

# FRONTLIST

AUGUST 2022

*Welcoming the 3rd edition of the Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022!*



Get ready to participate in the biggest literary event!



**75**  
Azadi Ka  
Amrit Mahotsav



**“Celebrating 75 Years of Independence”**

Learn from the achievers of the Publishing World!



# WELCOME MESSAGE

**Dear Loyal Readers,**

This month of August is super special. It is being subsumed by the celebrations of 75 years of Indian Independence. For Frontlist, this has started with good vibes and lots to look forward to. We have a packed series of events this year.

Learning is what frees us from emancipation. It is what gives power to us, power to lead and power to innovate. India has a long tradition of walking on the path of wisdom and knowledge. In this edition, we've featured young achievers across the Indian Publishing Industry to commemorate the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahostav' initiative launched by the Government of India. These are leaders in their own right today or those fast walking the path.

As India completes 75 years of Independence, the publishing industry looks into the 75 years of book publishing in India. We bring you an exclusive compendium of articles encompassing the overall evolution of different genres of book publishing in India. The Federation of Indian Publishers is celebrating the occasion with a book titled '75 Years of Book Publishing in India', edited by Shri Asoke K Ghosh.

I am very pleased to announce the 3rd edition of Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022, which will be held from 13th - 17th September on the PragatiE.com platform to captivate you with amazing book offers, fun activities, and enriching webinars. Frontlist is the proud Media Partner bringing you an exclusive look into it. Contact us to set up your customized stalls.

While we focus on the events for the month, nominations for PVL Author Excellence Awards 2023 are still open. We have received an amazing response so far and are looking at your continued participation. Submit your entries in the various categories and stand a chance to win rewards for your published works.

Lastly, the publishing industry will also see the release of India Book Market Report by Nielsen and FIP. This research is a must have for everyone in the publishing industry. Frontlist is proud to have designed the book cover for the India Book Market Report as well as 75 Years of Book Publishing in India.

With full of heart, I would like to venerate everyone for being compassionate and establishing strong connections with us.

Stay tuned with us to explore the publishing community innovatively.

Keep reading and smiling :)

Write to me: [navita@frontlist.in](mailto:navita@frontlist.in)

Navita Berry  
Business Head

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**75**  
**Azadi Ka**  
**Amrit Mahotsav**

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS FROM**  
**ACHIEVERS OF THE**  
**INDIAN PUBLISHING SPACE!**



# 75 YEARS OF AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV YOUNG PUBLISHERS INTERVIEW



**Trisha De Niyogi**

*Director at Niyogi Books*

Trisha De Niyogi is the Chief Operating Officer and Director at Niyogi Books, an independent publishing house based in New Delhi. She began her career in publishing with SAGE Publications and has come a long way since then. She was a fellow at the Istanbul Fellowship Program 2020. She is an advisor to multiple organisations, including the heritage and education organisation, Heritageshaala, an initiative for promoting Indian Literature, Purple Pencil Project, and the Diversity and Inclusion platform, Belong. She is trained in Bharatnatyam, plays piano, and practices Krav Maga. She holds degrees in Mathematics, Economics, and Business Administration.

**Frontlist-** Since you graduated in Mathematics, Economics, and Business Administration, how did you start your career in the Publishing Industry?

**Trisha-** My parents founded a publishing house together in 2004. The excitement at home was quite palpable, even for a fourteen-year-old. Our dinner-table conversations were centered around different aspects of publishing a book. My parents had a lot to learn as first-generation publishers, and I loved tagging along. I was only fifteen when I decided I wanted to be in publishing.

However, even as a child, I loved mathematics and wanted to study the subject and its applications. While I studied

Mathematics honours, I took up Hindi literature and Economics as my optional papers. When I was studying Economics at the University of Warwick, I would attend all open lectures organised by the English Literature and History departments. It was there for the first time that I heard lectures delivered by Dr Samik Bandyopadhyay and Dr Amit Chaudhuri. But that wasn't all.

Warwick Arts Centre was the epicentre of our time on campus. From attending Gurcharan Das's lecture on mythology to watching a contemporary take on King Lear to a front-seat experience of Anoushka Shankar's fusion sitar—I tried to immerse myself in as many fields as possible.

I have always had a keen interest in sports, and I regularly played tennis and even took classes in rock climbing. Since I was a child, my training in Bharatnatyam and learning to play the piano helped introduce me to many other aspects of our culture and heritage.

Last but not least, I have always read as much as possible. I could jump from 3D printing to behavioural sciences, from the classics to the arts. In fact, I believe publishing is one field where anything you do, learn or read can be implemented in your work. As a result, you never really work a day!

I sincerely believe that curiosity is perhaps the most important trait to make in publishing. And after working in different fields, I believe my desire now is to bring the knowledge I gained in other industries to publishing.

Fingers crossed!

**Frontlist-** Niyogi Books has embarked on a journey to introduce Indian Heritage through its illustrated books. What are the career prospects in the book illustration industry?

**Trisha-** An illustrated book need not be for children, as is commonly assumed. Anything which illustrates or elucidates the text, i.e., photographs, paintings, documents, letters, and even sketches, all contribute to the making of an illustrated book. A large-format, highly

researched book on Pahari paintings is an illustrated book. An illustrated children's book is also a subset of illustrated books. Mangas, graphic novels, and comics are some other examples of illustrated books.

We at Niyogi Books specialize in illustrated books on a wide range of subjects like art, architecture, history, heritage, biographies, children's books, and more. There is ample scope for a photographer and or an illustrator in the publishing industry. For example, our book *Voices from the Lost Horizon* by Anvita Abbi and illustrated by Subir Roy.

Also, book covers are very important nowadays for a book's success. Book covers are a precursor of what is there in the book's pages. So publishing houses always look for talented illustrators to design their book covers.

**Frontlist- How did Niyogi Books cope with the Digital wave since the Pandemic outbreak?**

**Trisha-** The pandemic has indeed had a profound impact on Indian publishing – publishing in general. It is well-established that Indians still prefer to touch and feel their books before buying them. But during the pandemic, bookstores were shut down, operations were restricted, and libraries were out of bounds. No physical books were sold, which meant zero revenue for most publishers. But the pandemic also taught us how to use digital channels more effectively. We started selling more ebooks.

How do we reach out to the readers – this was the question on everyone's mind. We saw sales (of e-books, audiobooks, and other digital formats) go up significantly during the lockdowns. We also saw significant online events and session growth during the last few years.

While it can be said that we hopped on to the digital wave to reach out to the readers, we believe we learned a lot to make use of the digital wave more effectively. Not only did we have a presence in the online space with our digital products, including e-illustrated books and online sessions – live or pre-recorded – we also learned how to package our content keeping in mind the move towards digital. Our title, *Voices from the Lost Horizon* by Dr Anvita Abbi, launched during the lockdown; we integrated audio-visual elements into the physical book. All the songs at the end of each chapter can be heard in the original ambiance. I shall not disclose any further detail about this book as we would like you to take a look at the book yourself.

Now, when we are moving about again and physical events are back (and we really need to get out), we cannot afford to underestimate the hybrid model – online and offline go hand in hand. It also delineates the cost-effective nature of the internet and the tools for us to diffuse into the world of readers. It is great equipment; if used wisely, it can be very effective. In fact, during the second lockdown, when we all truly felt the terror, we wanted to do

something to distract our minds and alleviate the stress. For ten consecutive days, we gave away e-books of Indian literature in translation published by Niyogi Books to the readers. We had a fabulous response.

During the first lockdown, we realised that the sleep cycle for most people had gone for a toss, and while one had a lot of activities lined up during the day, we started a month-long poetry series at midnight.

As Pablo Neruda said, "You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot keep Spring from coming." When things got tough, we adapted, and it is paying off now! – Spring is here!

**Frontlist- The book publishing sector has advanced significantly since 1900. According to you, where does the Indian Publishing Industry stand today?**

**Trisha-** Publishing is a very fast-moving and fast-changing field. Trends come and go, but good literature and books have a long shelf life in English and other Indian languages. The print runs have shrunk, but we also see that the demand for our illustrated books is now higher than ever. Children's books are the fastest growing segment. In contrast, fiction is becoming difficult to sell off late.

Indian literature in translation is now a part of mainstream publishing. In the 1980s and 1990s, the likes of Geeta Dharamrajan, Mini Krishnan, Urvashi Butalia, and Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee laid the groundwork for translations in India. Today, we have awards where translations are celebrated, such as the JCB awards. This year Geetanjali Shree became the first Indian to win the International Booker Prize. Nevertheless, there is a long way to go, and there always shall be a long way to go.

Interestingly are now seeing a rise in graphic novels in the Indian market.

**Frontlist- Would you like to share any achievements within a span of your publishing career which taught you that Publishing is your forte and will always be the one?**

**Trisha-** I simply believe that we are very young and have a long way to go. I learn something new every day, and that is perhaps my driving force. Challenges make us want to stay put, put our heads down and work.

I don't think I would ever want to get out of this industry – for good or bad. I think I will be around for a long, long time.

**Frontlist- The United Nations introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals. What's your take on creating a sustainable publishing industry?**

**Trisha-** The publishing industry in India has always been very much in sync with the Sustainable Development Goals, even before they were adopted. Mahasweta Devi's writings have always had a significant impact on not just

me but almost every serious reader in the country. Rudali and Draupadi are perhaps two of the most important writings highlighting the urgent need for equality in our society. Arundhati Roy's powerful family drama *The God of Small Things* (winner of the Booker Prize in 1997) explores casteism, social discrimination, misogyny, how women are perceived in India, and gender discrimination.

A couple of years ago, we published a translation of famous Hindi writer Govind Mishra's book titled *In the Glow of your Being*, which highlights the fact that the modern Indian woman – is equal to her male counterpart in every aspect of life, be it education, career, intellect, ambition, and the rest – has no equality when it comes to individual freedom or choices, shackled as she is by the fetters variously named 'tradition,' 'Indian culture,' or 'value systems.' We have published similar books such as *A Plate of White Marble*, a translation of the modern classic *Swet Patharher Thala* by Bani Basu, *Breaking Paths: Stories of Women Who Dared* by Meera Khanna, and many more. In fact, from what I have observed, in this industry, including our own office, the gender ratio in our offices is pretty much 50:50, which should set an example for the rest of the industries.

By the end of this year, we are bringing out a very important piece of work titled *Entering the Maze*. This volume places Krishnagopal Mallick at the intersection of urban, Bengali, and queer cultures and, in so doing, makes him available to readers famished for queer narratives from the global South. Thus, it transcends the boundaries and standards of 'local' and reaches every corner of the 'global.' Many such voices are being published regularly by Indian publishers who are not just understanding the pulse of their readers but also trying to fuel the movement for a better tomorrow.

Recently, we published *Iridescent Skin: A Multispecies Journey of White Sharks & Caged Humans* by marine anthropologist Raj Sekhar Aich. The book highlights the importance of human-animal interaction and life below water, and this is the first time an Indian has attempted to write such an ambitious book. Though the subject is not based in India, we sincerely believe that the Indian readership will take a deep interest in this book, and in fact, this could pave the way for more Indian books on the vast subject of life below water.

During the lockdowns, we saw a rise in the demand for books on health and well-being, especially from the backlist, which shows that publishers are mostly not behind the curve. They have been perceptive and have published and are publishing more literature to bring about a change and contribute towards the fight for ending poverty, improving equality, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity.



## Sahil Gupta

*Director-Founder, 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-** When tapping into the Publishing legacy, how did you manage everything initially, and did you want to make a career, or were you following your father's footsteps?

**Sahil-** It's much more complicated than what people make of it. People feel established businesses are easy to handle, and one simply has to exchange hands and sit on the throne. It is very different from how people perceive it. There is a lot of pressure, and often, the policies are rather stringent and budget modest, giving you limited scope to work and build upon. I joined in 2009. It was out of my own choice. I always felt this was my thing, and I joined straight out of college and pursued my MBA later. Our industry was at the cusp of an Edtech revolution at that time. Having been the leaders in Trade Book Publishing for decades, there was a lot of pressure to be the best at what we did.

We always felt we were the trendsetters, and with technology just entering Publishing, at that time, eCommerce and ebooks had just started; it was imperative

that we put our best foot forward and again be the pioneers at adopting tech in Publishing. I started small, and the initial profile I remember was more to do with business development & expansion, particularly in untapped territories, be it sales in tier 3 cities, understanding the edtech sector, or collaborating with eCommerce vendors. The task of being at the forefront of Publishing books by adopting Ebooks was handed over to me very early. It was interesting. Venturing into uncharted territories was challenging. I also did extensive sales touring, as my father always used to tell me that understanding ground realities was essential for running a successful business in India. He couldn't have been more right as I soon learned business basics. I realized very early there was a lot of scope for improvements in business processes and changes concerning catalog and personnel. As often is the case with legacy businesses and family-run setups, it wasn't easy to branch out and change things overnight. Still, I felt my initial few years were a rather steep learning curve for me and made me understand the nitty-gritty of business and ethics. Eventually, after a couple of years, my father and I started our setup of V&S Publishers because of ideological differences. I think rebuilding things with a new foundation from scratch helped shape my career as it was very tough initially, handling everything on our own and not taking things for granted. We had limited budgets and multiple things to take care of because the industry then was rapidly changing, and every second wasted I felt was an opportunity lost. We have done well over the last decade despite all the challenges by God's grace. We now have a catalog of over 1000 titles across 9 languages, with more than 50 categories published and books selling worldwide in multiple formats, from Print to Ebooks and Audiobooks.

**Frontlist- Quality of education has been hugely impacted due to the pandemic. How can we address the educational gaps while creating sustainable development?**

**Sahil-** I strongly feel that the quality of education has gone downhill over the last few years, particularly during the pandemic. I think there has been a lot of focus on e-learning and the holistic development of a student. Rightly so, the focus on building a strong foundation should not be shifting; this is where we are faltering. The worst thing is we wouldn't know about this for at least 15 years because the generation now getting educated would feel this effect after a decade when they enter the job arena. In the last few years, many people in power positions have blindly embraced western philosophies of education, and I feel it doesn't work in India. By the time we realize this, it will already be too late. Call me old school, but India as an education sector, especially at the primary level in schools, is still not equipped and ready to take such a giant leap. You see many Indians at top positions worldwide as CEOs of big multinationals because they have a very strong base they could build in the future and keep learning. Because their fundamentals were strong, they could hone their skills when the time came. Pandemic proved this

furthermore; while the focus was on e-learning and edtech and rounded development, people and masses in India didn't have access to electricity, internet, and devices and further lacked understanding of how e-learning works. Books are and will remain at the heart of education, and if India has to become a knowledge economy, then there is no substitute for quality books. There are a lot of gaps for Books(Quality & Distribution) despite them being here for the last 75 years post-Independence, despite all the initiatives government has taken and the work put in by private publishers, so when it comes to sustainable development, there is a long way to go. I feel some holes need to be filled, and Publishers, educationists, and government must collaborate to create initiatives that contribute towards this in the long run. We cannot simply copy what someone else is doing, lower the quality standards, and ensure everyone passes the exam. What is needed is a plan of action where Books, Elearning, and Education leads to the development of people at the base level, which is sustainable and sufficient over the next 100 years. Isn't this sustainable development in the true sense. If people are aware and educated and their base is strong, that is when they contribute to the development of the economy. The problem lies in the fact that all the stakeholders in our sector are not in sync, which often leads to hara-kiri. Then competitors, customers, and students all play catch-up games, eventually resulting in very poor learning for the child, which should be the most important agenda.

**Frontlist- Do you believe that a career in Publishing industry is as enticing as other career prospects?**

**Sahil-** Definitely! I am a strong believer that Publishing Industry has a very bright future. I, in fact, often conduct pro-bono seminars in colleges where I encourage students to take up Publishing as a career. I think the way publishing is visualized to be re-understood. It's not just about books and printing. It's about CONTENT. It's about Educating. It's about Learning. I think the next decade will see lines getting blurred even more between tech sectors and publishers. Eventually, publishing companies will amalgamate IT and infra in their setup because at the heart of the industry is CONTENT which no one understands better than Publishers. What content, how, where, why, and who content are all equally important. I think some sectors will outperform others. Children's Books, School Books, and Competitive Examinations will do brilliantly. As a young man looking for a job, I feel the culture, the pay and overall what you contribute to society and nation-building is unmatched in the Book Publishing sector. I urge the government and stakeholders to encourage students and the youth to take up Publishing because, over the next decade and more, the sky is the limit for Publishing Sector and Books.

**Frontlist- Consumers have access to multiple content formats nowadays. How has it influenced the monetization of printed book format?**

**Sahil-** Access to content and authentic content are very different things. Of course, the last few years have been



tough for the book publishing industry, especially in printed format, but that's because our sector is undergoing a transition. Publishers are content creators who are still understanding and figuring out the best way to deliver and monetize content. There is a lot of free content available. There is a lot of content available across multiple formats for consumption, which sometimes leads to cannibalization, but eventually, the print will sustain itself. Print and E formats will go hand in hand, I feel. The monetization models for printed content may change from a typical sale model to a more consolidated subscription model where the print is just one of the deliverables. We understood that it's not that buying power is not increasing for people; it is. It's just that they don't feel the need to purchase print books anymore. And these needs are a function of where the nation's economy is and how it's doing. Pandemic has shown that people are willing to spend on education and entertainment. The growth of Edtech companies and OTT platforms is testimony to that. I think more than the monetization, it's the distribution network structure that's a problem, and as this improves, the monetization for print books will get better. Again, I think tech will have a significant role to play in this. I see a lot of consolidation happening in the distribution sector. Publishers must be open-minded and proactive in adopting newer ways to monetize their content, be it print or E. Gone are the days of 500 paged hardback printed books. Books going forward can be better monetized if they are concise. It's like selling smaller packets of content.

**Frontlist- How did the book supply chain disrupt due to the pandemic, and how did V&S Publishers navigate themselves into the digital era?**

**Sahil-** Big time. The biggest drawback and disruption during the pandemic was that of the supply chain and distribution network. As it is, our book sales network has traditionally been marred with challenges like long credit cycles, returns, and poor logistics. The pandemic broke the back of this channel. Many small bookshops closed shutters overnight without paying ever to publishers. Big book shops consolidated and shifted business to selling toys etc. which meant publishers not only lost money during settlement but also lost key clients in big and small cities, which meant that suddenly the availability of books in tier 2 and tier 3 cities was just not there because there was no book shop anymore. We at V&S Publishers luckily had a very strong Online Ecommerce Distribution Network in place, which did help us in ensuring that we were able to make our ends meet even during the pandemic, albeit barely. Obviously, eCommerce couldn't cover up for the sales we lost in the market, and we are still recovering from the same. Still, the silver lining was that it made us focus on eCommerce a lot more and helped us tap into a market whose dynamics were very different from the usual trade we do. The fact that we had relatively filtered out many of the previous defaulter parties ensured that we didn't burn our hands to the extent many other players in our industry did. Ebooks sales, although modest, did

surge during the pandemic, so we were already present on that front and were able to reap some rewards ☺

**Frontlist- The United Nations introduced 17 Sustainable Development goals. How are you planning to implement all of them as a publisher?**

**Sahil-** As a book publisher, as an educationist, I feel that most of the goals defined can be achieved by education. Over the next decade, education will and has to be the cornerstone around which these goals can be achieved and the Indian economy revolves. And as a publisher, through our books, we try to educate people; we try to help them learn, help them attain skills, clear their doubts, and give them an understanding which eventually will help them feed themselves, become independent, earn and thereby eradicate poverty.

