

Vol 4, Issue 2

May 2025 Edition

# THE LITERATURE TIMES

## 2025 SUCCESS TIPS

Learn from renowned authors for your literary success.

*Author Interviews  
Short Stories  
Selected Poems  
Literary Articles  
& Much More!*

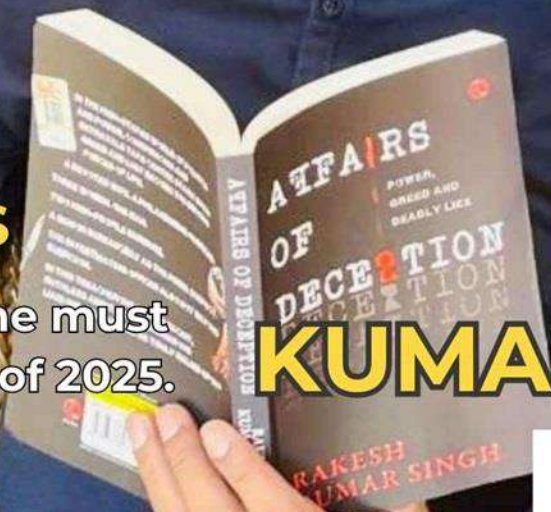
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## BOOK REVIEWS

Unveiling the must read books of 2025.

*Cover Story*

# RAKESH KUMAR SINGH



@theliteraturetimes

www.theliteraturetimes.com

We had no idea where our idea for The Literature Times would lead when we first started out. We improved with experience, grew in scope, and educated ourselves with each new issue.

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# ***Editor's Note***



The Magazine has helped us reimagine the role of media and to connect the world of words with the rapidly developing world of technology. The 2nd Issue of the Volume 4, April 2025 Edition of The Literature Times has allowed us to broaden our horizons by introducing us to a wide range of new ideas.

This new edition aims to attract a wider audience than ever before, therefore it includes a lot more than simply books.

The magazine covers a wide range of themes, from technology to lifestyle to fashion to anything revolutionary or impactful in people's lives, and it even has book reviews and author interviews. Under the subject of current themes, it also features material that is timely and applicable to the contemporary situation. In addition, once readers get their hands on this issue, they will find a few unexpected inclusions.

We believe there is always more to add and learn, thus with each new edition, we push ourselves to new limits in order to better the following one. Consequently, we would appreciate it very much if our readers provided us with feedback at:

[editorial@theliteraturetimes.com](mailto:editorial@theliteraturetimes.com). We hope to hear from you soon. If you're reading this, I hope you enjoy it.

Enjoy your reading!

***Zinnia A Laha***

Editor-in-Chief

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# WELCOME

Cool to see you in this issue.

We invite you to join us in our journey to reach the next milestone and see what marvel our new venture has in store for us.

Our effort intends to reach out to maximum readers who want to see the movements and developments in the literary world and aspire to write someday too. So, with the hope of giving you a joyous experience in reading, let's begin without delays.

We hope you enjoy this one.

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# Rakesh Kumar Singh

## COVER STORY

*Rakesh Kumar Singh doesn't just serve the nation — he writes its untold stories.*



A decorated officer in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Singh has spent nearly three decades in the heart of India's most intense conflict zones — from the insurgency-ridden Northeast to the red corridors of Chhattisgarh. But beyond the boots and bullets lies a quieter force: his pen.

Author of ten books and over a hundred articles, Singh bridges the world of strategy and storytelling. His works, including *Naxalwaad aur Police ki Bhumikaa* and *Naxalwaad: Ek Ankaha Sacch* — both recipients of the Govind Ballabh Pant Puraskaar — bring rare, first-hand insight into internal security, human behavior, and the emotional cost of duty.

As a commanding officer, he's led five CRPF battalions with distinction. As a writer, he's influenced minds in training rooms, policy circles, and beyond. Singh's dual life is a testament to what happens when courage meets clarity — when leadership doesn't end on the field, but continues on the page.

Now, stepping into fiction with upcoming novels, Singh is ready to reveal the human side of heroism, exploring themes of survival, silence, and sacrifice.

In a world that often separates action from introspection, Rakesh Kumar Singh stands at the intersection — a soldier of thought, and a chronicler of truth.

# AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Rakesh Kumar  
Singh

In a country as vast and diverse as India, stories of bravery often go untold, especially those of men and women who dedicate their lives to protecting its sovereignty from the shadows. One such story, though deeply entrenched in the theatre of internal conflict and national service, is also equally a tale of intellect, creativity, and an enduring commitment to thought leadership – the story of Rakesh Kumar Singh, a serving officer of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and an accomplished author of ten published books and over a hundred published articles.

Born on September 4, 1971, in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Rakesh Kumar Singh's life has been defined by two powerful callings – the uniform and the pen. After completing his graduation and post-graduation in History from Delhi University's prestigious Kirori Mal College, Singh embraced a career in the armed forces, joining the CRPF as an Assistant Commandant in 1995. Since then, he has carved an unparalleled journey in Indian paramilitary history.





### MATT ZANG SAID...

What sets Rakesh Kumar Singh apart from many of his peers in the force is his dual legacy – of action and articulation. While his tactical decisions and leadership on the ground won him respect among fellow officers and subordinates, it is his pen that has extended his voice far beyond the battlegrounds. Singh has authored ten books, including both fiction and non-fiction, each reflecting his lived experiences and intellectual engagement with issues of security, behavioural science, police training, and human psychology.

With over three decades of experience in internal security operations, Singh has served in some of the most volatile regions of India, including Kashmir, the insurgency-ridden Northeast, and the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas of Dantewada in Chhattisgarh.

His role in curbing the Naxal menace has been particularly notable. A man who leads from the front, Singh's strategic prowess, dedication, and leadership have won him numerous accolades including Internal Security Medals (thrice), Special Police Duty Medals (twice), and ten prestigious CRPF Commendation Discs.

His works are deeply insightful and born out of first-hand experience, making them essential reading not just for those in uniform, but for anyone interested in the socio-political fabric of India. Among his best-known books are *Naxalwaad aur Police ki Bhumikaa* (2011) and *Naxalwaad Ek Ankaha Sacch* (2021), both of which were awarded the prestigious Govind Ballabh Pant Purashkar by the Government of India.



These books offer an unvarnished look into the operational realities and ideological complexities of the Naxal insurgency – a conflict that continues to challenge India's internal security framework.

In addition to his books, Singh's contribution to thought leadership is evident from his more than 100 articles published in leading newspapers, journals, and magazines. These writings cover a wide array of topics including internal security, counter-insurgency tactics, behavioural training, and police management. His ideas are frequently sought by academic and policing institutions alike. As a resource person for the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), he regularly delivers lectures at premier police academies, contributing to the training and development of future law enforcement leaders.





The hallmark of Singh's leadership lies in the operational excellence he brought to the units under his command. He has had the rare distinction of commanding five battalions of the CRPF – an acknowledgment of his tactical acumen and dependable leadership.

During his tenure, each unit consistently earned accolades as the best in either administrative or operational domains. The pinnacle of this success came in 2019-20, when the 195 Battalion under his command was declared the Best Operational Battalion of the CRPF in LWE areas.

Currently serving as a Deputy Inspector General, Rakesh continues to be a figure of immense respect within the force – a leader who understands the heart of his men and the psychology of conflict.

Beyond his professional achievements, Rakesh's personal life is deeply grounded in values of family and creativity. He is married to Shagun, his college sweetheart, and together they have nurtured a family steeped in literature and thought. Their daughter, Subhangi, a

postgraduate in Psychology from Delhi University, is a published poetess whose debut collection *Khidkiyo ke paar Akaash* has garnered appreciation for its emotive depth. Their son, Aditya Shauryavardhan, is a Computer Science engineer, symbolizing the family's wide intellectual expanse. Interestingly, Singh's inspiration to write fiction emerged from his desire to portray the human side of those caught in extraordinary circumstances.



His fiction, set to be published by Rupa Publications and Om Books International, promises to offer a different dimension of his narrative capabilities – stories that blend emotion, tension, and realism, driven by his profound understanding of human behaviour and societal dynamics.

With his deep-rooted integrity, intellectual sharpness, and unwavering commitment to the nation, Rakesh Kumar Singh is more than just an officer or a writer – he is a chronicler of our times, a soldier of thought, and a true son of the soil.

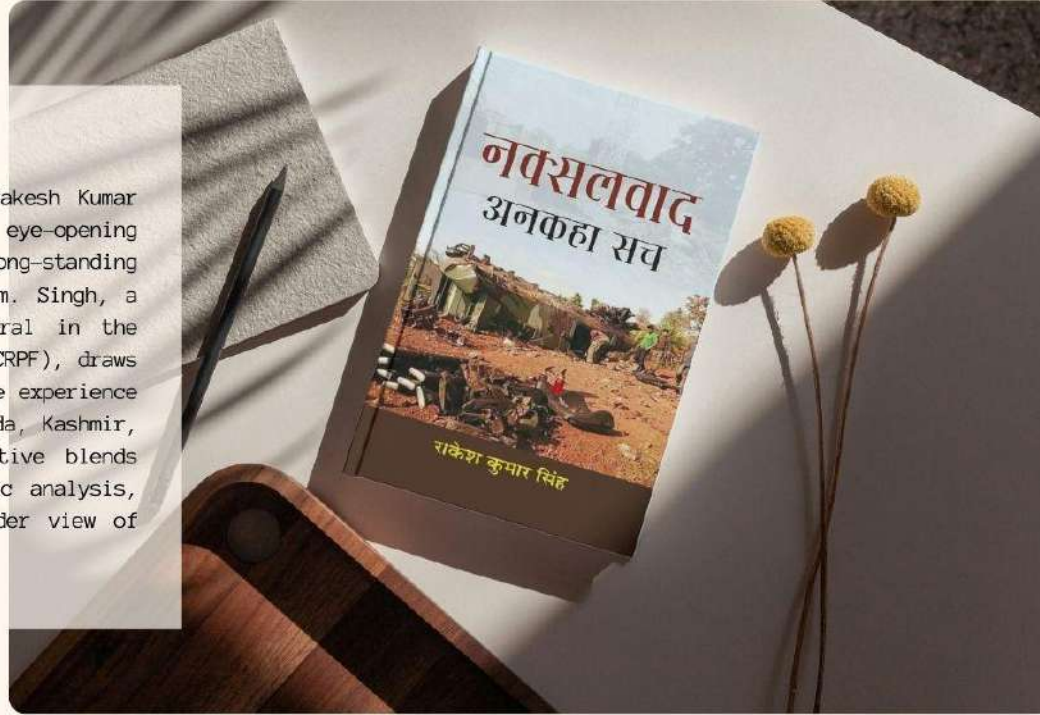
In every sense, his life is a testament to the power of words and action working in tandem – safeguarding the nation not just with guns, but with the guidance of wisdom



# NAXALWAAD EK ANKAHA SACCH

By Rakesh Kumar Singh

**N**axalwaad Ek Ankaha Sacch by Rakesh Kumar Singh is a powerful and eye-opening exploration of India's long-standing internal conflict with Naxalism. Singh, a serving Deputy Inspector General in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), draws from over 30 years of frontline experience in conflict zones like Dantewada, Kashmir, and the Northeast. His narrative blends personal insight with strategic analysis, offering readers a rare, insider view of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE).



