

BOUND

DEMYSTIFYING INDIAN PUBLISHING

BOUND'S INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



A RESEARCH REPORT BY

TARA KHANDELWAL
AISHWARYA JAVALGEKAR
MICHELLE D'COSTA



DEMYSTIFYING **INDIAN** PUBLISHING

BOUND'S INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

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BOUND

The Authors



Tara Khandelwal

Editor & Founder

With over 9 years of experience in publishing, Tara has worked at companies such as BloombergQuint, HarperCollins, Penguin India and SheThePeople.TV. She has graduated with a degree in Economic History from Barnard College, Columbia University, an MSc in Management from Imperial College and is an alumna of the Columbia University Publishing Course.



Aishwarya Javalgekar

Head Of Content

Aishwarya has a Masters in English (Public Texts) and a Certificate in Book Publishing. She is a writer and editor with internships at Simon and Schuster Canada and Zubaan Books, India under her belt. She loves reading genre-bending stories and running her feminist zine, ang(st).



Michelle D'costa

Managing Editor

Michelle is a writer and editor from Mumbai and co-hosts Bound's podcast, Books and Beyond with Bound. Her prose and poetry has been published in over 50 journals like Berfrois, Out Of Print, Eclectica, Litro UK, Queen Mob's Teahouse, Coldnoon, Vayavya, Guftugu and more. She loves to mentor writers.



Contributors

We'd like to acknowledge all the people who have contributed their time and effort into bringing this report to life.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Rishi Kochhar

RESEARCH

Megha Jha
Sangeetha Menon
Khwaish Gupta
Neha Pophale

CREATIVE SUPPORT

Isabelle Jasmin-Roth

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Note From The Authors

Dear Reader,

We founded [Bound](#) over three years ago because we saw that there was a lack of infrastructure for creatives. We wanted to bridge that gap. Creative and artistic fields like writing, podcasting, etc. have always struggled to be taken seriously, but with a growing audience waiting to consume content across platforms, writers and storytellers of all kinds are more important than ever before.

Our interactions with writers during our retreats, classes and services revealed the sheer lack of information available about books and publishing in India. Apart from the Nielsen research reports (2015 and 2020), articles published by independent news agencies and author Meghna Pant's book *How To Get Published In India* (2019), there is no structured form of annual research on publishing conducted in India. We have tried to bridge this gap with our writing mentorship program and our literary podcast, Books and Beyond With Bound, where we break down our favourite writers' creative processes for readers and other writers.

With this report, we want to make publishing transparent and accessible to everyone: content creators, curators and consumers. We hope this report will be a handbook for writers who want to publish their work. And a useful source of information for anyone who wants to understand the industry. This report along with our recently launched podcast, *The Book People* is our attempt to provide The Ultimate Publishing Toolkit.

For more insights from the experts themselves, tune in to The Book People.

Happy reading,

Team Bound



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

This report is an attempt to consolidate the available data on the publishing industry and to bridge the knowledge gap between publishers, writers and readers. It contains:

1. An overview of the publishing industry and ecosystem.
2. A guide for writers on how to get published.
3. Bound's insights on significant developments during the pandemic.
4. Future Predictions (purchase the full report to get access).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Sources

- Books and Beyond with Bound – conversations with some of India's finest authors like Manu Pillai, Arshia Sattar, Avni Doshi, Tashan Mehta, Jane Borges and more.
- The Book People – expert industry analysis from publishing professionals like Sayantan Ghosh (Commissioning Editor at Simon & Schuster India), Vaishnavi Singh (Digital Lead at Penguin Random House India), Disha Naik (Publicist, Juggernaut Books), Radhika Timbadia (Owner of Champaca Bookstore) and Resh Susan (Bookstagrammer).
- An online survey of the Bound community: questions about their reading habits before and during the pandemic, writing and content preferences, experience with publishing etc.
- Our conversations with readers and writers since 2017.

Secondary Sources

Latest reports and data published on the industry:

- In 2016, the international measurement and data company, Nielsen, released *The India Book Market Report* which was commissioned by the Association of Indian Publishers (AIP) and the Federation of Indian Publishers (FIP).
- In July 2020, Nielsen released a study — *Impact of COVID-19 on the Indian Book Consumer*.
- FICCI Nielsen K12 Publishing Market Report 2016

Articles, features, and interviews published in newspapers and online platforms like Scroll.in, The Hindu, etc.

An extensive list of secondary resources used is given in the appendix.