It has been our constant endeavor as a Book Publisher to give something back to society over the years. We request our Indian government to empower us, Publishers, to take this forward by helping us with suitable grants, funds & policies which benefit us.

**Frontlist- What has changed in the publishing industry from the time you joined this industry till today?**

**Sahil-** A lot. The last decade has seen many changes, from Tech integration to eCommerce distribution to Ebooks and much more. But the most significant change has been how the content is consumed. Content consumption was limited to books, magazines, and newspapers, primarily for us as Publishers. While there were other content mediums like TV and radio, there were limited options. Statistics show that the total content consumption has grown many folds across geographies and demographics and irrespective of the strata of life people are from, which is a healthy sign. Books need to be viewed from THE CONTENT PERSPECTIVE, and this understanding of where-what-how the content is read, viewed, and consumed is the most important thing & it's this pattern over the last decade has changed significantly to do so at a rapid pace. As a publisher of books, we need to adapt. Books need to be more concise. They need to have some media component to it. Images are no longer enough. Video content is becoming mandatory for a lot of subjects. Basically, the pricing structures of our books and our monetizing model are being governed by consumer behavior now more than ever before. Reading habits have died significantly over the last decade, so that's a significant change. I think people have become more dishonest. There was a sense of morality and ethics when it came to Books and Publishing earlier, but it has become much more commercial. I think the CSR side of the business has reduced significantly, and it has become highly profit-centric nowadays. Margins have shrunk, but the industry has expanded through so many changes.



### Yogendra Gupta

Partner at MAHAVIR BOOKS  
(Mahavir Publishing Company)

Yogendra Gupta is a third-generation entrepreneur at the helm of affairs at MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company). He has expertise in offering data-driven solutions for publishing and handling the marketing and communication vertical. He has propelled a business legacy to the dynamics of the contemporary juncture and has plans to make it more versatile in the future without compromising on its values.

**Frontlist-** Since MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) is one of the top Indian publishers of college, school (CBSE), and professional textbooks, you play a crucial part in the quality of education. How can you, as an owner, devise innovative approaches to preserving the same?

**Yogendra-** Preserving a legacy in any field is one of the most daunting tasks, according to me. This is because you are constantly walking on that thin ice where a fine balance has to be struck between the 'contemporary' and the 'traditional.' Particularly in education, the concerns about quality often seem to take a backseat these days for perhaps other narrower considerations. However, we at MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) believe firmly in our generation's old policy of 'quality first.' To preserve yet proceed continuously with this golden rule, we constantly engage with various subject experts, technology experts, and other relevant stakeholders to devise the appropriate approaches per the end user's requirements. Revisiting and analyzing the resulting data further contributes to our cause of devising better approaches because, as they say, data is the new oil.

**Frontlist-** The Pandemic has fragmented the book distribution process over the past two years. How did MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) encounter this problem and make available books to students?

**Yogendra-** Indeed, the Pandemic was an excellent disruption for all the supply chains, and the publishing industry was no exception to the challenges and

fragmentation caused by it. However, we approached the situation with the belief that every difficulty also throws up new opportunities and avenues for learning. This positive mindset helped us to respond better to the departures in the pattern of learning that emerged in the backdrop of the Pandemic. Towards this end, technology-based e-learning solutions were developed and offered from our end to the students and other stakeholders involved in the learning process. However, this did not serve as a substitute for our books which, of course, continued to remain pivotal to better learning outcomes but augmented and complimented a comprehensive learning environment.

**Frontlist-** The digital presence of MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) is significantly less. Don't you think MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) needs to transform themselves according to the new digital world to sustain themselves with other publications?

**Yogendra-** Transformation is an ongoing process, and digital transformation is undoubtedly the need of the hour. However, the quantum of digital presence is a very subjective issue and cannot be an objective criterion to measure the sustainability of operations. It depends upon a range of factors, including the kind of verticals you operate in. We plan to deepen and make our digital presence more versatile as we plan to diversify into new verticals in publishing in the near future.

**Frontlist-** In your career span, what is the central issue you have encountered in the publishing industry that restricts the Indian publishing roots from flourishing internationally?

**Yogendra-** 'Piracy' is the central issue that I feel has taken a toll on the prospects of the publishing industry to flourish domestically and, more importantly, at the International level. This is because most publishers have a particular 'genre' of books to begin with as their area of specialization. They can only expand globally if revenue streams are continuous and commensurate to their expansion plans. Piracy halts this entire process and acts as a barrier to innovation, which is crucial for taking off globally. This problem has only become grave with the evolution of technology as the forms of piracy have multiplied with various technological means of disposal. The intellectual property rights framework needs to be enforced more robustly.

**Frontlist-** Being a top Indian publisher, how can we attract young minds to pursue their career in publishing. What are the advantages of having a publishing career today?

**Yogendra-** Publishing is at crossroads today with many opportunities to offer an equal number of challenges to tackle. With their problem-solving outlook, young minds can tap this opportunity better than anybody else. We can attract young minds to pursue their career in publishing by making them aware that book publishing is not just about a completed book with an author's name. There is a dense journey behind the final visible product that involves;

editing, graphic designing, advertising, marketing, and sales. All these have just as much to do with the publishing as the human body does with the brain. A perspective about all these areas allows for many more opportunities for a career in each of them. The other advantage of publishing is that there is always a sense of satisfaction that you are a part of the learning process that will lead to better societal outcomes.

**Frontlist- Do you have any learnings you would like to pass on to today's generation that teach you to stand firm as youth is the future of our nation?**

**Yogendra-** Over the years, I have learned that success and failure are false binaries, and I believe you 'succeed' or, at worst, 'learn.' It is better sometimes to not have a short-lived success and instead inculcate in yourself much more prolonged learning. This learning which came to you the hard way will help to shape your firm character in the future, and the three Ps will contribute further to stand firm against all odds- Patience, Perseverance, and Persistence.

**Frontlist- How can we make more books accessible to promote literature as the Publishing industry helps accelerate the education level?**

**Yogendra-** Firstly, we need to be more flexible and accommodative to the demands of the readership to address the issue of accessibility of books because one can only solve a problem by understanding the aspirations of stakeholders in the first place. Therefore breaking the linguistic and geographical barriers in the publishing industry is very important, alongside overcoming the domination of books written in a few selected languages. The other is, of course, that on the supply side as well, we need to engage better with the various book distribution channels. This requires exploring the newer avenues and maintaining greater depth with the existing ones. A fine balance between these two together can result in better outcomes in terms of solving.

**Frontlist- Technology has brought varied ways for content consumption. How have MAHAVIR BOOKS (Mahavir Publishing Company) altered themselves to get new formats of educational books?**

**Yogendra-** Technology is ubiquitous today and has affected various spheres of life in different proportions. However, the education sphere is one of the most significantly intertwined areas with technology, given that technology shapes both means and ends of imparting education. Therefore it is necessary to remain in synchronization with these evolving technological changes. We are trying to respond to these changes in the publishing industry by adapting to the newer platforms and formats of book delivery like audiobooks, e-books, virtual libraries, m-books, educational kits, etc. Thus, in a sense moving beyond the terrain of the traditional book learning process.



**Sharad Gopal Sharma**

*Director at Souvenir Publishers Pvt Ltd*

Sharad Sharma, head of operations at Souvenir Group, talks about his vision for the publishing industry, what he learned from his father, and how he plans to change the dynamic of the Indian book publishing industry.

**Frontlist- What inspired you to pursue a career in publishing in the first place?**

**Sharad-** Growing up, my father taught me much about the publishing industry. It is a business that distributes knowledge to those who need it. A publisher popularises an author's work of art and gives them recognition while sharing their value with a vast community of readers. I've always believed publishing to be a benevolent business and was drawn to it.

**Frontlist- What are the indispensable learnings you adopted from your father - Mr Gopal Krishan Sharma when you began your career? How have these learnings changed you into the person you are today?**

**Sharad-** Well, among the many things I've learned from my father, I would highlight the "never give up" attitude. In an industry such as publishing, it is very important to be planned and prepared; hence, times of uncertainty take a toll on these highly organised individuals.

In this digital era, My father has witnessed ups and downs in the publishing business. And the uncertainty of the pandemic made matters worse. However, I have never seen my father lose heart or be pessimistic. He has not only resilient positivity but also the resourcefulness to cope with a new situation. I love this trait about him and wish to develop the same.

**Frontlist- Souvenir Publishers play an essential role in the spectrum of educational books. What are your views on Artificial intelligence in education?**

**Sharad-** I believe that AI is an excellent way to complement traditional teaching. A teacher may not be aware of some gaps in their teaching style, but an AI system can alert the teacher about these gaps based on the student's

performance. It can also make the grading system very efficient, like Souvenir's Learning Management System. Nonetheless, I also believe that nothing can ever replace traditional classrooms. Teachers can only evaluate students' progress, and technology cannot replace humans.

**Frontlist-** As a director of Souvenir Publishers, what changes have you brought to the Publishing industry through your existence in the community?

**Sharad-** Along with technological incorporation through Dreambox.inc, I've strived to improve our sales. Most salespersons in the Indian Publishing industry are old-fashioned and cultural, which gets them a boring rap. But for a company like Souvenir that solely deals with the young generation, we couldn't afford to carry that image for too long. I've encouraged a modern dress code, grooming among the staff, and a current outlook for running a business. The results have been quite positive, I must say!

**Frontlist-** How has Souvenir Publishers transformed itself regarding new age technology? What's your take on the digital world in the Publishing Landscape?

**Sharad-** Most people think the Digital Age threatens the publishing industry. I think of it as an opportunity!

Due to digitalisation, people habitually consume content that significantly involves educational content. Even so, most millennials know that free-of-cost internet content is not authentic for in-depth research. While the internet cues people's interest in subjects, they turn to books to learn more.

The internet had also marketed books like never before and spiked their sales. Additionally, people turn to books for a digital detox, which profits the publishing industry.

**Frontlist-** Having a massive existence, the Indian Publishing Industry is still grappling with getting acknowledgement at the global level. What's the leading cause behind this? Kindly explain it in a detailed manner.

**Sharad-** As the Director of a publishing company, I believe this is because of the lopsided priorities of Indian publishers. They use more resources on the look and feel of the books than the content.

However, the global market does not judge a book by its cover and rejects books with shortcomings in content. I strive to change this culture of ignorance through Souvenir Publishers and focus on quality content and writing style. After all, how can we forget our industry's bottom line, right?

**Frontlist-** What is the role of education publishers in the age of digital learning? How has the emergence of digitalisation impacted the book sales of Souvenir Publishers?

**Sharad-** During the pandemic and other uncertain times, the sales were negatively affected. I did not expect us to thrive in such a situation by only relying on books. Hence, through Dreambox.inc, I introduced e-learning and hybrid

learning tools to complement our publishing business and education. Adapting to technology worked magically for us as our sales increased exponentially. The e-learning tools incentivised the sales of our books.

**Frontlist-** What are the paramount issues that require more attention to expand the publishing industry?

**Sharad-** Language barriers are a significant issue regarding publishing in India. While publishing books in English or even Hindi helps us reach a wide customer base, we often underestimate the number of people who are educated in their regional languages. Without a good translator, it isn't easy to maintain the authenticity of the content in its original language.

Also, most Indian publishers are traditionalists and reluctant to incorporate technology into their business, making Indian publishing an industry notoriously tough to get into. However, the businesses that adapt to the latest technology, such as Souvenir, reap its benefits.



**Prashant Jain**

*CEO, Oswaal Books and Learning Private Limited*

A literary aficionado, visionary scholar, and compassionate leader, Mr. Prashant Jain holds a Master's degree in Publishing from the University of Arts, London, and has done his BBA from Amity University, Noida. Having the experience of 3 years in the land of 'Bard of Avon,' with some esteemed publishing firms, including John Blake Publishing, London. He has also worked with Procter & Gamble, the UK as an Account Manager for two years. He returned to India in 2006 to share his experience and skills for the betterment of Indian students.

Apart from his exuberant marketing and leadership skills, he's considered to be the Noah's Ark in a time of crisis. With a knack for constantly learning and working on self-enhancement, his vision is to create a centralized educational platform where students of every board, every language, and every country could accentuate their learning capabilities and ambitions.

His hobbies include reading books, participating in car rallies, and travelling. He also enjoys listening to music in his free time.

**Frontlist-** The array of content consumption has become readily available due to the prevalence of new-age

**technology. How have Oswaal books changed to parallel the digital-driven publishing industry, and how does it take a toll on book sales?**

**Prashant-** Technology advancements have increased book sales and reading market growth. Yes, everyone experiences ups and downs in sales, but Oswaal Books will always have a place in the market regardless of how high the competition rises. We deal with the best books without sacrificing quality, from informational to reading content. Our content is also published in E-books, websites, etc., and the digital era doesn't affect our organization's sales in any manner.

Oswaal Books initially adopted a policy of going with the flow and avoided getting drawn in by the shifting trends. Digitization seems to always result in positive results for us. People still love to read hardcover work. So, our organization's sales did equally well in soft copies and hard copies of the books. In short, the digital era doesn't affect us. We firmly feel that the adjectives "innovation" and "creativity" are superior. We always abide by these principles as we advance and concentrate on our objectives. And yes, we have transformed into a digital-driven society.

Moreover, modern technologies provide an increment in the success of our organization. We have already started an Ed-Tech platform, "OSWAAL-360," which aims to provide online assessment tests to help students improve their skills and abilities. Thanks to the most recent support trend and innovation, Oswaal Books transformed to match the digital-driven publishing market, giving us the chance to shift the mark to digitalization.

**Frontlist- How far do you come along to accomplish the vision you set for establishing Oswaal books as the leader across the education spectrum of India?**

**Prashant-** Every child in India learns from an early age that books are the most incredible friends, and I, with the help of my team, make this proverb a reality by enabling students to have a thorough understanding of educational series merely from one book rather than becoming accustomed to hundreds of books. In the educational sector, we have tailored our books for each grade to give students a comprehensive understanding. It is a promising undertaking to see the education sector battling alongside the developments in the other businesses. Oswaal actively supports these reforms and is attempting to contribute to this revolution. As a result, this sets our digitalization strategies apart from the competition: we didn't just dive headfirst into the idea of technology integration because it was a hot topic. And certainly, we are making Oswaal Books the industry leader in India's education.

**Frontlist- Do you believe that a Publishing career is much brighter for upcoming generations? Could you please share any advice for young entrepreneurs seeking employment in this field?**

**Prashant-** In a word, yes! Our unaided eyes show that the publishing industry is growing every day and will

leave a lasting impact. One of the most sought-after jobs in the world is publishing, which is pursued by people passionate about reading, editing, and creating books in a way that inspires readers to pick them up off the shelf and spend time with them. There are a variety of career paths open to those who desire to work in publishing, including production, design, marketing, editorial, and sales. As the demand for eBooks grows, so does the publishing industry's need for digital marketing and growth. Any experience in publishing is a positive experience because it shows that a person is willing to dedicate themselves to a field to gain credibility and expertise.

**Frontlist- The publishing industry has experienced a tumultuous shift in business values and innovations after the Pandemic. What's your take on this?**

**Prashant-** The Covid-19 Pandemic plunged the world into innumerable crises in all walks of life. It can be unequivocally said that the education sector metamorphosed the greatest to combat these changing world dynamics. The demands for digital education began augmenting at an unhesitating speed and have not waned out even now. Being a part of the publishing industry, we know that most publishing houses were shut down during the Pandemic and could not open up again due to the loss suffered by companies during the Pandemic. During a pandemic, the publishing industry has undergone a turbulent change in business values. The Pandemic has not affected us; our revenue increased significantly during the Pandemic. People love to enjoy hardcopy and digital books. At the time of the Pandemic, when all the other companies started to publish e-content, we were already dealing in e-books and e-content prior that's why we were able to generate handsome revenue via e-books at the time of the Pandemic.

We also launched our EdTech platform 'OSWAAL-360,' which aims to provide an online assessment test to the students. That's why our business gains profit because of these e-books and digitalization. Oswaal Books initially adopted a policy of going with the flow and avoided getting caught in the shifting trends. I kept a close eye on these events with the help of my knowledgeable team and sought to plan a way out. As a result, I started working on creating the highest degree of digital functioning and integrating it with educational issues. As the world has become more digitized, we have also changed.

**Frontlist- The Pandemic has significantly influenced the quality of education. How can we promote sustainable growth while addressing the educational gaps?**

**Prashant-** We are all aware of how devastatingly the pandemic affected everyone. The epidemic significantly influences every aspect of life, with the education system bearing the brunt of this burden. To stop the spread of the virus and lessen its effects, this emergency in the sphere of education has resulted in the widespread shutdown of face-to-face activities of educational institutions in more than 190 nations. The suspension of face-to-face classes at all levels has led to the adoption several measures in the

area of education that the region's countries have taken in response to the crisis. When educational institutions have stayed closed, and millions of young people have been persuaded to stay at home with their families, online education seems to be the only option to ensure that these students continue their education. For many students in our schools, colleges, and institutions with little to no access to computers and internet connectivity at home, conventional online education is still out of their grasp. The number of students who have access to broadband internet, 4G cell phones, tablets, laptops, or desktop computers, as well as other essential devices for online courses, is yet unknown.

Ways to promote sustainable growth while addressing the educational gaps:

- Be interdisciplinary and comprehensively integrated into the curriculum to enable a whole-institution approach to policy making.
- Discuss the values and guiding concepts of sustainable development.
- Encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and action, which all help people feel more confident while facing the difficulties of sustainable development.
- Use a range of teaching techniques to highlight the processes, such as theatre, debate, literature, and the arts.
- Permit students to weigh in on decisions affecting the structure and content of educational programmes.
- Avoid using jargon-filled language and words, and talk about both local and global issues.

**Frontlist-** Where does the Indian Publishing Industry stand with the Global Publishing Industry?

**Prashant-** India's publishing sector is ranked among the top seven publishing countries in the world. Following the US and the UK in English language publishing, India comes in third with an estimated market share of INR 10,000 crores. Undoubtedly, the Indian publishing sector is now competitive with the global sector. Globally speaking, the e-publishing industry is booming. Even while e-book sales may have decreased at times, this has no bearing on the expansion of the e-publishing industry or the number of companies offering digital publishing services. The demand for digitalization among technologically advanced readers leaves the market for India's e-publishing sector open. As the Indian economy expands and thrives, the Indian market will also expand in the years to come. India's publishing industry is diverse and depends on educational attainment and regional dialects. Therefore, I can see that the Indian publishing industry is at a rapid pace of development.

**Frontlist-** The education spectrum has seen dynamic growth because of Artificial Intelligence. How will it change the education level in India?