**T**he book is not just a historical overview—it examines the movement's ideological roots, its transformation into a militarized insurgency, and the psychological warfare tactics used by Naxal leaders to manipulate tribal communities. Singh presents a clear-eyed assessment of the Naxalite command structure, recruitment methods, and operational strategies, while also exposing the social and economic grievances that fuel the movement.

**W**hat sets this book apart is its focus on the human element. Through vivid anecdotes, Singh brings attention to the lives of CRPF personnel and the dilemmas faced by Adivasi villagers caught between state forces and insurgents. He also critiques the shortcomings of state policies and implementation gaps in development schemes like the Integrated Action Plan (IAP).



**S**ingh argues that Naxalism cannot be defeated by force alone. Instead, he proposes a multi-pronged approach: community policing, better training and welfare for security forces, improved communication with tribal populations, and long-term development in education and healthcare. His emphasis is on winning trust, not just battles.

## An Interview with Author Rakesh Kumar Singh



### ***What inspired you to start writing, especially while serving in such demanding roles within the CRPF?***

Translating the complex and sensitive real-world conflict of Naxalism into words for *Naxalwaad Ek Ankaha Sacch* had been a formidable challenge for me. As a CRPF officer with firsthand experience, I faced the task of balancing raw, lived realities with the need to craft a narrative that resonates with real ground situations. The difficulty lies in capturing the nuanced socio-political roots of the conflict—poverty and ideological extremism—while depicting the human toll on all sides, from security forces to civilians caught in the crossfire. Challenge was to convey the emotional and ethical dilemmas of anti-naxalism without oversimplifying or sensationalizing. The insider perspective was invaluable, but it demand careful restraint to avoid bias and ensure authenticity. The award-winning book's success suggests I navigated these challenges by grounding the narrative in stark truths, likely blending personal accounts with broader context to make the conflict palpable yet comprehensible.

### ***How do you balance your identity as a uniformed officer with that of a creative writer?***

Balancing my identity as a CRPF officer and a creative writer is like carrying two weapons ... rifle for duty, pen for creativity. In uniform, I'm bound by discipline, action, and the weight of protecting lives in the chaos of Naxal conflicts. Every decision is sharp, immediate, and rooted in reality. Writing, though, demands I step back, peel open those same moments, and let the mess of human struggle. It's tough to shift from giving orders to questioning what they cost, but I don't see them as separate. My badge gives me the raw material; the pen lets me carve it into something honest. The challenge is staying loyal to both: the uniform's silence and the writer's voice. And that's why I started writing fictions and poem.

## **You've written both fiction and non-fiction. How different is your creative process for each genre?**

My creative side is about my deep passion for storytelling and poetry, particularly in the realm of romantic fiction and love poems. My work captures the raw emotions of love, loss, and longing, resonating with readers through heartfelt narratives and evocative verses. I find writing fiction and non-fiction to be like navigating two sides of a battlefield—one born of truth, the other of dreams. Non-fiction, like *Behind the uniform: Not just a cop and Naxalwaad Ek Ankaha Sacch*, is my CRPF logbook: every page etched with the sweat, sacrifice, and stark reality of policing. I'm bound to the truth—each word a report from the frontlines, carrying the weight of lives lived and lost. It's a disciplined march, where I recount the chaos with clarity and honour. Romantic fiction and love poems, though, are my escape into a softer rebellion. I share stories and verses that bloom from the heart's quiet corners—where love whispers louder than gunfire. Fiction lets me weave worlds where lovers defy odds, their passion a spark I've seen in fleeting glances during tense patrols. Writing a love poem feels like disarming a bomb: delicate, precise, yet explosive. I draw from stolen moments—my own musings. While non-fiction chains me to facts, romance sets me free to imagine, to craft longing and hope with the same intensity I've faced danger. Both are my truth—one grounded, one soaring—but they meet in the pulse of human connection.

## **What role does empathy play in counter-insurgency and in your storytelling?**

I believe empathy is the heartbeat of both my life and my storytelling. In challenging situations, it's the ability to grasp the unspoken fears and hopes of others, guiding actions with humanity rather than just strategy. In writing, empathy is my muse. Whether spinning the delicate yearning of love poems or the vibrant dreams of romantic fiction. I slip into the souls of my characters—lovers, wanderers, the heartbroken. It's not enough to weave a tale; I want readers to taste every longing, every spark. Empathy binds my worlds, turning fleeting moments into stories that pulse with life.



## ***How has your family, especially your daughter—also a published poet—shaped your writing journey?***

My family—especially my daughter, a published poet—has been the pulse of my writing journey. My romantic fiction and love poems, glow with influence of love in my life. My daughter's verses, tender yet bold, teaches how to capture longing in a single breath. She'd nudge her poetry toward deeper truths, her poet's eye sharpening the psychological aspects. My near and dears, all fuel my stories, reminding me that every page, like every battle, is won with heart.

## ***What advice would you give to young officers or writers who wish to document real-life conflict zones responsibly?***

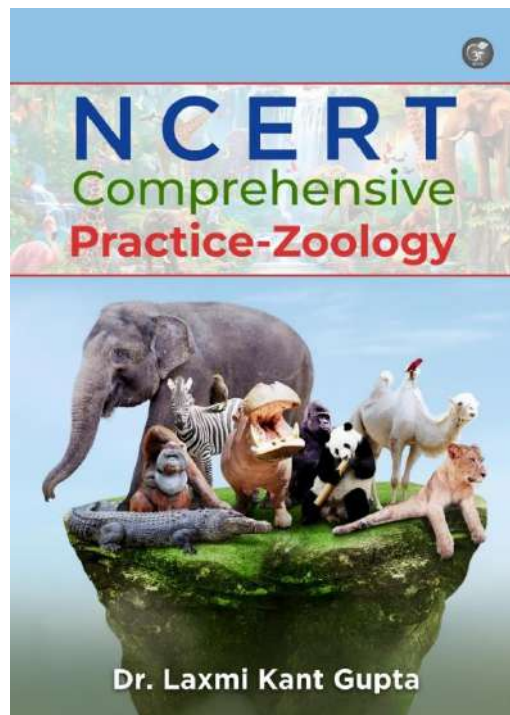
A police officer can be complex—creative, romantic, and loving—yet shaped by harsh realities of life. To portray this responsibly, immerse yourself in the world without judgment. Listen to the stories, understand the dreams, and depict the passions vividly and truthfully. Avoid romanticizing violence; instead, highlight human side. Let creativity speak about sensible and sensitive human being you are. And let the poetry influence the people on both sides of fences.



## TLT Specials

# NCERT Comprehensive Practice – Zoology for NEET and Other Medical Entrance Examinations

## Book Review



For students aiming to crack NEET and other top-tier medical entrance examinations, NCERT Comprehensive Practice – Zoology offers a well-structured, exam-focused guide that delivers both depth and precision. This comprehensive practice material, authored by Dr. Laxmi Kant Gupta, has been meticulously designed to align with the NCERT syllabus for Classes XI and XII, making it an invaluable resource for aspirants preparing for both competitive exams and board examinations.

What sets this book apart is its thorough understanding of the demands of NEET and similar exams. With years of experience as a researcher and educator, Dr. Gupta brings his expertise to each chapter, ensuring the content is not only relevant but also strategically designed to maximize students' scores. Each section builds upon the NCERT foundation — which remains the cornerstone for NEET — while integrating updated question patterns that reflect current trends in competitive testing.

The inclusion of Assertion and Reason questions encourages students to engage in analytical thinking, while List 1/List 2 format questions simulate the more complex question styles introduced in recent NEET papers. This approach helps students break free from rote learning and shift towards conceptual understanding and application-based preparation.

In addition, the book introduces Statement-based questions, rigorously aligned with NCERT content. These are crafted to test subtle distinctions and details from the textbook — often the difference between a good and a great score. Such intensive focus on micro-level understanding reflects Dr. Gupta's experience with what coaching institutions call the “question-maker's mindset.”

Each chapter is supplemented with self-practice test papers, giving students an opportunity to gauge their readiness and fine-tune their preparation. This practical angle ensures that learners are not only passively absorbing content but also actively engaging with their progress.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its dual-purpose structure. While it is fundamentally designed for NEET aspirants, its NCERT-rooted content makes it equally useful for students preparing for their Class XI and XII board examinations. This dual utility adds immense value for students who often juggle both simultaneously.

Dr. Laxmi Kant Gupta's academic background in Genetics and Plant Breeding, along with over two decades of teaching experience, brings a unique depth to the material. Having taught in prestigious institutions and contributed to academic committees, his approach reflects both pedagogical clarity and real-world examination insight. His emphasis on logic-driven learning, consistent practice, and topic-wise mastery positions the book as a trusted companion for every serious medical aspirant.

In an era where competitive exams continue to evolve and challenge students with new formats and greater conceptual depth, NCERT Comprehensive Practice – Zoology is a timely and much-needed resource. It doesn't simply compile questions — it teaches students how to think, analyze, and apply. For any student committed to cracking NEET or excelling in board exams, this book stands out as a strategic, reliable, and high-yield companion.

