



This American actor, comedian, writer, producer, and singer was born this day in 1961. As of 2016, Murphy's films grossed over \$3.8 billion (\$6.5 billion adjusted for inflation) in the US and Canada box office, and over \$6.7 billion worldwide.

BHUMIKA POPLI

# Guide to raising children as dynamic citizens

In this eventful world, children find themselves in the midst of conflicting ideas. A new book attends to parents' needs of helping their kids grow well without discounting their natural faculties

THE media we consume, the language we use, the relationships we cultivate, the discriminatory behaviours we practise in our families and societies, all these influence our children. Our culture and upbringing may compel us to believe that parents can never be wrong or that mothers know the best. This is the most dangerous parenting myth that can do more harm than good," say authors Manisha Pathak-Shelat, Professor of Communication & Digital Platforms and Strategies and Chair, Centre for Development Management and Communication, MICA, and Kiran Vinod Bhatia, a doctoral candidate at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison, as they launch their book, *Raising a Humanist: Conscious Parenting in an Increasingly Fragmented World*.

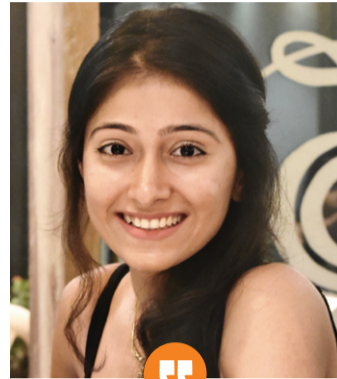
The book is the result of over three years and interactions with over 120 parents. Initially, the authors reveal, they were met with certain reluctance and discomfort. "The parents we interacted with didn't get on board with us immediately for this project. It took time and effort to encourage them to share their fears and apprehensions about introducing changes in their homes and communities. Some of these fears were very real — "What if you challenge an elder in your community and then all the other members ostracise you?", "What if you question family norms and it causes immense friction in the family?", "How to bring about changes without necessarily disrupting peace and love in our families and neighbourhoods?" the authors mention.

According to them, as parents teach their children the ways of being in the world, they must continually change and update their own ideas, values, and practices. The parents must learn to unlearn. While it is important to respect the wisdom in some age-old traditions, debunking parenting myths is critical to stop cultural practices and norms which perpetuate prejudice and threaten the peaceful co-existence of different communities in a plural society. Shelat is a parent herself and is upset about the growing suspicion and hatred in the society. "I want my daughter to grow up in a world that is nurturing, fair, and that respects difference, dialogue and empathy," she says in a conversation with *The Morning Standard*.



We show how the religious and cultural texts from which we draw lessons were created in different times and why it is important to question their relevance today while we still respect our core values

Manisha Pathak-Shelat, Author



We immerse ourselves in the routines of the parents and children we work with to understand their life experiences — socio-cultural norms in their communities, beliefs, and life conditions

Kiran Vinod Bhatia, Author

*ing Standard*. "This book has been written as a conversation about what we can do together in our homes and communities so that our children lead fulfilling lives and contribute to making this world a better place," she adds.

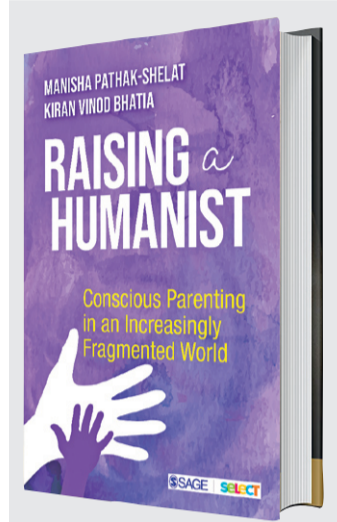
As a researcher, her long-term interest has been to examine how ordinary individuals use communication and media to participate in positive social change. "Kiran and I are both academics who are closely engaged with people, their realities, and the challenges that they encounter in daily living. We understand that these are times when what is going on in the world makes us question the wisdom in being kind, fair, and critical. But I am an incorrigible optimist. I believe there is a lot we can do to make the society a better place for everybody if we ask some critical questions and develop empathy for others, and hence this book."

The book talks about how our socialisation creates echo-chambers where we only want to be with people like us. According to Shelat, it traps us in labels of caste, class, religion, and gender and these labels are used for discrimination. "We discuss how such discrimination limits peo-

ple's life chances and well-being. We show how the religious and cultural texts from which we draw lessons were created in different times and why it is important to question their relevance today while we still respect our core values," while adding, "We suggest how unlearning is required to open our hearts and minds, how critical thinking helps and how we can communicate through our differences while practising self-care. We analyse how media reinforce certain stereotypes and show the potential of media to challenge stereotypes too. We offer many tips on involved parenting and on using technology and art with a purpose to connect and create a better world."