**Prashant-** The concept of artificial intelligence is no longer the stuff of science fiction; it now permeates every aspect of our daily life. Education is one of several

industries that will be affected by AI as it develops into a powerful modern technology that deals with massive amounts of data. As a result, if more students are aware of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, there is a chance that many young minds will contribute to significant advancements in AI technology in the future. According to projections, the country's population is over 50% of people under 25. These techniques must be used wisely to give better instruction and learning as digital data collection technologies grow.

Revolutionary changes that AI can bring in the education system:

- There are currently some artificial intelligence-based tutoring tools that can guide students through fundamental math, writing, and other topics.
- By accounting for all the drawbacks of fixed-format tests, including varying weighting and the difficulty of the curriculum, AI can develop fairer, more objective methods of evaluating candidates. Our compass can be adjusted straight by AI, allowing us to finally move in the right direction.
- The application of AI can decrease time and resource waste during the grading process since it gives each student access to real-time feedback on their performance from the perspectives of proficiency and expertise.

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## Aman Chawla and Anuj Chawla

*Director at Dreamland Publications*

**Aman Chawla**, the Director, joined Dreamland Publications in 2003 after graduating from Delhi University. He is an intelligent, solution-focused person with sales, marketing, and operations capabilities and is looking after the export section of the company. His sophisticated communication skills, right strategies to market the business, and utmost dedication to work have taken Dreamland Publications to the next level.

His focus has successfully led to the expansion of Dreamland Publications globally to export books to over 70 countries and in more than 25 foreign languages.

To broaden Dreamland's horizons, he regularly participates in and visits various international and domestic fairs that help him continue understanding multiple aspects of the publishing world.

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**Anuj Chawla** - With Delhi University, Symbiosis, and Harvard as his Alma Mater, Anuj Chawla joined Dreamland Publications in 2008. He is heading production along with international sales.

As Director, he is committed to the mission of the flawless production of books. His innovative ideas and research work help him develop new products that elevate the company's growth.

His understanding of the ethics of the publishing profession and dedication towards his responsibility to provide books of excellent quality, both content and designing-wise, have resulted. Hence, Dreamland Publications has been conferred many awards and honours like the Best Children Book Publishing Award, Excellence in Publishing Award, and many more by the Federation of Indian Publishers and Federation of Educational Publishers in India.

With these awards, he has become more devoted to bringing prosperity to the education system. His regular visits and participation in various international and domestic book fairs help him shape his research to develop more innovative products for children.

**Frontlist- How does Dreamland Publications revolutionise the Children's Publishing Industry as a leading children's books publisher?**

**Aman-** As leading children's book publishers, we at Dreamland have always tried to come out with books that provide the right content for education in an entertaining manner. A lot is happening in children's book publishing.

To revolutionise this industry, we aim to create fun, unusual picture books for children that are fun and provide great non-screen activities to stimulate their creativity and imagination.

**Anuj-** We at Dreamland Publications have an extensive publishing portfolio expanding daily with books and other educational products like puzzles, flashcards, and more for children. To revolutionise the publishing industry, we are committed to producing quality age-appropriate books for little ones to delight them while learning through play and promote fine motor skills and creativity.

**Frontlist- How do you look at digitalisation in the Publishing community? How has it influenced Dreamland Publications?**

**Aman-** A step in the digital world, in terms of books, is offering technical changes, operating on processes of production and market distribution, and extending along the whole value chain. But when it comes to children's books, people still prefer a physical printed book rather than an e-book. Digitalisation has influenced Dreamland Publications for the betterment to improve its designing, composing, editing, printing, etc., and to bring better products for children.

**Anuj-** Books are one of the oldest media still in use, and throughout its history, books have remained a central medium in providing education. The current changes from digitisation are evident, but it has not affected the importance of printed books. Especially when it comes to children's books. Parents want to keep their children away from screens due to their physical ill effects, so printed books are the best option.

Of course, digitalisation has been a boon for publishers when it comes to sales and marketing. It has become easy to reach the masses through various digital platforms, and global players like Amazon have provided a new context for the economics and distribution of books.

Digitalisation has also given a new platform for designing, printing, and editing books.

**Frontlist- What are the career prospects for Children's publishing? Do you think Children's publishing is an enticing career to pursue the young generations?**

**Aman-** Reading is an important part of a child's development, and a book with beautiful artwork, design, and texture is a genuine joy. Hence, career prospects for children's publishing are bright for those who wish to contribute to developing such beautiful books. It can make one proud to develop something that is loved.

Children's publishing is undoubtedly an enticing career to pursue young generations, as it has not only full-time

working options but also can be developed as a freelancer to fulfil one's hobby. Many areas in which enthusiasts young can contribute and make a mark, from writing and editing to designing. There are many fields in the publishing industry where one can make his career.

**Anuj-** Most people love reading books. Publishing can be defined as the activity of making information, literature, and other content available to the public. But this industry is not limited to this; apart from writers and editors, there are many segments in this industry where career options are available, especially in the context of children's books. There are many platforms where careers can be made, Such as painters, graphic designers, colouring artists, photographers, etc.

Indeed it is an enticing career to pursue for those who are creative, innovative, and enjoy reading books.

**Frontlist-** How has children's literature flourished since you joined until the status quo?

**Aman-** Children's literature is not only a means of entertainment, but they are so much more than that. Since joining this industry, I have seen vast growth in children's literature. Earlier it was confined to a few fairy tales, animal stories, or other books, and today it has a vast empire. It has been realised that the age range for children's literature is from infancy through the stage of early adolescence, so there are a plethora of books in

children's literature available nowadays. I have seen it flourishing since I have been in this industry.

**Anuj-** In earlier times, most early books for children were didactic rather than artistic, meant to teach letter sounds and words or improve the child's moral and spiritual life. But with advancements in technology and digitalisation, children's literature has been drastically changed since its earliest days. Today, an abundance of poems, fables, instructive texts, short stories, fictional narratives, etc., has been added to the children's literature empire. Hence children's literature has definitely flourished since I joined the publishing world.

**Frontlist-** Since you, both have given a great deal of time in the Publishing Industry. Why does the Indian Publishing industry lag at the international level? Answer on account of your first-hand experience.

**Aman & Anuj-** India's book publishers are facing myriad challenges – from heightened production costs to a reduction in the kinds of books consumers are willing to read. Publishers are facing new challenges, and price hike in printing and transport services has impacted the industry substantially.

Compared with mature publishing markets worldwide, the Indian Publishing Industry faces many constraints. A few such roadblocks are -



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- Lack of publishers' involvement in policy-making reforms pertaining to the publishing industry
- Weak laws and lack of enforcement concerning piracy and copyrights
- Regulatory challenges linked to GST and import duty
- The limited scope of the free market is due to a large market share of state-run publishers.

**Frontlist- The book distribution chain has been disrupted since the Pandemic Outbreak. How did dreamland Publications make it possible to give access to content to kids and children?**

**Aman-** Pandemic has undoubtedly hit the publishing industry just like it has affected almost every business badly. But thanks to technology and online portals, we have helped to meet the demands of our clients during the Pandemic. People order books online via email, website, or simply call us.

**Anuj-** COVID-19 has impacted supply chains across different geographies and industries. However, the book distribution chain has been disrupted since the Pandemic Outbreak, and the demand for books has increased. Kids been inside the home, unable to attend school or go outside to play or visit friends, and children's books saw increased interest.

Thanks to all online eCommerce portals for supporting the book supply chain.

**Frontlist- What are your thoughts on the Sustainable development goals introduced by UNESCO for giving a new direction to the Publishing World?**

**Aman-** Sustainable development goals call to end poverty, protect the planet, and promote good health and well-being. These goals are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. Each country faces specific challenges in its pursuit of sustainable development. The sustainable development goals introduced by UNESCO certainly give a new direction to the Publishing World.

They have motivated us to bring new books on new topics to bring awareness among children on protecting, restoring, and promoting sustainable use of ecosystems. These goals will help people to transform the world for the better.

**Anuj-** Sustainable development goals introduced by UNESCO are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed, developing, or in a global partnership. These goals are developing ways for publishers to recognise and address the lack of SDG-related content in their educational materials. They are encouraging the publishing world to create content and alternate formats

that are useful for the world. Steps taken in this direction will definitely impact and create a better world.

**Frontlist- You have attained this much at this age. Apart from a Publishing career, is there something left that needs to be accomplished as every person desires to explore innumerable things?**

**Aman-** Not only is the world constantly changing, our desires and wants continuously change. It is human nature to always look for something better and something new. Whatever I have attained so far inspires me to look for more innovative ideas for my business so I can take it to the horizon. It will help me to provide better prospects for my immediate family and my staff family, who has always stood by me.

By bringing more good content, and the best quality books, I want to serve the education industry to make better human beings.

**Anuj-** Our desires are endless. However, when fulfilled, countless more spring up. And it is not wrong to expect more at this stage of age. Of course, I have achieved a lot till now, but there is still a lot that has to be achieved, and today's success inspires me to achieve that.

I wish to take my publishing house to the heights that my father has dreamed of. I want to take the name of Dreamland to the heights where every reader has books that will help them improve academically and become a better person. To touch these heights, I keep trying to publish new format books daily. So there is still much more to accomplish and unlock the opportunities to serve my family, my organisation, and mankind.





### Arnav Gupta

Director, Arya Publishing Company

Arnav Gupta is the CEO of Arya Publishing Company (publishing premium educational books, from academic to medical and even competitive exam books). He is also the Co-Founder of Allter-India, the first sustainable baby care brand. A Third-Generation Entrepreneur, Arnav, holds expertise in data-driven operations and sales. He has catapulted a legacy organisation into the 21st century by bringing tech to the fore. He also developed India's first e-learning app for medical students - EduMed.

**Frontlist-** How did you start your career in the publishing sector?

**Arnav-** Growing up, the conversations at home were always about the book trade and how things worked in the sector. Coming from a legacy brand such as Arya, I knew that the scope for growth would be immense if I chose to build my career in the publishing world. After some real work experience in the family office, followed by my MBA from Narsee Monjee, I was confident about stepping into the publishing world and making my mark there.

**Frontlist-** As a third-generation entrepreneur, what advice would you like to impart to young generations planning to start their career in the same field?

**Arnav-** As an entrepreneur who has worked in both the traditional print-oriented side of the business and the more technology-oriented, my key advice to newcomers would be to strive to maintain a balance between both. Secondly, always remember that content is king; as publishers, our prime responsibility is to deliver premium content to our consumers.

**Frontlist-** A career in the publishing industry is as lucrative as in other sectors. What would you like to say about career prospects in the Publishing World?

**Arnav-** I'd say the time has never been better to be in the publishing trade. We are at the cusp of the technological revolution in the sector where the old will amalgamate

with the new in ways we can only imagine. To become part of this burgeoning industry at this time is to be part of a journey that will catapult your career into the future.

**Frontlist-** What is the significance of the Indian Publishing Industry at the global level? What must be done to bring Indian Publishing into line with global publishing?

**Arnav-** The consumer today is more aware than ever and exposed to a wide variety of content in all possible formats. As an industry, we must focus on continuously evolving the quality of our content, making it match the user's demands.

**Frontlist-** Why is it crucial for companies to transform themselves into digital minds? What new approaches Arya Publishing company has been taking to change themselves in the digital world?

**Arnav-** Gone are the days where there could be a one shoe fits all approach to education, be it relying solely on physical books or e-modes of learning. What works best, in my opinion, is augmenting books with digital content. At Arya, we are working on several customized apps which will provide the shot format accessible to grasp the content in the video format to students in a way that makes learning more approachable.

**Frontlist-** Pandemic has hampered the book's distribution. How does it affect Arya Publishing's book sales?

**Arnav-** Fortunately for us, the cloud of the pandemic has lifted from the organization and no longer affects our performance. But it was an arduous journey while it lasted, with schools being shut and a virtual absence of demand for books. At a time like this, we really looked

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into what made us the publication house that we are and focused on our core offerings. We did away with the fluff, and I am proud to say that we have emerged as a stronger business and brand post the pandemic.



**Ankur Mittal**

*Director at D K Agencies (P) Ltd*

Ankur Mittal joined the family business in 2004 after completing his degree in Business Administration from Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. He is currently Director of D K Agencies (P) Ltd and LiFi Publications Pvt Ltd. D K Agencies have been supplying books and periodicals to libraries globally since 1968. LiFi Publications was founded in 2012 and published literature and fiction in English. Ankur is an active Rotarian and has been involved in Rotary projects and serving society.

**Frontlist- D K Group started LiFi Publications - a new venture to signify Literary fiction. How has LiFi Publications brought a new wave to the fictional world?**

**Ankur-** We are a family-run organisation and have been in the book business for more than 5 decades now. LiFi was conceptualized and incorporated in 2012. At LiFi, we pushed the traditional publishing of works not only by veterans but also by debutant authors at a time when self-publishing was almost an unknown feature. It has been a wonderful experience working with new authors, who are generally desperate to have their books in hand. Some of those titles did pretty well in sales, particularly those where authors made efforts to promote their writings.

We have also published a good number of short story collections in the last 10 years, which generally are not preferred by regular publishers. In my opinion, general readers have minimal time available in this fast-paced world, and short stories can be read in a few minutes, whereas novels require hours.

**Frontlist- Why is it significant to consider the Sustainable Development Goals to bloom the publishing ecosystem?**

**Ankur-** Sustainable Development Goals set up by the United Nations in 2015 include Quality Education. Books being one of the essentials in achieving this goal, we

expect continued growth in the publishing ecosystem in the years ahead.

**Frontlist- The publishing industry influences the quality of education. How's LiFi Publications bridging the educational gaps as fiction books are the best tool to increase storytelling skills, which is very important for creative growth among children?**

**Ankur-** Storytelling or reading any literature, be it fiction or non-fiction, adds to the vocabulary and comprehension of children, which in turn generates creativity among them. And once the reading habits develop, it is a form of continuing education for all times.

**Frontlist- Suppose someone wants to start a career as a Publisher. What key things should they consider to become a publisher?**

**Ankur-** A person willing to enter into publishing must have patience and should be prepared to put in a lot of effort in making sure to bring out quality publications, not only in terms of production but also well-written and edited content to the liking of the audience. One can also go for professional/vocational courses relevant to this field to add skills.

**Frontlist- What dynamic changes have you seen in the publishing industry from your joining time till today? Would you like to discuss any specific change that might've impacted your career?**

**Ankur-** During these nearly two decades, technology in publishing has completely revamped things that existed earlier. With computers, gadgets, printing systems, and online resources, the publishing process has become a lot easier compared to the past. Similarly, the dynamics of promoting a book, an author, or a list of titles have also completely changed. Social Media also plays an active role in our lives and has an impact on promotional activities. While these changes have been quite favorable for the publishing industry, the misuse of new technologies has also led to unethical publishing, which is quite disturbing.

**Frontlist- Young generations have different career choices nowadays. Why would they choose their career in a publishing profession? Share your views based on your personal experience?**

**Ankur-** A devoted publisher has the opportunity to interact with authors and scholars and learn about the content and writing style of each one of the manuscripts, which help them to accomplish professionalism at all levels. As a publisher, we are a part of the Knowledge Industry and an important pillar in managing the author's supply chain of knowledge and experience to the reader.

**Frontlist- Do LiFi Publications make themselves paralleled to the digital wave? Are they still grappling with the digital transformation to compete in the technology race?**

**Ankur-** LiFi has been active on Social Media platforms since its inception. It has been a great way to connect with authors and readers. We have also created and marketed

eBooks for some of our titles. Digital is constantly evolving, and we are trying to keep up with the updated technology.

**Frontlist-** Copyright issues have been a part of the Publishing industry, creating many difficulties for Publishers and authors. How can we cater to this problem as we all are driving into the digital phase?

**Ankur-** There have been copyright issues even in hard copy publishing, particularly with the advent of technologies in the last 3-4 decades. In the digital era, these challenges have increased due to easy access and advanced knowledge of computers and gadgets, even at grassroots levels. The most important step to minimizing copyright issues is to create awareness about it from top to bottom. These days our Government is focusing on the environment by banning single-use plastics and creating awareness about it. Even at the school level, children are being informed about the problems associated with using plastics. Similarly, awareness drives are required so that people start respecting copyright. Moreover, as far as digital is concerned, the platforms and services providers should make their system robust so that nobody can misuse the contents and infringe the copyright.



### Prashant Jain

Director at Indica Publishers & Distributors P. Ltd.  
(IPDPL)

Prashant Jain, Director at Indica Publishers & Distributors P. Ltd. (IPDPL). IPDPL is a leading library supplier, distributor and publication house that is being run by Prashant Jain and his younger brother, Mohit Jain.

**Frontlist-** How did you start your publishing career? What has changed since you initially entered the publishing industry?

**Prashant-** Well, this is my family business. My grandfather started this publication house in 1962. I joined the company immediately after schooling in 1996 and pursued graduation and post-graduation together. A

lot has changed since I entered the business in these 26 years. The Indian Publishing industry registered considerable growth during this time. Now I see Indian publications are giving tough competition to their foreign counterparts. It is a proud moment as an Indian. Also, in the last few years, I have seen an increase in the number of Indian authors, which I consider another milestone in the Indian publishing industry because many of them are quite popular today for their contribution.

**Frontlist-** IPDPL is the leading Library Supplier of Indian and Foreign Texts, Reference Books, and General Works. How has the pandemic influenced the book distribution process? Could you please share some of the challenges that Indica Publishers & Distributors P Ltd faced during this period?

**Prashant-** Yeah, the pandemic was brutal on us as well as on the entire book industry. The print business was shut down as there was no demand due to the closing of all the educational institutes. Luckily, the e-resources business kept the trading sailing. During the pandemic, the institutes are more focused on e-resources to provide the reading material to their faculties and students at home.

**Frontlist-** The publishing industry plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education. What would you like to say in this context?

**Prashant-** Undoubtedly, it does. There is no substitution for books when we talk about education, and the publishing industry plays the primary role in enhancing the quality of education. Contrary to popular opinion, I believe that the internet can never replace books regarding education, and also, the internet cannot match the authenticity of the information.

**Frontlist-** What significant learnings have you grasped throughout your publishing industry career?

**Prashant-** I have learned the importance of strong trade relations. Also, you must be vigilant and keep yourself updated with the latest technologies and developments in the market.

**Frontlist-** Can we look upon young generations to envision their career in the Publishing Industry? Do you have any advice that will be advantageous to them?

**Prashant-** There are two categories of young generations venturing into the publishing business – the ones who are inheriting the business and the ones who'll be starting thing business on their own. For people joining their family business, I suggest observing their seniors and trying to grasp the trade's insights. For people with no background in this business and who are thinking of starting their publishing, I would recommend first taking experience with a publishing house. After gaining industry experience, they should consider investing money and establishing a publishing house. It would be a difficult journey to set up this business in this competitive environment. There

are many challenges in publishing, such as distribution, substandard content, cost of production, pricing a book at an affordable rate, and many others. But, of course, piracy and re-export are few among the other enduring challenges in India. However, we are trying to fight this evil. Since it is a herculean task that, more than money, involves time, it is difficult to have a complete check on piracy.

**Frontlist-** With the advent of the new technology era, things have been revolutionized for the publishing industry. How has it brought new avenues for Indica Publishers & Distributors P Ltd (IPDPL)?

