the idea about enforcing the copyright in a more elucidated way that will lead to sustainability?

Paula: CLNZ supports the 'Creative Rights = Creative Reads' campaign that humanises copyright through the stories of people in the publishing ecosystem. Copyright is about respect for others' work, and I hope that when people understand the creativity and effort that goes into writing and publishing the amazing books we all love to read, the author's rights will be respected.



Picture Credit: Astrid Maria Busse Rasmussen

ANDERS KRISTIAN RASCH

*CEO, Copydan Writing,
Denmark*

Anders Kristian Rasch is the CEO of Copydan Writing, Denmark. He is skilled in Research, Politics, Management, Licensing, and Marketing Strategy. He is a strong business development professional with a Diploma in Leadership focused on Strategy and Organisation Theory from Syddansk Universitet. He is one of the members of the International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisations (IFRRO).

Frontlist: It has been 14 years since you associated with Copydan Writing. Could you please share any unaccustomed shift that you've seen in the publishing ecosystem in your journey?

Anders: The last decade or so has proved to be an interesting journey with digitalisation in the driver's seat. New ways of publishing, new ways of copying, new ways of working, and new ways of using the material. Digitalisation has been the key to everything.

Frontlist: What is the vision of Copydan Writing for the upcoming years in the field of Copyrighting?

Anders: The Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market is without a doubt a focal point of ours in the years to come. There is important work ahead of us in the form of concluding agreements with existing business partners as well as covering new ground.

Frontlist: What changes does the copyright law demand?

Anders: It should always be a priority for any legislative platform

to be up to date. This is no different when it comes to copyright and reproductive rights. Adapting to and incorporating new technologies, new business models, and new user scenarios are a very important part of the ongoing legislative process in our field of work.

Frontlist: Understanding Copyrights seems very ambiguous for an ordinary person. Don't you think we should start introducing copyright courses in the school syllabus as well as in the writing courses?

Anders: This is a very difficult question. One that I am sure has been asked by everyone working in our line of work. A broad approach is perhaps the best strategy here: an introduction to the creative arts and intellectual property rights combined with copyright information is an attempt that perhaps could prove effective.

Frontlist: There is a lack of awareness about the importance of copyright. What do you think is the root cause?

Anders: To keep it short: People tend to focus on content and care less about how that content came about, i.e., who, how, where, etc. This tendency has only increased with advancements in the technology field.

Frontlist: Every industry sector has viewed the COVID-19 pandemic as a watershed moment. How did Copydan Writing get back on track while keeping in mind the massive digital transformation?

Anders: We appreciate that a lot of sectors have had to undergo an enormous change in the wake of the pandemic. Regarding digitalization and getting back on track, Denmark is – in all modesty - a front runner when it comes to incorporating digital trends and possibilities, both in the educational system and in the workplace. All our agreements are also set up to cover the digital use of material. Adapting to distance learning and working from home was a shift already set in motion by the changing of the times.

Frontlist: What is the most significant impediment facing the publishing industry in achieving copyright and licensing?

Anders: Technology has made everything possible. Moreover, accessible. This is, of course, both rewarding and challenging. I am, however, very optimistic about finding business models that embrace and incorporate the challenges that lie ahead. The music industry has made 'the transition' and now has very adaptable solutions. Finding such solutions in our field may take a while, but they are on the horizon.

Frontlist: How can Copydan Writing help reduce copyright infringement based on your experience as a member of IFRRO?

Anders: Licensing is the way to go, whether administered by rights-holders separately or by collective rights management. Working closely together with our fellow organisations, in IFRRO, we are building a strong and lasting platform for these types of solutions that help ensure both flexible access for users as well as compensation to the rights-holders.



JAMES TAYLOR

Director, Communications and Freedom to Publish, IPA

James Taylor is the director of Communications and Freedom to Publish. He was previously the Head of Communications and Membership Services for IMPALA, the independent music companies association. He is 36 years old, a British national with a Master's in Mechanical Engineering. He speaks fluently in French and German and has a grounding in Dutch. He is also well-versed in communicating internally to memberships and externally to policymakers, stakeholders, and other key audiences, developing and managing awards, delivering events, and growing and managing media relations.

Frontlist: As the Director of Communications and Freedom to Publish at the International Publishers Association (IPA), what are the pivotal steps taken by your organisation for the awareness of Copyrights Protection?

James: IPA's action on copyright works at two levels – international and national. The international level means organisations like the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) – the UN agency based in Geneva, where international copyright treaties are negotiated. IPA is an observer and always seeks to bring international delegations of publishers to explain the work of publishers on the ground to delegates. Our national-level work consists of monitoring copyright developments worldwide and supporting members upon request if there are threats or opportunities in local copyright discussions. All of this work is done by IPA's Secretariat and coordinated through our Copyright Committee chaired by Jessica Sanger.

Frontlist: According to you, how does strong copyright protection

work as an enabler of local creative industries?

James: This really is IPA's key message, particularly when we talk at WIPO, and we hear some actors claiming that weaker copyright is what would help developing markets. Strong copyright is what enables local industries to develop. The biggest existing markets have strong copyright and enforcement regimes. The pandemic has made it even clearer. In those countries with copyright regimes that haven't been updated to the reality of the internet, publishers are afraid to transition to digital fearing even worse rates of piracy than they already face for their physical books.

Frontlist: Even after the pandemic, the viability of copyright protection has not decreased. This is a crucial time when we need authors, publishers, and a strong legal framework more than ever. According to you, what measures can be taken to ensure the same?

James: What we see is an urgent need for copyright regimes adapted to the digital age. This means strong copyright but also strong enforcement. It includes the ability to take down pirated content and for that pirated content to stay down. Judicial procedures in some markets enable the courts to compel Internet Service Providers to block certain domains that have been found to host pirated content. However, the key shift has to be in terms of making platforms responsible for the content they host – particularly when they are making a profit by selling advertising against it. Only then will they have a real incentive to remove infringing content.

Frontlist: In your opinion, how can we contribute to a healthy copyright environment?

James: A healthy copyright environment requires up-to-date, fit-for-purpose laws that reward those who create and those who invest in their creations to help them reach readers. We need to explain to lawmakers exactly what authors and publishers do and how much they contribute culturally but also economically to society.

Frontlist: Since the law and legal solutions will always persist, there is no substitute for the copyright conundrum. What would you like to say?

James: Copyright is not a conundrum. It is a very simple premise – if I create something, I get to choose what happens to my creation. If I want to give it away for free, I can. If I want to be paid, then I get to choose my terms. If I want one platform to have my book but not another, that's my choice too. Copyright is elegant in its simplicity.

Frontlist: Do you think the 'Freedom of Speech' and 'Copyright' are not in correspondence with each other? If yes, then should they be balanced against each other?

James: Absolutely not. Copyright and freedom of speech mutually reinforce each other. The ability of an author, or a publisher for that matter, to be financially independent guarantees their freedom of expression. Copyright makes that economic freedom possible. This symbiosis is perfectly captured in Articles 19 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We should avoid creating false dichotomies between two fundamental rights which are part of a coherent system of protection.

Frontlist: In your opinion, what is the root cause affecting the environment altogether concerning copyright law?

James: The biggest companies that have ever existed have built business models that guide people to content and monetize the data of the end-user. These companies do not value the content itself, and we see pressure in scientific publishing and educational publishing for copyright to be weakened. These efforts to weaken copyright are global and arise in Canada, the EU, Namibia, and New Zealand. The weakening of the rights of authors and publishers will damage the abilities of strong local publishing sectors to grow and thrive.



PHILIPPA DAVIES

*Assistant General Manager,
JAMCOPY*

An Attorney-at-law with diverse interests, Philippa's working experiences has taken her from customs litigation, international trade negotiations, itinerant theatre production, and Intellectual Property Rights to human rights advocacy.

Philippa is a self-published author and occasional newspaper columnist. She founded a mentorship programme for children in State care and is a former radio discussion show host and producer with TBC radio (The Breath of Change). Podcasts of past programmes can be heard at connectprayact.podomatic.com.

Philippa has also participated in sports and the performing arts, the Girl Guide movement, writing and delivering character education, and Christian dramatic presentations to children.

Specialties: Research/writing, Lecturing/Teaching, Media, Family policy advocacy, Intellectual Property, Scriptwriting, theatre production, Mentoring children.

Frontlist: How is the Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency helping the publishing ecosystem combat piracy?

Philippa: Over the 24 years of its existence, the Jamaican Copyright Licensing Agency (JAMCOPY) has consistently undertaken public education, sensitization of users, licensees and prospective licensees on the importance of respecting copyright and related rights. Awareness activities have been carried out either solely or through cross-collaboration with other collective management organisations in Jamaica and the government IP office- the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office. JAMCOPY was a founding and active member of the Jamaica Anti-piracy Alliance (which is currently inactive).

Frontlist: Since you started your journey as an Assistant General Manager at JAMCOPY, what avenues have you seen this far in managing the worldwide repertoire of copyright content?

Philippa: JAMCOPY has done incredibly well so far, having licensed nearly 90% of the primary, secondary, and tertiary education sectors. Being able to offer a licence covering an international repertoire of works has been a major selling point for the licensing of this sector. Areas with growth potential include the licensing of digital content and corporate licensing.

Frontlist: The COVID-19 pandemic has been looked upon as a decisive moment for every industry sector. How did JAMCOPY bring back themselves from this downhill and also keep in mind the sheer digital transformation?

Philippa: Despite the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, JAMCOPY has managed to maintain collections and distribution. All eligible affiliates (nearly 800 creators and publishers) received their annual royalty distribution in December 2020 and 2021.

JAMCOPY also demonstrated sensitivity to the challenges facing institutions for the sudden and unexpected wholesale migration of teaching and learning to the online domain by granting a temporary extension of copying limits for licensees. This has been in effect since May 2020 and is due to expire at the end of April 2022 unless further extended.

JAMCOPY also hosted webinars in 2020 for authors and publishers on the experiences of counterparts in developed and developing countries who were participating in the digital transformation. Testimonials of emerging opportunities for smaller players in the market were also shared.

Frontlist: What is the most important obstacle that the Publishing Industry is facing to achieve copyright and licensing?

Philippa: Administrative and financial roadblocks in the licensing of major establishments.

Frontlist: On the occasion of World Book and Copyright Day, how are you conceiving the idea about enforcing the copyright in a more elucidated way that will lead to sustainability?

Philippa: Creators are more aware of their rights and the options for exploitation than twenty-four years ago when JAMCOPY first emerged, nevertheless more public education, especially via social media, is needed. Webinars and radio features, and now short videos are being utilised.

Without a doubt, the youth, the "digital born generation", must be reached. This demographic is the focus of JAMCOPY's contribution to IP week celebrations 2022. A short video competition for 13-18 years old is being organised by the three Jamaican CMOs. Entrants will have to provide a 3-5 minutes video presenting a solution, including licensing, to a given copyright problem. Other ideas for reaching the youth being explored are informational content in student-targeted publications (e.g., magazines and newspapers) and partnerships with school clubs based on copyright expressions (visual art and literary). JAMCOPY will continue to play a lead role in public education, sensitisation, and awareness campaigns, on copyright and licensing.



DR. ASHOK GUPTA

Chairman, IRRO

Dr. Ashok Gupta is a Medical professional by training. After practicing for a few years as a Child Specialist, he joined his family business of publishing books (Pustak Mahal) in 1986. He is actively engaged in publishing, either in his capacity or through 'The Federation Indian Publishers' (FIP), the only representative body of Indian publishers affiliated with to International Publishers Association.

He is on the board of the National Library, Kolkata as an Industry representative, and participated in several meetings of the National Book Promotion Policy Committee, Ministry of Education. He has been closely associated with FIP for the last 20 years, either as its executive committee member or as an office-bearer, whether it's Jt. Sec., Sec., Treasurer, Vice President or President.

Moreover, he is the Chairman of 'The Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation' (IRRO), a collective Copyright Society registered and approved by the Ministry of HRD. It licenses organizations to copy and re-use extracts from print and digital publications on behalf of the copyright owners - authors, publishers, and visual artists.

After separating from Pustak Mahal in 2011, he runs his own publishing company, Unicorn Books which publishes school, general and trade books. He has travelled far and wide - Germany, North America, South America, South Korea, China, England, Eastern Europe, South Africa, Australia, Singapore, Saudi Arab, Sri Lanka, and Abu-Dhabi to participate in international book fairs and activities, and to apprise himself about the new trends and technologies.

Frontlist: What currently is the role of copyright in the publishing industry in India?

Ashok: Copyright law is the backbone rather it is the main element on which the complete book publishing ecosystem is built on. Without copyright law, I think the industry as such cannot survive because all the stakeholders that are connected with this ecosystem, the author, the publisher, the artist, all of them, get compensation for their hard work on creating a creative work. I think that comes from copyright law itself. Though I would say that it is the most important element in the total ecosystem

Frontlist: What measures can India take to inform and educate users about the value of copyright and their rights and responsibilities?

Ashok: I think in my opinion, the most important step the government can take is to develop a book culture in the society, and conveying to the students to respect copyright by including a small chapter in the school books, as well as in college books, explaining the role of copyright plays in a society. Short term measures, maybe some seminars, webinars and advertisements may not serve the purpose. It has to be solved in the medium to long term gradually, by changing the mindset of the public, young students. I think, in my opinion, by including a chapter of copyright and school books, as well as at college level books, some sort of reading material, a compulsory reading material will solve or gradually build up the mindset against the violation of copyright.

Frontlist: What is the vision of IRRO for the upcoming years in the field of Copyrighting?

Ashok: Though the challenges are many, I am quite upbeat about the future. I think there is some sensitisation at the government level also. And we expect some changes, some amendments in the copyright law as such, wherever there were certain loopholes. Though there are challenges, I see a bright future for the Indian publishing industry, no doubt about it. And cyber laws are also coming up. I have no hesitation in saying that the future will be bright so far as far as protecting the copyrighted content in India.

Frontlist: When copyrighting is concerned, where does India stand compared to other countries, according to you?

Ashok: As far as copyright law is concerned, our copyright law is very robust. There are civil as well as criminal remedies available within the law. But implementation of the copyright law is quite dicey. It is not easy to implement, it is not easy to prosecute a violator at the police level also, it is very, very difficult to prosecute someone, even if someone is found violating a copyright law along with possession of the pirated books, even then, it is very cumbersome as well as cost-intensive to prosecute, or get some remedy from the court, although the law is very strong. Something needs to be done so that it becomes easier for the publishers and authors to take action against the violators so that it results in some sort of deterrence in public opinion.

Frontlist: There is a lack of awareness of the importance of copyright. What do you think is the main roadblock or root cause?