LIMITATIONS

There is limited research available on the Indian book-publishing industry. The available data could be potentially outdated and is limited in scope. Therefore, it is difficult to analyse exactly how many publishers there are in India, how many bookstores exist, the exact number of books being produced every year, number of e-books, etc. We therefore could not make concrete claims about numbers. Thus, we have used the numbers from the reports available and from newspaper reporting to analyse trends on a broader level.

Since the data was limited, we began the research with the objective of providing qualitative insight-based analysis. Because of the small sample size of our study: 50 experts, 30 readers, we relied on a consensus of observed trends across our conversations with participants.

Despite these limitations, our findings and analysis hold relevance because of the thorough analysis that was conducted amidst our community, the analysis that was conducted with experts at the helm of organisations that represent different parts of the industry and our informal interactions with Bound's community of writers, editors, publishers and creative professionals.

Here are the highlights of the report. Each of these points will be explained in depth within the report:

INDUSTRY TRENDS



Book To Screen Is Where The Money Is!

Book-to-screen deals will go up, adding more revenue to publishers and writers. There is a demand for mystery, thrillers and real-life stories. But genres that do well in the publishing industry, like romance and literary fiction, may not translate well to the screen. There is a need for both publishing and film industries to come together to fulfil the increasing demand for visual storytelling. With more censorship entering the industry, the type of content being produced may also change.



E-books Yay Or Nay?

E-book penetration in India before the pandemic was less than 10 percent. While the sales of e-books almost doubled in the pandemic, the demand flattened once the lockdown eased. Readers report screen-fatigue and many went back to physical or audio-books. There is no clarity on whether demand will continue to go up or remain flat. There is an opportunity to produce interactive e-book formats.



Let's Bet On Audio-books

The audio-books industry is growing fast, especially with the advent of Audible and Storytel. Most publishers are looking to convert their entire lists into audio. During the pandemic, readers turned to audio-books like never before and the demand has only gone up since.



Bookstores Must Adapt

Sales in bookstores and the number of bookstores in India have declined, even more so because of the pandemic. Some independent bookstores have thrived because of their ability to adapt to the digital environment. Chain bookstores have started also selling merchandise to keep afloat. The

fallout has extended to book-distributors. There are now only a few handful compared to hundreds as recently as ten years ago.



What's The Future Of Literary Festivals?

Some literary festivals had lost sponsors and were cancelled even before the pandemic, due to a flailing economy. During the pandemic, some festivals went virtual. Those that did go virtual like the JLF have not figured out how to monetise. There is no clarity on the relevance and financial sustainability of these festivals after the pandemic.



Pandemic Literature

Publishers and digital publishing platforms have already seen an increase in pandemic related submissions and content. However, book to screen agents like Sidharth Jain are skeptical about pandemic stories for the screen.



Prizes Reveal Hidden Gems

Prizes have shone the light on translations in India. Experts say that the level of translated work in India has already increased and will continue to do so in the future.



Digital First Approach To Marketing

The way we discover books is already changing and will change further. The growth of bookstagrammers, book-influencers and online communities can eclipse already shrinking book-reviews in traditional papers.

BOUND'S INSIGHTS

These insights are based on industry trends and our surveys. With the advent of digital, we cannot deny that writing and reading habits have changed. The way we consume books and think about books has changed. Patterns are being formed and broken.

There is an opportunity for publishers to adapt and make the most of the new eco-system of content consumers.

1. Writers are more open to different publishing avenues, like self-publishing and publishing on digital platforms like Wattpad and Juggernaut, especially for fiction.
2. The form of the book may change with the advent of serialised content, audio and interactive e-books. Writers are also more open to producing serialised content.
3. We have seen book writers turning to other mediums of storytelling, like podcasts and screenwriting.
4. Writers are increasingly opting to retain audio rights and screen rights. Rather than selling these rights via their publishers, they are licensing these rights out themselves. Writers on digital publishing platforms are also getting audio and movie deals and are getting discovered straight from those platforms. Book to screen agents like Sidharth Jain approach authors directly, by-passing publishing houses
5. Marketing is now important in every stage of the publishing journey, from the idea stage to the commissioning stage. Publishers look at an author's social profile and marketability of a book i.e in terms of numbers and prestige to the list, not only at the story when making decisions. Authors, self-published or not, are willing to invest in marketing. The number of book marketing agencies can rise.
6. With the growth of the creator economy, more and more people from non-creative backgrounds are turning to writing. There is more demand for upskilling avenues for writers. The discipline of creative writing might be formalised and more skill-building avenues like Bound have already sprouted.

As for the future of books:

People won't stop reading. It's just a question of how.