**Prashant-** I think technology has a high impact and has affected every sphere of publishing, including production and marketing. The main drivers of this change are the internet, print-on-demand, digital publishing, and e-books. The print-on-demand trend saves a lot of paper and warehousing issues.

**Frontlist-** IPDPL's participation is commendable across the World Book Fair/National Book Fairs/Conferences/Seminars and Book Exhibitions. How has IPDPL been adding value to the publishing ecosystem?

**Prashant-** IPDPL is generating a lot of employment both directly and indirectly. It is supporting many new publishing houses by distributing their publications. Also, we publish books by new authors, which boosts their morale, and they can start their career as writers. We are giving business to many paper suppliers, printers, binders, cardboard box manufacturers, transporters, etc. In that way, we are contributing to the publishing ecosystem. A lot of students are studying the books that we publish and distribute. Education enables them to bring laurels by being productive in the country as well as abroad.

So, the book trade directly or indirectly contributes to the country's development.



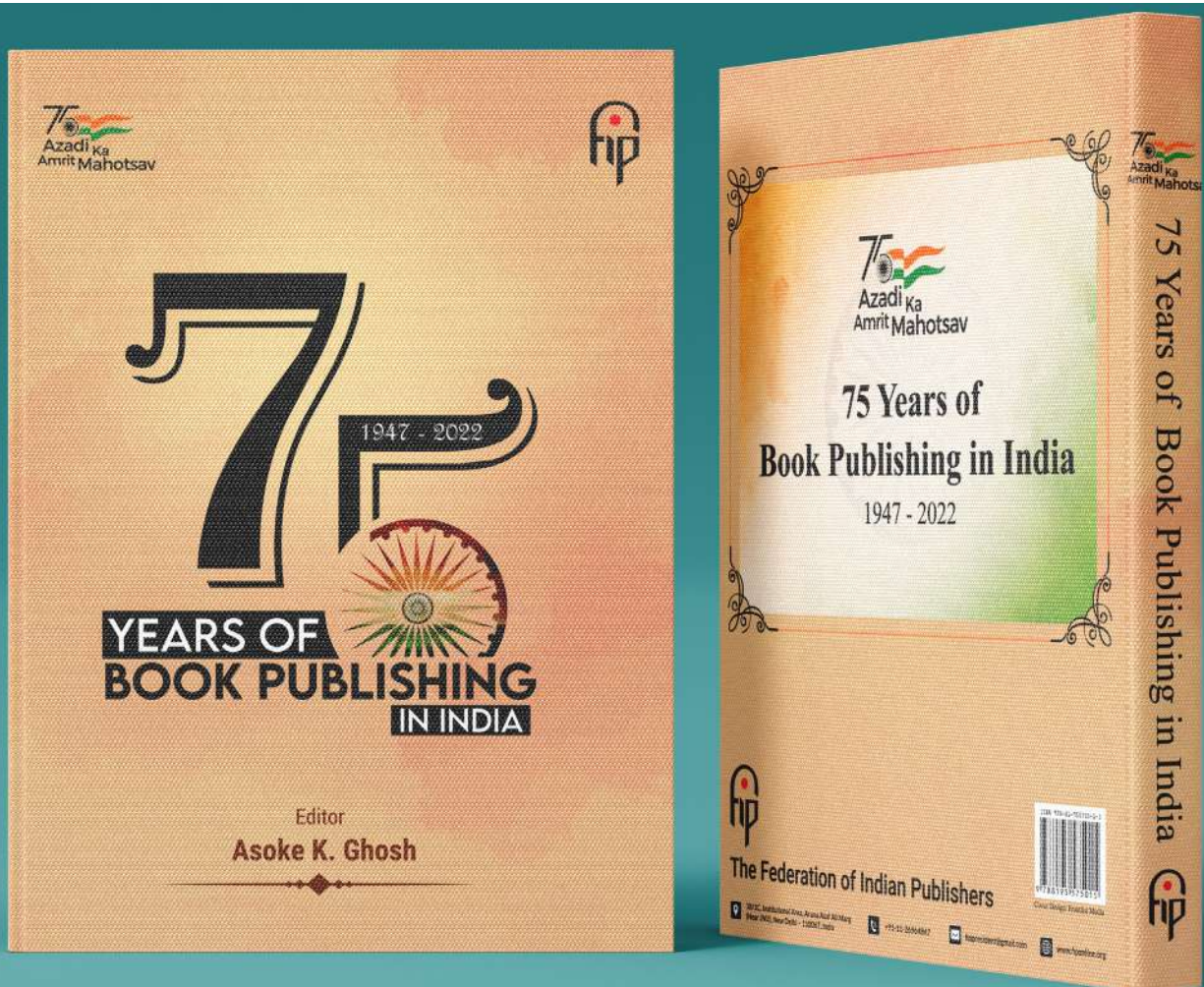
# EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE

## CELEBRATION OF 75 YEARS OF AZADI KA AMRIT MAHOTSAV

### Launching Soon: 75 Years of Book Publishing in India by FIP, edited by Shri Asoke K Ghosh

As this year marks 75 years of the Indian Publishing Industry and the '75 years of Independence: Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', The Federation of Indian Publishers will be launching the book - '75 Years of Book Publishing in India' in August 2022. The book is the quintessential specimen dedicated to our nation.

While Freedom fighters fought for our Independence through their bravery and intelligence, even at that time, the power of a pen reached one and all and fired the ambition of living in a free country. A salute to all those great individuals, FIP is bringing the same flavour where one can realize the POWER OF A PEN, the power of books, and the various perspectives of publishing professionals.



## ABOUT THE BOOK - 75 YEARS OF BOOK PUBLISHING IN INDIA

This book presents a comprehensive insight into the glorious evolution of the Indian publishing sector over the past 75 years. It offers an all-encompassing view of its past, present, and future. It further sheds light on how the ever-evolving landscape of Indian publishing and the tireless hard work of all its stakeholders has enabled our beloved nation to attain the feat of thriving amongst global frontrunners in terms of publishing and being only second to the USA in terms of publishing books in English. The mammoth reach of its expanse has resulted in our growth potential ranging up to INR 800 billion by 2024.

The first part of this book exhaustively covers articles on publishing in twenty Indian languages, followed by the second part, which has offshoots that encompass the narrative of how the publishing sector has met all the daunting odds over the past few decades to stay abreast with the changing trends across the globe.

It further highlights the role of digitisation and sustainability in this industry apart from highlighting the need for educating the masses on the viability and scope of copyright in India, intending to amplify the creative outcome of the literary space. Lastly, under the penmanship of eminent Indian personalities, it covers how the Federation of Indian Publishers has been the focal point of establishing robust global and domestic

relationships in this sphere, along with the role of prominent international organisations like the IPA.

## KEY CONTRIBUTORS OF THE BOOK

- 1. Dr Rajkumar Ranjan Singh**  
Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs & Education, Govt. of India
- 2. Bodour Al Qasimi**  
President, International Publishers Association
- 3. Karine Pansa**  
Vice-President, International Publishers Association
- 4. Shri Sunil Deodhar**  
BJP's National Secretary has also been given additional responsibility as the party's co-in-Charge for the state of Andhra Pradesh
- 5. Dr Vinay Sahasrabudhe**  
President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi and Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha
- 6. Amish Tripathi**  
A recognized contemporary Indian fiction writer best known for writing *The Shiva Trilogy*. His debut novel, *Immortals of Meluha*, made a record-breaking sell within a few weeks of its launch, making him an internationally acclaimed Indian author.
- 7. B Mahadevan**  
Professor, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore
- 8. Anil D Sahasrabudhe**  
Chairman of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

## ABOUT THE EDITOR



**Asoke K Ghosh**

The Father of Indian Publishing and this publication's architect, holds an immaculate vocational standing in this field that is adorned with accomplishments like being the first Indian and the sole Asian to be named Vice President of the leading global organisation for publishing worldwide, the International Publishers Association (IPA).

He's the Chairman and Managing Director of PHI Learning Private Limited and was the enabler of the ground-breaking revolution of the publication of low-cost books

under the umbrella of Eastern Economy Editions in the early 1960s that altered the publishing scenario in India by leaps and bounds. He is also the Founder-member, ex-Chairman, and the Honorary Advisor of the Indian Reprographic Rights Organisation (IRRO).

The foundation for publishing computer science books in India was established under his visionary leadership. As we commemorate the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav," which also marks the culmination of 75 years of publishing in India, it is important to note this because his work perfectly embodies the "Make in India" ethos.

Apart from enabling the Indian publishing sphere to create a stellar presence on the global map, Mr. Ghosh also is a Founding member and the President of Emeritus after having held the position of the President of The Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) twice previously. Lastly, he also receives the coveted Outstanding Leadership Award by the IPA for his "commitment to the protection of creativity and freedom to publish." He has also been presented with the Most Distinguished Publisher Award and the Life Time Achievement Award by the FIP.

Lastly, The London Book Fair, in collaboration with The Publishers Association, presented Mr. Ghosh with "The Simon Master Chairman's Award." His dedicated effort was pivotal in establishing Delhi as the first-ever UNESCO World Book Capital in 2003.

## Message from eminent dignitaries who played an integral role in publishing this book



**Ramesh K Mittal**

*President, FIP*

'75 Years of Book Publishing in India' is the most prestigious publication of the Federation of Indian Publishers. We at FIP are excited to release this monumental work during the celebrations of 75 years of Indian Independence 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.'

This extraordinary compendium contains a plethora of articles encompassing the overall evolution of different genres of book publishing in India in the last 75 years, including publishing in 22 Indian languages. All the articles are contributed by publishing stalwarts and renowned people from public life.

A comprehensive one-of-its-kind reference work – a must for any public or university library.

**Amrit Mahotsav** is a celebration of 75 years of an important event. In commemorating the Amrit Mahotsav of India's Independence, the country's publishing industry and other important stakeholders have joined hands with the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP) in presenting a volume on '**75 years of Book Publishing in India (1947 – 2022)**'. It's a collection of nearly 60 articles contributed by dignitaries and stalwarts in their specific fields. Each article distinctly speaks about the developments that have taken place in a particular area of publishing or an associated field, historically and up to now. Articles in as many as 19 languages in which regular publishing takes place have been included in this volume. Besides this, it comprises well-researched and thoughtful writings on the Socio-Cultural Aspects of Publishing, Diverse Areas in Publishing, and Technical, Business & Organisational Aspects of Publishing. In short, this monumental compilation puts before the reader an overall sketch of the Indian Publishing Industry, which happens to be at sixth rank in the world.

Shri Asoke K Ghosh, Editor of this volume and President Emeritus of FIP, has put his heart and soul through each article and ensured an appropriate layout of every page. FIP is happy to have him as its mentor and guide.



**Dr. Ashok Gupta**

*Hon. General Secretary, FIP*





**Pranav Gupta**  
*Joint Secretary, FIP*  
*Managing Director, Prints Publications Pvt Ltd*

“As our country celebrates 75 Years of Independence this year, the Government of India has planted a seed of ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ - an extensive celebratory campaign across industries and verticals to commemorate 75 years of Independence and the glorious history of our people, culture, and achievements.

In this Mahotsav, the Federation of Indian Publishers, an Indian body representing the Indian publishers, could not resist leaving any stone unturned as this year also marks 75 Years of the existence of the Indian publishing industry. Hence, we decided to curate the book ‘75 Years of Book Publishing in India’ in continuation to the earlier editions like 60 Years and ‘50 Years of publishing in India’.

The Indian publishing industry today is ranked as the 6th largest in the world and the 2nd largest in publishing English language books. The Indian publishing industry is worth USD 9.5 billion and continues to grow, and India is the largest creator and consumer of all the products and services at this time. Hence, as publishers of this phenomenal multi-cultural and large nation, we must build on our strengths immediately and collectively ensure that some of us rise to the world’s top 10 publishers within the next ten years.

The book ‘75 Years of Book Publishing in India’ is set to launch in August 2022 and includes valuable writings by global publishing leaders such as the President and Vice-President of the International Publishers Association, Ms Bodour Al Qasimi, and Ms. Karine Pansa, respectively. We were also able to invite contributions by celebrity names such as Mr Amish Tripathi and dignitaries such as Shri Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs & Education, Govt. of India, Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President - ICCR & MP Rajya Sabha, Shri Sunil Deodhar, National Secretary of the BJP and many more valuable personalities from national and international spaces.

I am sure the book will be considered a valuable resource for our present and future generations.”

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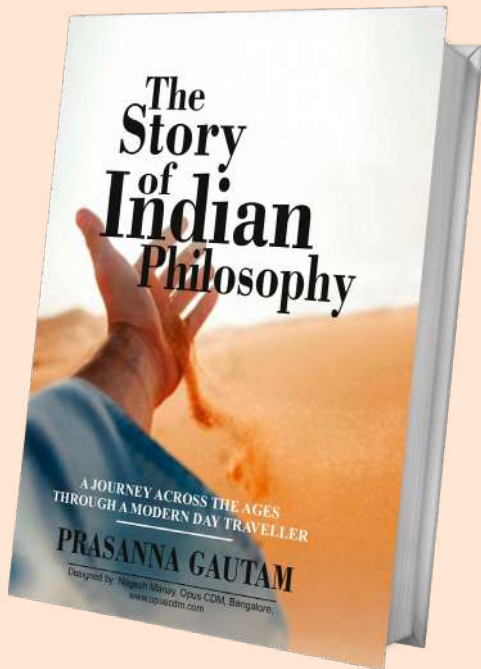


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# BOOK LAUNCH

## BOOK NAME - THE STORY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY



### BOOK BLURB :

The working title for this book at first was “Indian Philosophy,” which I always wanted to know but had no time to do so.

Indian philosophy appears at first to be a bewildering plethora of concepts, and this curious potpourri of faith and logic has made Indian Philosophy an enigma. This short work has squeezed a period of several millennia and prevented the evolution of concepts in a quasi-historical manner to demonstrate the dynamic nature of Indian philosophy. I hope this makes it different and more comprehensive than the hitherto published scholarly books on the subject.

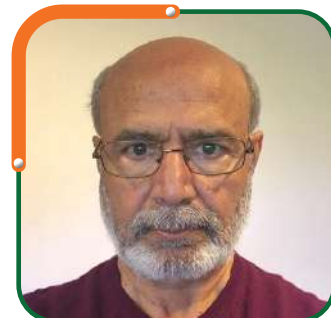
Despite the brevity of the presentation, the contents of this book are sufficiently informative to satisfy those who wish to know about it but are hard-pressed for time. The first few paragraphs give the essence of the full text in the chapter, and a general reader needs not go through the white text. The detailed text is for the students, researchers, and teachers. Footnotes, references, and a bibliography aid any serious study.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR :

Dr Prasanna Chandra Gautam - MBBS, MRCP (UK), FRCP Edin., FRCPS, Glasgow, FRSPH (UK). He has been studying ancient Sanskrit literature since 2005. Formerly, he was a Consultant Physician and a Senior Lecturer in Medicine at Aberdeen University, Scotland and an Honorary Professor of Gerontology at Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences in Kathmandu. He was educated in Kathmandu, Varanasi, Bangalore, and the UK. He was born into an orthodox Brahmin family in Nepal, where he grew up familiar with the

### AUTHOR NAME

**DR PRASANNA CHANDRA GAUTAM**



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traditional customs and rituals. Being an experienced science researcher and teacher, he is well placed to interpret ancient Sanskrit texts and present them coherently and systematically. He has translated the Rig Veda word for word from Sanskrit into English, Nepali, and Hindi. He lives with his wife Leela in Aberdeen, Scotland.

**Besides many technical papers on medicine, his other publications include:**

- I need to break your other leg: Tales of medical adventures and misadventures. 2008
- Rig Veda Samhita with Mantra, Pada-patha, Anvaya, Artha, and Essence. PC Gautam et al. (translator and editor), Nepali. Vol. 1-2. 2010
- Jawa Pugyo Sathi (Life after sixty). 2012
- Modern English Translation of The Rig Veda Samhita, Vol 1-4, Nepali edition 2012, Indian edition, 2015
- The Ping: An International Thriller. 2016
- Rigveda, Yathartha Anuvad. Vol. 1-4. MC Maheshwari and PC Gautam. Hindi. 2020
- Reflections in Contemporary Values, Beliefs, and Behaviours: Adventures of an Enquiring Mind. 2018, 2019

## EXPLORE THE BOOK

### Chapter 1: Introduction

This introduces most of the issues comprehensively from the background of existing literature. This also highlights continuity in misinformation and conjectures presented by the scholars. Finally, the text suggests a scientific and objective way of looking at the existing literature, which is logical and comprehensible. These concepts are the main quest for peace, bliss, and equanimity, which are essential to modern times, too.

### Chapter 23: Conclusion

The author suggests a few inferences based on this vast literature.

- (i) The Vedic Concept of social structure could be adapted to suit modern times.
- (ii) Each person should design and follow their religion which should have no intermediary between him and his faith. They should worship in private and have no commonplace preaching or worshipping. This is to avoid herding mankind into adversarial religious camps, and this will prevent conflicts, wars, deaths, and destruction.
- (iii) Let society determine an upper limit too for accumulating personal wealth. It will be in the interest of the whole society to narrow the widening divide between the rich and poor.

## MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Let our blind faith in tradition and superstition never extinguish the flame of curiosity within us.

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## INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

**Frontlist-** What does Indian Philosophy teach us regarding the quality of life? Why is it important for young generations to connect with Indian Philosophy?

**Prasanna-** "Quality of Life" is a modern concept. One is thought to have a good quality of life if one has sophisticated physical amenities, sufficient wealth, and other resources. The emphasis is on pleasurable living in comfort and possessing as much luxury as possible. The ancient concept of "Quality of Living" emphasises on a lifestyle in which equanimity, peace, tranquillity, and spiritual enhancement are actively sought and practised. Physical and luxurious amenities are not considered as important. There is nothing wrong with the former concept as one is prepared to accept the risk of mental breakdown, other manifestations of severely stressful conditions and conflicts, and disharmony. The latter lifestyle also can precipitate a sense of disaffection, failure, and a feeling of inadequacy within oneself, particularly when overwhelmed by peer pressure and the demands of society. Buddha suggested a middle way, balancing your life in the best possible way. Many call this a "Simple Living" – awareness of both these concepts can help a young person to choose the lifestyle that appears most acceptable.

**Frontlist-** If we look at the concept of Nihilism and Indian religious & moral principles, they are paradoxical to each other. What would you like to say in this context?

**Prasanna-** Nihilism, nowadays, is attributed to the German philosopher Nietzsche who was probably alarmed by the decline of Christianity in Europe. "Nothing really meant anything." But the concept in its widest scope has been debated since the Vedic times, nearly six thousand years ago. The Mantras have questioned the reality of everything and could not come to any conclusion. They could only say that the ultimate reality was "neither this," "nor that." *Neti, Neti*. The Upanishad era brought out the concept that the reality of everything was Brahma. The philosophers who sought proof questioned further. They asked, "Who sees that who is unseen but sees everything?" Buddha simplified this by teaching that the reality of everything was impermanence. The *Madhyamika* school of Buddhist philosophy stretched this teaching to its wildest imagination by bringing out the theory of *Sunyabad* (roughly translated as nihilism). This philosopher was Nagarjuna, who was born about 1500 years before Nietzsche. The Brahmins began to teach that everything was... or illusion. The quantum physicist discussing the formation of matter, the wave and particle theory, suggests that everything may be the manifestation of energy. I have asked whether we are, therefore, just holograms.