## The Author

Dr. Laxmi Kant Gupta holds a Ph.D. in Genetics and Plant Breeding from IIPR, Kanpur, and has qualified the CSIR-NET in Life Sciences. With over 24 years of teaching experience in prestigious coaching institutes and five years as a Lecturer/Assistant Professor at D.A.V. College, Kanpur, he is a seasoned educator. He also served as a CSIR-SRF and held administrative roles, including Head of the Science and Technology Department at Spectra Coaching Centre and member of the Library Advisory Committee at D.A.V. College. His extensive background in research, teaching, and leadership highlights his dedication to academic excellence.



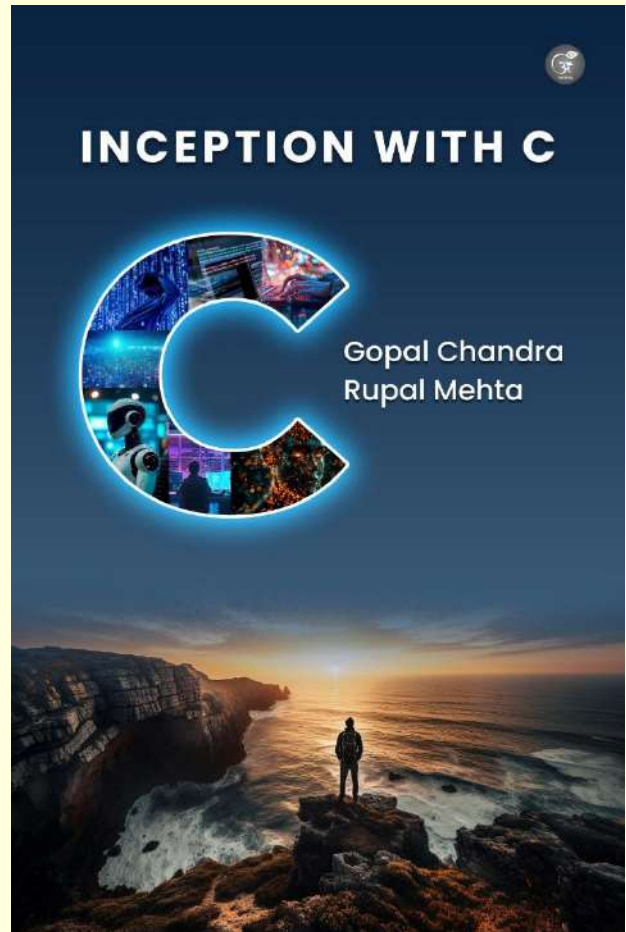
# Inception with C by Gopal Chandra & Rupal Mehta

Inception with C is an insightful and well-organized textbook that introduces readers to the powerful and foundational world of the C programming language. Authored by experienced educators Gopal Chandra and Rupal Mehta, the book presents an ideal starting point for beginners and a dependable reference for professionals looking to refresh or deepen their knowledge in C.

C is often referred to as the "language of engineers"—and rightfully so. It forms the backbone of modern programming and is used across various fields of software development, embedded systems, and academic research. This book captures the essence of C in a way that is both engaging and educational. The authors have successfully combined their rich academic experience with a practical teaching approach, making the content approachable yet intellectually stimulating.

The book is divided into 10 well-structured chapters, beginning with a strong foundation in programming concepts. The first chapter introduces the reader to programming fundamentals, algorithms, and flowcharts—critical tools for visualizing and solving programming problems efficiently. This early emphasis on algorithmic thinking helps readers develop a logical mindset before diving into the syntax and semantics of C.

As the chapters progress, readers are guided through an in-depth exploration of C, covering everything from data types and operators to control statements, functions, arrays, pointers, structures, and file handling.



Each topic is explained clearly, supported by tested and compiled programs, many of which have been used successfully in classroom settings by the authors during their long teaching tenure of over 18 years. The programs presented are not only accurate but also demonstrate real-life problem-solving scenarios, making them incredibly useful for practical application.

One of the standout features of Inception with C is its integration of examination-oriented problems. Many of the exercises and solutions are inspired by actual questions from Polytechnic and Engineering university papers. This makes the book a valuable resource for students preparing for academic exams or technical interviews.

What sets this book apart is its focus on the complete software development cycle. The authors go beyond simply teaching the syntax of C. They offer guidance on how to design programs, write clean and efficient code, debug errors, document work properly, and maintain codebases over time. This holistic approach prepares the reader for real-world programming challenges, nurturing not just coding skills but also discipline, structure, and confidence.

The writing style is clear, concise, and reader-friendly. Whether you are a complete novice or someone with prior programming experience, the book caters to various learning levels. Diagrams, flowcharts, and step-by-step code explanations enhance understanding and ensure that the reader can grasp both the concepts and their implementation with ease.

## About the Authors

Gopal Chandra (MCA, MTech (IT), MTech (CSE)) is a Lecturer in Computer Science & Engineering department in Government Women's Polytechnic, Bokaro, Jharkhand with a strong background in C programming. With 18 years of experience in coding and problem solving, He enjoys simplifying complex concept for readers. This book is designed to help beginners and professional alike master C with ease. His area of interest is C++, Java, python, DBMS etc.



Rupal Mehta (MCA, MTech in IT) is a dedicated teacher and trainer in the field of Computer Science with over five years of experience. She specializes in programming languages such as C++, Java, and JavaScript, and has a keen interest in Robotics. Rupal is passionate about simplifying complex concepts and aims to equip students with strong technical skills, making learning interactive, practical, and aligned with current industry needs.

# TIPS TO HELP WRITERS IMPROVE THEIR CRAFT

*By- Sakshee Sahu*

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## **Write Every Day**

Make writing a daily habit, even if just for 15–30 minutes. Consistency builds confidence, improves clarity, and helps you find your natural writing voice over time.

## **Read Regularly**

Reading widely—fiction, non-fiction, poetry—introduces you to diverse styles and fresh ideas. It enhances your vocabulary and gives insight into effective storytelling techniques.

## **Don't Fear Rewriting**

First drafts are just the beginning. The real magic happens in editing—revising helps you clarify your message and strengthen your narrative.

## **Infuse Emotion into Your Work**

Emotion creates connection. Let your characters feel deeply and write from a place of honesty to make your words resonate with readers.

## **Stay Inspired and Be Patient**

Every writer faces doubt or blocks. Keep going, stay curious, and trust that progress will come with time and effort. Writing is a journey, not a race.



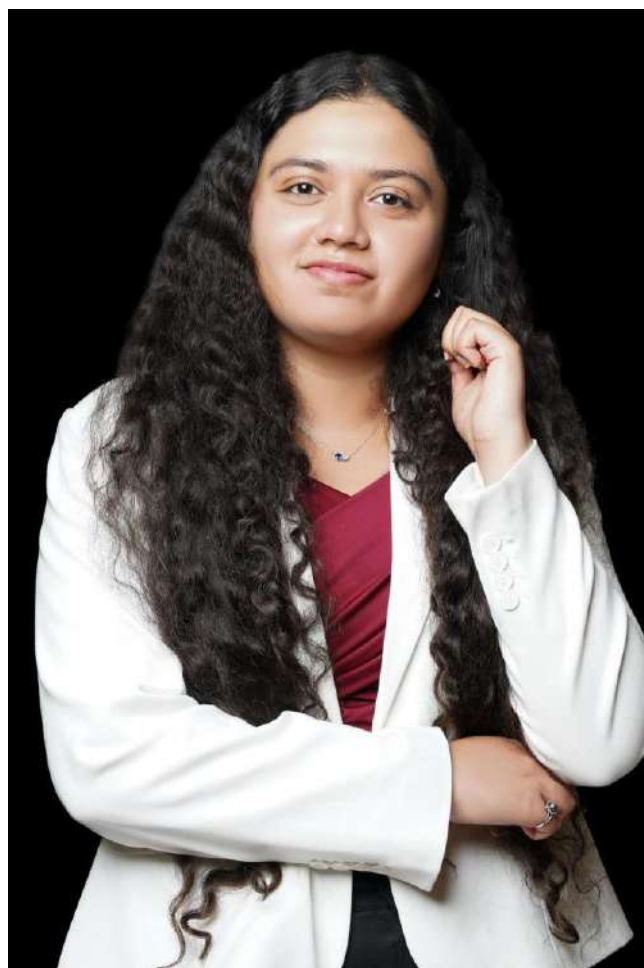
# Shubhangi Singh

## Author SPOTLIGHT

In a world that often rushes past the invisible struggles people carry, Shubhangi Singh stands as a bridge—between silence and expression, vulnerability and strength, healing and storytelling. A bilingual author, therapist, and mental health advocate, Shubhangi has devoted her life's work to understanding the human experience and offering tools for transformation.

With a Master's degree in Psychology from Delhi University and a Clinical Psychology specialization from Auburn University at Montgomery, USA, Shubhangi brings a blend of academic excellence and deep empathy to her work. Currently serving as a psychological assistant and therapist at Avondale & Associates Psychological Services in Alabama, her therapeutic approach is integrative and person-centered—grounded in the belief that true healing must honor the whole person, including their social, cultural, and emotional world.

But Shubhangi's influence extends beyond the therapy room. As an author and poet, she has published over 100 blogs and academic articles on mental health, gaining recognition from several platforms and organizations such as FeelJoy, IGNAMIND, FriendsSquare, and The Mood Space. Her work has been featured at national and



international conferences, adding a valuable voice to the global dialogue around mental health awareness.

Her poetry book \*"Khidkiyon Ke Paar Aakash"\* offers a deeply personal look into life's emotions, spirituality, and inner reflection—intertwining mental health themes with the beauty of Hindi verse.



Her advice to young writers or emotionally sensitive professionals is clear: “Embrace your sensitivity; it’s your superpower. Don’t write to impress—write to express. And always protect your own emotional well-being along the way.”

As Shubhangi continues to expand her reach through community outreach, creative projects, and psychological research, she remains anchored in purpose. Her journey is not just one of personal growth, but one of service—to amplify the voices of others, to reduce stigma, and to use language as a path to healing.

In every word she writes and every soul she supports, Shubhangi Singh reminds us: healing begins with being heard.

