



THE BLACK SWAN AWARDS 2016-17

A swan is a symbol of purity, loyalty, unity, and love. The swan is also linked to the God Apollo who is the God of music. Further, a swan also represents romanticism, love and devotion. A swan in anyone's life means a divine and good time has entered one's life. These are the reasons, AsiaOne Magazine and UWG Media give BlackSwan Awards to Film Personalites, as they also reflect purity, loyalty, unity, love and romance. Out of several awardees, Ashish Vidyarthi, Kirti Kulhari and Parvin Dabas have chosen to share their feelings with us in exclusive features

BE BETTER EVERY DAY

“Success is a fluke! I am learning to not take it too seriously, and to focus on enjoying the journey.”

Please read on to find out the success journey of Kirti Kulhari & what India as a country means to her. Kirti is a versatile actress, best known for movies such as Pink & Indu Sarkar

By Kirti Kulhari

From “being someone who wasn’t sure of what she wanted to do with her life” to “being recognised as an actor”, it’s been quite a journey for me. I hail from Rajasthan but am born and brought up in Mumbai, as my father served in the Indian navy. I was a kid who was fortunate enough to have been surrounded with a lot of opportunities to learn and grow. Acting happened to me by chance when I was in college and it very quickly made a place in my heart. I finished my graduation and a post-graduate diploma to pursue acting as a full-fledged career.

It was a tough decision for me and my family, but I persisted and asked for a real chance at it. I experienced huge success in the advertising industry but knew my final goal was to act in films and so started doing theatre to learn the craft. Khichdi and Shaitan happened to me soon after, but I tasted real success with “Pink” which showcased my talent as an actor. It was followed by “Indu Sarkar”, which further upped my reputation as an actor. The journey has been long & arduous, with its share of ups and downs and I know it’s not going to be an easy road ahead too, but I love what I do and as long as I am driven by that, I am ready to face it all.

BOLLYWOOD SINCE INDEPENDENCE

I feel Bollywood was the most progressive in the 50’s, 60’s and the 70’s and cinema will always reflect the attitudes, thought

processes and the acceptance of the society at that time. So it’s completely a myth that we are growing and opening up now. We had lost our way in between but we are trying to come back on track, which is a good sign. The audiences are opening up, reciprocating to new ideas, stories, thoughts and desperately looking for a change in the kind of films that come out of Bollywood. And that’s pushing the makers to go out of their comfort zones. Also digital space is creating huge competition for Bollywood which is always healthy for growth. In fact, regional cinema is really pushing their boundaries and leaving Bollywood behind.

BOLLYWOOD & INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTION

Internationally, I don’t think Bollywood is really looked up to. Having said that, people here have genuinely started to try. And talking about image, there are not too many Indian films that are seen by the international audiences to actually judge India as a country on the basis of those limited films. As far as films are concerned, there are good films and bad films. With such an insurge of Internet, and access to the real happenings in a country, people no more base their judgements on what’s shown in a film. People have the maturity and the understanding to keep art and reality separate. All that the film industry can do is to make good films. That will be their biggest contribution to building a positive

"I want to do something concrete on health & education, as they are basic needs"

image of India internationally.

MY COUNTRY, MY LOVE

I want to do something concrete on health and education. Health is true wealth, and equal & timely access to healthcare is the most important and basic need and expectation of the citizens of a country from its authorities.

Education is the pathway to opportunities in terms of employment, financial security, social status and the most basic right of a human being born in today's times and has to be seriously and sensitively delved into. I would also focus on providing equal opportunities to everyone. Thirdly, the population has been out of control for a long time in India but some serious measures have to be taken to curb it and bring it under some control because it is the underlying reason behind most of our problems.

FORWARD IS THE WAY

I am learning from anyone and everyone around me. It's an ongoing process, a tiring one but also the most important and fun. What really leads to my growth is my own "desire to grow" and to "be a better version of myself with each passing day". And if we all work on ourselves, this country, this world, will become a better place.



JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED

“I want to overhaul the justice system and make cases time-bound. Justice delayed is justice denied but in our country we feel justice may be late but at least it arrives.” Please read on to find out the success journey of Parvin Dabas and what India as a country means to him. Parvin Dabas is a talented Bollywood actor, best known for movies such as Monsoon Wedding and Mirror Game

By Parvin Dabas

I’ve always been connected with my roots, which belong both in a very earthy part of India, then growing up in Canada, finishing my education in Delhi and again being on my own in New York while attending acting school. This gave me a very broad work view and also a plethora of experiences to fall upon for all the different characters I have managed to create.

I think it is this experience and world view that attracted film makers such as Mira Nair and Dibaker Banerjee to me very early on in my career. As Mr Madhur Bhandarkar puts it “You can put Parvin in any kind of role and he can pull it off effortlessly”.

BOLLYWOOD SINCE INDEPEDENCE

Sometimes I have felt Bollywood has grown with the country and its hopes and dreams, and the way society has evolved; and sometimes one sees a Bollywood film and then feels one is in a time warp. So I guess rather than it being a generic quality, it is more of a personal quality to do with individual film makers. Having said that, overall I feel the industry is in a much more progressive place now.

BOLLYWOOD & INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTION

To see what films can do for

image building of a country one needs to go no further than the American Film Industry and how a whole generation of people fell in love with the country and its idea through its films...

If you look at some of the films which have portrayed India internationally like Monsoon Wedding and SlumDog Millionaire you will see what a difference they made in the way Indians were perceived globally... India was suddenly “cool” and “hip”.

Whenever you make a “real” film people will feel you are showing India in a bad light and when you try and show the good side of the country, people will feel you are brushing things under the carpet... So I would say every film maker has to follow his heart rather than a perception of how the country should be portrayed.

MY COUNTRY, MY LOVE

I would like to overhaul the justice system and make cases time-bound. Justice delayed is justice denied but in our country we feel justice may be late but at least it arrives. I feel this is the single biggest reason for the country’s problems.

I would also like to introduce police reforms which have been very late in being introduced. The police must get raises so they are respectfully compensated and also their work hours must be



"I would like to exhort my fellow countrymen to respect each other and keep the country clean"

better regulated.

They are one of the most over-worked forces right now I feel.

I would also eradicate the Land Acquisition Act due to which farmers' lands are taken away under the guise of public use and then given to private developers for profit. This is a British era law which must go. We are already far behind where we should have been by now.

The biggest social evil is the lack of apathy amongst the people themselves which manifests in many ways such as the garbage problem... and also in many other ways which is apparent if one reads the papers every day. We have a Crab in a Bucket mentality which shows by the way we treat each other in the country or how we pay obeisance to people who come from abroad.

FORWARD IS THE WAY

President Abdul Kalam is my role model. I feel he was our Mandela and in people's perception had no religion and no caste which is why he was so widely revered... He sincerely gave himself in service of the country.

I would also like to exhort my fellow countrymen to respect each other and keep the country clean.

“Educated people become self-dependent, and they can take care of themselves. It brings prosperity, and the prosperity is not only of the people, but the entire country.”

Please read on to find out the success journey of Ashish Vidyarthi and what India as a country means to him. Ashish Vidyarthi is a National Award winning Bollywood actor, and also a renowned corporate speaker with Avid Miner

By Ashish Vidyarthi

Having the ability to remain normal in this competitive world that I work in is a great success for me. My upbringing and learnings from my parents have helped me a lot. I also feel that my success lies is not having been negatively affected by the experiences I've faced in my life. Essentially what happens in any profession is that we act in a particular way and people expect us to or we think that people expect us to act in another way. These expectations create pressure in people's life, and they feel compelled to act in other ways. If you are weak, very soon you reach a point where you start not being yourself and start being someone else. So, the challenge before us is to retain our uniqueness, and face strongly whatever life throws at us. At this stage in my life, I'm still trying to discover my uniqueness and am trying to retain it, and trying to be myself.