Ashok: There are a few reasons, one is unaffordability and poverty, books as such are not very low-priced. But in comparison to other countries, our books are much cheaper, even then, people think that they have a right to get the books for educational purposes or any other purposes without any permission because they think their main aim is self-development or maybe for the development of the country. If they are studying, or if they are learning certain things, or it is good for the country, it is good for the people, and there should not be any control over the knowledge which is available in books or copyrighted content, and it should be made available. But they do not realize that

those who create this content spend lots of hours, time, and money, and they also have to maintain their families. So many stakeholders are dependent on this creative industry business. They also need to be compensated. Issues are there, no doubt about it, the government should come forward. In my opinion, for certain sections of the society, some books need to be made available at reasonable prices and the government should come forward, and subsidise some books in certain ways, or open up more libraries and promote the concept of a library in the society. Because even in foreign countries or in Western countries, people go to the libraries and take big books, no one expects to buy all the books that they need. Most of them go through the library, take the books, do their work and return them. And this way, the knowledge industry runs. I think the government of India needs to do something. I don't deny that there is a section of society which cannot afford books, no doubt about it. And from our side, as publishers, as authors, we are trying to keep our prices very low. There is no control on paper prices, no control of other inputs. But people do expect that the content should be made available free of charge.



DR. RAMESH K. MITTAL

President, Federation of Indian Publishers

Dr. Ramesh K. Mittal is President, The Federation of Indian Publishers, Secretary-General, Afro-Asian Book Council, and Executive Committee Member, Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO). He devoted his life to the cause of spreading education, knowledge, and culture through books and related printed materials. He also associated with CAPEXIL

and Afro-Asian Book Council to support the exports of books and printed materials and with the Indian Reprographic Rights Organization for serving the community on copyright issues. Moreover, involved in a charity that runs two medical clinics and a public library.

Frontlist: Being the President of The Federation of Indian Publishers, kindly elaborate on what the Federation plans to do in the field of Copyright.

Ramesh :The Federation has been in regular contact with the copyright-related authorities of the Govt. of India. We regularly conduct and attend various relevant programmes from time to time. The Federation keeps the authorities informed about the problem relating to rampant piracy/copying of books. An effort is being made to seek certain amendments to the Copyright Act to safeguard the interests of the stakeholders.

Frontlist: What considerations should a publishing house keep in mind while getting into contracts with authors?

Ramesh:The Publishing Contracts should be elaborate and explicit, covering all possible factors associated with the publishing of a book, its contents, copyright ownership, editing/publishing schedule, royalties and their payment schedule, position relating to various possible editions, especially in the digital environment, translations, third party licensing, geographical area coverage, the validity period of the contract and the like. The signing of a detailed contract between the stakeholders substantially helps in avoiding misunderstanding as well as litigations.

Frontlist: What is your take on the types of support available in India for copyright protection?

Ramesh: Copyright Act is meant for the protection of copyright. One can reach out to copyright consultants and seek advice before moving into any legal action.

Frontlist: How does a publisher become the rightful owner or acquire rights of a literary work?

Ramesh: The copyright of a work is always with its creator. However, a publisher can enter into a written contract with the creator and acquire rights of a literary work by fulfilling the conditions mutually agreed upon between the Publisher and the Creator. The copyright for the overall layout, presentation style, cover, etc. of a book can be that of the Publisher, as the same is the intellectual property of the Publisher.

Frontlist: What is the plan of action for the members of FIP about Copyright within international boundaries?

Ramesh: India is a signatory to the Berne Convention, and as such, Copyright holders from countries falling under the Berne Union have a safeguard on copyright interests within those international boundaries. Both FIP and IRRO are also associated with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Geneva, the forum that discusses all the international copyright laws and issues from time to time.



MR. PRANAV GUPTA

*Co-founder, Frontlist Media
& Secretary-General, IRRO*

Pranav Gupta is the Co-Founder of Frontlist Media, the #1 platform and magazine representing the Indian publishing industry & the Secretary-General of the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO). A third-generation publisher, Pranav grew Prints Publications multi-fold not just in revenue but also in reputation and global markets. Pranav takes pride in being one of the limited publishers who've not used the power of digital & tech, but created multiple brands around it. Some of the brands he represents include Frontlist Media, Prints Publications, Advit Toys, OMLogic, PragatiE.com, Solh Wellness and Buy Books India. Pranav is Joint Secretary Federation of India Publishers (FIP) & Executive Committee Member of the International Publishers Association (IPA).

Frontlist: You founded 'Frontlist' along with Mr. Kapil Gupta. How did the idea for starting this organization come to you? What was your sole objective behind Frontlist as an e-news portal?

Pranav: A publisher for life, I have been delving into technology and digital for years now. Over the years, I and Kapil have strategised and executed a variety of different initiatives within the publishing industry. One gap that consistently pinched us is the lack of any digital portal for the publishing industry. India hosted the IPA Congress in 2018 in New Delhi, which further strengthened my belief that this is an urgent need that needs to be fulfilled. With that, we embarked upon Frontlist – the portal for India's publishing industry. Over the last few years, Frontlist has gained traction and is the site to visit for all industry-relevant news and information. After 3 years of cutting-edge stories, distinct journalism, associating with some of the key leaders of

the industry, and organising various virtual events to encourage and promote the young talent in the literary industry. We've gained huge popularity amongst our audiences. Aside from this, we have also established a great rapport with publishers, authors, and we hope to continue doing the same.

Frontlist: It's been six years since you started working at IRRO as the Secretary-General. What have you achieved till now in your tenure, and how did your presence accumulate positive opportunities in the organisation?

Pranav: Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO) is a copyright society authorised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India, to work towards the protection of published literary works.

6 years ago, I became a part of the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO) as an executive member and then became the elected 'Secretary-General' in 2018. I am honoured for this opportunity to work with such experienced members and wish to always help them do the great work that they have been doing for over 60 years now. I take pride in informing you that in 2020 - 2021, I successfully pitched the renewal of 'IRRO society registration' with the Govt. of India and presented it to Mr Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industries, Govt. of India. Another achievement is that I successfully maintain the relationship with national and international stakeholders and take care of any other associated elements.

Frontlist: People are yet oblivious to the facets of Intellectual Property Law. Could you please elaborate on some key points that define it?

Pranav: Intellectual Property is a broad definition of a group of intangible assets legally owned and protected by a company or individual from unauthorized use or use without permission. So intangible assets are non-physical assets owned by a company or individual. IP includes copyrights, patents, and trademarks owned by an organization or an individual. Intellectual property law gives innovators and creators a monetary reason to work. Copyrights and patents allow artists & inventors to stop anyone else from selling their creations. Therefore, the creators can market their work without direct competition from any other entity.

Frontlist: Our youth is coming up with amazing digital startup ideas that need government assistance. Being an entrepreneur, please share your views on how we can educate them about Intellectual Property.

Pranav: I believe the Indian government is doing a great job by facilitating startups through various programmes. The central government has benefitted 4,000+ startups in the last year, 960 crores of funding have been enabled to Startups through various schemes, and 828 crores sanctioned funds for infrastructure. In reference to educating startups about 'Intellectual Property' rights - IRRO is the answer in India. We are the sole society in India for protecting IP in literary works and even educating individuals or organisations through our digital presence. Also, we support aggressive virtual events curated for the literature industry, such as DBF 2020 & 2021, PragatiE Vichaar Literature Festival, and the upcoming World Book and Copyright Day. Through these events, we can establish the correct narrative for educating upcoming businesses, publishers, authors, and even readers about everything currently buzzing in the industry while being an efficient platform for fruitful networking. Fresh talent meets industry leaders and fellow entrepreneurs through such events, and it does boost the ecosystem of our industry.

Frontlist: You were the only individual who brought the IRRO digitally. Hence, how are you thinking to expand the growth of the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation in the future?

Pranav: I am a proud digital entrepreneur as well, and today most people spend most of their time on the internet. Therefore, we feel that any organisation or association like IRRO needs to have a strong digital presence. So we have successfully curated a world-class website and are actively creating social media collateral on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Today's world needs to be equally available digitally, and hence, we contribute a good majority of our resources to expanding digitally. The future of India is digital.

Frontlist: If we consider the music industry and the implementation of Copyright Laws within the industry, there is a huge gap contrary to the publishing industry and its Copyright Laws. How can we educate the people of the literary world about their rights?

Pranav: The Music Industry has a lot of celebrities - Javed Akhtar fought for the industry and got some amendments done to the law. I must admit we miss the star power here, though we are quite slow but are steady.

Copyright is essential to every creator in the literary world, and they have a right to protect their innovative projects. IRRO continuously and passionately makes efforts to educate professionals from the literary industry about their Intellectual Property Rights. One such initiative will be the upcoming event on 'World Book and Copyright Day' 2022, organised by IRRO. It will be a hybrid event that is open to all with back-to-back informative sessions based on Copyrights and their global societies, Intellectual Property Law, New Technological Developments that have enabled better protection against copyright infringement. The virtual part of the event will be hosted on the virtual platform, PragatiE, supported by the renowned 'International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organisation' and other supporting organisations, including the Federation of Indian Publishers, the Authors Guild of India, and the Afro-Asian Book Council. We are also proud to have 'Ajay Sahni and Associates' as the knowledge partner and Frontlist as our media partner for this event.

Frontlist: What best practices can we adopt to spread the knowledge of copyright ownership in our education system?

Pranav: Although traditional textbooks have provided students with curriculum learning, educational publishers have been at the forefront of this situation. However, it is becoming quite clear that in front of digital alternatives, textbooks may not be the most effective way to impart learning. The issue lies in the new needs of educators where they want to offer students more interactive and flexible learning while also protecting the content from free distribution and piracy.

As a member of the Federation of Indian Publishers, I believe that the transition into digital products is extremely crucial to fall in line with the future vision of new-age learning. I understand that this is a complex and sophisticated process and would possibly change the whole business model. The future of fast-evolving digital products offers a new, exciting opportunity to produce digital-only products.

This new vision of publishers doesn't have to be relegated to ebooks because, in recent years, some EdTech companies have provided schools with more than just digital textbooks. If publishers have to start matching up with the pace of EdTech, we have to start thinking about audio and video content for students that can enhance learning in classrooms and improve student learning outcomes.

Frontlist: Several legal copyright infringement cases stir up the wind in the publishing industry. After considering these cases, how does the publishing ecosystem come up with safety measures to tackle situations like these?

Pranav: There have been many litigations and lawsuits filed by different publishers/authors in India and around the world. Most cases have remained bilateral among the parties, but few were recognised as matters of public importance here in India, such as the famous Delhi University case and the ongoing SciHub/Libgen case, before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court. We at IRRO chose the path of soft diplomacy and made multiple representations before the competent authorities in the Govt. of India for certain amendments under the Copyright Act, 1957 because in both cases, the defendants in the court relied upon the reproduction of the copyrighted work under the fair-use for the research purposes.

Frontlist: What is Frontlist doing as an e-news portal in the publishing industry to educate people about Copyright Laws?

Pranav: Frontlist is an e-news portal that is aggressive in its research and news publishing process. We frequently inform the audience about copyrights through our blogs, organising talk shows with renowned individuals having in-depth knowledge about IP and Copyright Laws, discussing the challenges and the role of technology in the domain of IP. To promote the advocacy for Copyright, Frontlist Media is an exclusive partner for the event of 'World Book and Copyright Day' organised by IRRO. At Frontlist, we feel that plagiarism and photocopying is a major issue, not only in India but at a global level, and we believe it to be our mission and responsibility to inculcate the habit of developing respect for the 'right owners' in the youth of this nation, especially those operating within the literature and academic spectrum. This is a long-term vision, and we need to work hard on these goals. We also request government support in this.



ANKIT SAHNI

*Advocate, Intellectual Property
and Technology Laws*

Ankit Sahni is a Partner in Ajay Sahni & Associates' top-ranking, widely lauded intellectual property and innovation law practice. He represents clients in a diverse array of enforcement, contentious and transactional IP and technology law matters covering a variety of industries. He manages large and small IP portfolios throughout the clearance and approval process and advises clients pursuing a worldwide IP strategy.

He is retained by some of the world's largest Fortune 500 companies as counsel, to enforce and defend their IP rights before the Indian IP Office, the Intellectual Property Appellate Board, and various courts and tribunals across India.

His practice is widely recognized by the industry and media, for which he has been awarded the International Client Choice Award for Trademarks, recognized by the World Trademark Review 1000, and featured as one of Super 50 Lawyers in India by Thomson Reuters ALB. He also featured in the Forbes Legal Powerlist 2020 as one among top 100 lawyers in India.

He is the only Indian lawyer to be appointed as an Expert Member to the European Observatory on Infringement of Intellectual Property Rights, a regulatory body that functions as a policy think tank for the European Commission.

Frontlist: How do Copyright laws work when it comes to the national as well as the international level?

Ankit: In India, copyright law is codified under the Copyright Act, 1957. Right holders are entitled to enforce their rights in India in accordance with and subject to the exceptions and conditions contained under the Copyright Act. In addition to the Act, right holders also enjoy privileges and benefits under common law. The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, commonly known as the Berne Convention, is an international agreement governing copyright, first accepted at Berne, Switzerland, in 1886. 179 countries are parties to the Convention. The Berne Convention requires its parties to render (at least) the same level of protection to the works of authors of other parties to the Convention as it renders to works of its own nationals. In addition to establishing a system of non-discriminatory treatment among the parties, the Convention also requires member states to provide strict minimum standards for copyright law. A right holder who owns the copyright in particular work in India can enforce his rights in the said work in another country that is a signatory to the Convention. Such a country is required to ensure that the said person receives the same protection, benefits, and privileges under copyright law as it would grant to works belonging to its own nationals.

Frontlist: Are there Special Courts for copyright in India?

Ankit: IP infringement actions are contested within the framework of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015. In each state, at the district level, there are specialized benches that have been notified as 'Commercial Courts'. At the High Court level, there are 'Commercial Divisions' that deal with intellectual property (including copyright) disputes. Appeals against orders of the

Registrar of Copyrights and rectification petitions are also filed before the High Court. Recently, the Delhi High Court became the first High Court in India to set up a dedicated 'Intellectual Property Division' which exclusively hears matters pertaining to intellectual property. This initiative has been widely lauded as one of the most progressive steps for intellectual property enforcement in recent times.

Frontlist: Is there any 'Board of Advisers' on copyright matters?

Ankit: There is no provision of any 'Board of Advisers' on copyright matters under the current legislative framework.

Frontlist: What are the moral rights of the author of any work?