Meanwhile, her bestselling self-help book \**“Behind the Uniform: Not Just a Cop”*\* shines a light on the often-overlooked mental health struggles within law enforcement, offering both practical tools and emotional insight.

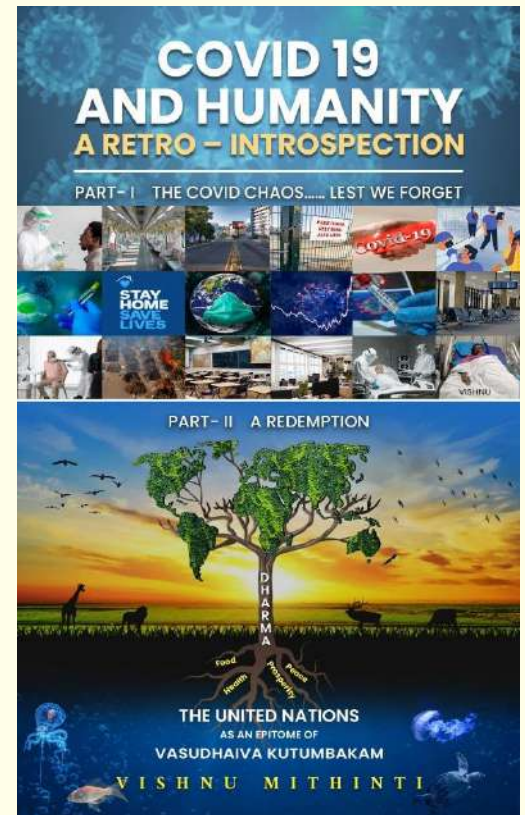
At the heart of all Shubhangi does lies a commitment to storytelling. “Whether it’s through therapy, poetry, or research, I see it all as different expressions of the same truth,” she says. “We’re all just trying to be seen, heard, and understood.” Her ability to bring psychological insight into poetic narrative helps readers and clients alike feel connected, validated, and inspired.

Shubhangi is also a believer in the power of silence—the space between words where emotions often live unspoken. In therapy and poetry, she honors the unexpressed, using it as a guide to explore trauma, resilience, identity, and love. She emphasizes that emotional vulnerability, rather than being a liability, is a sign of strength and connection.



## TLT Specials

### Book review



In this title, “COVID 19 And HUMANITY: A Retro — Introspection” author Vishnu Mithinti delivers a profound and timely exploration of one of the most pivotal events in modern human history — the COVID 19 pandemic through a dual lens of retrospection and introspection. This thought-provoking work, straddling the genres of health, self care and personal experience is more than a record of global suffering and survival; it is a moral wake-up call, urging humanity to reflect on its shared experiences and to chart a collective path forward rooted in compassion, unity and responsibility. The book is thoughtfully divided into two significant parts: Part I – A Retrospection, and Part II – An Introspection. Each section serves a distinct purpose while being deeply interconnected in terms of message and vision!

Author Vishnu Mithinti is a qualified Engineer, an ex-defence officer, a Life Skills Trainer, a Motivational Speaker and now, a third time Author. Two of his earlier books, ‘Love Lost & Found’ (Fiction) and ‘Deception on Westminster Bridge, London’ (Non-fiction) are out on the stands. Whereas, this particular title, “COVID 19 And HUMANITY: A Retro — Introspection” is published by Astitva Prakashan and is released during the period of April 2025. Also, the book is available in both paperback as well as in e-book format and the readers can find this title on all the top online marketplaces.

In the first part of this book, “COVID 19 And HUMANITY: A Retro — Introspection” the author painstakingly recounts the emotional, psychological and the societal upheaval wrought by the COVID 19 pandemic. Rather than just presenting a clinical or statistical overview of the virus’s spread, author Vishnu Mithinti invites the readers to relive the shared human experiences of the fear, grief, isolation and the confusion that gripped the planet between 2019 and 2023.

His reflections are honest and unflinching and he reminds us of a painful truth that ‘during this period, we humans feared the other humans more than the virus itself.’ This powerful observation captures the essence of how drastically the interpersonal relationships were altered and how trust — a bedrock of human connection was momentarily lost amidst the chaos of infection and misinformation. Author’s narrative resonates because it is not detached or academic — it is deeply personal and empathetic. Whether reflecting on the dread induced by a cough in a crowded room or the eerie silence of empty streets, the author recreates a vivid tapestry of the pandemic years. He urges readers not to forget, not to dismiss these years as merely a dark chapter, but to retain their lessons as we move forward. This call to remembrance serves as the book’s emotional anchor!

On top of that the second half of the book takes a decisive turn from recalling the past to evaluating the present state of the humanity. Over here, the author’s voice shifts from that of a chronicler to that of a philosopher, questioning the ethical, cultural, and the spiritual foundations of our global society. At the heart of his introspection lies the ancient Indian ethos of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” — a principle which means that ‘The World is One Family!’ Drawing on this inclusive philosophy, the author advocates for a global moral realignment, one that transcends national interests, cultural divides and political agendas. He believes the concept should not only be referenced in diplomatic speeches but must guide the conscience of global institutions like the United Nations. His assertion that this principle should serve as the ‘Collective Conscience of the United Nations’ is especially poignant in a world fractured by nationalism, economic inequality, and climate crises.

One of the Noteworthy Aspects of this title is the author citing the Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi’s 2014 UN Address and India’s subsequent vaccine diplomacy during the pandemic, wherein India provided over a billion vaccines to underserved nations as a living embodiment of this philosophy in action. This example serves as a rallying point, reinforcing the idea that global cooperation must be practiced, not just preached. Author Vishnu Mithinti’s emphasis on the global interdependence is not just idealistic fantasy, but also a pragmatic necessity in an age where the viruses, misinformation and the economic shocks cross borders with ease!

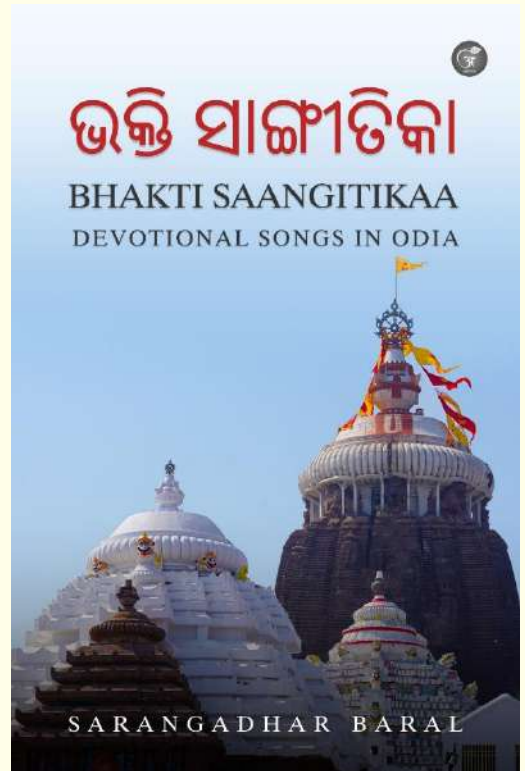
More importantly, the author’s writing style is measured, reflective and sincerely marked by a blend of emotional insight and philosophical depth. He does not offer simplistic answers but provides a framework of thought, encouraging the readers to engage in their own introspection. There is a clear sense that this book was written not just as a personal project but as a social responsibility — a literary endeavour to awaken a sense of urgency and solidarity within its readers.

Now, upon reaching the final part of the review, i.e. the Book Verdict, we can conclude that a title like “COVID 19 And HUMANITY: A Retro — Introspection” is for sure a reading worthy title. The book deserves a chance by the readers as it is a significant contribution to the post-pandemic discourse. It captures the spirit of a unique era while offering a roadmap for a more compassionate and united future. More importantly, author Vishnu Mithinti has succeeded in writing a book that is both a memorial to our collective past and a blueprint for our shared future. It is for those readers who seek meaning amidst the tragedy, who wish to make sense of the senseless and who believe that the true healing begins with reflection and unity!

In addition, this book is not only recommended for those segment of the readers, who are interested in health, pandemic narratives or self-help literature, but also for anyone who wishes to be a better global citizen, which makes it a **MUST READ**. It reminds us that in the face of invisible threats, our strongest armour is our shared humanity.

## TLT Specials

### Book Review



**BHAKTI SAANGITIKAA: DEVOTIONAL SONGS IN ODIA** by Sarangadhar Baral, known affectionately and reverently as “Saranga” in the Odia literary tradition, is a profound spiritual offering and a heartfelt collection of devotional songs dedicated to Lord Jagannath of Puri Dham. These songs are not merely verses on paper—they are emotional outpourings of a devout heart, steeped in the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of Odisha.

The background story of the book’s publication adds another layer of significance. Originally intended for release in 2022, the manuscript faced setbacks due to a failed publishing agreement. However, its final appearance in print now feels like a triumph of devotion and perseverance, mirroring the very spirit the songs embody.

What sets this collection apart is its authenticity. These are not second-hand translations or adaptations, but original compositions penned by the author himself, emerging from a place of sincere devotion and inner dialogue with the divine. Each song acts as a poetic supplication or conversation between the mortal and the eternal, often framed with the rawness of human sorrow and the unwavering faith of a devotee. Saranga doesn’t shy away from expressing anguish, frustration, or longing—all directed towards Lord Jagannath, not in rebellion but in loving reproach, making the verses deeply relatable for those on a spiritual path.

Stylistically, the songs are steeped in the geet-sangeet tradition, making them not only poetic but also musical in rhythm and cadence. They resonate with the age-old bhakti poetry of Odisha, echoing the works of saint-poets like Jayadeva and Salabega, while still bringing a fresh, contemporary voice through the author’s own experiences and revelations. Each composition seems designed not only for reading but also for singing, as part of collective devotion or personal meditation.

Saranga's humility is another notable aspect of this book. Rather than placing himself as the centerpiece, he assumes the role of a collective voice for the sorrowing devotee. This choice makes his work feel inclusive and empathetic. The reader or singer of these songs can easily find themselves reflected in his words—as if their own emotions are being articulated.

Another commendable feature is the balance between tradition and individuality. While the songs are clearly inspired by Odisha's long and venerated devotional music tradition, they also bear the stamp of the author's personal insight. The divine is addressed not only with reverence but with a tender intimacy, reflecting the emotional complexity of the devotee's relationship with the Lord.