**Frontlist-** How do you consider yourself as an iconoclast or a pious person? Please elucidate it.

**Prasanna-** Iconoclast suggests a person who is an atheist with a destructive personality, thus denoting a negative trait. A religious person is thought to be pious. I do not belong to either category, I am a student of science and my job for forty years was to help the sick. I did not destroy but mended their body and mind. Science leads us to the truth. The organised religions of the world are based on faith. The search for truth may be disconcerting to the traditionalists who practice their faith blindly without question. They may consider me to be an iconoclast. I do not conform to any organised religion and have been a pious person. Your question reminds me of an aphorism of the great thinker Sri Aurobindo, who said that searching for truth often leads to some degree of agnosticism.

**Frontlist-** When did you start your journey with Indian Philosophy? Who motivated you the most to explore the complexities of Indian civilizations and their evolutions?

**Prasanna-** I became interested to know about religions and spirituality after reading the lectures of Swami Vivekananda when I was a young boy. At the age of seventeen, I shifted to Ramakrishna Mission Hostel to enhance my mind and build my body", according to the teachings of this great man. The Swamis' arrogance, the religion's rigidity, and subsequently, the misinterpretation and fallacy seen in the commentaries in English, Hindi, and Nepali prompted me to self-study. I have been able to devote much of my time to learning these concepts since retirement.

**Frontlist-** The notion of understanding religion nowadays is being altered due to religious leaders. They trick people in the name of God to display themselves as a figure of holy saints. What are your thoughts on this?

**Prasanna-** Swami Vivekananda noticed this and told the parable of Two Frogs. There is not much difference or significant change in the practice of organised religions and their leaders. However, the visible differences are in social media usage by modern religious readers and their desire to tour foreign parts.

**Frontlist-** What is the main idea behind writing this book? What may this book offer someone who has never read any Indian philosophical works?

**Prasanna-** As I have explained in my prefaces, I have systematically documented the evolution of philosophy in the subcontinent factually and scientifically, giving reference and context. This has, hopefully, made Indian Philosophy easily comprehensible to any readers. Besides trying to make this an easy read, I was also hoping that this vast knowledge could provide some answers to the ills of our times. This might show the way for the younger generation to leave this world in a better state for their children. The destitution, death, and deprivation in the wealthiest nations prompted me to seek their answers.

**Frontlist-** How are Contemporary Preachers different from ancient preachers? Where do these philosophical theories stand in the self-centered world?

**Prasanna-** The contemporary Gurus appear to me to be exceptionally gifted! They seem to know the answer to every question. They also appear to have a very self-satisfying "Quality of Life." There were fake and genuine gurus in ancient times, which we can find by reading some Smritis or Sastras. To me, a genuine Guru is one who envelopes you to think, finds answers to your questions, and enhances your innate mental ability and self-confidence. A fake Guru does the opposite by teaching you half-truths and false things, making you more fearful and dependent on others, mostly himself or herself. It is easier to shun one's responsibility by saying it is "God's will" or "Baba/Swamiji/Mata will set it right" than doing your duty yourself. Fake gurus appear to teach self-hypnosis, too, to a large extent.

**Frontlist-** If you lie for someone else's good sake, it isn't a lie. However, a lie is a lie. It is just a way to manipulate ourselves and others. Please share your thoughts.

**Prasanna-** The traditional teaching has never been to accept that telling lies is ok! The Upanishad says, "Maa bruyaat satamapririm." Do not tell the truth in an unpalatable manner. Our motto has been "Satyameva Jayate Nanritam." Ultimately, the truth prevails; none else.



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## PRANAV GUPTA

**Joint Secretary, Federation of Indian Publishers**

Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022 is an event that makes it convenient for publishers to attend book fairs while they are placed anywhere in the world and network with professionals from across the globe. We are relieved from unnecessary travel expenses and can robustly display our products & services to prospective consumers. It has become an international name ever since it has been able to connect individuals and organizations from the national as well as global markets! DBF provides debutant and established authors with a real-time and quick medium to market their books and receive recognition simultaneously.

## KAPIL GUPTA

**Founder, PragatiE**

Virtual exhibitions were not a Covid fad, and it's here to stay. 3rd edition of the Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022 is a testament to that. We look forward to having innumerable publishers and authors as exhibitors and massive interaction with readers and several International buyers for Indian export trade promotion.



## NAVITA BERRY

**Business Head, Frontlist Media**

I am thrilled that the Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022 will provide a fantastic opportunity for the publishing fraternity to come together.

Frontlist is the exclusive media partner for the 3rd Edition of Virtual Delhi Book Fair 2022. Kindly contact our team for participation, setting up stalls, and sponsorship.



# MEDIA COVERAGE

## Book Launch: Ceremony of "WHO IS A PARSI?" by Prochy N Mehta, organised by Niyogi Books

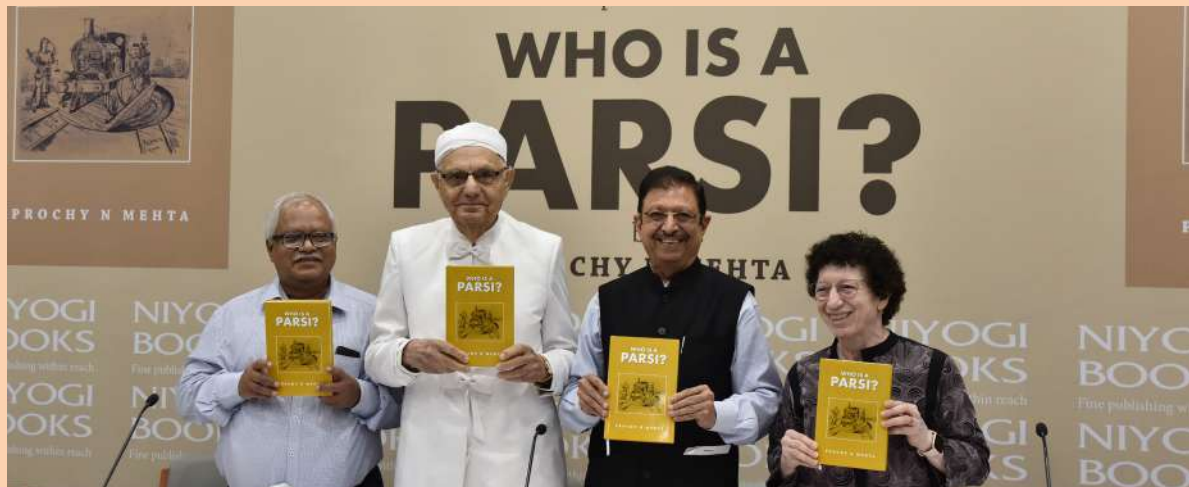
Book launch Ceremony of "WHO IS A PARSI?" by **Prochy N Mehta** was held on Thursday, 7th July 2021, at India international center New Delhi. Niyogi Books organised the launch.

**Who is A Parsi?** by Prochy N Mehta, published by Niyogi Books, was launched at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi, on 7th July 2022.

Chief Guest launched the book **Ervad Yezad Kapadia**, Former President, Delhi Parsi Anjuman, Guest of Honour - **Mr Kersi K Deboo**, Vice-Chairman of National Commission of Minorities, along with the Author, Mrs Prochy N Mehta, and Editorial Director of Niyogi Books, **Dr Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee**.

**Dr Shernaz Cama**, Director of the UNESCO Parzor Project for the Preservation and Promotion of Parsi Zoroastrian Culture and Heritage, was also present at the launch.

After the introduction by Ms Trisha De Niyogi, Dr Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee shared, "The Parsis are dangerously dwindling in numbers today. The crux of this problem lies in the community's refusal to accept children born to a Parsi mother by a non-Parsi father. When India as a nation today is debating the uniform civil code, such personal laws should be abolished, and gender justice should be safeguarded."



Author Prochy N Mehta said, 'There is no definition of 'Who is a Parsi?' This book was conceived with the endeavour to aid those women and children who have been alienated from the Parsi community and help them understand their constitutional rights. She also added that there was child marriage and prostitution in the Parsi community, which was accepted, but as you must know, children of Parsi intermarried women face discrimination. I have explained the difference between the Special Marriage Acts of 1872 and 1954. Only after the Special Marriage Act of 1954 did

interfaith marriage become a reality in India. In this book, I try to show that there is no legal, religious, social, or age-old custom on which it is based. If you have any questions or explanations required, do ask. I hope the book will pave the way for equality for men and women in our community. If you have any questions or explanations required, do ask. I hope the book will pave the way for equality for men and women in our community. I must thank Mr Fali Nariman, India's foremost constitutional lawyer, who guided me in putting the facts and legal aspects together'.

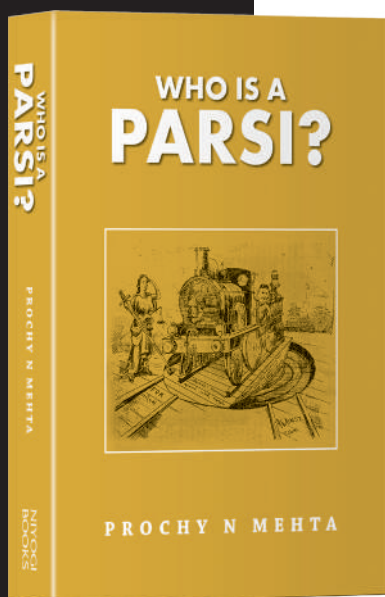


Ervad Yezad Kapadia added 'The core of this book lies in two cases- Petite vs. Jeejeebhoy and Saklat vs. Bella. The book successfully answers the question it raises in its title'. He noted, 'The Parsis are considered racially pure, but scientific research has proved that no people in this world can be racially pure.' He also raised several pertinent questions like 'Should inducting children of inter-religious marriages be considered heresy?'

Kersi K Deboo said 'The tussle between orthodox and reformists which is age-old. Reformation is slow but

certain. Women have been ex-communicated from the Parsi temple on many grounds, as did the Panchayats. But, with time, we have to change.' He applauded the author by saying, 'Prochy has challenged the authorities of the Special Marriage Act by ailing many cases as evidence for the readers to go through and understand by themselves.'

Dr Shernaz Cama also shared 'That the whole concept of Zoroastrianism is based on truth, and that is what I am reminded of by Prochy's book.'



### ABOUT THE BOOK :

The author takes the reader through a detailed analysis of the court cases and seeks to reveal an accurate picture of the community through transcripts. She unveils the history of an ancient Persian trading community, the 'Persees' or 'Persians,' familiar with the sea route to India from before 500 BCE, living as a tribe among the Hindus, and narrates how they rediscovered their religion and the ancient connect with Persia – how in the 19th century they read their recently translated holy book, Gathas, and understood that they were the followers of Ahura Mazda, the one God, who preached a religion for all humankind. The epiphanic realization dawned upon them that the greatest 'meritorious act' performed by a follower of Ahura Mazda was to bring an alien into the faith.

The author depicts the dichotomy of the community in the 20th century between the orthodox and the reformist groups and explains the anomaly of how the reformists who followed the original Mazdayasna or Parsi religion constituted the real orthodoxy. It was a reform movement led by the high priests of the community and the most influential members of society for a return to the pristine purity of the original Zoroastrian Religion. This book documents, through letters, articles in the newspapers, and transcripts from court cases, the views of those brave men, Dadabhai Naoroji, Ratan D Tata, Ratan J Tata, Sir Dinshaw Maneckji Petit, Sir Jehangir Cowasji Jehangir, Rustomjee Byramji Jeejeebhoy, Homi J Bhabha, K R Cama, and many others who dared to stand up and fight for what they believed in, that Parsi and Zoroastrian meant the same thing.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR :

Prochy N Mehta is a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, school leader and topper, and a highly successful sportsperson. She represented West Bengal in hockey and basketball and India in Masters Athletics. She has won 71 international athletic meets, including 52 gold medals. She is the Asian record holder in the 400 meters and the Triple Jump in the Women's 40+ age group. A recipient of the Ladies Study Group Award for contribution to the field of sport and the Federation of Parsi Anjuman of India Award for Sports, Mehta is also the President of the Athletic Coaches Association of Bengal. She is the first female President of the Calcutta Parsee Club. Her father, the late Rusi B. Gimi, an eminent social worker of Calcutta, was a pioneer in outdoor advertising in India. His company Selvel started in 1945, is now synonymous with out-of-home advertising. Mehta is actively involved in the business and is a director in several of the companies.



**Prochy N Mehta**

## Book Launch: 'Getting the Bread: The Gen-Z Way to Success', by Prarthna Batra, organised by Oxford Bookstores

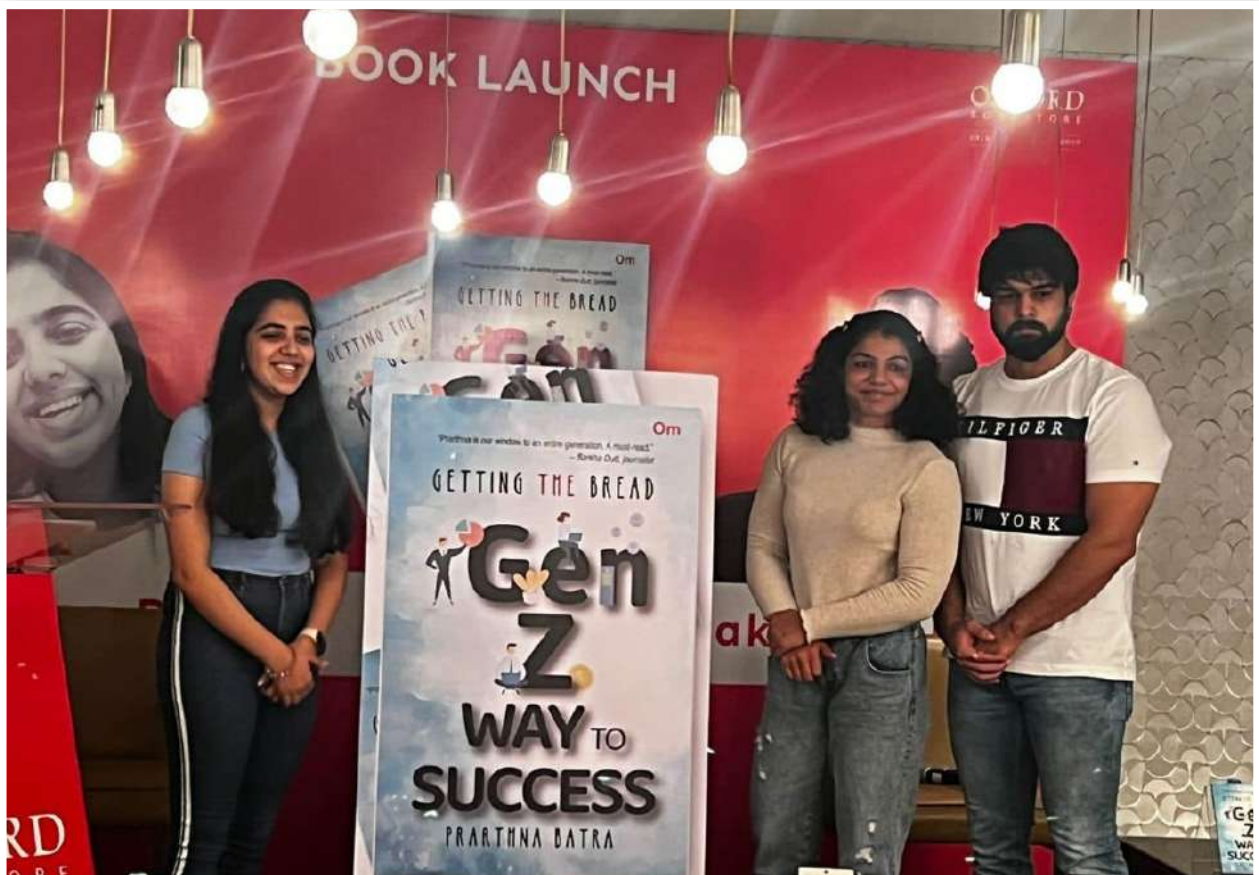
### ABOUT THE BOOK :

Prarthna Batra's debut book 'Getting the Bread: The Gen-Z Way to Success' was launched on a star-studded evening by sporting icon Sakshi Malik on 7th July at The Park, New Delhi.

Several dignitaries attended the book launch, including Eminent Corporate Lawyers Siddharth Batra and Sudhir Mishra, noted wrestler Satyawart Kadian, Saurav Banerjee, Managing Director & Founder MyyTake, among others.

Speaking about Prarthna's debut book, noted Olympic Medalist and Wrestler Sakshi Malik said, "Writing a book at the age of 17 shows the immense talent that Prarthna has. It also reflects her dedication and hard work, the two most valued qualities, in my opinion. The Gen-Z Way to Success is a well-written book that will be a source of inspiration to young readers. We need more youngsters like her to tell the story of their generation."

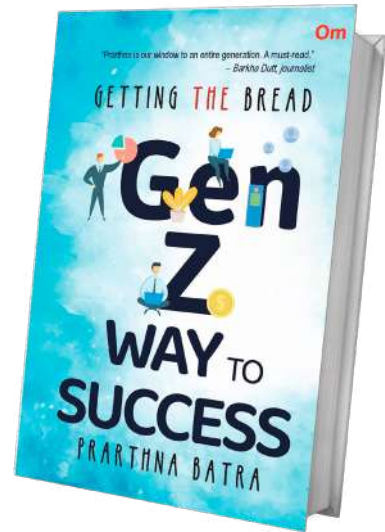
The young author spoke about the inspiration behind writing the book, "I always wanted to do something to make this world a



better place. I am an avid reader, and writing a book was my natural choice. Though I had to balance between school and exams and filling out forms for my studies abroad, I used to sit till midnight to ensure that I wrote something each day. My family has been a great support in making this possible."

"This is my first book, and I feel grateful for the love and support that it has received. It has also inspired me to think of my next book, which I want to be a deep dive into the GenZ mindset", added Prarthna Batra.

It must be mentioned that Prarthna Batra launched a YouTube series about entrepreneurship in 2020, featuring achievers from different fields of work. She interacted with personalities like Barkha Dutt, Prajakta Koli, and Sakshi Malik in this series. Her book captures the essence of these conversations, and Prarthna's mission is to make this world a kinder place.



**Prarthna Batra**

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR :**

17-year-old Prarthna Batra is an avid reader and a public speaker. She has spoken at many large public forums, including the annual Women's Economic Forum in 2019, where she was one of the three youngest speakers. Her address on why menstruation should not be celebrated captivated the audience. In 2021 she was invited to speak at IIM Tiruchirappalli on Women's Day, which was an incredibly memorable experience for her.

Prarthna and her team won the second spot in the TIE Young Entrepreneurs Business Plan competition. She enjoyed collaborating and ideating within a team and turning an idea into a business.

She is also the Co-Founder of Lajja Diaries - an online platform to felicitate the gender discourse on Feminism and Women's Rights in India. Her article on gender bias was published in The Hindu and featured in the February 2021 edition of Blub World in the young entrepreneur's section.