Ankit: Moral rights of an author include the right of attribution, which means the author has the right to be identified as the creator of a work. It also includes the right to publish work anonymously (without attribution) or pseudonymously (under a pseudonym). It further covers the right of an author to preserve the integrity of his work and to prevent distortion, mutilation, or unauthorized alteration of his work. The said rights are mentioned under Section 57 of the Indian Copyright Act and Article 6bis of the Berne Convention.

Frontlist: Can you enlighten us about the remedies available to a right holder against Infringement of Copyright?

Ankit: A right holder is entitled to file a suit for infringement, seeking injunction, damages, delivery or destruction of infringing material and other reliefs. A right holder can also file a complaint regarding infringement with the police or the magistrate. The police, under section 64 of the Copyright Act, has the power to seize infringing copies.

Frontlist: What are the rights with regards to a piece of writing-Literary work?

Ankit: Copyright vests in original literary works. Section 14 defines 'copyright' as the exclusive right to do or authorise the doing of any of the following acts in respect of a work: to reproduce the work in any material form including the storing of it in any medium by electronic means; to issue copies of the work to the public not being copies already in circulation; to perform the work in public, or communicate it to the public; to make any cinematograph film or sound recording in respect of the work; to make any translation of the work; and to make any adaptation of the work.

Frontlist: Is it a criminal offense to break the Copyright Law?

Ankit: Infringement of copyright is an offence. Section 63 of the Copyright Act provides for imprisonment upto 2 years, and fine upto Rs. 200,000. Section 63A provides for enhanced penalties on second and subsequent convictions.



Contact us for Event Collaborations

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PRAGYA CHATURVEDI

*Senior Intellectual Property
Advisor, British High
Commission, New Delhi*

Pragya Chaturvedi has been working in close collaboration with the Government of India to deliver the work plan under the MoU executed between the Office of CGPDTM, India, and the UK IPO, with the shared objective of strengthening the IP ecosystem in India, and enhancing Ease of Doing Business (EoDB). Assisting UK businesses with local IP issues in India. Collaboratively working with various government entities on raising IP awareness. Engaging and advising regional HMG colleagues to implement projects per the IPO's objectives. Supporting the DIT team on the ongoing FTA negotiations.

Frontlist: There is a prevailing notion that people should not pay for using books and other material that is available online. However, in many cases, it may amount to copyright infringement. What are your views on dealing with this issue?

Pragya: I have indeed come across this notion several times. The common feeling is that for anything available on the internet, no permissions are required, and no payment needs to be made to the copyright owner since it is already on the internet. However, that is not always true and will always depend on the nature of the content. If the content is still under copyright, you need permission from the copyright owner to use the content and may also need to make payments for using that content unless the use falls under any of the fair-dealing or other exceptions. More

awareness about the rights of copyright owners and permitted fair use can address this issue to some extent.

Frontlist: While digital technology has made it easier to share and disseminate content, there are also challenges such as increased piracy and infringement. How can we manage this situation?

Pragya: In the digital context, one major issue is that the cost of copying is almost close to zero, and the availability of one unauthorised copy can hamper the economic rights of copyright owners. Criminal enforcement can also be difficult since the source of pirated content might come from a different jurisdiction where local laws do not apply. Even after initial enforcement, mirror pirated sites with the same pirated content can appear again. In recent times, dynamic injunctions have been a helpful tool to deal with such infringements.

There are also some challenges that copyright owners face in the context of online service providers and intermediaries' obligations to tackle copyright piracy on their platforms. All concerned stakeholders need to work together to understand their roles and responsibilities in dealing with copyright infringement.

Frontlist: With your experience in this field, can you please share some success stories in the Enforcement of Intellectual Property?

Pragya: The Telangana IP Crime Unit (TIPCU) and the Maharashtra Digital Cyber Crime Unit (MCDCU), in close collaboration with government bodies, have been proactively working on dealing with IP crime and piracy, including suspension of infringing websites. Industry bodies in India have also been very active in the enforcement arena, with some impressive initiatives. At the IPO, we are very happy to have partnered with them on several occasions to support their efforts to ensure more effective enforcement.

Frontlist: What has been your experience working with UK publishing industry stakeholders, and do they have any common issues with the Indian publishing industry?

Pragya: Getting fair value for published works has always been a challenge, particularly in the academic publishing space. In my experience working with UK and Indian stakeholders in the publishing industry, the fair dealing exception in the Indian copyright law has been a key issue for them. Also, in the digital context, when pirated educational content is available online, it sometimes becomes difficult to negotiate with entities in the education sector to purchase a licence. It can cause economic harm, which may be irreparable from the perspective of publishers.

Frontlist: Is there a way to make it easier to buy and licence content, and will that help to eliminate copyright issues?

Pragya: In a price-sensitive market like India, it is necessary to evolve licensing and business models that respond to local markets. Collective management organisations play a vital role in ensuring this. Ensuring the diversity of CMOs in the market will help in ensuring more effective licensing and return on investment.

Frontlist: Does the existing copyright regime sufficiently address the issues posed by digital technologies?

Pragya: India's Copyright Act does set the right framework for enforcement in the digital context, with provisions on Technological Protection Measures (TPM) and Rights Management Information (RMI). However, enforcement can sometimes be difficult and expensive, particularly for smaller businesses. Thus, the role of collective management societies is the key to ensuring that copyright owners receive fair value for their works.



SAHIL GUPTA

Director, V&S Publishers

Sahil Gupta is an entrepreneur and an accomplished core Book Publishing Professional with over 12 years of experience as the Director and Founder at V&S Publishers – one of the leading general and academic Indie Book Publishing Houses in India. He is also a Functional Domain Consultant in the Educational and Publishing Space.

As a B.Tech & MBA degree-holder, he possesses demonstrated experience in content management, book publishing, ebooks, digital marketing, and business development. His track record of cost optimisation, which includes cost-benefit analysis and process streamlining coupled with his innovative plans relevant to branding, with a special focus on P&L statement, has been exemplary. His passion is Publishing Books and crafting impactful corporate communications strategies that build brand awareness and creates change.

On a personal front, he appreciates poetry & philosophy and loves to travel. His sphere of interest includes music, movies, and people. A food enthusiast and a critic, he strongly believes in the idea of 'Live & Let Live'. His mantra of life is 'Expectation is the Root Cause of Pain'.

Frontlist: According to you, what is the condition of Indian Publishing: Today vs Tomorrow?

Sahil: So I think I would like to break this question into two parts. The publishing industry today is at the cusp of an ed-tech revolution. When we look back 30 years from now, at the end of the 80s, it was touted as the revolution for the manufacturing industries, with a lot of industries coming up. At the turn of the century, it was a revolution for the IT sector, whereas, post the financial crisis of 2007, 2008, and 2009, it was a revolution for finance and fintech as an environment. And what this pandemic has done is just expedited everything in terms of publishing and how important technology is, and the advent of new companies, like Byju's and Vedantu, Aakash coming to the fore. As far as today's scenario is concerned, no doubt, like any other industry, we also face a lot of challenges. The primary challenges are concerning distribution. I think distribution remains very, very fragmented. The availability of trained personnel, and the fact that you don't see a lot of new people, students from the new generations, looking at publishing as an opportunity and as a thriving career, I think that's a concerning factor for the industry. Concerns like lack of awareness about agendas like copyright issues, legalities of the content. Obviously, no doubt publishing has been facing stiff competition with other industries, be it media or OTT platforms, so definitely it has a lot of challenges.

What the pandemic has shown us for the last two years is that people do read books. And even in a country like India, despite facing so many challenges and all the shops being shut down, I think a lot of the sales were made, especially when I talk about trade books or other sales shipping online. I believe E-commerce has opened a new paradigm and has opened new opportunities for publishers. So I think while there are a lot of challenges, publishing has evolved considerably in the last few years. When I talk about the publishing of tomorrow, I think the amalgamation of tech with publishing will happen more and more. I think publishers who understand how their content can be presented in different forms would go a long way. And the quality content would definitely be the winner. And I think over the last few decades, while we have seen that publishing was governed by more and more marketing, I personally feel that it will again be driven by the editorials over the next decade, or so, with the content being at the heart of the things. I think technology companies, education companies, and publishers all have to collaborate to bring a solution to the end customer which is more holistic in nature. So I think, publisher and book publishing will not just be concise to book publishing in the physical format, but things like ebooks, audiobooks, and amalgamated forms of content delivering would evolve, and that is where we as the Indian book publishing industry and perhaps the entire world, is heading towards a more amalgamated and holistic publishing scenario and delivery of content for the end customer.

Frontlist: As the Director of V&S Publishers, what are some of the actions taken by your publishing house to improve the lack of awareness against copyrighting?

Sahil: So one thing you have to understand is that while we are a young publishing house, we have a standing of more than 70 years. So we understand what is the relevance of copyright and how important that is, and how important the agreements are. And how important it is for authors to be aware of copyright. So, this is something that has been ingested to us in the way we have been brought up. So, one thing that we very particularly do is we put everything in writing, we have a contract, which is very, very exhaustive in nature, it spans over 17 pages, we make sure that, at the time of just starting the conversation with the author and I'm not talking about him signing the agreement, at the time of starting the conversation with the author, we are very clear

about what rights the author will hold, what rights the author will not hold, what will be the terms and conditions, what will be the revenue splits like tomorrow if we have the rights of a particular product, when we sell his translation rights for XYZ company, what will be the profit share and how will that be calculated. So, it is not just that the author is made aware, but I think everything is being very clearly put down in the agreement, and we make sure that the author is aware of it. I think that is very important.

The other thing which I, on a personal front, have been doing is during World Copyright Day, I have spoken previously even on Doordarshan on the relevance of copyright and how important it is. So, whenever we, as a company, try to get the word out there, we do that, we make sure that we explicitly mention that the contents of each of our books are copyrighted, and they cannot be just copied and pasted. And there has been a case once where some content of ours was used in a magazine, and while the due credit was given, correct permissions were not seen, and that is when we objected to the magazine we asked them to pull it down. So I think these are the important things. And, as a company, we are making sure that the author is very aware, and even aware with regard to the media, you know, communicating through various forums. Like what I'm doing right now is something that I, and the company, V&S Publishers, take very seriously.

Frontlist: In today's scenario, what steps should be taken by the publishers regarding free access to the content?

Sahil: In a country like ours, we are in a knowledge economy time. So, knowledge is money. There has to be a balance between how much content is being accessed freely, and how it has been monetised. So, I'll explain it very clearly. There are two things - while we understand that there is a school of thought that the content needs to be made available freely to anybody and everybody who wishes to consume it. And you see a lot of content these days being available on the internet on Google and other platforms freely. So, you have to understand the problem of free content. See anybody these days is democratised to create whatever content they wish to write. They can then upload it through blogs, put it on YouTube, put it on various forums, and the content is out there for people to consume. I think the biggest challenge is who verifies that content? I feel there is a need for a publisher because whoever creates the content, there has to be some person who verifies it. If everybody starts just writing the content and putting it out there on the internet, who's to say what is verified and what is not? And you don't know who is consuming the content, whether that person has the kind of understanding to verify that content when he consumes it. As they say, half knowledge is not good, right? So I think the availability of content for the growth of the industry, for the growth of the nation, the growth of the economy is very, very important. And obviously, that means that we make as much content as available freely. Content creation is not easy, and it is not cheap.

There is a lot of effort that goes into creating content that is very authentic, verified, and research-oriented. I think if we make that content available freely and from a moral high ground, it feels like the right option. There has to be a certain sense of commercial viability. So as publishers, we are constantly exploring ways to do that. Sometimes generating revenue by sponsorships, ads, and views is an option. But I think there has to be a certain balance. See, even if you talk about something like an OTT platform industry, right? You do have a lot of free content, but there is a lot of premium content, that you have to pay for. Right? So I am personally not against having free content. But I think over the next few years, a model will evolve, where we'll have a balance of free content, right, along with content, which needs to be paid for. What publishers need to do more and more, as the content is digitally available, is that we need ebooks in the form of YouTube,

because I think that increases the availability and reach of the content. Then you have various companies which often push your content, a portion of the content is being shown for display as free, whether it is through Kindle look inside other features with other prominent platforms offer. But I think there has to be a model which is commercially viable for content creators- be it publisher, authors, which is user-friendly and doesn't hurt the pockets of consumers. I think that model is evolving. We have different subscription models. We have different ad revenue models. So that's a work in progress, and it is happening more and more.

Frontlist: How would you explain the Publishers' related rights?

Sahil: Yes, I did mention this briefly in one of my other answers that, as technology is evolving, more and more rights would come into the picture, 20 years back, or probably 30 or 40 years back, when an author used to write a script, it was a handwritten work that he used to bring to the publisher and publishers used to tell him that okay, this is the copy, this is the small agreement, and we retain the copyrights. So you know, when technology entered, and those agreements never talked about future rights or publisher rights, those agreements probably then did not talk about having something like an e-book in place. So because it was not heard of, now who has those rights? We are talking about publishers' rights. So, you got to understand that the manuscript which a publisher acquires, or when he signs a particular author, has a lot many applications in today's world, in comparison to what it was 10 years ago. So when you talk about publishers' rights, you talk about publishers' rights to sell, obviously, to commercialise, monetise, edit, proofread, typeset layout and design the manuscript. That is your basic right as a publisher when you sign a manuscript. I think the second right is, and I think there's more applicable in the literary world is something like an abridged version. So, if somebody has written a manuscript, which is 500 pages, and tomorrow the publisher wants to have a kind of an abridged version of it or a concise version of it, and this will become more and more popular in the coming times with people consuming smaller packets of content, they want to read less, and consume more information. So I think you will start having those capsule books in abridged editions more and more. It is already very popular with English classics. So, that's another publishers' right. It is only a function of who retains those rights, whether it is with the author or the publisher - publisher obviously has the right to manipulate the prices. And with paper prices going up and various other costs, newer costs are coming into the foray.

So there is a right to price the book, the right to have the book in different formats, and not just paperback or hardcover. But what about digital rights? And, digital rights are a whole other ballgame. The rights to take your book in an ebook format, whether, it's an interactive ebook format, or to take the book into an audiobook format, so you're talking about audio rights. And then something very interesting is publishers' rights, if a book is natively published in Hindi, so nobody has the rights for English. So publishers' rights regarding different languages is an interesting part. Generally, as a publishing house, if we send any contracts, we make sure we tell the publisher that we would like to have the publishing rights for the different language translation as well between India and abroad because that gives us and the author more opportunities. And once we know that, we will have those rights, and we can sell those rights. It opens a whole new revenue stream for the publisher or the author.

Frontlist: According to you, what are some of the common infringements of copyrights?