In summary, BHAKTI SAANGITIKAA is more than just a book—it is a spiritual journey rendered in lyrical form. It is a gift to lovers of devotional literature and music, particularly those drawn to Lord Jagannath and the Odia language. Saranga's voice is both ancient and new, echoing centuries of devotion while carving a unique place in the modern bhakti literary canon. This book deserves a sacred place in the hearts and homes of all spiritual seekers.

## About the Author

Sarangadhar Baral (Saranga) was born in 1960 at the village of Ghatakuli in Puri District, Odisha. He has been working as a senior Professor of English in the Mizoram University (a Central University of India) located at Aizawl. He was the former Dean of the School of Education and Humanities, of the School of Humanities and Languages, and is working with Research Scholars for their Ph.D. degrees and projects. He was also Member of different Boards of Studies, Academic Council, and Executive Council of the University as well. A number of edited books, Translations and creative texts in English and Odia are available to his credit.

He has contributed to creative literature and critical studies with research papers.

While the *Bhakti Daarshanika* is his first song book (Astitva Prakashan, 2022) in Odia, the present *Bhakti Saangitika* is his second bhakti song book (2025).

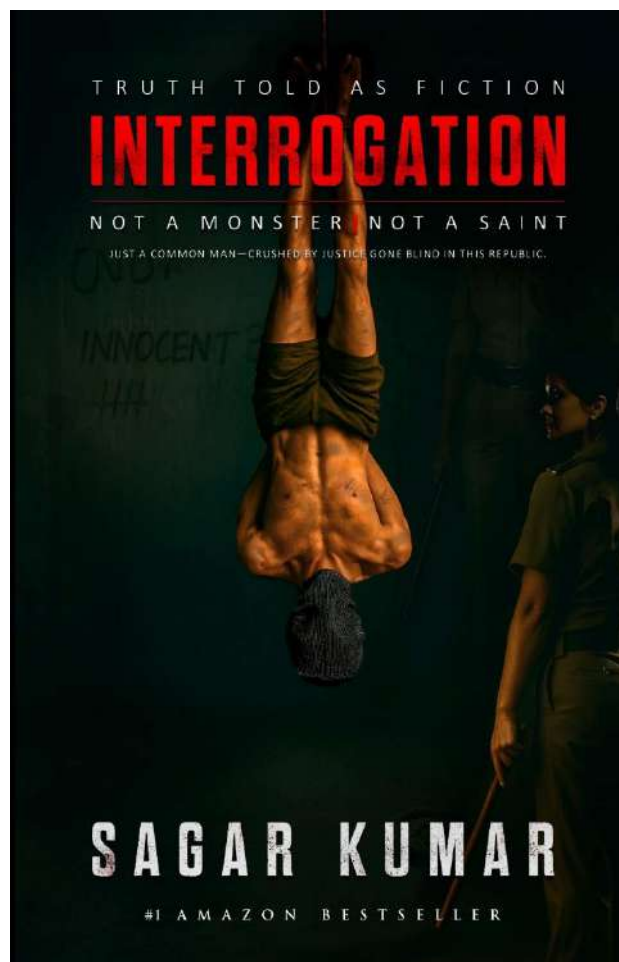


## INTERROGATION — Not A Monster. Not A Saint by Sagar Kumar

### Book Review

Author Sagar Kumar's debut title, "INTERROGATION — Not A Monster. Not A Saint" is a hauntingly powerful and emotionally wrenching account that blurs the line between reality and fiction — not to mislead, but to reveal. Billed as biographical fiction, this book is not merely a thriller or a suspenseful narrative. It is a literary reckoning — a visceral, honest confrontation with the machinery of injustice, stitched together through the pain and silence of a real-life incident that unfolded in June 2021 at the Madiwala Police Station in Bengaluru. Besides, the manner in which the author had carried out the task of storytelling in his book is captivating enough to make the readers quench for more with every turn of the page, and this is something that actually makes this title reading worthy!

Author Sagar Kumar is a writer and a director based in Bangalore, originally from Shimoga. He is a B.E. graduate, and he had worked in the IT industry as an iOS developer for seven years before fully transitioning into the world of storytelling. Driven by a deep passion for truth & human narratives, he wishes to be known simply as a storyteller, regardless of the medium. Whereas, this particular title, "INTERROGATION — Not A Monster. Not A Saint" is published by Astitva Prakashan and is released during the period of April 2025. Also, the book is available in both paperback as well as in e-book format and the readers can find this title on all the top online marketplaces.



At its core, "INTERROGATION — Not A Monster. Not A Saint" is a story about identity, language and systemic violence. But it is not couched in grand abstractions. It is grounded in the crushing reality of one man's ordeal — a man neither monster nor martyr, but someone who became the target of a system that turned blind when it needed most to see. This is not a tale of extraordinary crime or cinematic confrontation; instead, it is the very ordinariness of the man and his suffering that magnifies the horror. In author Sagar Kumar's sparse yet lyrical prose, the mundane becomes tragic and the familiar becomes sinister. Over the course of '9 Searing Chapters', the author unearths the grim truth of what it means to be a common man in a system that wields power with indifference and prejudice.

The book does not entertain in the traditional sense — it disturbs, provokes and ultimately transforms the readers. The experience is less like reading and more like witnessing, being drawn into an emotional courtroom where the jury is the conscience of society itself.

On top of that the author's storytelling is intensely intimate. Every chapter feels like a confession, every paragraph a fragment of a life broken under the weight of bureaucratic brutality. Yet what sets the narrative apart is its refusal to indulge in sensationalism. The violence is not embellished for dramatic effect. Instead, it is presented quietly, factually and devastatingly, with all the more power for its restraint. The reader is not spared the discomfort, nor are they allowed to look away. The book demands that we feel it and we sit with it, as the author implores and while doing so, it forces us to reckon with the dehumanising silence that often surrounds such injustices!

One of the Notable Strengths of this title lies in its tone, which is measured but unflinching. Author Sagar Kumar approaches his subject with a blend of empathy and controlled fury. He does not shout; he does not preach. Instead, he holds up a mirror to a society that too often turns its back on the voiceless. And in that mirror, we see not only the protagonist's pain but our own complicity. The book is not a comfortable read and that is precisely what makes it necessary. Despite its darkness, 'INTERROGATION' also gives space to unexpected moments of light — acts of human connection, fleeting compassion and enduring resilience. These glimpses of warmth amidst the cold machinery of injustice remind us that even in the bleakest moments, the human spirit can resist, survive and assert its right to be seen and heard..

The presence of these moments adds the emotional complexity and keeps the book from descending into nihilism. It is at its heart, a tribute to those who endure

Stylistically, the author's writing is stark, almost minimalist and yet deeply evocative. He avoids the overwrought prose, letting the gravity of the situation speak for itself. Dialogue is used sparingly but meaningfully, often highlighting the linguistic and the cultural fractures that lie at the heart of the protagonist's mistreatment. The narrative is tightly constructed, and each chapter contributes to a cumulative sense of dread and injustice, building to a crescendo that leaves the readers both shattered as well as awakened in a very different manner!

Now, upon reaching the final part of the review, i.e. the Book Verdict, we can conclude that a title like "INTERROGATION: Not A Monster. Not A Saint" is for sure a reading worthy title. The book deserves a chance by the readers as it is an act of bearing witness. It is a cry from the margins, a testimony to the countless lives that are bruised, broken, or erased by systems meant to protect. Author Sagar Kumar's fearless and deeply humane storytelling compels us to ask uncomfortable questions about power, silence and justice. The book does not offer easy answers, nor does it claim to. But, what it offers is something more vital — a chance to listen, to reflect and perhaps to change, which makes it a **MUST READ** one.

In addition, in a world where the stories of the oppressed are too often buried beneath the weight of the bureaucracy and apathy, this particular title insists that we remember, we speak and we certainly do not let the system crush another common man into silence!

# Ghazipur, The Opium Mint: From 1820 to the Present

## BOOK REVIEW

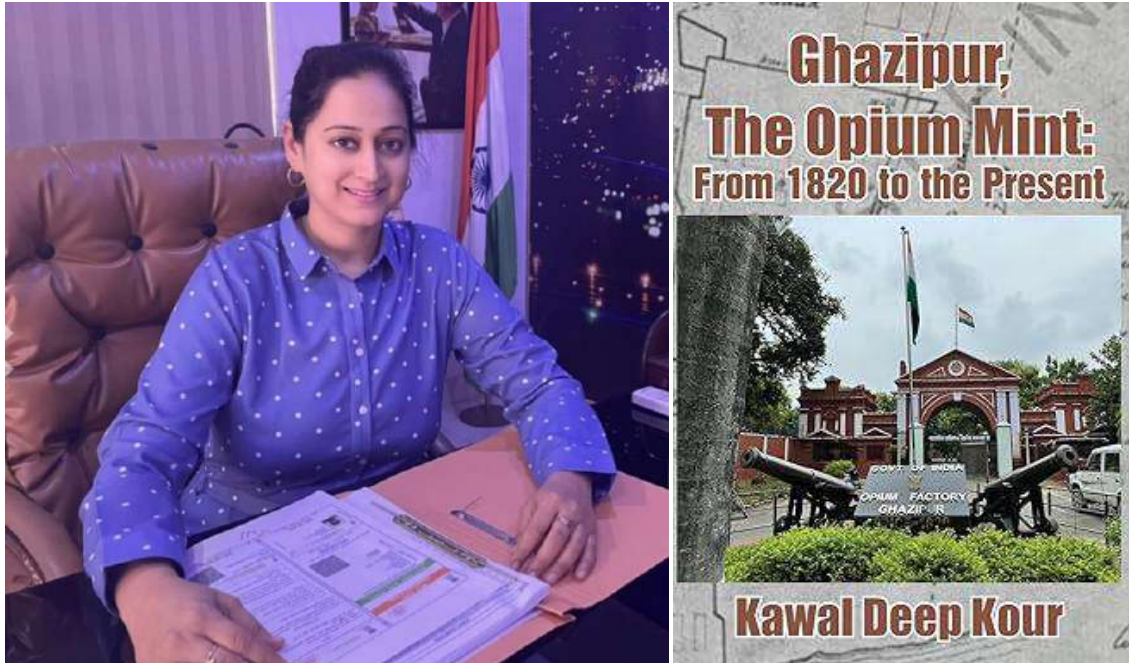
Kawal Deep Kour's *Ghazipur, The Opium Mint: From 1820 to the Present* is a compelling and meticulously researched exploration of one of colonial India's most enduring and little-known institutions—the opium factory at Ghazipur. This book is not simply a history of a production site but a study of how a single establishment became a microcosm of colonial capitalism, imperial science, and post-independence industrial continuity. Through this lens, Kour offers a fresh and nuanced understanding of the political economy of narcotics in both colonial and contemporary India.