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# CELEBRATION OF THE 55<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF AMAR CHITRA KATHA

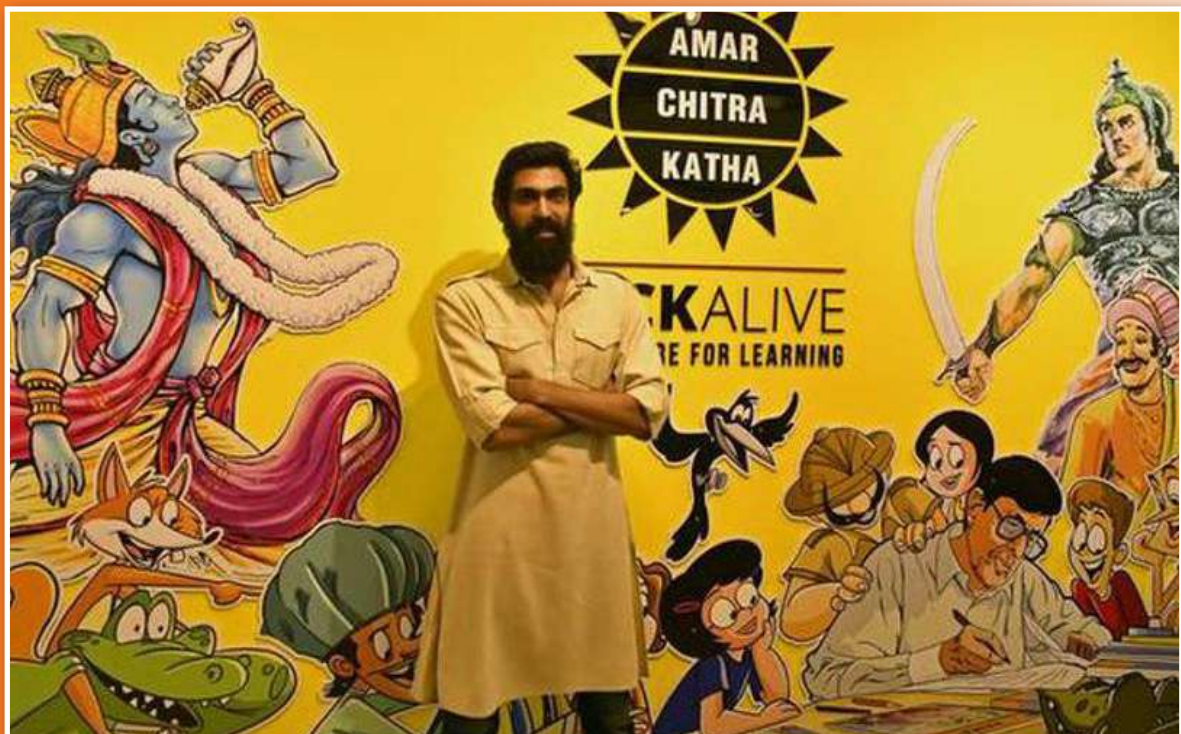


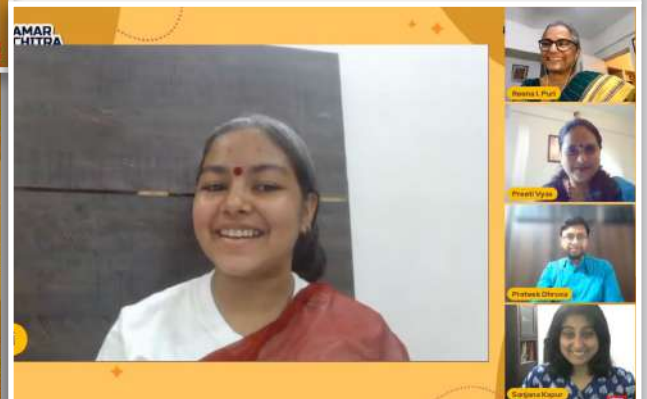
On 17th July 2022, Amar Chitra Katha celebrated 55 years of telling stories from Indian heritage with great stars like Rana Daggubati. This year's theme for Amar Chitra Katha Day is Beyond Nostalgia, which perfectly encapsulates the ever-evolving nature of the brand. This day is dedicated to our young and old readers through various online and offline events.

Over the past 55 years, Amar Chitra Katha has expanded its base beyond print. It has a robust digital content library, including multiple TV shows, web series, podcasts, board games, mobile apps, and movies. Its content has evolved across social media channels, too, including YouTube.

"Amar Chitra Katha is a national treasure that has helped preserve Indian heritage and acquaint it with generations of readers. The ACK universe of stories has inspired me since my childhood and continues to make an impact even today. I wish Amar Chitra Katha a glorious 55th birthday! May it continue to be a timeless storyteller." - Rana Daggubati, Indian Actor & Company Promoter.

"I know our Founder Editor, Anant Pai, would smile with satisfaction on seeing his brainchild path. Always looking at the future and envisioning Amar Chitra Katha as ever-growing and adapting to changing times and thoughts, he thought of comics at a time when the format was frowned upon by adults but loved by children. Today, we continue on the same path of innovating and reaching out to readers through new storytelling platforms. The pace of creating new comics is faster than ever in our 55-year history. Last year, we created over a thousand pages of fresh content. At 55, Amar Chitra Katha is going strong, and we'll be celebrating that with pride and joy," said Reena I Puri, Executive Editor, Amar Chitra Katha, who has been working with the brand for over thirty years.







"It gives me immense joy to see Amar Chitra Katha reach a new milestone. The brand's evolution is visible in every little aspect of art, narration, and story choices, connecting with and adapting to every generation more strongly than ever. When we created comics five decades ago, we used a simple 24 watercolor palette. Today we use the latest illustration techniques and art equipment to create our comics. What has remained unchanged is the hand-drawn beginning of every comic even today, which lends each book the iconic Amar Chitra Katha art style," said Savio Mascarenhas, Group Art Director, Amar Chitra Katha, and Tinkle, who has been working with the brand since 1994.

To commemorate the grand milestone, Amar Chitra Katha has planned numerous activities and events. These include exciting offers at their partner stores, contests on their social handles, a physical storytelling session on the Adventures of the Indus Valley, Buddha, and Mahavira, and a museum tour in collaboration with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, which lots of other fun activities will follow, virtual storytelling and quiz and the launch of their latest release 'Buying a Song and Other Folktales.' Along with CRY, Amar Chitra Katha will celebrate the day in a BMC school with a fun storytelling session in Hindi, games, and food distribution. Each child will get a book as part of the event!

"It is our absolute honor and pride to celebrate the milestone of 55 years of Amar Chitra Katha. From creating reels on Instagram to experimenting with metaverse, we have branched out and spread our roots into newer narrative styles and technologies. And while doing so, we do not forget our core values and mission of providing a crucial link to India's grand past through comics for multiple generations of Indian children beyond nostalgia." - Preeti Vyas, President & CEO, Amar Chitra Katha



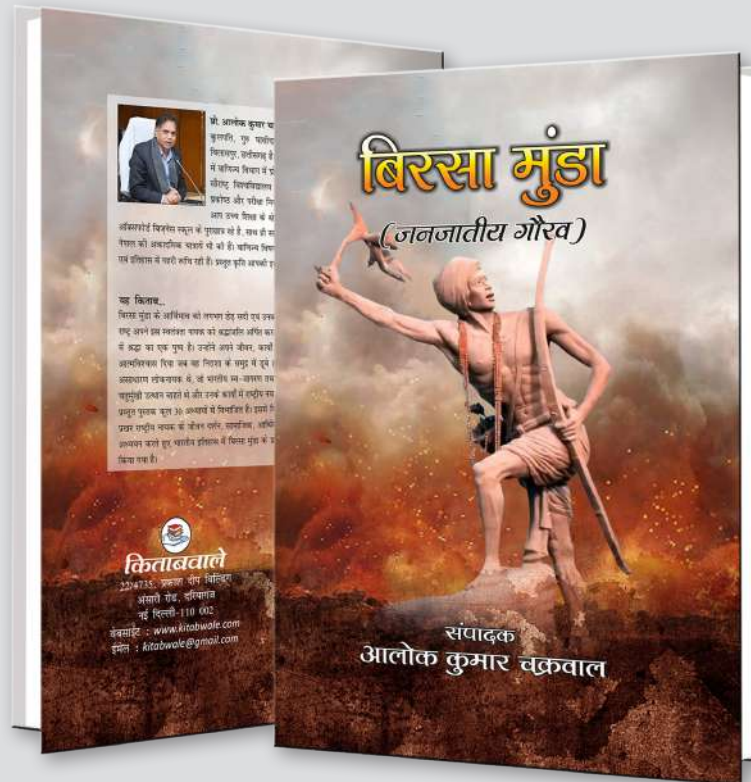
**Preeti Vyas**

*President and CEO of Amar Chitra Katha*

## Book Launch: Birsa Munda (Janjatiya Gaurav) in Hindi Language published by Kitabwale, New Delhi

A book release was held on the title named बिरसा मुंडा (जनजातीय गौरव), published by Kitabwale, New Delhi, in the Hindi Language at Sansad Bhavan on 5th April 2022.

A comprehensive book edited by Prof Alok Kumar Chakrawal, Vice Chancellor of the Guru Ghasidas Central University of Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, on the unsung Tribal Hero of India's freedom struggle, Birsa Munda was released by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Govt of India in the presence of Sushri Annapurna Devi, Hon'ble Minister of State for Education and the Editor Prof Alok Kumar Chakrawal.



### ABOUT THE PUBLISHER :

Kitabwale is a publisher of Hindi & English literary works (including fiction and non-fiction, novel, story, poetry, prose), Indian Cultural Studies, Biography, General references, and books translated into Hindi of foreign origin.

Management of Kitabwale has been associated with the book business for more than six decades. Kitabwale is famous for its quality publication on various subjects in Hindi & English language.



# पुस्तक लोकार्पण- 'खानाबदोशियाँ : यारों संग तफरीह'- पंकज भार्गव, वाणी प्रकाशन द्वारा आयोजित

वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप द्वारा प्रकाशित न्यूज जगत में अपन बहुमुखी प्रतिभा से पहचान बनाने वाले, जाने-माने न्यूज एंकर पंकज भार्गव की पहली किताब 'खानाबदोशियाँ : यारों संग तफरीह' का लोकार्पण 22 जुलाई दोपहर 3:30 बजे रॉयल नॉर्वेजियन एम्बेसी, नयी दिल्ली में किया जायेगा। पुस्तक का लोकार्पण भारत में नॉर्वे के राजदूत एच. ई. श्री हैंस जैकब फ्राइडनल्ड करेंगे।

## पुस्तक के बारे में

शिमला, हिमाचल प्रदेश में जन्मे पंकज भार्गव यायावरी प्रवृत्ति के हैं। उनकी यूरोप व अन्य विदेशी यात्राओं को रोचक रूप से यात्रा वृत्तान्त शैली में 'खानाबदोशियाँ : यारों संग तफरीह' के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है। यह उनकी पहली किताब है।

बचपन से ही अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सैलानियों को शिमला के मॉल रोड पर भ्रमण करते देख युवा अवस्था में लेखक की उत्सुकता यौवन की यायावरी की प्रेरणा बनी। नॉर्वे जैसे समृद्ध, कलात्मक, सांस्कृतिक व उत्तर-आधुनिक देश की यात्रा को बेहद सरल और किस्सागई के अन्दाज में हिन्दी भाषा में पहली बार लिखा गया है। इससे पहले नॉर्वेजी भाषा के श्रेष्ठ साहित्यिक स्तम्भ क्वत हाम्मुन, थूरब्योर्न एग्नर, हांस हेरब्योर्नसूद, हेरब्योग वास्समू, थूर ओगे ब्रिंगस्वैर्द, शेल्ल आस्किल्दसन, रोय याकोब्सन, यून फोस्से, ओयस्तेइन लोन्, योहान हार्शाटा, लार्स आमुन्द वोगे, सीमोन स्त्रांगेर लेखकों की कृतियों को वरिष्ठ आलोचक व कवि तेजी ग्रावर द्वारा अनुदित और नॉरला के सहयोग से प्रकाशित किया गया। यह सभी लेख वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप की 'विश्व अनुवाद श्रृंखला' में प्रकाशित किये गये हैं। वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप



के प्रबन्ध निदेशक अरुण माहेश्वरी के कहा कि, “लगभग 25 वर्षों से समृद्ध हो रहे नॉर्वेजी साहित्य के साथ वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप का सम्बन्ध पंकज भार्गव की ‘खानाबदोशियाँ : यारों सेग तफरीह’ के साथ एक नये मुकाम पर पहुँचेगा। हिन्दी भाषा व साहित्य की ओर से नॉर्वेजी साहित्य, कला और संस्कृति को एक आदर भरा नमस्कार। आजादी के अमृत महोत्सव में हम इस पुस्तक का प्रकाशन कर गौरवान्वित हैं और इसके लिए एच. ई. श्री जैकब फ्राइन्लंड को धन्यवाद ज्ञापित करते हैं कि उन्होंने उदारता के साथ इस पुस्तक का नॉर्वेजीयन दूतावास में स्वागत किया हैं। साथ ही, नोएडा लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल और शिमला लिटरेचर फेस्टिवल की युवा संस्थापक सुश्री स्वाति शर्मा को भी धन्यवाद क्योंकि उन्होंने और प्रकाशक के बीच सेतु बन्धन किया।”

रंगकर्मी, अभिनेता व साहित्यकार आशुतोष राना ने पुस्तक की प्रशंसा में कहा कि, “सैलानी और यात्री में अन्तर होता है। सैलानी की रूचि स्थानों को देखने में होती है, किन्तु यात्री की रूचि व्यक्तियों को जानने-समझने में होती हैं, क्योंकि वे जानते हैं कि नगर का विकास नागरिकों का विकास नहीं होता, वे नागरिक ही होते हैं, जिनके मन, मस्तिष्क और हृदय में संस्कृति-सभ्यता के फूल ही नहीं उनका मूल भी होता है। प्रिय पंकज को जितना जानता हूँ, उससे यह कह सकता हूँ कि वह सैलानी नहीं, बल्कि एक यात्री हैं, जो शब्द ही नहीं स्पन्दन भी सुन, समझ लेते हैं। मुझे विश्वास है कि यह यात्रा-वृत्तान्त पाठकों को संसार से जोड़ने, उसे समझने में सहायक होगा। शिवसंकल्पमस्तु।”

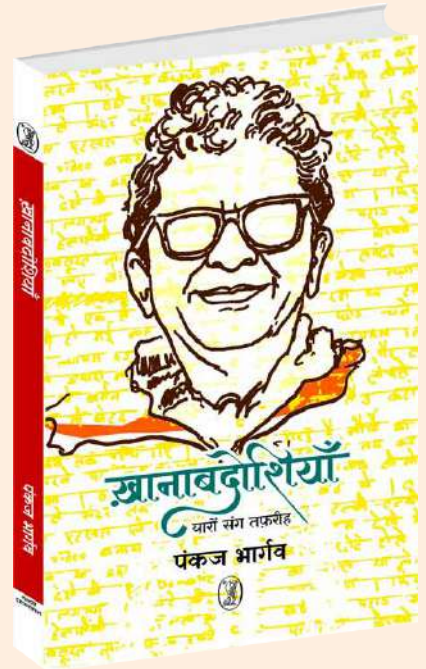
पुस्तक के लेखक पंकज भार्गव की कलम से मैं अपनी इन यादों को हमेशा से शब्दों में पिरोकर किताब की शक्ल या फिर किसी और जरिये से सुरक्षित कर लेना चाहता था, ताकि जब भी मैं चाहूँ तब अपनी यादों की सलवटों में इसका साथ पाऊँ और उसे अपने जहन में ताजा कर सकूँ। साथ ही यह भी ख्वाहिश थी कि मेरी यादें किसी दूसरे के लिए कुछ अनुभव के तौर पर मददगार भी साबित हो। यही वजह है कि मैं अपने सपनों की दुनिया तक पहुँचने के सफर और वहाँ गुजारे हर पल को दूसरों को बताने को बेताब भी रहा। लेकिन कोरोना ने दुनिया के बाकी लोगों की तरह मुझे भी झकझोरा।

## लेखक के बारे में

पंकज भार्गव ढाई दशक से मीडिया जगत के प्रसिद्ध नाम व चेहरा हैं। आकाशवाणी पर अपनी आवाज से श्रोताओं को मन्त्रमुग्ध करने के बाद साल 1997 में पंकज ने अपने करियर को टी. वी. एंकर के रूप में एक नयी दिश दी। पंकज ने बहुचर्चित टेलीविजन कार्यक्रम (सुबह सवेरे) के द्वारा बतौर एंकर लोगों के बीच जो जगह बनायी, उनकी उसी प्रतिभा ने उन्हें IBN7 के प्राइम टाइम एंकर के रूप में भी ज्वरदस्त लोकप्रियता दिलायी। आज पंकज देश के प्रतिष्ठित न्यूज चैनल India T.V. के सफल न्यूज एंकर हैं। पंकज ने मूलरूप से राष्ट्रीय विषयों जैसे राजनीति, मनोरंजन, खेल और सांस्कृति विविधता को अत्यन्त सहजता के साथ कवर किया हैं। लोकसभा और विधानसभा चुनावों को कवर करने के अलावा नेपाल भूकम्प, उत्तराखण्ड प्रकृतिक त्रासदी, विश्वप्रसिद्ध कुम्भ मेला, मुम्बई में आतंकी हमला, अन्ना हजारे आन्दोलन और बिहार में बाढ़ त्रासदी ये कुछ ऐसे महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे हैं, जिन्होंने पंकज को एक जुझारे एंकर के रूप में हम सब के दिलों में हमेशा के लिए बसा दिया हैं।

## वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप के बारे में

वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप पिछले 59 वर्षों से साहित्य की 32 से भी अधिक नवीनतम विधाओं में, बेहतरीन हिन्दी साहित्य का प्रकाशन कर रहा हैं। वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप ने प्रिंट, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक और ऑडियो प्रारूप में 6,000 से अधिक पुस्तकें प्रकाशित की हैं। तथा देश के 3,00,000 से भी अधिक गाँव, 2,800 कस्बे, 54 मुख्य नगर और 12 मुख्य ऑनलाइन बुक स्टोर में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराई है। अब वाणी प्रकाशन ग्रुप वाणी डिजिटल, वाणी बिजनेस, वाणी बुक कम्पनी, वाणी पृथ्वी, नाइन बुक्स, वाणी प्रतियोगिता, युवा वाणी और गैर-लाभकारी संस्था वाणी फाउण्डेशन के साथ प्रकाशन उद्योग में लगातार अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज करा रहा है।



## A session on Nabaneeta Dev Sen's book of poetry 'Acrobat', organised by Oxford Bookstores

On 26 July 2022, in association with Juggernaut, Oxford Bookstores presented two intriguing sessions on Nabaneeta Dev Sen's book of poetry titled "Acrobat" at Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata, and The Park, New Delhi, respectively.