Sahil: I think one of the most common infringements of copyright

is that people feel that they can just buy the book, copy-paste the content wherever they want, without giving any due credit to the book or the author. And then for that matter, even monetize that. I think that is a very very clear infringement and very strict, and very bad infringement of copyright. And the worst part is, nobody is aware of it. If I am a customer, if I buy a book from the market, right as long as I'm using it for my own personal use, it is fine. There is a clause, a modified clause in the copyright arrangement, which mentioned that for the purpose of education, a certain portion of the Book, the entire book could be used, right. But that does not mean that you know, you can just pick in, pick a few chapters, like half a book, given this copy, paste half a book, use it, add or reduce some content to it, and then you know, just copy paste as it is on your blog or on your forearm or, and then start monetizing your blog. So I think that is something which is strictly not allowed. And that is a form of copyright infringement, which a lot of people do with a lot of authors. A lot of youngsters do those who are into writing blogging, this and that. The fact is that if there is a book out there, and it is a copyrighted content, it is not an open domain, you are not allowed to use its content beyond a certain percentage, unless and until you give new credit, or you seek permissions in writing from the copyright holder, be the author or the publisher, so you are not allowed to do something like book reading or you're reading the entire book, or you're putting the entire book out there on the internet, and then you decide to monetize your channel or commercialize it, I don't think you can do see anything.

In India, if somebody is the creator, the law automatically gives him the copyright to his content. You need not go to the copyright office and get copyrighted particularly. So as a creator, if you have written the book, you are the copyright holder of that product. The most common form of copyright infringement is that people just use, copy-paste and monetise and commercialise whatever content they see, without seeking any permissions, without doing any due diligence, and without even identifying whether that content is available. A lot of that is attributed to content being readily available in different formats, be it an e-book. I think there is a certain responsibility that lies even with forums and online companies who use a lot of such content on their forums for providing information that is often picked up as it is from the books because it is very difficult for any publisher to track this. I, as a publisher, have published more than 1000 books. It's not possible for me to constantly keep a track of who is making what content of mine from where and where he is displayed more. So there has to be a moral responsibility that all the citizens of our country need to have. And I think simply copy-pasting the content and using it online or offline for your commercial benefits is one of the most common mediums of copyright infringements, and it needs to be talked about more and more.

Frontlist: What steps should be taken by the publishing industry concerning book piracy?

Sahil: We, as publishers, are already doing a lot of things to ensure that piracy does not happen. And 'piracy' could be a lot of 'France', piracy is a big term. Piracy happens when your book becomes photocopied and is being made available. It happens when your book is leaked on various platforms, like Torrents, Telegram and WhatsApp. There is another form of piracy, which people don't talk about very often, that is when you have published a book and some other guy, or some other author or publisher, rips off your book, copy-pastes it, types it, and publishes the book in his name, and then sells it with a different name. And it is almost impossible to track that. So I think it's very difficult to stop piracy. But as a publisher, we are doing a lot of things. I think holograms is one thing that sometimes does help. It adds another factor to it, another layer of authentication. So we do it for some of our top-selling titles, where we put a hologram and make sure that

people only buy the books with holograms. So that becomes a little difficult to pirate. The second thing is a lot of publishers, and mostly academic publishers, have a separate cell.

As S. Chand Publishers have an anti-piracy cell where they even conduct raids, and they're very strict about somebody pirating their books or printing duplicate books and selling them.

I think there have been recent amendments. And the Federation of Indian Publishers has been very proactive in taking those steps along with IRRO. See, the government also acknowledges that piracy doesn't work. Talking about piracy, sometimes people are unaware that they are infringing copyright. They don't understand that this is something they do and it's piracy. You know you can just copy-paste content from a source and give them no credit, and then commercialise it and monetise it, and that has worked with them. As publishers, we make sure that we spread a lot of awareness, whether it is through our authors, or our editors, to our customers. I think publishers have been very vocal about having their books moving freely on platforms like Telegram, and I know publishers who have approached these people and even approached group admins, Telegram Management people and other such platform management's, asking them to take those things down. So all these things are being constantly done. And obviously, there is more that needs to be done. It needs to be done more proactively and practically on a lower front. Like I think the Indian publishers, the smaller publishers need to be a little more watchful and more particular about these things. And once it penetrates down to smaller cities and smaller publishers more and more, I think there'll be a better understanding, and it would help stop piracy in the long run.



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PVLF EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022: AWARDS NIGHT



PVLF Excellence Awards 2022, organised by Frontlist Media held with much fanfare. Due to the unfortunate long pause because of the lockdown, Frontlist was unable to hold the physical event for the PVLF Excellence Awards in January. However, finally the awards ceremony and winners felicitation took place on March 9th 2022. The event was honoured and inaugurated by our Chief Guest, Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State For External Affairs & Education.

PVLF Excellence Awards 2022 was a part of PVLF 2022 that received industry-wide support from publishers such as WonderHouse Publishing, Repro India, FingerPrints Publishing, Disha Publications, Dreamland Children Books, Prints Publications, LiFi Publications, Solh Wellness, BuyBooksIndia, and Advit Toys joining as sponsors. All the top publishers around the country had participated with their books, inviting their readers to vote for them and the coveted PVLF Excellence Awards.

The physical event of the PVLF Excellence Awards was a spectacular and successful Awards Night. It commenced at 6 pm at Hotel Claridges, Delhi. Renowned personalities across the publishing industries graced the event with their presence.

Here is a list of awards and the winners:

WINNERS of PVLF Author Excellence Awards:



Author Name: Ashraf Karayath
Category: Best Debut Fiction



Author Name: K. Vijayakarthekeyan
Category: Best Fiction



Author Name: Shalini Chhabra Jain
Category: Best Poetry



Author Name: Sujata Parashar
Category: Best Non-Fiction



Author Name: Vikramjit Singh Rooprai
Category: Best Debut Non-Fiction



**WINNERS of PVLF People's Choice Publisher Awards
Trade (Non-Academic) Publisher**



Publisher Name: Prakash Books India (P) Ltd
(First Prize)



Publisher Name: Manjul Publishing House
(Second Prize)



Publisher Name: Rupa Publications
(Third Prize)

WINNERS of PVLf People's Choice Publisher Awards
Top Indian Children Publisher



Publisher Name: Wonder House Books
(First Prize)



Publisher Name: Dreamland Publications
(Second Prize)



Publisher Name: Om Books International
(Third Prize)

WINNERS of PVLf People's Choice Publisher Awards
Top Indian Academic Publisher



Publisher Name: Arihant Publishers
(First Prize)



Publisher Name: Disha Publication
(Second Prize)



Publisher Name: S Chand & Company Ltd
(Third Prize)

WINNERS of PVLf Reader's Choice Book Awards



Book Name: Indian Polity
Author Name: M. Laxmikanth
Publisher Name: McGraw Hill Education
Category: Platinum

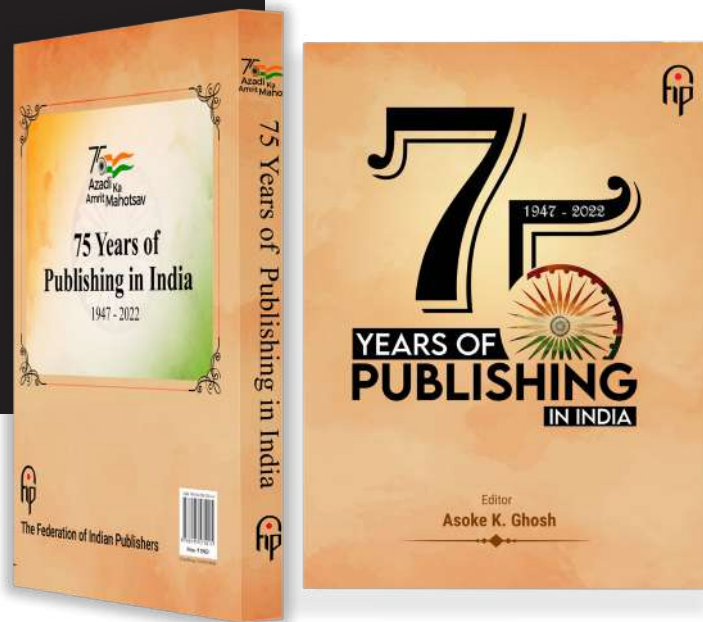


Book Name: Oxford Student Atlas for India
Author Name: Oxford Editorial Board
Publisher Name: Oxford University Press
Category: Gold



Book Name: Raavan: Enemy of Aryavarta
Author Name: Amish Tripathi
Publisher Name: Westland Publications Ltd
Category: Silver

Book Cover Launch: FIP 75 Years of Publishing In India



The Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) has celebrated the 75th anniversary of Indian independence (Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav). To commemorate the monumental occasion, FIP has brought out a book on 75 years of book publishing in India (1947-2022), under the guidance and mentorship of Shri Asoke K Ghosh, President Emeritus of the FIP.

The FIP had earlier published books on the completion of 60 (1947-2007) and 50 (1947-1997) years of book publishing in India, respectively.

The Book Cover is designed by Frontlist.

We, at Frontlist, are immensely honoured to get the opportunity to design the FIP Book Cover.



Report Cover Launch: Indian Book Market Report 2022



Nielsen Bookdata collaborated with FIP to produce the much-awaited second edition of the Nielsen India Book Market Report 2022.

This collaboration brings together two critical players, and their alliance assures to deliver a report that shows a business-critical analysis of the market to inform and assist the stakeholders of the Indian Publishing Industry.

The Report Cover is designed by Frontlist. We had a good working experience with Nielsen Bookdata and the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP).



MEDIA COVERAGE BY FRONTLIST MEDIA:

Sahitya Akademi “Festival of Letters” 2022



साहित्य अकादेमी



Sahityotsav, the 'Festival of Letters' of Sahitya Akademi, India's most inclusive literature festival, was held from March 10 to March 15, 2022, in New Delhi. 'Festival of Letters 2022' was a part of the celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence. The events covered one or the other theme on Independence or Independence movement. At the festival, there was a special corner to display the books related to India's Freedom Movement and other materials relevant to the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. It took place at the Rabindra Bhawan Lawns, Kamani Auditorium and the Akademi Auditorium.

The festival commenced with the inauguration of the Akademi Exhibition by Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Culture along with Dr. K.S Rao, Secretary Sahitya Akademi on March 10. The exhibition showcased the Akademi's achievements and seminal events held in the previous year. On the same day, 26 young writers representing 24 Indian languages recognised by Akademi participated in the event, 'The Rise of Young India'. Moreover, reputed publishers and authors representing different Indian languages participated in the 'Panel Discussion on Publishing in Indian Languages'.

'Festival of Letters' was inclusive and diverse as it included progressive sessions and highlighted marginalized communities like Transgender Community. A whole session was dedicated to the Transgender community, and Trans poets delivered speeches and recited powerfully and moving poems.

The main highlight of the 5th day at the festival was a session by Dr Sashi Tharoor. His session was at 6 PM, where he delivered a lecture on his debut novel, 'The Great Indian Novel'. The session was enlightening, and he immaculately delivered a speech on his novel.

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MEDIA COVERAGE BY FRONTLIST MEDIA:

Oxford BookStore Book Cover Prize



Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize, instituted in March 2015 by the Oxford Bookstore, has gained traction as the most esteemed award in the book cover design industry. It is a first-of-its-kind award for excellence in book design, an initiative by the iconic bookstore to recognize and encourage the extraordinary work of designers, illustrators, and publishers across India.

Every year Oxford Bookstore announces the award's shortlist and winner. This year was its 7th edition of the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize. Entries for this year's award were opened in September 2021. On 24 March 2022, they announced the winner of the prize. Visual artist Ishan Khosla was awarded the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize 2022 for designing the cover of 'Kintsugi: A Novel'. Khosla was felicitated with a trophy and Rs 1 lakh cash prize at the India Habitat Centre here by the jury, which included Writer and MP Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Art Historian Dr. Alka Pande, Author Dr. Kunal Basu, and Director of Apeejay Surendra Group, Ms. Priti Paul. The guest juror was Mr. Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens, Director of the French Institute in India.

'Kintsugi' is an astonishing book cover. Intricately illustrated, it conveys the superior craft of the creator and draws one's eyes into the heart of the book.

In addition to the winning book cover, three more designers were honored with Special Jury Awards in appreciation of their remarkable command of graphics and visual narrative. These designers are Maithili Doshi for 'Turmeric Nation' published by Speaking Tiger; Shashi Bhushan Prasad for 'The Maharaja of Jodhpur's Guns' published by Niyogi Books and Gavin Morris for 'Estuary' published by Eka.

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PragatiE Vichaar Poetry Festival 2022



We, Frontlist Media, organised PragatiE Vichaar Poetry Festival on the occasion of World Poetry Day, i.e., 21st March 2022.

In this Festival, we conducted the Poetry sessions based on Poetry themes such as Lyric Poetry, Narrative Poetry and Dramatic Poetry in English, Hindi and Urdu Languages.

Numerous renowned poets participated in the poetry sessions where they read their poems and discussed the facets of Poetry Literature. Each session reflected emotions, society, comedy, and journey that evoked us to the core and reignited our affection towards poetry.

We also ran the Poetry Contest and the winners got the opportunity to get published in a Poetry Anthology with Prints Publications.