Talking about the research that went into the making of this one, Bhatia informs that as experienced media educators in several schools they adopted an ethnographic and participatory approach to research. "We immerse ourselves in the routines of the parents and children we work with to understand their life experiences — socio-cultural norms in their communities, beliefs, and life conditions. Based on this in-depth understanding of their lives, we encourage them to work with us and iden-

**BOOK DETAILS**  
**RAISING A HUMANIST**  
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**Pages:** 260



tify some of the limitations they experience in the children-parent relationship."

The authors aim to tackle a range of issues — from digital literacy and media use, gender-caste-class realities, art and activism, to family norms and interpersonal communication. "Never in the book do we undermine the uniqueness of the individual parenting journey and importance of self-care. We acknowledge the real-life challenges and at the same time show possibilities for creating a better world."

Next on their list is to write a book that directly addresses young people and helps them engage positively with the world. Along with this is also a research-based academic book on transcultural citizenship that will examine how media facilitate engagements beyond one's local cultures and geographic boundaries and how such engagements shape young people today.

SHANTANU DAVID

LET us state from the very outset that we shall refrain from innuendo in this article, rife though the opportunity for it may be. And that's the way *Misters* in likes it. The self-labelled men's confidence company offers Ayurvedic and botanical origin products and seeks to balance science and provenance; it also addresses a spectrum of themes such as erections, ejaculation, libido, masturbation, fertility, and porn addiction, through a combination of products and self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) on their website, sans the sass and implications. It also lets men consult licensed sexologists for free and get personalised treatment kits for various sexual issues.

The brainchild of serial entrepreneur Suhas Misra (who has helped co-found Hector Beverages, the company behind Paper Boat, and Channel Play), *Misters*, in was inspired by that most ubiquitous, and literal, signs of small town India: white and black wall paintings advertising the services of a sexologist.

"I was doing a lot of travelling across small towns for another project and realised that even though everything else in India has changed, those signs are exactly as I remember them when spotting them through train and bus windows as a kid in the '80s," recalls Misra, who on a whim decided to go and check out what advice these 'experts' were peddling. Apart from the usual quackery, he found that almost every ailment was blamed on "bad childhood habits (basically masturbation)".

"Clearly, there was need for actual expert advice as well as a need to de-stigmatise the conversation around men's sexual wellness," he says, noting that this is why *Misters* was conceptualised as a direct-to-consumer online offering, dispensing with any perceived judgement and providing tailored solutions. "We spent a lot of months researching and developing formulations in consultation with doctors as well as Ayurveda specialists, and also developing ways to communicate to and with consumers."

He also acknowledges the business potential of a brand like *Misters*, which could cater to the vast untapped market of a country in which conversations around sexual wellness is mostly taboo, and any attempt at addressing the issue is "both

# ON MAN HANDLING



Misters Shilajit Pro capsules for men



We spent a lot of months researching and developing formulations in consultation with doctors as well as Ayurveda specialists, and also developing ways to communicate to and with consumers

Suhas Misra, Founder, *Misters*.in

implicit and explicit innuendo geared towards shaming men into buying their products."

"If we had launched even 5-6 months before the lockdown, all our logistics would have been in place and we would probably have enjoyed the surge in sales experienced by other more established online brands. But we launched in late-February 2020, and our only facility was in Delhi at the time, so when the lockdown was announced, we were completely hamstrung for the first few months, with all our stock

stuck in various places," mourns Misra.

On a brighter note, sales have picked up substantially since last October, with new categories of sex toys and other sexual wellness aids performing well since their introduction earlier this last year.

"Because we pay a lot of focus on vernacular (the majority of the sexual health quiz on our homepage has been taken in Hindi), we are seeing traction across the country. Naturally, the North Indian belt is doing the best as Hindi was the first vernacular we introduced, but since then our Marathi, Telugu, and Kannada versions are getting us great response from the regions that speak them, and we intend to keep expanding our language base."

While it doubtless takes courage for men, be they be townsfolk or city dwellers, discretion is still the better part of valour. "We used to deliver our products, like so many other D2C companies do, in packaging that told our brand story, but the feedback we got was that our customers want discreet packaging. It didn't matter that there was nothing explicit or even overt in the design and text of the boxes, men didn't want to be seen ordering anything to do with sex, even by someone as distant as a courier," shares Misra, concluding, "That's the same feedback when it comes to an app. Though we have a lot of cool ideas for one, guys don't want to have a sexual wellness app that can be seen on their phones, so we are figuring out how to address those concerns."