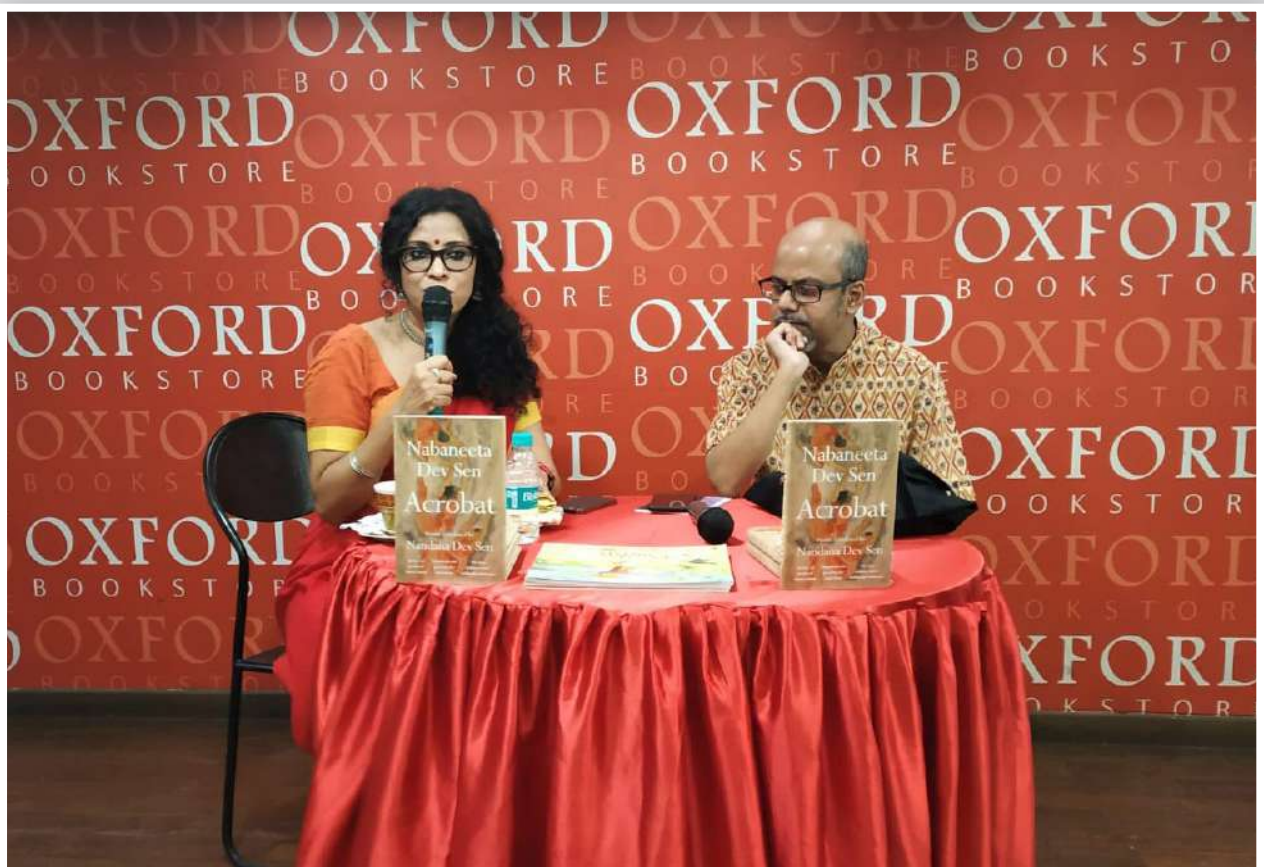
'Acrobat' by Nabaneeta Dev Sen is a collection of luminous poems that explore the joys and agonies of first love, motherhood, and decay with a restless, tactile imagination, both picking apart and celebrating the rituals that make us human. In addition, it shows Dev Sen—a fiery feminist, formidable academic, and political activist—at her most human, most intimate. Stunningly translated with lightness and lyricism by her daughter Nandana Dev Sen, this radiant collection is compassionate, unsparing, conversational, and symphonic.

On Monday, the session at The Park, New Delhi, explored various angles of the poetic translation while discussing the late poet's work and writing. Author, actor, activist, and translator of "Acrobat," Nandana Dev Sen and Member of



Parliament & author Dr Shashi Tharoor engaged in a freewheeling conversation with renowned translator Arunava Sinha at the event. Each speaker read their favourite poems from the book to a packed house at The Park. Nandana Sen narrated her emotional journey of translating her mother's work and also recollected how the title 'Acrobat' was a mutual decision of Nabaneeta Dev Sen and Nandana because it not only reflected the diversity of identities that a woman goes through in her life but also about the delicate balancing act of a poet.

On Wednesday, at the iconic Oxford Bookstore in Kolkata, the event began with a video montage projection to invoke the presence of Nabaneeta Dev Sen, her life, and her work. Nandana Dev Sen delved into conversation with poet, lyricist, and scholar Srijato Bandyopadhyay. The evening paid tribute to her late mother, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, and her cousin, Samantak Das, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University, who passed away that day. The evening witnessed a poetic ambience as Nandana Dev Sen, and Srijato Bandyopadhyay fondly recollected Nabaneeta Dev Sen's memories and read some selective poems from Nabaneeta Sen's original works and their translated versions. Nandana encouraged the audience to translate the works of Nabaneeta Dev Sen because translating her works must not be a family project but a community project.





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# AUTHOR INTERVIEWS

**Frontlist:** India Vision is your roadmap of how you want India to be, but what does it offer its readers?

**Kapil:** It offers a stripped-down, barebone, unabridged truth about the state of things in India and the problems that it is currently at the cusp of. It provides perspectives about how the reservation is causing a brain drain in India while promoting inequality and anger amongst the country's people. It talks about the difference between a true democracy and India's democratic republic model. It sheds light on the state of countries and their paradigm shift from the 20th-century leftist nationalist movement to today's right-wing nationalism. The book dives deeper into the religious tension in the country and how all of this cannot propel true equality in the nation if our myopic mob mentality remains unchanged as the world around us evolves and leaves us behind. Finally, it provokes the reader to think about our country's state and future.

**Frontlist:** How would you describe the current situation in India from your perspective?

**Kapil:** India is currently in a favorable and stable position compared to its counterparts in the subcontinent and even with Europe or America. We have been fortunate and tactical to avoid the burnt of the hyperinflation that is currently devastating economies. Even the Russia-



## Kapil Gupta

*Founder of Frontlist Media & Solh Wellness,  
Author of 'India Vision: New Age Quality'*

Kapil Gupta is an entrepreneur, both in thought and in style who believes that the power of a message & its delivery is what causes true revolutions. Kapil Gupta is a parallel entrepreneur who believes in providing true meaning to the various organisations he runs and builds them in sync with one another. He is the Founder and the CEO of OMLogic (India's leading digital marketing agencies), PragatiE (a virtual exhibition platform), Frontlist (portal for the publishing industry), Solh (a mental wellness platform & his current passion project), Advit Toys (a board games company).

He has also written a book called India Vision: New Age Equality that became #1 bestseller in sociology on amazon.in within a week of its release. It explores the concept of India, equality and what it means for different people.

Ukraine war hasn't had much impact on our economy as we remain partners with Russia and Ukraine and their Western allies. Our growth has been stable; however, the GDP hasn't returned to its pre-Modi era. However, our religious tensions are rising, and Nupur Sharma wasn't an instigator but an effect of how things were already leading up. Global Warming is already devastating our coastal areas while incending our cities. The population is fragmented, with social media echo chambers fuelling their inherent biases. Finally, we aren't spending enough on the large-scale manufacturing and tech infrastructure we require for our future.

**Frontlist:** You're a Mental Health Activist and the Founder of Solh Wellness Pvt Ltd. What approaches do you like to adopt to develop India's present condition regarding prevailing Mental Health Issues?

**Kapil:** Just like any other nation facing the current mental health pandemic, India needs to take a step back and understand the

core issues of this rising problem. Firstly, our inherent capitalist system is debilitating our citizens into living like machines, and we are gaslighted into believing that there is no other way of organizing or changing society, which is false. Secondly, the balancing act the country's youth is doing between clashing Western and Eastern values comes as a sacrifice of individuality v/s groupism. Thirdly, there is a lack of infrastructure and education about

mental health problems, and also, the stigma associated with it is draining our society of its most valuable resource: humans. Finally, we need to stop most of these problems from arising right from their origin, and that can only happen if mental health is seen just like physical health; thus, Solh Wellness will play a large part in achieving this. Not only do we have voluntary experts but also the best psychologists and therapists that you can reach out to through our marketplace. You can charter your journey, set your goals, share your journey for others to learn from, and much more!

**Frontlist:** Let's assume you have three wishes to change India. What will be those wishes?

**Kapil:** The following will be my wishes that I would implement right after gaining those wishes:

- **A clear separation of Religion and State** - This will not just entail a direct separation of religion and governance but also religion's elimination from politics and our policies. Everyone must be treated equally regardless of the religion they subscribe to. I don't care what sky-daddy you pray to as long as it does not poke my nation's policies. Believe it or not, our modern technological economies cannot function with commandments written 2000 years ago. To even think about confusing facts from fiction is laughable at best and dangerous at its worst.
- **Reduce or remove government intervention from the economy** - The market should be free, and there should be no cap on which direction it morphs. Governments should have no right to own monopolies or participate in the private sector. People should be free to work however they want, and the market should decide what works and doesn't. Artificially seeding businesses that the government wants afloat is why many of these things backfire. I am not a pure capitalist or socialist, but even I can see that artificially capturing the market never works out in anyone's favor.
- **Separate policies for rural and urban India** - Let's be clear: the problems in the rural areas are far different than those in the urban areas. One law to rule them all cannot work as there are different types of people who live in entirely different worlds when we compare rural and urban India. Frontlist:

**Frontlist:** What are your thoughts on the ongoing Presidential Elections 2022?

**Kapil:** Useless & unimportant

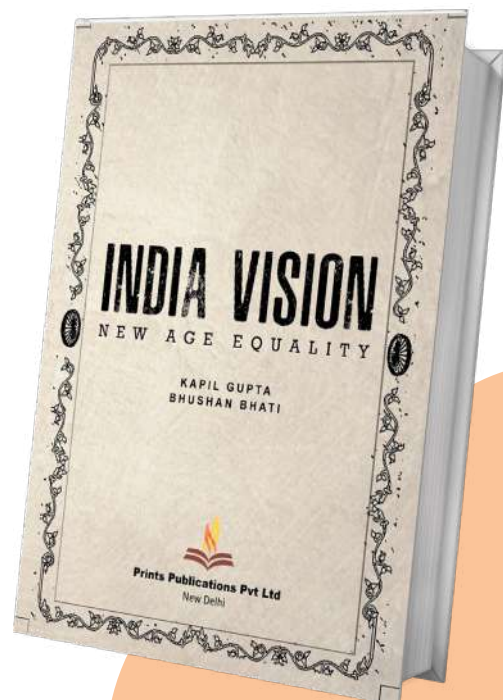
**Frontlist:** What are your thoughts on social media as a platform for Freedom of Expression?

**Kapil:** I think the freedom of expression is primarily dead, and social media is very much responsible. Think about it; you are not just censored on social media but also pressurized in conforming with what the active masses believe in. You would be downvoted if you express an unpopular opinion or doxed on the internet if you are found to make mistakes even if you did it years ago. Witch hunts were stupid two hundred years ago, and they are stupider

now. Mass justice is never the answer, no matter how schadenfreude it may feel. Lives have been ruined, and everyone is now walking on eggshells. Is this the freedom of expression that we wanted? Either you should trust your audience and let everyone be free, or you should kill it entirely. Under the current status quo, there will always be boundaries for what is allowed or not. But we decide what it should be, and if our goal is to give everyone the freedom of expression, then we shouldn't stop it because of a few trolls. In fact, the only way to curb the problem of fake news is by informing people enough so they can form their perspectives on the truth from several opposing viewpoints.

**Frontlist:** People consider you an extremist. What would you like to say in this context?

**Kapil:** Yes, I am an extremist because I fully stand by my views and understanding of the world. I admit I am wrong when presented with provable facts, but otherwise, my theories are pretty solid. I speak my mind and oppose censorship. I do not doublespeak and follow my unique way of thinking, and people hate it. I can't help not being a conformist as I believe it is my God-given right to question even God. So why should I mellow myself down to the side with what the majority believes in for the sake of solidarity? I am against political correctness as I never like to sugarcoat the truth, and I believe any attempt at doing so is not just a farce but also an attempt at hiding it. In this world of over-bombardment of information and false truths, we need to speak as clearly and honestly as possible. And instead of hiding or getting angry at criticism, we should face it like the bench press for the mind it is.



**Frontlist:** "Soda, Water, Lemon in My Mocktail" is a clever choice for the book's title. Why have you chosen these three ingredients to plot your storyline?

**Ruchira:** I started with the word Mocktail as I was looking for something one curates by mixing different flavors, yet it may not be exactly the way they originally envisaged it. The book is focused on how the protagonist leverages the different flavours that her experiences bring to make her potion of life. The flavour of 'Soda' indicates quick decisions based on preconceived notions that may initially lead to a feeling of exhilaration as the bubbles rise but very soon fizzles out when reality bites. 'Water' brings out the sense of being molded in the shape others want one to and giving in without having an identity of one's own, and 'lemon' indicates the unpredictable sweet and sour moments that are important to give life its true taste.

**Frontlist:** How can women in our society relate to Mandira, the protagonist in your story, and how can she influence them?

**Ruchira:** Despite our society having evolved a lot over the years, a vast segment of women still depend on their male family members to make decisions for them. Like Mandira, they easily step into the unknown with complete dependence on their spouses. Most do not deal with their finances and completely defer that to others. There is also a high level of self-blame, which restricts women from acknowledging and bringing out their challenges in the open and addressing them. I believe many women in our society will relate to the experiences and challenges Mandira goes through, and how she navigates through them will influence them to take charge of their lives too.

**Frontlist:** Is it difficult for a woman to be independent and successful while balancing it with the norms of life?



## Ruchira Garg

*Author Of "Soda, Water, Lemon in My Mocktail"*

Ruchira Garg was born in Varanasi and has lived across multiple cities in India. She is a psychology graduate from Lady Shriram College for Women. She has a Master's in Human Resources from Delhi School of Economics with a career spanning over two decades with renowned multinational brands.

She has been a speaker at several corporate and management events. She is also an active blogger and storyteller, sharing her thoughts on various professional forums and through her podcast, which is available on all leading podcast platforms. Along with her career in management, Ruchira is also an itinerant traveler. She finds travelling and engaging with people meditative and feels her adventures help her build different perspectives. She shares her travelling experiences through her Travelog- "The Wanderbee."

Soda, Water, Lemon In My Mocktail is her debut novel.

**Ruchira:** Many of the norms of our society were created to restrict women from being independent; hence it is difficult as long as women let others dictate the norms for them. One can never make everyone happy, and our understanding of an independent and successful woman is very different from an independent & successful man. The erstwhile norms have laid out many additional barriers to responsibilities and behaviors for women than men. We must challenge the norms and make them more equitable instead of trying to balance an already skewed system.

**Frontlist:** In your book, you explore the difficulties that women must overcome in daily life. Why do men not need to make a choice when women constantly do?

**Ruchira:** When norms of society are one-sided, the choices will also be. As I mentioned, the erstwhile norms were created to restrict the Independence of women, so they have to exercise the choice to break the norms or adhere to them. These norms were not focused on men, so they

did not have to make a choice. Yet, in the times we live in, we are experiencing a lot of men also making choices and breaking norms. There are examples of role reversals or equitable distribution of responsibilities that were earlier only restricted to women as homemakers, caregivers etc. But it will take a lot more time and conscious effort for the change to reflect in societal norms.

**Frontlist:** This book is dedicated to your parents. So, how did they inspire you? Could you share any such childhood memories?

**Ruchira:** My parents have always encouraged me to make choices and supported me through whatever the consequences of those choices. They have also always encouraged me to stand up for what is right. During



my childhood, there was an instance when a few other students and I were being bullied by school staff to pay money as a fine for coming in late. We had already been punished by being made to stand out and miss a class. When I returned home and asked my parents for the money to pay the fine, they encouraged me to stand up and ask the staff to get an official letter. Due to the values they instilled in me; I dared to walk up to the person the next day, challenge the fine and ask for an official communication despite my friends trying to stop me and all others having paid the fine out of fear. Contrary to what everyone thought would happen due to my challenging him openly, he quietly excused himself instead of punishing me further. The next day, he stopped bullying the students and collecting the fines.

**Frontlist:** In one of the chapters, we read how Mandira keeps her issues to herself. We see women doing the same in their daily life. Should women conceal these issues or look for a solution?

**Ruchira:** Many times, women conceal issues as they have a misguided notion of being responsible for everything that goes wrong. Some of this is triggered by the norms where women are brought up with a sense of being accountable to make everyone happy. We forget that if we are unhappy, we cannot spread cheer. A fruit that is rotting itself will rot the whole basket, and it will not ripen other fruits and make them tastier. So, there is no point hiding the issues and living through misery as that will neither help them nor others. Asking for help is not bad, and that is the first step toward making society a better place.

**Frontlist:** Knowing this is your debut novel, would you kindly share your writing process with us and any tips you have for aspiring authors?

**Ruchira:** As I was writing a book for the first time, I had to spend a lot of time building Mandira's character in my mind. I did that through interacting with those whose stories inspired me to write this novel, other women who

still conform to these norms, and research on events of those days to recreate that period. There were a lot of questions that I had to answer in my mind thinking about how the reader of today will think to build a narrative. I focused on getting the story in the right flow, developing the characters further, and thickening the plot with more incidents with every iteration. For a good read, the language has to be excellent and crisp, which was also a key focus. As I have learned through interaction with readers, a well-written and well-edited book engages the readers more than a novel plot that is not well presented.



## Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan

*Author of the Good Innings*

Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan is a children's author, poet, editor, and voice-over talent. She is also a former non-profit development professional who spent two decades as an advocate and fundraiser for persons with disabilities. Shobha has recorded voice work for documentaries, educational programs, journalistic initiatives, and audiobooks. She has published children's books in India and the United States, including *Native American Folktales* (DC/Mango Books), the award-winning *Indi-Alphabet* (Mango and Marigold) and *Prince With a Paintbrush: The Story of Raja Ravi Varma* (Red Panda/Westland), *How Many Lines in a Limerick?* (Clear Fork Publishing), *It's Time to Rhyme* (Aleph) and *Parvati the Elephant's Very Important Day* (Harper Collins).

Shobha's work has been anthologized by Tulika Books, Solstice, and Skipping Stones. Essays and reviews have been published in India Currents, Bizworld and Scroll.in.

**Frontlist:** This is the first time you've written something distinctive from Children's Literature. How did you stumble upon this hybrid genre? What do you want to say in this context?

**Shobha:** That's true. This is my first entire book for adults. But I have written articles and essays before. When the publisher approached me with interest in a memoir, I turned down the offer. But, as the publisher was



persistent, I decided to do it differently. I've come up with a creative approach to telling a life story. This hybrid genre of memoir and self-help in both first person and third person allowed me to share my mother's story and "voice" without ventriloquizing her. I also maintained an accurate timeline of her life to showcase how life's experiences allowed her to strengthen and shine. My mother has inspired us all with her indefatigable spirit- part of her legacy- and this format allowed me to showcase those teachable moments.