Have a glance over the Poetry Session Schedule Below:

Session Type	Session Theme	Session Topics	Poetry Speakers
Narrative Poetry	Journey, Spiritual	Everyone can be a poet in the journey of life!	Abhay K Sucharita Parija Hema Myer Sood Amit Majmudar
Lyric Poetry	Emotions	The spontaneous overflow of feelings	C P Surendran Sudeep Sen Kala Ramesh
Lyric Poetry	Patriotic (hindi)	‘देशमक्ति क्यों महत्त्वपूर्ण है?’	Kamal Kishore Rajput Irfan Tarique Khan
Lyric Poetry	Hindi - emotions	भावनाओं का सहज अतिप्रवाह’	Anamika Joshi Rekha Mehra Deepali Aggarwal
Lyric Poetry	Perspective	Are we slaves of our emotions?	Aftab Yusuf Shaikh Damayanti Barua Singh Gayatri Chawla
Lyric Poetry	Society	Let me write my own destiny	Neil Daswani Menka Shivdasani Archana Mirajkar Naina Kataria
Lyric Poetry	Society/Emotions	The sanity of society is a balance of a thousand insanities’ - What is your opinion?	Nishi Chawla Neelam Saxena Chandra Ritvika Sharma
Dramatic Poetry	Satire/ Comedy	I am not kidding!	Kumar Gautam Sidhartha Mallya Shalini Chhabra Jain
Lyric Poetry	Society/Emotions	“Feelings are something you have; not something you are.” Do you agree?	Mahua Sen Seema Jain

List of Poetry Contest Winners

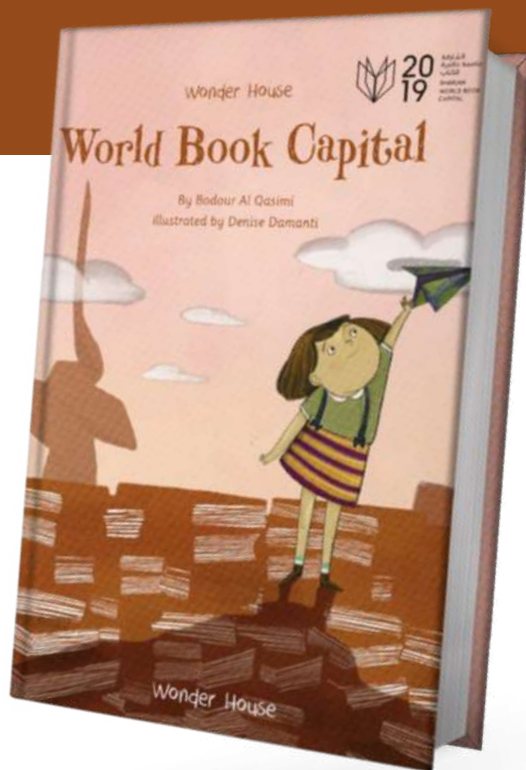
S NO.	WINNER'S NAME	POEM	LANGUAGE
1	Mehak Varun	Shadow	ENGLISH
2	THE DS	Tired shoulders- an ode to my father	ENGLISH
3	Dwarikanath Pandey	जगमग जगमग ज्योति जले और भागे तम का रोर	HINDI
4	Vivek Agarwal "Avi"	आव्हान	HINDI
5	Dr. B.C. Dwibedy	To Whom Is Due All My Worship	ENGLISH
6	Aju Mukhopadhyay	The Structural Violence	ENGLISH
7	Byomkesh Dwivedy	The War Zone	ENGLISH
8	Dhanya S Nambiar	The Blue of the Sky	ENGLISH
8	Dhanya S Nambiar	The Blue of the Sky	ENGLISH
9	Rajamouly Katta	Time	ENGLISH
10	Suparna Ghosh	The Dance of the Goddess	ENGLISH
11	HS BHATIA	Realizing Pain	ENGLISH
12	HS BHATIA	Tribute to an unknown	ENGLISH
13	Priyanka Nain	एक ख्याल	HINDI
14	Dr.Suresh Pande	The Little Warmth	ENGLISH
15	Prof. Sagar Mal Gupta	Helplessness	ENGLISH
16	Maria Netto	Where I lived	ENGLISH
17	R RADHIKA	A Mother's Advice To Her Son On His Marriage	ENGLISH
18	Dr. K. Balachandran	Floating Chennai	ENGLISH
19	Rachna Saran	स्पर्श	HINDI
20	शोभा निमित्त	Ghazal 2	HINDI
21	Shalini Chhabra Jain	THE WORSE VERSES	ENGLISH
22	D.C CHAMBIAL	Lift the Marooned Man	ENGLISH

EXCLUSIVE STORY:

Soft Book launch by Wonder House Books at Bologna Children's Book Fair of 'World Book Capital' (Indian Edition) by Bodour Al Qasimi Illustrated by Denise Damanti.

About the Book:

Every year, UNESCO grants one city the title of 'The World Book Capital' from 23rd April - 'UNESCO World Book Day' - until 22nd April of the following year. During this year, the selected city undertakes to organize several activities and events related to books, reading, and literature. This is implemented through a program that aims at raising awareness about literacy and reading issues, as well as the significance of libraries and book shops, and at highlighting the overall benefits of lively book culture.



BODOUR AL QASIMI:

"**World Book Capital** is a book about the beauty of imagination and the richness of learning. It invites children around the world to imagine cities in which books, reading, and knowledge are everywhere. It is designed to trigger their curiosity about living in such cities and to learn more about the cities which have previously been crowned as the World Book Capital.

I authored this book to promote a love of books and literacy in children and to celebrate reading as a powerful medium in reinforcing our interconnectedness and in building bridges of understanding and mutual respect."

Views shared by Prashant Pathak and Gaurav Sabharwal from Wonder House Books on the book launch at Bologna Book Fair of 'World Book Capital' (Indian Edition) authored by Ms Bodour Al Qasimi and illustrated by Denise Damanti.



PRASHANT PATHAK:

"I came across to 'World Book Capital' Book when I was attending the Sharjah Book Fair. This book entails the significance of literature and passion for reading. The whole idea of the book got me thinking about how we Indians are lacking when it comes to promoting the reading culture, and we should publish books like this in our country. I reached out to Kalimat Publishing to hold onto the rights deals. That's how we started to bring 'World Book Capital' to our country."

GAURAV SABHARWAL:

Today, we are on the verge of publishing the 'World Book Capital' book. We successfully did the book launch at the Bologna Book Fair. The book will be out soon in May or June in India. It will be available on pre-order at Amazon. As Prashant said, this book aims to educate children. It will help us to explore different literature around the world. It's our mission to search for more and more books and events that promote the uniqueness of different cultures and augment wisdom. We are immensely proud to launch this book in India.



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AUTHOR INTERVIEWS



"The Legend of Kuldhara"

Malathi Ramachandran

Malathi Ramachandran has a Master's in Mass Communication and has had many short stories published in magazines and anthologies, two of which have won prizes in the British Council short fiction contests. She is the author of four novels, *The Wheel Turned* (2010), *Edge Of All The Light* (2013), *The Legend of Kuldhara* (2017), and *Mandu* (2020), the last two titles in the genre of historical fiction. An avid reader, amateur artist, and an ardent itinerant, she has travelled widely and loves observing people of different cultures. Her plots and characters are often inspired by her rich and varied experiences. Malathi conducts creative writing workshops for adults and children under the brand name 'Melting Pot'.

Frontlist: You conduct creative writing workshops for adults and children under the brand name, 'Melting Pot'. Share something about it.

Malathi: I was first approached by some of my readers in the community where I live, asking me if I could advise their children on developing writing skills. I realised that while our curriculum has plenty of scope for knowledge-based rote learning, there is little or no emphasis on creative thinking and expression.

I personally believe that today's children can solve complex math problems but not simple everyday challenges; they can write a factual essay but not spin an original tale; and they are encouraged to reproduce verbatim from textbooks, instead of creating something fresh, something new. The ability to think out of the box needs to be cultivated as early as possible.

This is where my concept of creative writing workshops for children was born. Through guided mind exercises, concept generation, writing techniques and finding one's voice, children from ages ten to sixteen are encouraged to write original essays, stories, poems and skits, then read them out to their peers.

For adults, I restrict myself to Fiction Writing workshops where

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we practise the process of creating a story idea, plot, characters, dialogues and title.

Frontlist: How did you get the inspiration of writing about the village of Kuldhara?

Malathi: Most of my fiction writing ideas spring from my travel experiences and my love for history and legend. The Legend of Kuldhara is based on a story that lies buried in the ruins of a village in the Rajasthan desert. When I visited this place, I was struck by the fact that this village along with eighty-three other villages of the Paliwal community, had been abandoned overnight 200 years ago. Legend says that all the Paliwal Brahmins left their homes as one to save the honour of a beautiful maiden, the chieftain's daughter. I was fascinated by this story and wanted to imagine and explore the village life, the people, their relationships, and their emotions through a work of fiction. That is how I came to write 'The Legend of Kuldhara'.

Frontlist: The synopsis of the book is very fascinating and unique in its own nature. How did you create this plot on the flimsy facts available to you?

Malathi: If you google Kuldhara, you will get only two lines of history, no matter how much you search. Facts state that hundreds of prosperous Paliwal Brahmins abandoned their villages overnight to escape the Diwan of Jaisalmer, Saalim Singh, who wanted the chieftain's daughter to be sent to him. That's all. History has no answers to our questions: Where did they go? How were they never found again? What happened to the girl?

I decided to start my story where history has no more answers. So I built a plot and subplots to trace the story of the villagers, of the girl and of Saalim Singh and his private life. Even as I created characters and scenarios, I stayed true to the aura of nineteenth century Rajasthan and factually correct to the history of Jaisalmer and its rulers. This involved intensive research and a seamless blending of facts and fiction.

Frontlist: Share your favourite chapters from the book and a chapter close to your heart.

Malathi: The chapter I enjoyed writing the most is the one where I introduce the folk singer of Jaisalmer. He is 'ageless...dressed in a yellowing dhoti... shaggy grey locks lowered over his ravanhatha'. He is not just a musician and balladeer but also a clairvoyant and a soothsayer.

I brought him into the story as much to create a mystic element as to serve the role of a Greek chorus, i.e., someone who comments on events, knows the past, and predicts the future.

Instead of directly narrating the story of how the Paliwal Brahmins had come to be, I decided to use this literary tool instead. The folk singer tells the story and then predicts the future of the Paliwals. Other chapters I enjoyed writing are the ones where Parvati and Pari take their destinies into their own hands because this is about the strength of women, even in the most patriarchal times.

Frontlist: This book is historical fiction. Are you interested in

exploring other genres also?

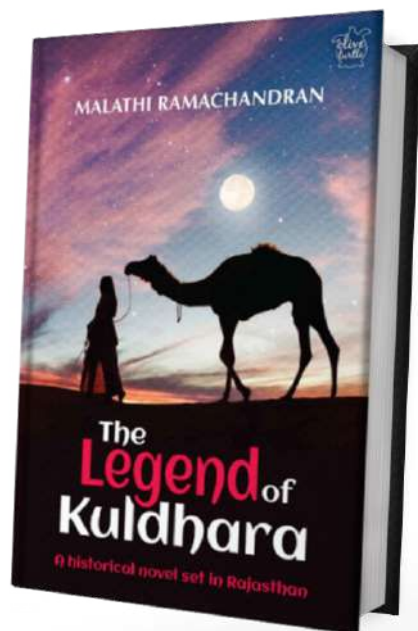
Malathi: When I first started writing fiction, I started with short stories and then wrote my first full-length fiction (*The Wheel Turned*), which was a love story set against the backdrop of military action in the North East in 1962. Then I tried my hand at a romantic thriller (*Edge of all the Light*). Meanwhile, my travels all over the country became forays into exciting remnants of the past. The historical places I visited revealed their secrets and stories, and I was inspired to recreate them through my works. Historical fiction as a genre excites me because it combines two of my passions - history, and writing. When I say history, I don't mean the dry facts and dates taught in school. History to me is the people who lived centuries back, their clothes, their pastimes, their culture, and their lives under their rulers, whether during strife or in peacetime. Monuments and ruins are not just brick and stone - they still carry the echoes of voices, laughter, music, and tears.

Writing historical fiction is very satisfying, and I think I will continue with this genre as long as there are stories to tell.

Frontlist: As you like exploring places and meeting new people, would you like to share your experiences with us?

Malathi: I have been a traveller for the last twenty-five years, both within the country and outside. We have visited over a hundred destinations around the world and seen natural wonders, man-made wonders, and UNESCO world heritage sights, from the Pyramids of Egypt to the Great Wall of China and from the Great Barrier Reef in Australia to Machu Pichu in Peru.... the list is long! Every experience has shaped my perception of the world and my ideas of people. Meeting fellow travellers, guides, local women with children and old people, and hearing stories from the past has shown me that no matter in which country people live, no matter in which century they lived, all human beings are the same inside. How we love, how we dream, and how we emote are always the same.

This insight has helped me to write historical fiction by reaching across the centuries and reliving the lives of my characters and recreating their experiences.



“English, Quo Vadis”

Prof. A K Ghosh

A widely published writer, Professor A K Ghosh, has been writing on topics related to education, language, and literature in leading national dailies and journals for more than 25 years. More importantly, he is concerned with the plight of English teaching in India and has explored innovative methods for proper teaching of the English language at the school level and the creative part of it at the tertiary level in his different write-ups. Also, he has authored several topics of general interest, research papers, and short stories. His recently published non-fiction, 'Auntie English' has received widespread acclamation.

Frontlist: Share some tips and recommendations on how to use English as a language of opportunity.

Prof A.K: English is already the language of opportunity. This language didn't remain limited to Britain only. When Mayflower sailed with all those English people, who were later known as Americans, it went along too and flourished there. When the convicts were shipped to Australia, it went along with their aboriginal language and grew. And when the settlers and explorers went to Canada and made homes there, in the heart of the French domain, it reigned too. To ensure that work went on smoothly, English was taught to the natives, and in the process, this language became a part of their politics. Once confined to a remote era, English in two centuries struck such deep roots in other lands. One can see it as an interesting linguistic phenomenon on the Indian scene that a larger number of Indians speak and write the language than under British rule. The same was the case with many other countries, and today it is the native language for more than 30 countries and is the second language in about 75 countries. Now that English is emerging as a single world language, the emergence of an English-based global lingua-franca is also imminent.

Frontlist: How is a person judged on his English speaking skills in today's generation?

Prof A.K: We all know English as a language is not native to our

country, but there are certainly more speakers of English here than in Britain. Knowledge of English in India symbolizes better education and greater sophistication. It is also true that for the vast majority of the population, there exists an emotional bond with the mother language, which helps to shape its vision of the world, its culture in the broadest sense of the term, even though there are areas of cultural contiguity and interference because of bilingualism and biculturalism of a significant proportion of the urban population. A country like ours, where many languages, some of them mutually antagonistic, are spoken, needs an elite that can manipulate the techniques of the government and administration and constitute an effective interface with the world. Merely cosmetic show-off will hardly do.

Frontlist: A person's socioeconomic status in Indian society is almost in line with his fluency in the English language. Why?

Prof A.K: I consider this assumption quite derogatory. This would insult our thousands of entrepreneurs lacking fluency in English, who are intelligent, hard-working, and have the potential to fight for their goals. They are creators, and we need to be proud of them. Remember, English was introduced to create a class that, according to Macaulay, would act as interpreters between Englishmen and the millions they governed. We cannot overlook that many of them became creators and not merely interpreters, who with their revolutionary thought spelled the doom of English rule.

Frontlist: The world is ever evolving - so does the language. What are your thoughts on the changing of English as a standard language?

Prof A.K: The English language continues to bask in global sunshine. It is no longer used in the same manner as in the country of its origin. The extent of variation in its usage, structure, and pronunciation is bewildering. In fact, Standard English has been going through a period of great change. It is feared that the divergent processes would ultimately break up English into many separate languages. So, we have American English, Indian English, Australian English, Kiwis' English, Caribbean English, and should we say English English! The distortions of the English language are likely to make Standard English not recognizable in the near future. However, the hope lies in the continuing unity of English and its prospects as a major medium of global communication.