BOLLYWOOD SINCE INDEPENDENCE

I would like to use the term Indian Film Industry rather than Bollywood, as I've been working in this industry across languages. The Indian Film Industry is such an organic part of India that it has no choice but to be reflective of what true India is. And therefore the first thing that is reflected in the term Indian Film Industry is "Indian". And, even if we make remakes of movies from other countries, we make them in our own Indianized way, and they also

reflect our Indian-ness. Thus, our movies are very much a reflection of our Indian society.

Of course, in a developing economy, aspirations and desires of people are always high. Everyone wants to be someone else, or be like something, or want to own something. That becomes even bigger in a film industry. So, it's not uncommon that movies reflect those actual high aspirations of the society. Of course, the influence of movies on society or vice versa is a chicken-egg story; one can never tell which came first. Everything is controlled by the needs, wants, desires and aspirations of people.

BOLLYWOOD & INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTION

Images or perceptions cannot be created; people make their own images in their minds as per their thoughts or inclinations. Even if the Indian Film Industry wants to create an image of India through its movies as a well-developed economy, audience abroad are not going to accept it, and would differentiate between what is true and what is not. So, films do not create images. Films just echo things that already exist in the society. People may be influenced by what is shown in a particular movie. For example, if in an American movie superheroes are shown, it doesn't mean that they actually exist in America, and are doing those things in America which are being shown in the movie. So, images are made in

SHINING FOR



R THE NATION

the mind; however, the content and the methodology with which we have made movies are reflective of us Indians. So, all the entertainment, songs, humour and the story have a unique Indian-ness about them, and that is our reflection or our image before the world. All stories of our passion, love, care, emotions, dignity have an Indian-ness about them, and these are important in creating that local impression on international cinema. Indian movies don't have to rely on propaganda to create a positive image-building on the rest of the world, which is done to some extent by North Korea, and was done earlier by the Soviet Bloc. Each society has something or other happening and these may be reflected in their movies.

MY COUNTRY, MY LOVE

If I had the power, I would completely reform education in India. Because education has most far-reaching implications than anything else in the society. I would also give a huge part of our budget to education if I had the power, and I would take care that no one is left uneducated in our country, so, they understand things, and they are able to make informed choices in their lives. I feel educating people is equivalent to teaching them how to fish. It doesn't only empower people, it gives them the power to change so many other things. It would also help the country get that "push" which would take it to the next level of growth and development.

To a great extent I'm satisfied with the progress India has made since independence. Actually, there is no doubt that India is really doing great, if I compare it with some other countries around me. Still, I feel we have to do a lot of things before everyone in this country would feel completely satisfied. When I observe objectively I see that some people have been left behind, and we have to become more inclusive. At the same time, I'm proud of my country as it is progressing on multiple fronts and is emerging as an

engine to the world growth.

I would also like to mention corruption as the biggest evil in India. It cuts across all castes, creeds, religions, and sections of the society. It is all-pervasive and is not limited to only a region. We must fight it squarely. Also, one corrupt person leads to another corrupt person, and corruption in one field leads to corruption in another field. So much so, it has become the root of so many other social evils. Corruption makes some people so powerful, that they start feeling that they cannot be touched, and then they commit other crimes. Also, corruption doesn't just mean financial corruption. Corrupted minds, corrupted values are more dangerous for a nation.

FORWARD IS THE WAY

I consider my father as my role model. He was known for his kindness. He believed in himself and in whatever he did. He always tried to make other people's lives better. I've learnt these traits from him, and it gets reflected in my conversations and interactions with people all across the globe. Another trait he taught me is generosity. He used to tell me that you will be recognized by the work you have done. I've observed that generosity helps people move up and ahead in their life. I would advise other people who look up to me to be amazing people. Do things and ask yourself how can you become an amazing person, an understanding person, a generous person? Can you do something on which people would come to you and say, "Well done"? Can you excel in whatever you do? Can you do that something extra to achieve your goals? Can you shine? Nations shine, when its people shine. Can you shine for your nation? Can you create a personality, and acquire qualities far beyond anyone's expectations? Do you have the will and the desire to be better than what you were earlier? If you do all these things to improve yourself, you would be indirectly doing good to the nation.

"There is no doubt that India is really doing great, if I compare it with some other countries"