**Frontlist:** Every child has an inherent quality from their parents. What qualities have you inherited from your mother?

**Shobha:** I'm pragmatic about ups and downs in life. And I don't let the "down" destroy my equilibrium.

**Frontlist:** How has the digital world impacted the life of Lily Tharoor? Please share any glimpses from the book.

**Shobha:** As I've said in *Good Innings*, my mother is connected to family and friends on her smartphone and the world on her computer. There's often a collective minor panic if she cannot connect to WIFI as she's far better at responding to texts than picking up the phone when it rings. She is online regularly, and WhatsApp messages are frequently forwarded. I used to Skype her to wish her Good Morning every day, but these days she prefers to sit out and drink her morning tea, so we chat on the phone.

Her access to the digital world has given her the opportunity to watch informative and interesting videos on YouTube and share some of them with family without leaving the house. She can text daily with children, grandchildren, and siblings on WhatsApp family groups, mark milestones, and enjoy photos of events she could not attend. And she has learned the convenience of following her favourite shows and news channels by logging in on a computer in any part of the world.

**Frontlist:** As we all know, your journey with this book is indescribable. How did Shashi Tharoor assist you in giving the final touch to the remarkable life of Lily Tharoor?

**Shobha:** Thank you. I've enjoyed reflecting on my mother's life and cherish the experience of writing this book. This was a project that the publisher commissioned me, specifically, to complete. My brother has many demands daily, and I did not seek his assistance. My brother's only aid was verifying some dates and details I had questions about and expressing his appreciation of my efforts. I wanted to give him the opportunity to express his thoughts in this special tribute to our mother, so I asked him to write a prologue. Of course, his words always embellish every book.

**Frontlist:** The 'Good Innings' book provides more inspiring lessons through the life events of Lily Tharoor and illustrates three genres: Biography, Non-fiction, and Self Help collectively. How did the idea strike you to write in this format?

**Shobha:** My children's writing has been quite diverse as well. I've written narrative picture books in rhyming couplets, penned a prose biography with two distinct narrative threads, written a Poetry Reader (for Kids of All Ages) that includes poems on the craft of poetry, and my next book will be a collection of short stories. The thread common to all my books is a hope they will not only inform and entertain but be long-lasting in their themes and something that readers will turn to time and again. This hybrid genre of biography and self-help in both first person and third person allowed me to share my mother's story and "voice" without ventriloquizing her. However, the reflections are mine and pieced together from stories I've heard directly from her or others. With this creative format, I could maintain an accurate timeline of her life and showcase teachable moments about how she was inspired at different periods in her life.

**Frontlist:** Since most members of the Tharoor family have a knack for writing and reading, can we call the Tharoors a "Bookish Family"?

**Shobha:** A bookish family? Sure, if you mean, we are all surrounded by books and are regular readers. Reading and expressing in some form or another is something we all do. And we have, in every generation, been blessed by that interest.

**Frontlist:** What is the greatest advice your mother gave you that you'd like to pass on to your daughter?

**Shobha:** Like my mother, I am a great believer in not waiting to do what I desire to advance a purpose. There is wisdom in fulfilling tasks on time. Like her, I feel that time is precious and should not be squandered. That does not mean we can't rest or relax but be mindful of how swiftly time passes. My children have been reminded of this thinking over the years.

**Frontlist:** What life lessons can today's generation learn from Lily Tharoor's extraordinary and energetic life?

**Shobha:** Those challenges can be surmounted. That one can dream and aspire at every age that we all have something to give the world. That we can all strive for good innings!





## Amit Majumdar

Author of "The Map & The Scissors"

Amit Majumdar is the author of five critically acclaimed novels, four collections of award-winning poetry, a translation of the Bhagavad Gita with commentary, a forthcoming memoir, and a three-volume retelling of the Mahabharata. The former first Poet Laureate of Ohio and a diagnostic and nuclear radiologist, he lives in Westerville, Ohio, with his wife and three children.

**Frontlist:** What made you think that the two characters, Jinnah and Gandhi, are the ideal rival for each other? Who do you believe can be regarded as their counterparts in the modern era?

**Amit:** Jinnah pursued the division of British India along religious lines. Gandhi once compared dividing India into India and Pakistan to cutting his own heart. Gandhi's philosophy insisted that India's peoples were all Indians despite differing religions, while Jinnah's "two nations theory" insisted that Hindus and Muslims were separate nations and must have separate countries. This fundamentally opposite way of looking at people, groups, and British India's post-Independence future made them rivals. Then, once you factor in their appearance and personalities—penurious Gandhi dressed as a "half-naked fakir" in Churchill's phrase and very religious; rich Jinnah, not particularly observant, and always in well-tailored suits—the contrast is tailor-made for a novelist. The two men have no counterparts in the modern-day because politicians don't quite come larger-than-life like that anymore.

**Frontlist:** A lot of your emphasis is on the partition. What would be the outcome if the two nations were not divided, to begin with? Do you think there could be a possibility in the future of both the nations reuniting?

**Amit:** The two nations will never reunite in the lifetime of anyone reading this (or ever, in my opinion). The outcome, if the two nations were never divided, is a matter of speculation. I believe that secessionist movements would

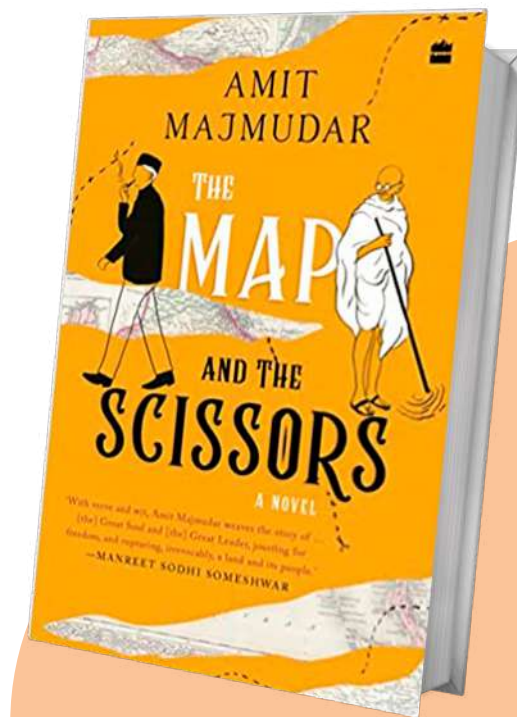
have broken out, probably along religious lines, with local civil wars of varying intensity and duration. Some might have been put down, and others might have resulted in smaller ethnostates or mini-Pakistans. "Balkanization" might have been more likely. The creation of two large nation-states ensured each could define itself against the other and experience rivalry and distrust of the other. Shared antagonism has a unifying effect.

**Frontlist:** What do you think would have happened if both characters switched roles? Do you think the outcome would have been deferred?

**Amit:** The two characters could not have switched roles. Their approaches to the problem of an independent India were fundamental expressions of their natures.

**Frontlist:** Both Jinnah & Gandhi have their separate meaning & dream of freedom. On a personal level, who do you align yourself more with?

**Amit:** I give both rivals their due. I believe Gandhi was an idealist whose vision could not have lasted if implemented. Jinnah was also an idealist whose vision, Pakistan, broke into Pakistan and Bangladesh just a quarter century after its realization. So I don't align myself with either. I believe both were wrong; I also believe there was no "right" answer to the central political problem of that era. People mistakenly think of these things in that binary: what was the right thing to do, what was the wrong thing to do. Sometimes, there is no correct course of action, only a less-incorrect course of action. Because you can only run one experiment once, you never know whether you picked the least-incorrect action. As the Gita says: gahana karmano gatih. The way of action is profoundly murky.



**Frontlist:** A radiologist specialising in nuclear medicine & an author/poet. How do the two fields resonate with you? Was the passion for always writing within you?

**Amit:** I have had a passion for writing since about the age of eleven or so. As for radiology, the two fields are mostly separate in my mind. I do not write about radiology very much, though if anyone is interested in seeing some of my writing on that subject, it can be read here: <https://granta.com/the-doctor-will-see-you-now>.

**Frontlist:** What is one belief/argument that you believe both characters would have agreed on during their lifetime?

**Amit:** That the British Empire should leave the Indian subcontinent. Both characters wanted that outcome, but they differed on what the map should look like once that happened.



### Rohit Mehra

*Author of '31 Green Habits to Save Our Planet'*

Rohit Mehra is known as the Green-man of India. He is an IRS officer of the 2004 batch. Besides being a taxman, he is known as the Vertical-Garden Man of India. He is also known as Forest Man of India and Seed-ball Man Of India. He re-introduced ancient Vrikshayurveda (ancient Indian science of plantation). He has started the first ever Tree and Plant Hospital, equipped with a Tree-Ambulance in India. Besides, he also started a Mobile Tree ATM. He has written three books: *Super Child-52- Habits of Parenting*, *Gift Lungs To Future Generations*, and *31 Green Habits to Save the Planet*.

**Frontlist:** What inspired you to develop these 31 ideas for saving our planet?

**Rohit:** We always talk about saving mother earth. But, how, why, when, and what actions I can take at individual level to help keep the planet are the questions that come across when we think of living in harmony with the planet. We have evolved from our observation, experience, and

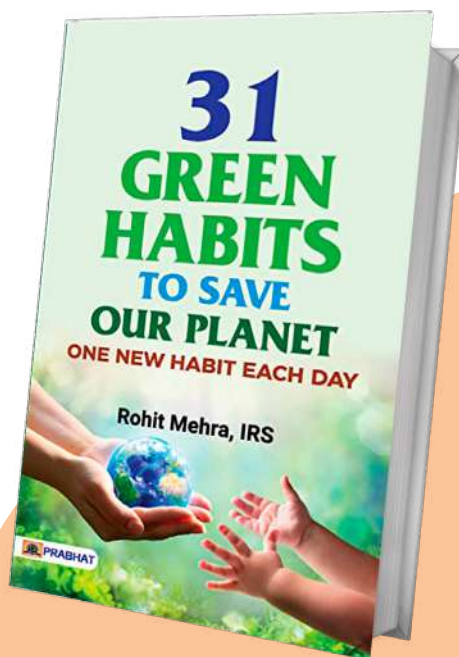
research 31 small daily actions and habits, which we have named **Green Habits** to save the planet. Each month has a maximum of 31 days, so if we follow one daily habit, we can go a long way in doing our bit to save the planet. These small daily habits seem minor but have a substantial incremental impact cumulatively. This is what inspired me. In my day-to-day life, suppose I save 1 unit of power consumption in 1 week, I am saving 52 units of power in a year; now multiply these 52 units by 130 crores for individual citizens of India if they also start following these habits. Imagine the national saving we can make in terms of power and ecology.

**Frontlist:** How do paper consumption and production affect the environment?

**Rohit:** We, humans, are the only creatures on the planet who first cut the tree and then make paper out of it and display on it 'Do not cut the trees!'. Paper is directly produced by cutting trees and is one of the reasons for deforestation and the disappearance of biodiversity since the demand for paper forces agroforestry to replace the native trees. In this book, we have suggested simple yet highly impactful habits on how to save paper. One such habit is using both the paper's front and back sides while printing, and this habit can reduce the use of paper to almost 50%.

**Frontlist:** Sinking groundwater levels are a stark warning, and while rainwater harvesting is a practical step, what other measures can be taken with urban households in mind? Please list some of the benefits.

**Rohit:** We are running out of our drinking water because of the use, misuse, overuse, and abuse of one of the essential elements of life. We have suggested many habits like closing the tap while brushing, using the wastewater of RO



for wet-mopping, saving water in the office and workplace, etc. One such step is rainwater harvesting in households and workplaces. The rainwater harvesting technique is simple, cost-effective, and easy to install. We will have a water supply throughout the year, and it will help maintain the groundwater level table.

**Frontlist:** According to Chapter 7, "Water is the elixir of life, and water contains medicines." In light of the fact that water is essential to life, how can people learn to use it wisely and reduce wasteful water consumption?

**Rohit:** Water is one of the five essential elements of life, the other 4 being earth (soil), fire, space, and air. We have a limited quantity of usable human water; the only way is to preserve this water. We can make Green Habits like using the required amount of water, saving RO water for other purposes, saving water from AC for plantation, using bath-shower for less time, turning off the shower when we apply soap, etc. We can go for water harvesting also. Instead of using a pipe to wash our car, we can use dry-cleaning of car.

**Frontlist:** Even though there is a wide range of awareness everywhere, from children & textbooks to newspapers, there hasn't been a significant change. Where do you believe we are going wrong, and how do you envision your book addressing the issues?

**Rohit:** Change is not an event but a process and a matter of habit. Though environment awareness has increased, it is not manifested on the ground at a practical level. There is a gap between being aware and action for the environment and habits for the environment. This gap can be minimized if we develop green habits as part of our lifestyle. This book is a user manual on how to develop environmentally-conscious habits.

**Frontlist:** Where do you see Mother Earth in the next ten years as people continue to deplete her resources? What advice would you give to people as a motivational speaker?

**Rohit:** We are heading towards an environmental disaster if we keep on at this phase. Indian ethos teaches us to worship nature and its manifestations, be it space, air, water, soil or hills, rivers, mountains, plants and trees, birds and animals, etc. We must revive our cultural ethos to live with nature in harmony. We have only one planet, and there is no Planet B.



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## Aman Singh Maharaj

*Author of 'A Dalliance of Destiny'*

Born in 1973, Aman Singh Maharaj primarily lives in Durban, South Africa, with a large extended family, in a home overlooking the picturesque Indian Ocean. Also spending considerable time in India annually, he considers himself a nomad, travelling the world. Taking an avid interest in anthropology, he never ceases to be enthralled with the sheer kaleidoscope of cultures, diversity, and architectural marvels the world offers.

Having first graduated with an honours degree in structural engineering, he continued with an MBA and then a PhD in Development Studies, working in many diverse professions before finally choosing to become an entrepreneur. Quite enamoured by the concept of 'magical realism,' he also decided to enter the literary realm.

He also writes articles on various subjects for national newspapers, focusing mainly on the Indian Diaspora, but he has now also forayed into more culturally generic topics.

**Frontlist:** Your story revolves around a protagonist who pushes the limits of sanity and materialism to pursue a higher spiritual goal. Is there a connection between the character and any real-life individual?

**Aman:** To be honest, I wholly believe that all writers put a bit of themselves into their characters, as that's how the ego works. However, in the case of my book, I hyped up the characters' negative traits by putting them on steroids. So the similarities become very stretched, almost impossible to determine.

**Frontlist:** Your book discusses humour, sanity, materialism, and fluctuating emotions. What was your primary purpose or message with this book?

**Aman:** Ultimately, it is as the title suggests. Who is in charge of one life path? Is it the individual, fate, or some combination of the two? The novel examines the possibilities of free will versus some sort of fixed destiny.

**Frontlist:** Why did Milan Gansham, the protagonist of your story, decide to travel to India on a mystical journey with his unusual best friend, Birju?

**Aman:** Milan has been through a series of distressing experiences, some not of his knowledge as to why, and it all leaves him feeling lost and disheartened. Additionally, he receives synchronistic signs that maybe going to India will save him from the extreme angst he seems to be undergoing.

**Frontlist:** Why is Milan at odds with the rest of the democratic world while everyone else celebrates their country's euphoric entry into it?

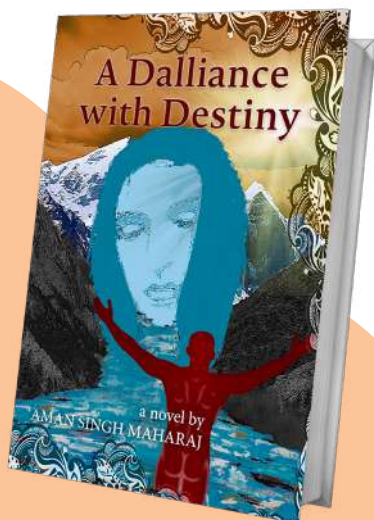
**Aman:** When South Africa came out of apartheid in 1994, and under the stewardship of Nelson Mandela, there was a tremendous sense of patriotism and hope, which had begun to wane with Mandela's end of his presidency, when kinks had started to show in the ruling party. So, while the rest of the world celebrated South Africa's relatively bloodless transition to democracy, Milan feels there are deeper, antagonistic forces at play that are not visible to the globe.

**Frontlist:** Grant Road was Bombay's notorious red light area. What would you like to say about it and the different types of people living in those areas?

**Aman:** I remember walking through Grant Road for the first time at night, around 1996. It was very distressing for me. There were moments of silliness, with hijras pulling my then long hair, but seeing 10-year-old Nepali girls standing in stalls, peeping from behind curtains, made my tummy churn.

**Frontlist:** You were captivated by the concept of 'magical realism'; and you later decided to pursue a career in literature. What was the main reason for it?

**Aman:** I have always loved the idea of bringing an ethereal dimension into literature, not so much that it loses its ethos of being contemporary fiction, but just enough to



highlight that there are several different forces beyond our realm of vision that play a role in influencing our lives.

**Frontlist:** What was it like for you to write this book, and has anything in particular influenced you?

**Aman:** Well, there were great moments, good moments, bad moments, and terrible moments. When the creative juices flowed, it was wonderful to pound away at my keyboard. But, when I sometimes read my provocative words, then I will get anxious about the possible reactions in the public realm. So, in essence, it was a multitude of contradictory emotions that I underwent. In terms of what influenced my writing, well, maybe growing up in a small town in the Eighties, with not much access to entertainment, made me turn to read as a source of amusement, which was also augmented by my mum taking me to the municipal library at a very early age.

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# FRONTLIST SPECIAL

**FRONT LIST**

— JULY'S SPOTLIGHT SESSION —

On the topic  
**MOVING TO A SUSTAINABLE PUBLISHING FUTURE**

Our Distinguished Panelists Are

JOIN US LIVE ON 25TH JULY @2:00PM

**HUGO SETZER**  
CEO, Manual Moderno  
Presidente, CANIEM  
Past President, International Publishers Association

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**PRANAV GUPTA**  
Managing Director, Prints Publications  
EC Member, International Publishers Association

## SPOTLIGHT SESSION

Frontlist organised the July month's Spotlight Session on the theme 'Moving to a sustainable publishing world.'

Through the spotlight session, we illustrated the stimulating perspectives of publishing industry professionals who have years of experience and are closely familiar with the functioning of the publishing world. The session's main objective was to disseminate the right message to the right audience on how we can establish a sustainable publishing world.

### We featured :

1. **Mr Hugo Setzer** - CEO of Manual Moderno, President of CANIEM & Former President, International Publishers Association
2. **Mr Pranav Gupta** - Managing Director, Prints Publications and EC Member, International Publishers Association

### Here are some pointers that were discussed in the conversation:

1. Meaning of Sustainability in terms of the publishing industry.
2. Publishing industry's role in achieving quality education.
3. As a custodian of the Publishing world, the number of approaches applied by Publishers to the growth of education.
4. International and National organizations work together to develop the right content for future generations.
5. QUALITY EDUCATION - Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for achieving a better quality of education.
6. Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence to accelerate the publishing industry development.
7. On account of Sustainability, views on the publishing industry are non-existent without paper.

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