Frontlist: "As English is not about containing knowledge and it's just a language" one shouldn't be forced to have this skill. What do you say?

Prof A.K: Each linguistic community evolves a particular language for expressing its feelings, emotions and ideas. In India, as per the 1966 recommendations, the mother tongue was generally followed in all stages of education all over the country with the exception of a few states. However, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, English has been accepted as the official language along with other languages. English should be taught but not at the cost of other languages. We remember, for nearly a decade between 1975 and 1985, Macmillan India ran a Hindi publishing unit for tertiary level textbooks. Most of the books published were translations of standard English texts, including Harold Laski's Grammar of Politics and sections of RC Majumdar's Advanced History of India. The program came to an end because the books didn't sell



"Prisoner's Dilemma"

Vish Dhamija

Vish Dhamija is the bestselling author of ten works of crime fiction, including Unlawful Justice, Bhendi Bazaar, The Mogul, The Heist Artist, and Doosra. He is frequently referred to in the Indian press as the 'master of crime and courtroom drama'. In August 2015, after the release of his first legal thriller, Déjà Karma, Glimpse magazine called him 'India's John Grisham' for stimulating the genre of legal fiction in India. Vish lives in London with his wife, Nidhi.

Frontlist: You've been known for stimulating the genre of legal fiction in India. How's this new book different from other crime thrillers that you've written thus far?

Vish: Crime fiction can cover a lot of subsections of crime. Broadly speaking, it can be about the crime itself or the investigation, or when the criminal is brought to the court for trial. Prisoner's Dilemma is different as it covers an in-between phase where the investigation is almost complete, and the police have apprehended the suspects but are struggling to find damning evidence to charge the perpetrators with the crime. And the stolen cash is missing. The policeman in the story, Arfy Khan, is playing mind games with the two suspects expecting either of them to confess. The story begins after the burglary and the arrest of the perpetrators. So, this novel is neither simply about the cleverness of the heist nor the details of the police investigation. Although, I've covered those elements to give readers the complete picture. However, the nub of the story is psychological manipulation, so whoever blinks first loses.

Frontlist: If you were in the shoes of Bipin Desai and Anuj Shastri, would you choose freedom over friendship?

Vish: Clever question. And while it might appear to be a simple choice, it is not. It's not quite as black and white as one might think it to be. However, to answer your question—how can I be of any help to my friend if I am not free myself?

Frontlist: Does the conclusion of a thriller define the quality of the novel?

Vish: Not necessarily. I have always advocated that it is not about a happy ending or any conclusion for that matter. It is about a good story. The true test of a good novel is - "Is the story interesting enough for the reader or viewer?" - as the case may be to stay engaged until the end. How you wish to see a story conclude can be different from how I see it. In fact, looking back at the conclusion in one of the books I wrote five years ago, I now think it should have been different. So your perception today might not be the same a few years later.

Frontlist: Tell us something about your new book, 'Prisoner's Dilemma'.

Vish: The 'Prisoner's Dilemma' is a concept in game theory in economics. It demonstrates that two entirely rational individuals might not cooperate even if it is in their best interest. It is so because they do not get to communicate with each other, and irrespective of how close to each other they are, they end up distrusting their partners. In my story, Bipin Desai and Anuj Shastri are two friends who concoct a plan to rob a van full of cash and manage to get away with a loot of over one crore rupees. The two are arrested within days, but the cash is still nowhere to be found. Enter Senior Inspector Arfy Khan, who has only forty-eight hours to make Bipin and Anuj confess to their crime by convincing one of them to go against the other. The two friends only have to keep their calm and their stories straight in front of the police. But there is one major obstacle: Arfy isn't allowing Bipin and Anuj or their lawyers to see or talk to each other. It's all mind games from thereon.

Frontlist: Over the years, how have you strengthened yourself as a crime fiction author?

Vish: I read a lot—about 50-60 crime novels a year. And I watch a lot of crime series. One of the exciting ways to keep stories fresh is to explore various sub-genres: legal and psychological thrillers, crime capers, heist stories, cozy mysteries, police procedurals, to name a few. Meaningful subplots also strengthen the story. I also make it a point to create memorable characters that tell the story. My Rita Ferreira novels are as much about Rita as they are about the cases she works on. Another key to making a story exceptional is changing the narrative style—from the first person to the third person and sometimes a mix of the two. Also, I do not keep to linear storytelling; I shift the narrative between the past and the present to augment readers' interest. There are various other tools to explore and experiment with. One more thing: research. Always do your homework before you start.

Frontlist: Your books, BhenDi Bazaar, Doosra, and Lipstick, are going to be adapted into digital series soon. Heist Artist and Unlawful Justice have been optioned for adaptation as well. What would you like to say about this new achievement?

Vish: It feels great. The fact that my stories can be adapted to screen feels good since the reach of the screen is far more than that of a book. It is an endorsement that they are well-plotted, with believable characters and enough details. Besides, recognition of any kind is positive reinforcement. It encourages me to write more. However, I'm frustrated that Covid has delayed the filming, so I'm looking forward to 2023.

Frontlist: What does it take to pen down a legal thriller?

Vish: Be realistic. Granted, it's fiction, but it needs to be believable. Thirty years ago, you could have gotten away without doing the kind of research it requires now. Anyone with a smartphone and a one-bar 2G connection can search the web if they think something doesn't make sense. Also, talk to lawyers and, if possible, befriend them. In my experience, all experts are willing

to extend help if they think the request is genuine. I call my lawyer friends all the time. Don't be afraid to ask.

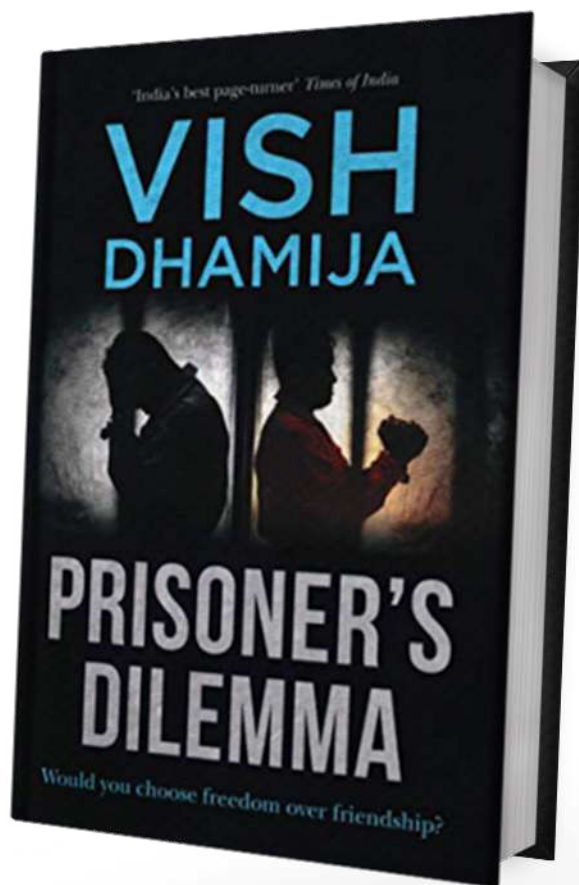
Frontlist: What impact do psychological thrillers have on human minds?

Vish: None. To clarify, I do not write psychological horror. Psychological thrillers use misdirection to catch the unguarded reader. The omission is one of the techniques employed whereby we completely shut out a part of the narrative without the reader realising it. Other techniques often used to misdirect are split time frames or an unreliable narrator. Trust me, none of these are meant to mess with the reader's mind—they are merely to surprise the readers at the conclusion.

AUTHOR QUOTE:

"A pawn only needs to move five spaces to become the queen."

- from BhenDi Bazaar





“Classified: Hidden Truths in the ISRO Spy Story”

J Rajasekharan

J. Rajasekharan Nair is a winner of K.K. Birla Foundation Fellowship in Journalism and was the Kerala correspondent of MAGNA group of magazines.

His association with the ISRO espionage case was both - as a journalist and a human rights activist. He was the first to report that the espionage story was a cock-and-bull story fabricated by CIA through its moles in IB to abort ISRO's clandestine operation to illegally acquire cryogenic technology from Russia.

He accessed telex messages between Glavkosmos, the Russian space agency, and KELTEC in Kerala about a clandestine operation to transfer cryogenic rocket technology to ISRO, circumventing Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). He interviewed all the accused and filed more than half-a-dozen reports exposing the ISRO espionage story at a time when the media was celebrating the spy story. He had to face two defamation cases from a police officer. He won both.

As a human rights activist, he approached National Human Rights Commission and Kerala State Women's Commission, seeking justice for the Maldivian women trapped in the case. The genesis of the Special Leave Petition (SLP) on which the Supreme Court ordered Rs. 50 Lakh to S. Nambi Narayanan in 2018 is the Original Petition (OP) he had filed before the Kerala High Court. He was also the Chairman of an NGO that worked among sex workers, HIV+ves, LGBT, and the mentally ill.

Frontlist: What are your views on ISRO as an organization?

J Rajasekharan: ISRO's first Mission Statement, quoted on its website, is “Design and development of launch vehicles and related technologies for providing access to space.”

Let us see what ISRO has achieved with respect to this mission. ISRO has three launch vehicle-related technologies; solid, liquid, and cryogenic. It bought the solid propellant technology from Sud-Aviation in 1967 (two years before ISRO was formed; when it was Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station-TERLS) and liquid technology ten years later, from Ariane, both in France.

ISRO tried to get the cryogenic technology from Russia. But it didn't work out. ISRO claims it has developed cryogenic engine indigenously. It questions our prudence because it took 17 years for ISRO to develop the Vikas engine from the French Viking after ISRO acquired the technology from Ariane. Besides, ISRO technocrats had spent nearly 135 man-years in France as part of acquiring the technology. Compared to liquid technology, cryogenic technology is much more complicated.

The untold secret behind the indigenously developed cryogenic engine would tell volumes if ISRO come out with a White paper on the illegal reverse espionage to transfer cryogenic technology from Glavkosmos in Russia to ISRO after the agreement to legally transfer the technology was scrapped by Russia owing to the US pressure.

The fact is that ISRO has not done any original research with respect to its first Mission Statement but has only excelled in the art of Reverse Engineering, which is the glorified technolanguage for copying. In reverse Engineering, you often have limited knowledge about the engineering methods that went into creating the product.

Juxtapose this reality with the first Mission Statement of ISRO and you would get a better picture of the real achievements of ISRO if you are ready to read beyond the PR reports on ISRO that appear regularly in the media.

There should be social auditing of the activities of ISRO.

Frontlist: ISRO has done some remarkable work in the past so do you think your book will tarnish this image?

J Rajasekharan: Through my book, I have only called a spade a spade - one of the first lessons I learned 37 years ago while doing my Master's in Journalism. I had to write the book because ISRO is not ready to acknowledge its criminal mistake of permitting its team of technocrats to illegally transfer cryogenic rocket technology from Glavkosmos (in Russia) to ISRO using clandestine methods. Later, when the CIA planted an absurd spy story that Indian cryogenic rocket technology had been spied to Pakistan by certain ISRO technocrats, ISRO kept an intriguing and criminal silence and didn't come out with a statement that ISRO didn't have cryogenic technology in 1994 when it was alleged to have been spied to Pakistan. Instead, ISRO allowed its honour to be trampled on the street by IB, Kerala Police, and the media.

Had the Chairman of ISRO convened a press conference in the first week of November 1994 and told the nation that the spy story was a technical impossibility - something we expect any officer of substance and prudence would do—the spy story would not have spread like wildfire.

ISRO owes an apology to the nation first for allowing its technocrats to go for the illegal reverse espionage and then for not busting the spy story on day one itself.

We are a people with a lot of Holy Cows, where the Holy Cows can do any damn thing and go scot-free, and its actions should go unquestioned, but the one who questions it runs the risk of being branded a traitor or being unpatriotic.

Frontlist: You have shared different scenarios of the spy story in the book. Where did you get all the unfiltered information from?

J Rajasekharan: More than 70% of the materials I have used in the book are available in the public domain. I have quoted more than 85 documents, all available in the public domain. The point is that the media, instead of reporting the facts based on documents, had have been regurgitating what was being fed to them; 27 years back by the IB and Kerala Police, and now by CBI and S. Nambi Narayanan.

At the same time, I got certain confidential materials that gave the role of the then Director of IB in the spy case through an officer in CBI who was a member of the team that investigated the spy case for 18 months. One day in 1996, after CBI had submitted the Closure Report before the CJM, Ernakulum, stating the spy case was false and baseless, I met the CBI officer at the airport on his way back to Delhi. I asked him whether he could give me copies of the Confidential Reports CBI had sent to the Union Home Ministry and the Kerala Government listing out the lapses on the part of the IB and Kerala Police, respectively. He asked rudely, "how dare you ask me that?" I replied, "It is one way how Journalists get documents. We don't create documents." He said he wouldn't do it. But after two weeks, I got the documents. He had mailed it to another person whom he knew well, which, in turn, reached me.

The whole issue of the ISRO spy case and its multi-layered structure is so clear to me that it took only 30 days for me to write CLASSIFIED: HIDDEN TRUTHS IN THE ISRO SPY STORY.

Frontlist: Share briefly about the reverse espionage chapter in the book.

J Rajasekharan: 800-1/50 was a bilateral agreement signed between Glavkosmos, the Russian space agency, and ISRO on 18th January 1991 (when Russia was a part of the Soviet Union). It envisaged a supply of three cryogenic stages, KVD-1, built by the Isayev Design Bureau, and the transfer of cryogenic rocket technology to ISRO for Rs. 235 crores.

But owing to the US pressure in the aftermath of the disintegration of the USSR (the US said it would cancel its 24 billion Dollars aid package if Russia didn't cancel the technology transfer clause), Russia cancelled the agreement on 20th July 1993, invoking Force Majeure. A new agreement for the purchase of cryogenic engines without the technology transfer clause was signed by the two parties in January 1994. The first cryogenic engine, as per the second agreement, was to reach ISRO in 1996.

But, certain top brass in both ISRO and Glavkosmos decided to hoodwink the US. They worked out a two-pronged strategy. One was to directly transfer materials as part of technology transfer, from Glavkosmos to ISRO, illegally, but with the full connivance of the Indian and Russian space agencies. While S. Nambi Narayanan was the go-getter from ISRO, Alexei Vasin was the man from the Glavkosmos side. However, Glavkosmos was not ready to effect doorstep delivery, which it wanted ISRO to do. S. Nambi Narayanan contacted Air India. But, Air India refused to carry the materials for want of legally valid documents. Nambi Narayanan then contracted with Url aviation, a Russian airliner, to do the job. Though there are five airports in Moscow, where Glavkosmos is located, it was not possible to airlift the materials without the US agencies coming to know of the illegal act. So, the materials were

transported to Tashkent International airport by road, travelling more than 3300 km, and from there airlifted in Url Aviation that came from Moscow, and was then flown to Thiruvananthapuram. Url thus made three flights. It couldn't make the fourth because, by that time, the spy case had hit the headlines. The fact that Url discontinued the operation halfway through and ISRO didn't claim compensation from Url for stopping the transportation halfway through tells volumes that the whole operation was illegal.