Located in the United Provinces and known during the British era as Ghazipore, the opium factory emerged in the early 19th century as a key player in the British Empire's trade and fiscal strategies. It operated under the Benaras Opium Agency and became one of the central nodes in a vast and lucrative opium economy that linked India, China, and Britain. Kour illustrates with precision how Ghazipur was more than just a regional production center—it was a critical site where metropolitan capital, imperial policy, and scientific advancement converged to support Britain's economic interests.

The early chapters of the book detail the establishment of the factory and its role in provisioning the opium trade, particularly the export of processed opium to China. This trade, as Kour reminds us, was not just economically significant but geopolitically explosive—fueling conflicts such as the Opium Wars and creating far-reaching consequences for Asian politics and international law. Within this framework, the Ghazipur factory became a symbol of colonial extraction and the violent entanglements of commerce, coercion, and control.

Kour pays special attention to the role of science and technology in elevating the factory's operations. She describes how the colonial government invested in chemical expertise to improve the quality of opium and enhance its yield. The role of opium chemists becomes a central thread in the book, reflecting how the imperial state used scientific methods not for public health or ethical research, but for the refinement of a commodity deeply tied to addiction and dependency. This is where Kour excels—she exposes the moral ambiguity of scientific progress under colonial rule, showing that innovation was often at the service of domination.

His transition from a high-pressure leadership role to a more introspective and fulfilling life provides a practical example of how one can redefine success on personal terms. The author also tracks the transformation of the factory across time, particularly after India's independence in 1947. Rather than being decommissioned or forgotten like many other colonial institutions, the factory evolved into the "Government Opium and Alkaloid Works," a state-run facility involved in the production of medicinal opiates. Kour's narrative shows that this evolution did not break completely from the past. Instead, elements of colonial infrastructure, management practices, and secrecy were carried over into the postcolonial state's handling of the narcotics industry.



This sense of continuity is one of the most striking aspects of the book. It forces the reader to reconsider the legacies of colonialism—not just in cultural or political terms, but in the physical and operational structures that remain embedded in modern governance. Kour shows how the Ghazipur factory, once a tool of imperial ambition, became a part of India's pharmaceutical and narcotics policy apparatus. This continuity raises critical questions about institutional memory, regulatory adaptation, and the ethics of narcotics production in the contemporary era.

Another strength of the book is its multidimensional approach. Kour draws from a wide range of sources, including colonial reports, scientific papers, archival records, and interviews, to present a layered and deeply contextual narrative. Her interdisciplinary methodology allows her to bridge history, political economy, sociology, and the history of science and medicine. She is equally comfortable discussing imperial policy and the technical aspects of alkaloid extraction, making the book both intellectually rigorous and highly readable.

The local dimension of the Ghazipur story is also given attention. While the book is global in its implications, Kour ensures that the people who lived and worked in and around the factory are not forgotten. Her descriptions of labor systems, recruitment practices, and the social environment of the factory town provide an important human grounding to what could otherwise be a solely institutional history. These micro-histories make the book more relatable and give depth to the broader narrative.

# Merin James

Author  
**SPOTLIGHT**

Poetry has long been a sanctuary for those who seek to understand the world, and for Merin James, it is exactly that—a sacred space where thoughts, emotions, and lived experiences are tenderly woven into words. In her heartfelt collection of poems, Merin invites readers into a deeply personal journey of self-discovery and emotional exploration. Though she humbly states she is not a professional writer, the sincerity and resonance of her words speak volumes.

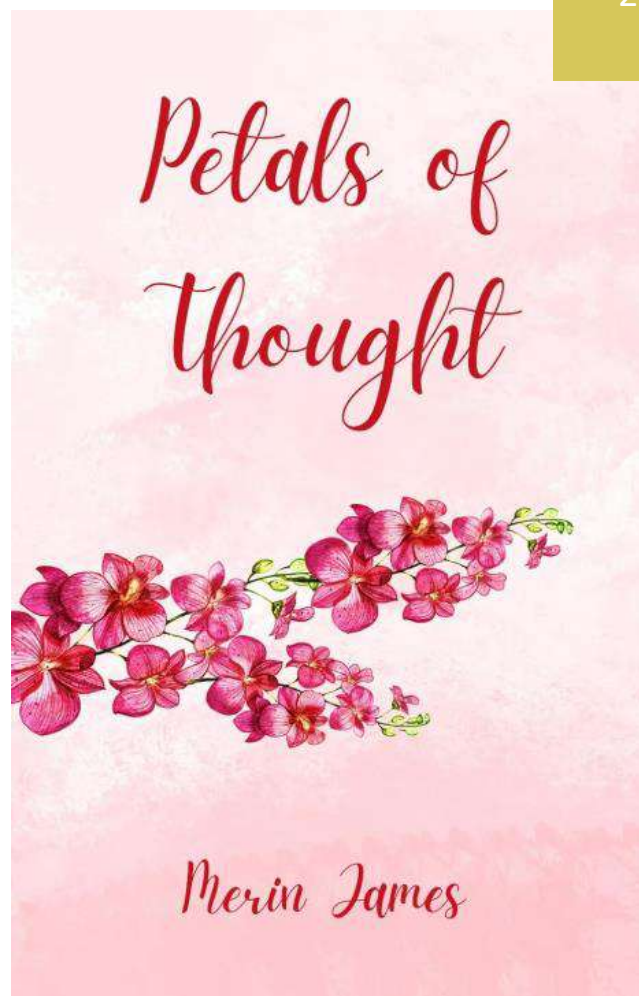
Merin's collection stands not as a polished literary showcase but as a genuine expression of life as it is felt. Each poem is a reflection of moments—some joyful, others painful—that have shaped her path. These verses are more than just stanzas; they are emotional imprints, capturing the quiet complexities of human experience. From the aching beauty of solitude to the quiet strength found in resilience, her poetry allows readers to feel seen and understood, as if walking alongside her through each phase of growth. Her journey as a writer is deeply intertwined with her identity as an educator. Originally from Kerala and now living in Bangalore,



Merin holds a Master's degree in Literature, a testament to her deep love for language and storytelling. But it is her career as a teacher that has provided her with a unique perspective on life. Working closely with students, she has learned to appreciate the nuances of human development—how individuals learn, grow, stumble, and ultimately find their voice.

This same nurturing spirit carries over into her poetry. There is an undercurrent of mentorship in her writing, a subtle encouragement to embrace vulnerability, to reflect, and to rise stronger. Through her poems, Merin doesn't just share her own story; she invites readers to look inward and recognize the beauty in their own journeys. It is this blend of literary insight and emotional wisdom that makes her work so quietly powerful.

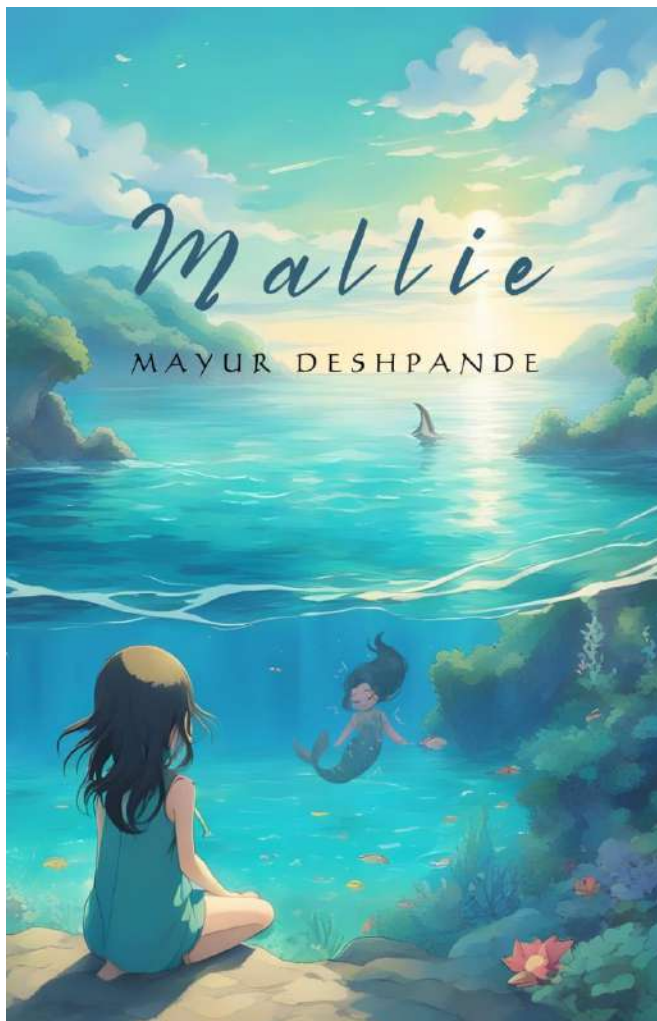
In reading her collection, one cannot help but feel both comforted and inspired. Merin James doesn't just write poems—she opens doors to understanding, compassion, and healing. And in doing so, she leaves behind more than just words—she leaves a lasting imprint on the heart.



As Merin James continues to evolve both personally and creatively, her poetry promises to be an ever-growing testament to the human spirit. With each new verse, she deepens her commitment to truth and emotional honesty, quietly defying the notion that one must be a "professional" to be powerful with words. Her work serves as a gentle reminder that some of the most profound expressions of the human condition emerge not from grand declarations, but from quiet courage—the courage to sit with one's emotions, to translate them into language, and to share them with the world. In a time when genuine connection often feels scarce, Merin's poetry stands as a bridge—between past and present, between self and society, and most meaningfully, between heart and word.