YOU'VE SEEN THE DATA. NOW MEET THE PEOPLE.

Get direct access to the people working behind the scenes. Tune in for expert insights, publishing tips and book recommendations.

PODCAST

WATCH



LISTEN



Featuring Sayantan Ghosh, Meghna Pant, Resh Susan, Sidharth Jain and more! New episode every Thursday.

WITH



HOST

AISHWARYA JAVALGEKAR

Writer • Editor • Book Person

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01

OVERVIEW

PUBLISHING ECOSYSTEM & WRITERS' CORNER

01

Overview: Publishing Ecosystem & Writers' Corner

The act of publishing means putting a book out into the world, whether in a physical form, or in the form of an e-book and audio-book.

According to the latest data available, India is the sixth largest book publisher in the world, and the second largest producer of English language books after the USA (FICCI 2018). Nielsen predicted that the Indian publishing industry was set to grow at an average CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 19.3 percent till 2020.

The Indian publishing industry comprises traditional publishers, independent publishers, children's book publishers, regional language publishers, comic book and graphic novel creators, and textbook and educational book publishers.

Educational publishing i.e textbooks dominate the industry. School textbooks are 71 percent of the total book market, 23 percent of the total book market is books published for higher education. Trade publishing makes up the rest (6 percent). Within trade publishing, 30 percent of books published are fiction, 45 percent are non-fiction, and 25 percent are children's books (Nielsen).

In this report, we have focused on English language trade publishing.

According to the Nielsen report, 55 percent of all trade books published are in the English language, 35 percent in Hindi and the rest in regional languages. Malayalam is 8 percent, Bengali is 6 percent, Marathi is 4 percent and others make up 47 percent of the market. Experts in the industry consider 10,000 copies sold to be a bestseller ([Mulmi](#)).

THE PUBLISHING ECOSYSTEM

Jaico was the first publisher of English language literature in India and was established in 1946. Penguin was the first international publisher and set up shop in India in 1985. HarperCollins has completed 27 years in India ([“21 Top Indian Book Publishers”](#)). [Simon and Schuster India](#) began its local publishing program as recently as 2017. Over the years, independent publishers like Yoda Press, Niyogi Books and Navayana also set up shop. We also saw the growth of digital publishing platforms like Juggernaut and Wattpad. The growth of the publishing industry saw the rise of an accompanying ecosystem that comprises online and offline book-stores, literary agents, self-publishers, authors, marketers, sales persons, designers and more.

It's safe to say the number of books written by Indians writing in English has majorly increased in the last ten years! Never before have we had such diversity and variety in the kind of books available. And we hope to see this trend keep growing!

If you would like more insight into the Indian writing scene, listen to our author podcast [Books and Beyond with Bound](#).

Each of the above players come together to put a book out into the world. Here's a short explanation about each of the different stages of a book. A deeper analysis will be provided later in the report.

Pre-publication

These are the people who work with a writer on their manuscript before it reaches a publisher. Freelance editors, training programs and mentorship services help writers finalise the content of a book and make it the best possible version it can be.

They can also help writers with their query letters and putting together a submission package, if writers opt to pitch their book to a traditional publisher.

A [literary agent](#) helps the author sell their book to the publisher. The main role of a literary agent is to facilitate communication between the writer and the publisher and help the author sell his or her book to the publisher, though agents can also provide editorial help. Please note, a literary agent is only relevant if the author wants to opt for traditional publishing.

PRE PUBLICATION

 **Mentorships
& Writing
Courses**

 **Freelance
Editors**

 **Literary
Agents**

 **Typesetters**

 **Cover
Designers**

 **Printers**

PUBLICATION

 **Commercial
Publishing
Houses**

 **Independent
Presses**

 **Literary Festivals**

 **Prizes**

 **Interviews &
Features**

POST PUBLICATION

 **Distributors**

 **Bookstores**

 **E-commerce
Platforms**

 **Book Reviews**

 **Book Marketing
& PR**

THE PUBLISHING ECOSYSTEM

Publishing

An author can either sell their book to a traditional publishing house or pay a [self-publishing](#) outfit to help them put their book into the world. Traditional publishers buy the rights to sell a writer's book, take on the cost of producing, printing and publicising the book and give the writers a smaller share of the book's [royalties](#) in return.

Authors who opt to self-publish, take on the costs of producing, printing and publicising themselves, but also keep a larger share of the royalties for themselves. We will discuss each of these options in detail later on in this section.