The second method was to use KELTEC, a Kerala government fabricating unit in Thiruvananthapuram, as a conduit for the transfer of cryogenic technology from Glavkosmos to ISRO. The idea was to entrust the job of fabricating cryogenic engines with KELTEC as an offshore agreement for which Glavkosmos will have to transfer the technology to KELTEC. Grounds were prepared to transfer the technology from KELTEC to ISRO, thus outwitting the provisions of the amended MTCR of which Russia was a signatory at that point in time.

Frontlist: What are some myths and lies that were spread regarding the espionage case?

J Rajasekharan: The first lie was that ISRO was a defence organization, and S. Nambi Narayanan and D. Sasikumaran, both technocrats of ISRO, had spied the cryogenic missile technology to Pakistan using Url aviation, and bundles of documents had reached the enemy. The lie in this is that ISRO is not a defence organization and does not manufacture missiles. Moreover, there is nothing like cryogenic missile technology because no country uses cryogenic fuel in missiles for obvious reasons. Moreover, ISRO didn't have cryogenic technology in 1994. The second lie was that the ISRO technocrats had a business tie-up with Alexei Vasin of Glavkosmos to sell documents of Vikas engine to Vasin, who would, in turn, sell it to many third world nations, including Pakistan. The fact is that Vikas engine, using liquid propulsion, is ISRO's indigenously developed engine from the French Viking. Since Glavkosmos had a better liquid engine developed before the French Viking, why should Alexei Vasin go for this circumlocutory path if he wanted to make business by selling documents? Moreover, who needs these documents when the technology is available in the open market for a price?

Frontlist: Karl Marx wrote in 1852. "History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce." How did the CBI prove this statement?

J Rajasekharan: In the fifth paragraph of its confidential report sent to the Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala, on 3 June 1996 listing out the serious lapses on the part of certain officers in Kerala Police, CBI accused the Kerala Police of not registering the espionage case much earlier (than 13 November 1994, the date on which the espionage case was registered by Kerala Police). The report reads: Despite the lingering suspicions about the conduct of Rasheeda and Fauziya harboured by Kerala Police and the IB officials, and the fact that the local press was playing up the issue and even the name of Raman Srivastava, IGP, was also being linked up with this episode, no immediate steps were taken by the Kerala Police to register a case under the Official Secrets Act and effect the arrest of accused persons.

The history was a tragedy because, through this statement, CBI paraded its ignorance of Section 13 (3) and (5) of the Indian Official Secrets Act (IOS Act), 1923 that prevents either Kerala Police or CBI from registering or investigating a case under the Act without a complaint in writing by the appropriate government (in the case of ISRO, it is the Central government) reaching the competent Magistrate, who can take cognizance of the offence. Twenty-five years later, when the same CBI filed FIR against eighteen persons, including seven officers in Kerala Police, before the CJM, Thiruvananthapuram, for arresting S. Nambi Narayanan

in the ISRO espionage case under the Indian Officials Secrets Act, 1923, it allowed history to repeat as farce.

The CBI team that investigated the espionage case for 18 months (from December 1994) and submitted its closure report stating that the case was false and baseless, didn't hint at any foreign hand behind the spy scandal. But the new CBI team that is yet to arrest a person or interrogate the accused had stated before Kerala High Court on 29 July 2021 that Pakistan was behind the espionage case.

Now, which of the CBI teams—the first or the second—is a pack of jokers?

Frontlist: Could you share some of the unknown facts about S. Nambi Narayanan?

J Rajasekharan: There are many pieces of information I know about S. Nambi Narayanan; some were told by him during our close association for nearly 15 years and even more, I had gathered through my sources. It is not fair on my part to divulge those pieces of information, which are personal. But, I can tell you a few which the general public should know.

1. S. Nambi Narayanan is one of the few persons in the world who adores Adolf Hitler.

2. He has the uncanny knack of telling lies unabashedly. He had done it even before the Supreme Court in his Special Leave Petition on which the Apex Court passed orders on 14 September 2018. I have listed out the lies that are tantamount to perjury in my book.

3. Both CPI (M) and BJP tried to field him as a candidate in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency to defeat Shashi Tharoor, but he didn't yield.

4. Don't be surprised if S. Nambi Narayanan is the BJP candidate for the post of Indian President after the tenure of Ramnath Kovind.

Frontlist: What are the breakthroughs that occurred in the spy story?

J Rajasekharan: I am the first Journalist to interview S. Nambi Narayanan. He told me ISRO was yet to acquire cryogenic technology alleged to have been spied to Pakistan by certain persons, including him. It was the first breakthrough because the media, quoting sources in Kerala Police and IB, were reporting a crime that could not have happened.

Prof. Satish Dhawan, Prof. U.R. Rao, Prof. Yashpal, Prof. R. Narasimha, Prof. Chandrasekhar, and T.N. Seshan issued a public statement after the Supreme Court in April 1998 had quashed the Kerala government's order to further investigate the ISRO spy case. One part of the statement reads: "The espionage case reveals that the country's space programme, or for that matter other strategic programmes, may no longer be immune to outside interference."

The statement hinted at some foreign hand behind the espionage case. The signatories were all men of eminence, and it was naïve to think they were hinting at some foreign hand without any substance. It was then easy for me to identify the foreign hand as that of the United States - since it was the only country that had openly expressed its displeasure over the proposed transfer of cryogenic technology to ISRO.

I got certain crucial documents accidentally. K. Chandrasekhar, one of the accused in the spy case, gave me photocopies of

some telex messages between KELTEC and Glavkosmos to prove his credentials as the authorized agent of Glavkosmos. Some of these telex messages gave me a hint that there was an attempt for a clandestine operation between Glavkosmos and ISRO to transfer cryogenic rocket technology from Glavkosmos to ISRO outwitting the provisions of the amended MTCR. It was a big breakthrough that helped me focus on the illegal and clandestine operations between Glavkosmos and ISRO that led to the CIA fabricating an absurd spy story.

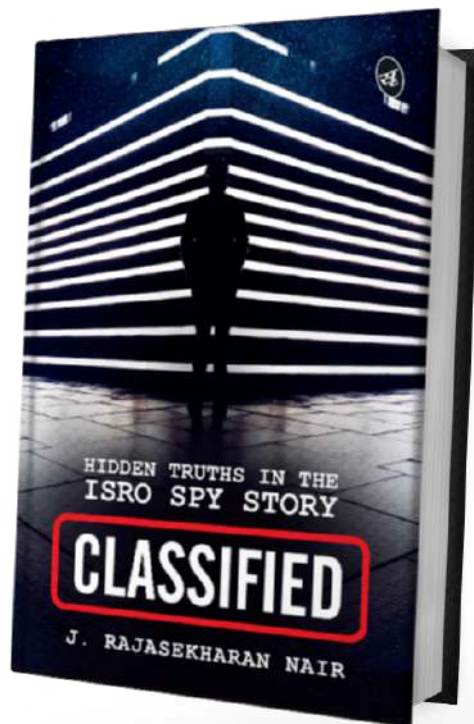
Certain reports in The Christian Science Monitor and reports of discussion at the Russian Duma (parliament) gave me a better perception of the failed operation of reverse espionage.

Frontlist: How has the Indo-Russian relationship helped the advancement of the Indian Space Research Organization?

J Rajasekharan: India's engagement with Russia in space relationships goes back to 1975 when the erstwhile Soviet Union helped in the launch of Aryabhata (India's first satellite) from the Soyuz Launch Vehicle. Even the second satellite, Bhaskara, was launched from the Soviet Union in 1979. In 1984, the Soviets took Sq. Ldr Rakesh Sharma to fly on the Soyuz T-11 spaceship.

A major step in space cooperation was the ISRO-Glavkosmos agreement of 1991 to transfer cryogenic rocket technology to ISRO. However, Russia cancelled it in 1993. Meanwhile, KELTEC and GLAVKOSMOS worked out the proposal for a joint venture between Glavkosmos and KELTEC with equity participation and mobilization of balance financing necessary through public issues. The joint venture contemplated a Rs 1,000-million project. The project was stillborn in the aftermath of the espionage case.

In 2018, during Putin's visit to India, an MoU was signed to enhance cooperation. Consequently, there has been a spurt tied between the Russian State Space Corporation 'Roscosmos' and the ISRO in human spaceflight programmes and satellite navigation.





"The Tree with a Thousand Apples"

Sanchit Gupta

Born and brought up in the hills of Himachal Pradesh, Sanchit Gupta began his career as a part-time copywriter. He went on to co-found his theatre group, worked as a freelance film screenwriter, and as executive producer-fiction for a leading television network. His short stories have been published in several publications and lit festivals, viz.: Muse India, Indian Ruminations, Contemporary Literary Review India, and Tata Lit Live, to name a few. He has also worked with All India Radio as a talk show host.

Frontlist: The tragedy that happened in 1990 is still prevalent in Kashmir. Can you give your perspective on how it left a deep impact on everyone that suffered from it?

Sanchit: Yep. So, you know, as also the book which is called "The Tree with a Thousand Apples" tries to say, the impact that kind of came in 1990 was even on the soul of Kashmir, and it impacted the Kashmiri Pandits who had to leave their houses overnight. It impacted the Kashmiri Muslims who became prisoners in their own city. It impacted the people, you know, the army that had to go there and fight against an unknown enemy. It impacted the whole fabric of the place and the culture. And hence, when we look at the future also, we need to understand that it is something that we need to ensure and address, that it is a cause that affects all the communities together, and not just one, and work towards that, you know, that is what we should understand, whenever we look at Kashmir.

Frontlist: So, political or religious, how do you look at 1990?

Sanchit: Neither. It is social; you know. We are the ones who add politics or religion to it. But eventually, it is not the politicians; it is not the fear or the religious leaders who suffer. They are the common people of the society, who end up suffering from both sides, from all the stakeholders who really suffer, who are innocents, who are used by others for their own cause. And hence it's a social issue. It's a social problem. It's a social impact. It is neither political, nor religious. And that is what we must keep in mind.

Frontlist: How do you relate your fictional story of three friends with the true events that happened in Kashmir?

Sanchit: Well, I think, that's a quiet kind of rhetorical question in the sense that the book follows true events. It is a fictional story based on the incidents that happened during the 90s, be it the insurgency of 1989-90. The characters are fictional, but the events that are happening were real.

Frontlist: So what impact did the tragedy bring to the lives of the people who were born after it?

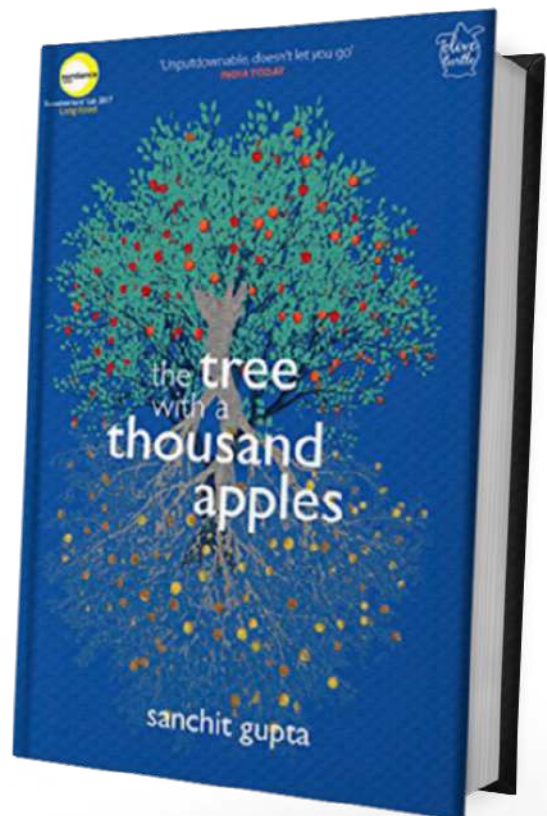
Sanchit: Even if you are born after it, or born before it, you kind of follow the lineage of what has happened.

Frontlist: "If a criminal was once a saint & a saint was once a criminal, then who is the criminal and who is the saint?" Maybe everyone has a saint and a criminal in themselves. Do you agree?

Sanchit: Absolutely, and it is just the circumstances that kind of take one person in that direction, and, hence, we should understand and empathize with where the person is coming from. Be it the saint or a criminal.

Frontlist: The most affected victims in the 1989 tragedy were the citizens who witnessed everything. So did you write this book to show the pain from their perspective?

Sanchit: It is one of the perspectives, yes, you know, as I always say the one line of the book is about an innocent civil liberal searching for justice, and exiled Pandits who longed for belongingness, and a cold-hearted rebel who started redemption, and there are all three different perspectives, you know, and they all suffered in their own different ways. And that is what we need to understand and appreciate that it is not the suffering of one person or one community, it is, you know, the suffering of all of them and Kashmir as a whole.





"From Wulf to Woolf"

Nimai Verma

Silver Medalist in Dr Sayan Chattopadhyay's discourse on Literary Theory and Criticism, Nimai Verma has found solace in tales since the foremost days of his consciousness and has been critically reading literature since Middle School. Claiming to have inherited this admiration for arts from his mother, he deliberately aims to work for the appreciation of arts centred on Philology and literary criticism. Intrigued by politics and the writings of Oscar Wilde and J.R.R. Tolkien, the writer believes in the poet's self-contained ability to create sublime, "l'art pour l'art".

Frontlist: What is the idea behind choosing your book title, 'From Wulf To Woolf'?

Nimai: The title simply justifies the timeline covered in the book itself. Long story short, it elaborates on 'From Beowulf to Virginia Woolf'. Now, Beowulf is known to be the oldest British literary relic and one of the foremost productions in the Old English period, roughly stretching from Julius Caesar to the Battle of Hastings. Obviously, Virginia Woolf needs no description, as her works like "A Room of One's Own" have changed the course of history. To conclude, the book covers political and literary history from the times of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the late twentieth century. Language is meaning and history, sedimented layer upon layer, and a word without a meaning, is merely a sound. The book intends to provide this interpretation to its readers.

Frontlist: You are just 16 years old, yet you have written a whole book on British Literature which is impressive. We would like to ask what inspired you?