# Mallie

Mayur  
Deshpande



## BOOK REVIEW

*Mallie* by Mayur Deshpande is a novel that artfully blends fantasy with reality, delivering a story that is both emotionally resonant and philosophically rich. At its core, this is not just a tale of mystical creatures or magical possibilities; it is a deeply human story that explores identity, truth, power, and the protective love of a father for his daughter. In *Mallie's* world, humans live under the illusion of having a “Midas touch”—a metaphor for control, influence, and superiority—but as the protagonist begins to unravel the layers of her reality, the reader is invited to do the same.

The story follows *Mallie*, a young girl caught in the structured confines of a society built on illusion and rigid hierarchy. Her life, and the lives of those around her, are shaped by myths that people have long stopped questioning. But what if the stories we read as children—of magical beings, ancient creatures, and hidden realms—were not only real but still active, quietly influencing the world from the shadows? This is the question that begins to haunt *Mallie* as she grows, observes, and slowly awakens to a truth far deeper than what she has been told.

The novel’s emotional anchor is the relationship between *Mallie* and her father. His character is sketched with warmth and strength—an unwavering protector who tries his best to shield his daughter from a harsh and demanding world. It is here that Mayur Deshpande’s personal inspiration shines through. As a father himself, Deshpande channels his own experience into this bond, imbuing the story with authenticity and tenderness.

The father-daughter dynamic is central to the novel's impact, making the reader reflect not just on fantasy and myth, but also on the very real and universal experiences of love, sacrifice, and protection.

As Mallie navigates her path, she begins to see that the power structures around her are built on shaky foundations. The so-called supremacy of humanity is challenged by the quiet wisdom and power of mystical beings who have long hidden themselves from view. These elements are not just added for spectacle—they serve as mirrors for the human condition, prompting reflection on our own place in the world and the stories we tell ourselves about progress, dominance, and control.



*Mallie* by Mayur Deshpande is a refreshingly introspective take on the fantasy genre. Instead of leaning into grandiose conflicts or elaborate magical systems, the novel opts for a quieter, more emotionally grounded narrative. The mystical elements are woven delicately into the storyline, emerging gradually and creating a subtle sense of wonder that complements the emotional and psychological journey of its protagonist. Deshpande uses fantasy not as an escape, but as a mirror—one that reflects the complexities of memory, perception, and human experience.

The story follows Mallie through a deeply personal journey of transformation, where external events are intricately tied to her inner evolution. As a character, Mallie is layered and believable, shaped not by dramatic plot twists but by the quiet revelations that come with self-awareness. Her struggles and doubts feel real, and her growth unfolds in a way that mirrors real-life transformation—messy, gradual, and ultimately profound. This makes the book feel more like a meditation on identity and truth than a conventional fantasy novel.

Deshpande's background as a business analyst and self-help writer clearly influences the structure and themes of the book. The philosophical undercurrents are ever-present, yet never heavy-handed. He raises important questions about success, societal expectations, and authenticity, encouraging readers to reconsider what they value and why. The pacing, though slower in the beginning, is intentional—designed to give space for the story's emotional and thematic layers to unfold meaningfully. Each chapter adds depth, drawing the reader further into Mallie's world and mindset.

Ultimately, *Mallie* is a story that lingers. It entertains, yes, but more importantly, it resonates. It's a novel for readers who appreciate introspection, who seek stories that reflect the quiet strength of resilience and self-discovery. The ending avoids easy conclusions, staying true to the novel's spirit of reflection and openness.

# What They Still Don't Teach You in Project Management School

Joseph Dolphin

## Part 1

Joseph Dolphin's *What They Still Don't Teach You in Project Management School: Part 1* is a compact, insightful guide that explores the practical realities of project management often left out of academic training. With a career spanning over 30 years in global IT delivery and consulting, Dolphin uses this first volume to address the tools, techniques, and mindsets that separate theoretical knowledge from real-world success.

The book's strength lies in its directness. Dolphin dives into topics like earned value analysis, work package strategy, and onshore-offshore delivery models—areas that are essential in large-scale project execution but seldom taught in PM certification programs. His treatment of earned value, for instance, goes beyond formulas to explain how it can drive decisions and course corrections. Similarly, his breakdown of staffing pyramids shows how team composition influences both cost and delivery effectiveness.

Another key insight is the distinction between “solution-to-sell” and “solution-to-deliver,” which speaks to the frequent disconnect between what is promised by sales and what can be realistically achieved by delivery teams. Dolphin offers practical strategies for managing this gap, rooted in his own project experiences across industries like financial services and FMCG.

*HIGHLY*  
**recommended**



The writing is crisp and avoids jargon, making it accessible for early-career project managers while still offering value for seasoned professionals. Rather than focusing on process for process's sake, Dolphin emphasizes results and adaptability, encouraging readers to think critically about what works in their specific contexts.

In all, Part 1 is a valuable read for anyone looking to enhance their practical project management capabilities. It fills the often-ignored space between theory and application, offering real-world wisdom that can immediately be applied on the job.



## Part 2

In Part 2 of his practical series, Joseph Dolphin expands the conversation beyond delivery mechanics to tackle the broader, strategic responsibilities of modern project managers. This volume moves into management consulting territory, discussing change management, benefits realization, and Lean Six Sigma—areas that elevate project managers into transformation leaders.

Dolphin's approach to change management is particularly compelling. He emphasizes the psychological and organizational aspects of change, offering insights into how leaders can guide teams through uncertainty.

Rather than presenting generic strategies, he shares nuanced techniques grounded in real-world experience, making this section highly applicable across industries.

Benefits management is another standout topic. Dolphin urges readers to shift focus from traditional project metrics to actual business value, encouraging alignment between project outputs and organizational goals. His frameworks help project professionals think more like consultants, challenging them to drive measurable outcomes, not just deliverables.

The discussion on Lean Six Sigma and process improvement adds another layer of depth. Dolphin doesn't just explain the tools—he contextualizes them in business environments where efficiency and quality are paramount. His balanced view of Agile delivery, particularly its strengths and limitations in complex service ecosystems, provides a refreshing contrast to overly enthusiastic Agile evangelism.

What distinguishes this book is its focus on adaptability and strategic thinking. Dolphin understands that today's project managers must wear multiple hats—analyst, strategist, change agent—and provides the insights to do so confidently. The language remains clear and professional, accessible to both seasoned leaders and those aspiring to expand their influence.

Part 2 is an essential follow-up that pushes readers to grow beyond technical execution into areas of broader impact. Combined with Part 1, it forms a well-rounded toolkit for delivering not just projects, but lasting business transformation.

# Foreign vs. Indian Authors: A Reader's Dilemma

TLT SPECIALS

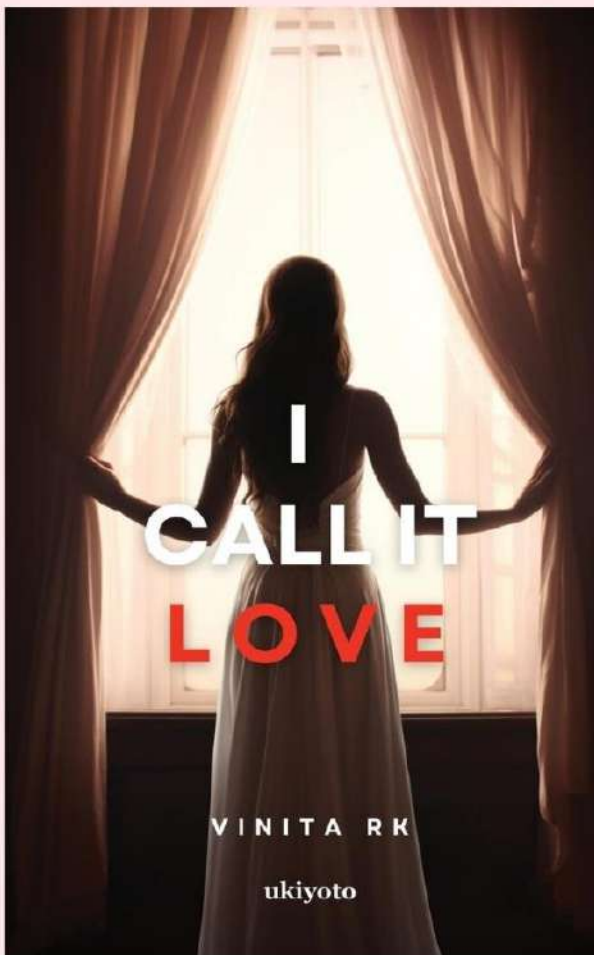
-Zinnia A Laha

Indian readers often gravitate toward foreign authors due to cultural fascination, stronger global marketing, and the universal themes found in books by writers like J.K. Rowling, Paulo Coelho, and George Orwell. English as a global language further boosts the accessibility of foreign literature, while Indian authors—especially those writing in regional languages—struggle with limited visibility and reach. The education system also plays a role, heavily emphasizing Western classics and giving students minimal exposure to contemporary Indian literature. For many, foreign books provide a form of escapism, whereas Indian novels dealing with caste, poverty, or other social realities may seem too close to home.

However, Indian writers such as R.K. Narayan, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Ruskin Bond have successfully blended Indian themes with universal appeal, earning loyal readerships. Events like the Jaipur Literature Festival and the rise of digital platforms are helping revive interest in Indian literature. To create a more balanced literary culture, publishers must invest in promoting Indian authors, and schools should include more modern Indian works in their curricula. Ultimately, rather than choosing between foreign and Indian literature, readers and institutions should strive to build an inclusive literary ecosystem where both have equal space to flourish.

# Vinita Rk

Vinita Rk is a writer with nearly twenty years of experience. Besides running her creative writing business, Vinita writes a column for Robin Age and she is an author of two books- I call it LOVE and Letters to my Daughter. An upcoming children's series will be out later this year. In 2024, Vinita Rk was voted as one of the 'Top 10 Influential Authors of India' by Tribune India.