# 'Strong roles attract me'

RAJKUMARI SHARMA TANKHA

KAMNA Pathak did her first play at the age of five, which paved the way for her participation in extra-curricular activities throughout her school days in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh. But her shift towards professional theatre happened while in college at Miranda House (DU), where she moved for graduation.

Reminiscing her college years, which she calls "golden days", Pathak says, "I cherish those days. To secure my hostel seat, I had to get good marks, and had to study a lot. But I was also a part of the dramatics society. So, time management was crucial. My professors were very helpful, more so at times when I could not meet deadlines. Once when I was sick I was allowed to eat even while the lecture was on. I was fortunate to be surrounded by so many loving souls."

In a career spanning over 15 years, this seasoned actor has worked with noted directors M.S. Sathya, Saurabh Shukla, Hema Singh, Ramesh Talwar, Manoj Joshi, and Masood Akhtar.

Currently seen in *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*, she plays Rajesh, wife of SHO Happu Singh, and brings on a fresh take to the role of a homemaker.

Tell us more about your character Rajesh in *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*.

While watching *Bhabhiji Ghar Par Hain* (BGPH), I had often wondered how Happu's wife would look. She is mentioned but not shown even once in the last four years that BGPH has been running.

Rajesh is a very *dabbang*



Pathak with her actor Yogesh Tripathi in *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*

SIDE TRIVIA

**Favourite Directors:** Baba Azmi, MS Sathya and Shashank Bali

**Other passions:** Singing, especially folk songs

woman. She looks traditional and has nine kids, but comes out as a person to reckon with, not shadowed by her family. Most TV serials tend to show wives as submissive, helpless and tormented souls, but Rajesh is a breath of fresh air from this monotonous narrative. This is why the role appealed to me so much.

The language Rajesh speaks is Bundelkhandi, and learning its proper diction was a challenge. But I am glad that viewers have accepted me.

What makes you say yes to a role?

Roles that have an assertive personality attract me. For *Happu Ki...*, many people asked me if I wasn't scared about getting typecast as a "mother figure" at such a young age. But having kids is only a part of Rajesh - she is a storm on her own accord.

You have worked with well-known directors. Any experience you would like to share?



Kamna Pathak

Why haven't you delved into web series?

I am not looking to do any new projects because *Happu Ki...* takes up so much time. However, OTT platforms are much in demand these days, and if I get a role I believe I can do justice to, I would definitely pursue that.

All my directors recognise the importance of giving actors their space, as also the much-required constructive criticism, which motivates me to work with full dedication.

Sitting and talking with Sathya sir, with whom I did my first play *Aakhri Shamaa*, is the best way to cool down your exhaustion and nervousness. He is the true embodiment of "the show must go on" and insists that each actor learns the lines of every character in the play. Saurabh Shukla, with whom I did *Jab Khuli Kitaab*, taught me that an actor should not suppress the instinct to add on something extra to their role while acting. "Let it flow", is his motto.

## DELHI DIGEST

### COLOURS OF DIVINITY

Kathak Kendra, the National Institute of Kathak Dance, organised *Swadheenta Ke Rang, Phalgun Ke Sang*, a dance festival celebrating the 75 years of Independence. The event, held at the Swami Vivekanand Auditorium, Chanakya Puri, Kathak Kendra, started with the performances by Pratibha Singh, a Kathak dancer, who presented her production, *Ishaq Rang*. Following that, the students of Kathak Guru Shama Bhatte from Pune presented her choreography, *Guru Rani Khanam's* second performance was on *Holi Khelungi Keh Ke Bismillah* by Bulleh Shah, and focused on the divine feeling of celebrating the spring season and Holi.



### NEW OUTLOOK

Timex unveiled its new digital brand campaign, *We Don't Stop*, through a brand film featuring celebrity Sidharth Malhotra and global influencers. The new creative features notable change makers from around the world who display their resilience and are inspiring others through their actions, as well as supporting the #togetherband campaign to further the *We Don't Stop* mission. The campaign's hero video, shot pre-COVID, now symbolises a future where people can be brought together again, to achieve a common mission and celebrate each other's achievements.



FEAR NONE. FAVOUR NONE

# Sustainable Tribal Development and the Forest Rights Act

**Prof S B Roy**  
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Retired IAS officer

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Professor, JNU

**Prabhu Chawla**  
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**Kaveree Bamzai**  
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