Nimai: Tradition is one of the pillars to rule them all. My mother has been a scholar herself, and somehow it was passed on to me. Passion alone remains the reason for the completion of the manuscript, and I desperately hope that a day must dawn when age would only be asked for medical purposes. Agreeing with Longinus's Peri Hypsos and a dozen other defenders of Arts, I believe that an understanding of literature is a privilege and

cannot be motivated through teaching or inspiration. The Greeks talk of the Muses, and I dare not disagree with them.

Frontlist: Where did you get all the information on British literature, as the books themselves have limited content?

Nimai: The location of the scholar and his subjects have always been in a direct relationship. I have mostly studied British authors refraining to touch on Asians for a single distraction from the sense of nationalism could disrupt the uniqueness of the chronology I have prepared. Books have an unlimited abundance of content. You just need to read a good amount of them.

Frontlist: How does literary criticism differ from opinion? Do you think the work of literary criticism makes it biased sometimes?

Nimai: Criticism in the field of humanities means something different than the usual meaning. The purpose of Criticism is to study, evaluate, analyse, while you can have an opinion without any groundwork based on maybe prejudices. Criticism tends to suggest changes while opinion doesn't. Criticism is academic, while an opinion is an informal set of thoughts, which with an appropriate sense of academic writing, could be turned into criticism. I have opinions on Plato, Art, Politics, but they definitely need a procedure to become criticism.

Frontlist: You have written a book on British Literature. When are you planning on writing about Indian Literature?

Nimai: Studying British Literature before graduating from school was an intended effort for I desire to study there. Europe has always fascinated me, and eventually, from the Celts, I'll move to the Romans and Greeks. Hopefully, when I am done with the Philologically centred study of Tolkien and critique of Plato, I will touch upon the Postcolonial literature of Bengal and a comparative study on Vedic literature, but it is at least not happening for the next decade.

Frontlist: "Language was developed for one endeavor, and that is... to woo women." Your book was all about British Literature, but the quote on the first page of your book is quite unlike. Please elaborate on this?

Nimai: The quotation is taken from my all-time favourite movie, 'The Dead Poets Society', and surely the book is on literature, but as I discussed earlier, a sound with a meaning is a language, and the aesthetic use of language in literature. They are in a symbiotic relationship. If a language doesn't create literature for mere admiration, it might die, and in turn, literature cannot exist without a language. Be it oral literature, drama, poetry, prose fiction, even inscriptions had a determined set of a pre-defined framework of rules within their very own structure. And to woo women centralises on the purpose of literature which is to bring harmony, peace, and civilization to society.

Frontlist: Among all the eras, which is your favourite poet? Do you also fancy writing poetry?

Nimai: All poetry by me remains private as of now. I would not deny that I write, especially when I travel. Talking of a favourite poet, I must clarify, a poem to me need not contain rhyme or meter, but intelligent use of literary metaphors, be it in a piece of prose or a strict sonnet. Speaking of which 'Shakespeare's Sonnets', 'Milton's devotion' and 'Byron's love for tradition' have something of the divine in them.



"Nautanki Saala"

Mohua Chinappa

Mohua Chinappa is a writer, voice-over artist, and among the most sought-after podcasters in Bangalore. Mohua interviews artists, entrepreneurs, and individuals working to make their communities economically and socially stronger. Her popular blog MoodyMo emphasizes brands that endorse gender equality, nostalgia, arts and crafts of India, available on Apple, Google, and Spotify.

Over the past 15+ years, Mohua Chinappa has held leadership positions as a Public Relations/Corporate Communications specialist in top agencies, such as Brandcomm, HCL, ITC, and Genesis PR.

Frontlist: Why did you choose the title 'Nautanki Saala' for your book?

Mohua: My book is a collection of 15 stories of men and women I have met since the 80s. One of the things common to their lives and experiences is that they choose to suppress their feelings and desires. Of all the protagonists, the bar dancer felt the most daring and bindaas. Men used to take her for granted, including her lover. So when she decided to own up, value herself, and live the life she wanted to, she just says, 'Nautanki Saala' to this creep of a man, telling him to stop exploiting her for his physical gain. I felt that would resonate the most with readers!

Frontlist: Which is your favourite story in the book and why?

Mohua: It is difficult to choose one because I care for all my protagonists. Rather if you asked me to choose blindly, I would say that I love the story - Silence in The Valley of Death. I enjoyed writing this because it took me back to my childhood memories of Shillong, where I was raised during my formative years. It was a languid life with lots of time and a bounty of nature around me. As I penned the story down, I travelled with the protagonist, Wajiri. I could vividly recall the Khasi women, the incessant rain of Shillong, and the memories of the innumerable jilted women I had met. Although I was merely a child, I could sense their brokenness even then. The beautiful and strong women who had lost themselves, and could not bear the heartbreak. The deep

pain I saw in their eyes remains in my heart even today.

Frontlist: Does intimacy affect a partner's mental health? What kind of void does it create? (This is in the context of Seema's story, whereby she goes to the extent of committing suicide.)

Mohua: Like any other woman, especially married, Seema was seeking togetherness and bonding with her spouse. Unfortunately, intimacy between a married couple is taken for granted. It is something that helps strengthen the bond between a couple. However, intimacy is misunderstood. Once you marry, for instance, the in-laws expect the bride to have children and produce a grandson for them. The message a married woman receives is that her home is incomplete without children as soon as they become part of the family.

This pressure to procreate is immense on a young woman. And it is not just her in-laws but also her parents and relatives that expect from her. Naturally, girls are stressed till they have children.

The other kind of intimacy, physical intimacy, is seen as sinful, not just in the rural psyche but also in urban mindsets.

Being naked with your partner is a bold step for the woman in cementing her place in the new home. Does your husband see you as desirable enough? That often becomes your value as an individual in married life. Did Seema not want to be pleased? Her desire to become a mother and start a family, how much of it was social conditioning?

It is important to know that lack of sexual intimacy is one of the biggest reasons for marriages falling apart. Studies also reveal that sexual intimacy is one of the most primal needs in human beings. Denying this need can create a massive conflict and sadness and as seen in this story, an irreparable loss. In fact, according to a 2016 Delhi High Court ruling, denying sex to the spouse for a long time, without sufficient reason, amounts to mental cruelty and was also seen as a ground for divorce.

Frontlist: Your stories unfold some of the major issues prevalent in society. For instance, Chapter 6 talks about the taboo which prohibits lower-class women from having physical attraction or desires. What is your take on that?

Mohua: The story you are referring to, So you mean everyone's entitled to desire, is about this ten-year-old girl who assumes others are less entitled to feeling attraction, and later she feels really bad about it.

It is not just women from a certain stratum. Women are not allowed to either feel desire or be sexually vocal, and if they are, then they are taught to repress, not embrace such feelings. The onus of being on the right side of morals is primarily shared by women.

I have interacted with innumerable women from the lower class who have to hide their contraception pills from their husbands simply because it hurts the male ego. The men, on the other hand, of course not all men, indulge freely in unprotected sex, leading to unwanted pregnancies and multiple health issues.

In such homes, desire isn't even a topic of discussion. The woman is expected to be coy, not demanding, and always willing to give in when her spouse desires her and give birth to children irrespective of the financial situation or her overall health.

Frontlist: Your book attempts to strengthen the feminist who hesitates in confiding. Please share some tips for the women in our society as well?

Mohua: Everyone is stressed, not just women. It is relieving to talk and share, especially with your tribe, or your friends, whoever you can rely on. I strongly believe that it helps to be fearless in sharing personal concerns. For that, women must learn to own unapologetically everything from our scars to our successes to our failings. Hence, each of us must take the first step in being honest with one another.



"Abhimanyu: The Warrior Prince"

Deepak MR

Deepak M.R. is a professional trainer and writer. With master's degrees in commerce and management, he has over twenty-five years of experience in education, training, and consultancy. He has been involved in corporate training, teaching, process consultancy, and auditing and has worked at a private university as a dean and controller of examinations.

Deepak has written academic books and technical articles during his career. He writes blogs and is an avid fan of various genres of fiction. He has contributed to the anthology *Unsung Valour: Forgotten Warriors of the Kurukshetra War* (Bloomsbury, 2020), which features tales of forgotten warriors from the great epic. He considers the story of the Mahabharata - the greatest ever told.

Frontlist: What Abhimanyu did while he was trapped in the Chakravyuh probably was not shown to the audience in Mahabharata. What are some of the unknown facts shown to the audience about Abhimanyu in this book?

Deepak: Most TV shows have not shown in detail what happened during the 13th day of the Kurukshetra war when the Chakravyuha was formed. Abhimanyu's valour on that day is among the greatest displays of bravery in the war. He single-handedly fought with all the great Kaurava warriors and created chaos in the Kaurava ranks.

He killed many great warriors like the son of Shalya Rukmaratha, Karna's brother, and most importantly, Lakshmana, the son of Duryodhana, who was the heir to the Hastinapura throne. He slaughtered thousands of Kaurava soldiers, creating complete panic in the Kaurava ranks. Abhimanyu repeatedly defeated Karna proving his might on the battlefield. Unfortunately, all these incidents have never been highlighted. I have faithfully recorded all the incidents that occurred in my book.

Frontlist: Abhimanyu has never really received the due credits which he deserved in Mahabharata. How has your book shown him in the limelight? And how have you glorified the warrior side of him?

Deepak: In my book, I have depicted Abhimanyu's prowess on the battlefield as per the original Vyasa Mahabharata. There is no glorification, instead, the incidents that took place in the war are narrated as they took place. On the very first day of the war, Abhimanyu took on the mighty Bheeshma and destroyed his chariot flagpole. It was a stupendous achievement for someone who was sixteen years of age.

During every day of the war, he contributed to his side's success. He killed king Brihadbala of Kosala and many other powerful warriors. He defeated the terrible demon Alambusha. Great warriors like Karna and Duryodhana were repeatedly defeated in battle. All these have been depicted in the book, in the battle scenes.

Frontlist: Could you please elaborate on the part where Abhimanyu was trained by Pradyumna? According to you, what are some of the key facts about Pradyumna that one must know?

Deepak: In the Vyasa Mahabharata, Bheeshma talks about Abhimanyu and explains how he learned from Pradyumna, the son of Krishna. Pradyumna is one of the most powerful warriors and is Kamadeva reborn after he was burnt by Shiva. Pradyumna trained Abhimanyu and helped him in his quest to become a great archer.

Incidentally, Pradyumna did not participate in the war since he did not want to fight either the Pandavas or the Kauravas. He and his uncle Balarama went on a pilgrimage and returned by the time the war ended.

Frontlist: What were some of the significant rules/codes of conduct in Mahabharata, essential for winning the battle and yet were broken by both - Pandavas & Kauravas to win the battle? Was it ethical and righteous to do so in the war?

Deepak: A code of conduct for the war was agreed upon by both sides. Bheeshma, being the senior-most, outlined the rules, and the Pandavas also agreed to it. As per the code of conduct, the following had to be observed:

- Warriors had to fight among their equals and not with someone inferior to them.
- Group attacks were not allowed.
- Attacking from behind was not allowed.
- Attacking an unarmed or helpless person was not allowed.

The first two rules of the code were broken on the very first day when everyone started fighting with everyone else, and group attacks became common. The biggest violation of the code came with the killing of Abhimanyu, when he was attacked from behind and then killed while he was unarmed and helpless.

This was a cardinal violation of the code of conduct, and the Kauravas had to suffer because of this. The Pandavas too violated the code of conduct because of this act of the Kauravas. This proved costly, with the war ending with widespread death and devastation.

Frontlist: How did the death of Abhimanyu change the direction of the war completely?

Deepak: Abhimanyu's death completely changed the course of the war. Until then, Arjuna was restrained in battle. Even though Krishna had advised him to discharge his duty as a warrior, Arjuna was concerned that he had to kill his own family members and fight with his elders. This ensured he had not given his 100% in the war.

The brutal and treacherous killing of Abhimanyu enraged Arjuna. He took a vow to kill Jayadratha and then accomplished it. On that fateful day, 7 battalions or Akshauhinis were wiped out by Arjuna. From then on, the war was completely dominated by the Pandavas, who quickly ended the war by killing the remaining Kaurava commanders/great warriors.



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SPOTLIGHT SESSION

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SPOTLIGHT SESSION

on the topic

"Let's settle this debate - Movies or Books"

Featuring



Abhay K.



Debalina Halдар



Bharath Shenoy

Timings : 25th March, 3:00 PM

Don't Miss out on this Interesting Session

We had a Spotlight Session on the topic, 'Let's Settle this debate- Books Or Movies', which featured Debalina Halдар, Bharath Shenoy and Abhay K on 25th March 2022.

The key points raised in the session were as follows:

- The authors discussed some of the pros and cons of watching a movie and reading a book.
- Authors put their thoughts on the question that arises if a movie version of a book justifies its story.
- The authors talked about the situation where books are very elaborative, and yet people prefer watching movies more than reading books.
- Authors told which of their books should be made into a movie and which Bollywood/ Hollywood actor would they like to have in their movie? And, why?
- The authors shared which are some of the best books to be adapted into movies.

FACEBOOK LIVE

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Facebook Live



Aanchal Arora

Aanchal Arora

We held a Facebook Live Session on 4th March 2022 at 6 PM with Ms Aanchal Arora, a flamboyant author of 'The Efflorescence'.

It was an exciting session consisting of Unknown Facts about her, her beautiful poetry book.

Aanchal Arora resides in Kurukshetra and pursuing her MA in English from Kurukshetra University.

She is a poet by profession and a mother of Mystic Verses. She loves to explore new things.

FACEBOOK LIVE

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Facebook Live



Shalini Chhabra Jain

Shalini Chhabra Jain

On 11th March at 6 PM, we did Facebook Live with Ms Shalini Chhabra Jain, author of 'Dear Silver Lining...'

A marketeer at Google, a go-getter, a millennial, and a budding Indian writer, Shalini has been putting pen to paper since childhood. She has been appreciated by the Late President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for the poetic letter she wrote to him, titled 'Dear Dr. Kalam'. She is an enthu cutlet, a true Punjabi at heart and is known to practice mirrored writing in her free time. She currently resides in Gurgaon with her family.

It was truly an interesting session with her.

FACEBOOK LIVE



Sujata Parashar

On 25th March 2022 at 6 PM, We had Facebook Live with Ms Sujata Parashar, author of 'Going Solo-Raising Happy Kids'.

Sujata is a Writer, Poet and Founder of the 'Talk-it-Out-Express(TiOE)', a talk therapy based platform to address emotional health.

It was an enlightening session and revealed some interesting facts about her.

Question: Which is the quickest and probably the best books marketplace in India?

Answer: It's Buy Books India.

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