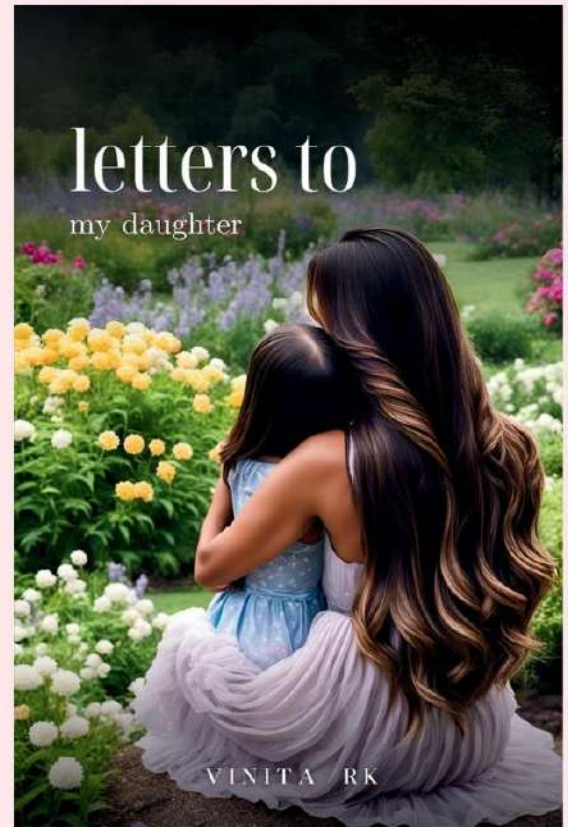


## Book Review

I Call It LOVE by Vinita Rk is a gripping and unconventional tale that departs from traditional romantic narratives. Set in Pune, India, the novel follows the harrowing journey of an American-Indian couple, David and Chaya Hannigan, whose lives are shattered when their daughter, Jose, goes missing. The story unfolds from the chilling perspective of the stalker, who is also the kidnapper and murderer. The only clue is a diary that chronicles the stalker's disturbing journey, adding an eerie layer of suspense. Unlike typical crime stories that offer closure and happy endings, this novel presents a realistic and heartbreaking exploration of obsession, loss, and the harsh realities of life. Vinita Rk's emotionally powerful writing captures the anguish of a family's search for their daughter and the unsettling truth behind the mystery, leaving readers with a haunting, unresolved conclusion. I Call It LOVE is a thought-provoking reflection on the darkness of human obsession and the complexities of crime.

## Book Review

Letters to My Daughter by Vinita Rk is a heartfelt collection of poems and letters that captures the profound journey of motherhood. Drawing from nearly two decades of experience, Vinita explores the highs and lows of parenting with emotional depth and honesty. Each piece in the collection reflects her love, wisdom, and reflections on the complexities of raising a child. The writing is tender, relatable, and full of personal insights, making it a touching tribute to the bond between mother and daughter. Through its bittersweet, humorous, and melancholic tones, the book offers an intimate look into the emotional evolution of motherhood. This book is a beautiful and inspiring read for all parents, especially mothers, offering a genuine exploration of the challenges and rewards of nurturing a child. It will resonate with anyone who cherishes the joys and struggles of raising the next generation.



## Special Note

Dear Readers,

In I Call It LOVE, I explore obsession, loss, and the harsh realities of life through the eyes of a stalker, offering a story without a happy ending. In contrast, Letters to My Daughter is a heartfelt collection of poems and letters, reflecting my journey as a mother, filled with love and personal reflections. Both books are deeply personal, and I hope they resonate with you.

With love,  
Vinita Rk

# From Manuscript to Marketplace : A Writer's Guide to Self-Publishing in India

-ZINNIA A LAHA

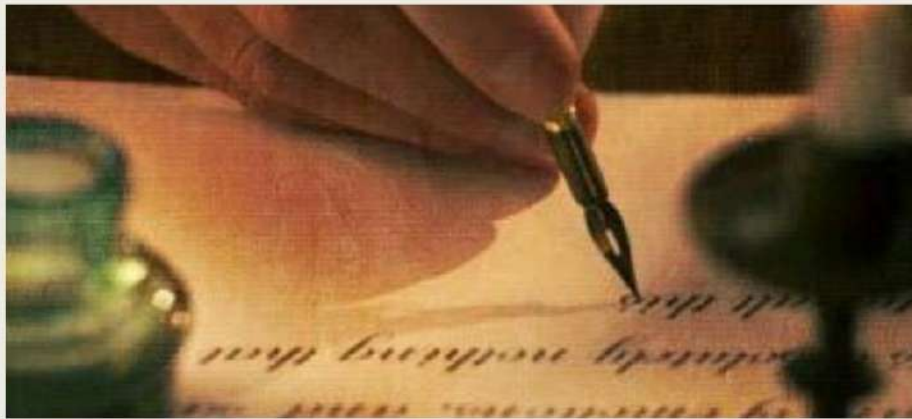
In the past, a writer's dream was incomplete without a traditional publisher's nod of approval. But times have changed. Today, Indian writers are turning the page—embracing self-publishing as a powerful, liberating alternative that brings their voice directly to readers. From poetry collections to personal memoirs, regional tales to genre fiction—self-publishing has opened the gates of the literary world to anyone with a story to tell.

## Why Self-Publishing?

Traditional publishing in India is often a long, uncertain journey. Manuscripts pile up, response times drag, and the chances of getting selected are slim—especially for debut authors. Self-publishing, on the other hand, puts the power back in the writer's hands. You control the timeline, the design, the marketing, and most importantly, the royalties.



## Here's how to get started:



### 2. Choose a Platform

Pick a self-publishing platform based on your goals. Use a right platform for global eBook sales or Astitva Prakashan / any other print distribution.

### 4. Set Price and Royalty

You decide the book's price and royalty share. Most platforms offer up to 70% earnings per sale, giving you more control.

### 3. Design Smartly

A great cover attracts readers—don't cut corners. Also, format your book's interior neatly for a smooth reading experience.

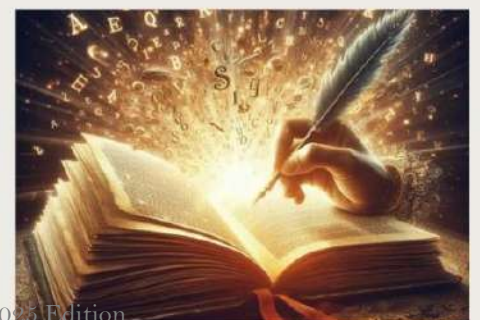
### 5. Promote Your Book

Marketing is key—create buzz through social media, book reviewers, and literary forums. Build your author brand actively.

### 1. Finish and Edit Your Manuscript

Write your complete story, then revise thoroughly. Hire a professional editor to fix grammar, flow, and structure for a polished final draft.

Self-publishing is no longer a backup plan—it's a bold first step. So if you have a story to share, don't wait. Publish it, promote it, and own your journey as an author.



## How to Create a Book Marketing Plan That Delivers Results



Publishing a book is only half the journey—getting it into the hands of readers is where the real challenge begins. In today’s competitive book publishing landscape, authors need more than just great writing; they need a comprehensive, strategic book marketing plan to ensure their work reaches its intended audience and drives meaningful sales. Whether you’re going the traditional publishing route or self publishing, understanding how to market your book effectively can make the difference between a quiet launch and a breakout success.

A good book marketing plan starts well before your publication date. The earlier you begin planning your strategy, the more momentum you can build leading up to your launch. Ideally, your marketing efforts should begin 3 to 6 months before your book is released. At this stage, the focus should be on building your author platform and audience. Start by defining your brand—how do you want readers to perceive you? Think about your genre, tone, and target demographic. These elements will help guide your messaging and outreach across platforms.

Identifying your target audience is one of the most important steps in your marketing plan. Who is most likely to buy your book? What are their interests, reading habits, and favorite platforms? If you’re writing young adult fantasy, for instance, your readers may spend more time on TikTok or Instagram, whereas nonfiction readers might be more active on LinkedIn or Facebook. Pinpointing these behaviors helps you prioritize where to focus your energy and budget.

An essential component of any effective book marketing strategy is developing an engaging online presence. In 2025, having a website is non-negotiable. Your author website should include a blog, an email list sign-up, book information, pre-order links, and a press/media kit. Search engine optimization (SEO) should be a part of your site-building strategy, so include keywords related to your genre, book publishing, and book marketing. Write blog posts about your writing journey, your research process, or themes in your book. These not only establish you as a thought leader but also give Google more content to index—boosting your discoverability.

Email marketing is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal. Begin growing your list months before publication by offering lead magnets like a free short story, a sample chapter, or exclusive content related to your book. A well-segmented and active email list allows you to communicate directly with readers and drive pre-orders, announce events, and keep your audience engaged over time. Make your emails personal, valuable, and visually appealing. Consistency is key—consider sending out a monthly newsletter even before your book is released.



Publicity should also be a key component of your book marketing plan. This includes reaching out to bloggers, podcasts, local newspapers, literary magazines, and influencers in your genre. Craft a professional press kit that includes your bio, book summary, author photo, sample Q&A, and press release. When pitching, personalize each message—show that you know their audience and why your book is a good fit. Don't forget about local opportunities either; libraries, bookstores, and community organizations are often eager to support local authors, especially if you're planning in-person events like signings or readings.

Pre-order campaigns are a great way to build buzz and momentum before your book even launches. Offer readers special incentives for ordering early, such as signed bookplates, exclusive digital content, or access to a virtual Q&A. Promote your campaign on social media, in your newsletter, and through your launch team. Many traditional publishing companies look at pre-order numbers to gauge demand, so strong pre-launch marketing can influence future support from your publisher.

Once your book is live, the marketing doesn't stop. In fact, post-launch is when sustained engagement matters most. Continue promoting through fresh content, reader interactions, and seasonal tie-ins. Collect and share reader testimonials, write guest blog posts, and stay active in reader communities. Consistency over time helps create a backlist that sells steadily, not just during release week.

Finally, analyze your results. Use tracking links, social media insights, email analytics, and sales reports to see what's working and what's not. This information is invaluable for future launches and long-term author growth. Book publishing is a marathon, not a sprint, and having a solid, data-informed marketing plan ensures that each new release performs better than the last.

Creating a book marketing plan that delivers results requires time, effort, and strategic thinking. Whether you're navigating traditional publishing or managing your own self publishing, a thoughtful marketing approach is essential for building an audience, increasing sales, and establishing your career as an author. With persistence, planning, and a strong connection to your readers, your book can find the audience it deserves.

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