In a traditional publishing house, once an author signs up with a publishing house, they are assigned an editor. Over the course of a few months, editors and writers work together to get the book ready to be put out in the world. Editing sometimes requires re-writing and re-structuring a book, and always requires a thorough grammar check: a copy-edit. A copy-edit is always the last edit that is done to finalise the content before the book goes into production.

Authors who opt for self-publishing can opt to pay for any of the above services if they choose to.

After the editor and writer finalise the content of a book, the book-cover is designed and the book is type-set, i.e. laid out for printing. Self-published or not, no book can be printed or uploaded as an e-book without having gone through this stage.

After the book is type-set, proof copies of the book are often sent out to the author, i.e. a type-set version of the book will be sent to the author and the editor for one last look. This is an opportunity to correct any mistakes or typos that may have shown up in the typesetting process.

Once the typeset proof is approved, the book is sent to the printers and voila! The book is made.

Post-publication

These are the people who help books reach readers via marketing and distribution. Many publishers have in-house marketing and PR departments. They also tie up with book distributors, wholesalers responsible for getting physical copies of books into bookstores around India bookstores and online e-commerce platforms and bookstores.

The emergence of literary festivals, prizes, podcasts, bookstagrammers, book reviews also contribute to a book's journey, as do independent book-marketing and PR agencies. We will discuss each of these aspects in detail.

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Traditional publishers buy the rights to publish a writer's book. They take on the cost of producing, marketing and distributing a book, and in return, keep a majority chunk of the money made from book sales. Authors receive a percentage of this money as royalties. When an author sells a publisher rights to sell their book, they receive an advance payment. The royalties they then receive from the sales of the book are adjusted against the advance amount paid to the author. Royalties are usually 7.5–8 percent for paperbacks, and between 10–15 percent for hardbacks. Royalties can go up, the more influential the name of the author ([Gupta](#)).

The business model for the majority of traditional publishers is the volume of books sold. They make more money, the more books they sell. It also hinges on a few books becoming blockbusters and generating enough income to justify the rest of the list:

"A lot of publishers adopt a 80–20 rule when it comes to selecting manuscripts for publishing. According to this rule, the revenue generated through 20 percent of the products will provide them approximately 80 percent of their revenue and profits. The success of all of the products is difficult to achieve in creative industries and many publishers try to balance their diverse lists with commercial fiction to achieve these revenue and profit goals."

[David Davidar](#), Founder of Aleph Book Company in an interview with Scroll.

Traditional publishing offers brand recognition, infrastructural help and credibility to authors who want to get published. Thus many authors want to opt for this method of publishing.

PUBLISHING HOUSES

Within the traditional publishing industry, there are different kinds of publishers with different mandates. We will discuss each of these below:

Mainstream Publishers

Mainstream publishers have larger lists. They publish almost every genre, and often employ specific editors for specific subjects. They are larger operations that perform at scale. In India, we have both multinational publishers like Penguin Random House, Simon and Schuster, HarperCollins; and homegrown ones like Rupa Publications, Juggernaut Books and Jaico Publishing House ([Namrata](#)). See the entire list [here](#).

Independent Publishers

Independent publishers are smaller, homegrown publishers that might publish books which may not be picked up by bigger publishers. They often have an issue-based mandate or a niche or specialized book list. For example, Zubaan and Kali are feminist presses, while Seagull and Niyogi Books focus more on translations. To see the entire list, click [here](#).

Independent publishers are gaining more recognition because of social media and a growing awareness about the issues and topics tackled by them.

“

Ishaani Butalia of Zubaan Books talks about the philosophy behind independent publishing in an interview of *The Book People*:

“Our thing is, is it more important to say is this thing commercially viable? Or is it more important to say, I don’t care if it’s commercially viable, we will find a way to make sure it exists? That’s what we’re trying to do.

Not everything is going to be an instant bestseller. And by not everything. I mean, most things are not going to be instant bestsellers. But there might be things which over the course of 10 years, steadily stay in print, or the minute they go out of print, you have people asking about them.”

”

HOW TO GET PUBLISHED

Books are selected by commissioning editors, who manage a publisher’s book list. They read the book proposals submitted to the publishing house. They might approach authors with a book idea or industry experts to write on a topic of their expertise. They negotiate the contract with the authors and take them through the publishing process.

SOLICITED MANUSCRIPT	UNSOLICITED MANUSCRIPT
Requested by the editor or submitted by a literary agent	Submitted directly by the author to the editor
More likely to be read and considered for publication	Less likely to be read and considered for publication

THE PUBLISHING PROCESS



HOW BOOKS ARE SELECTED

Traditional publishers have a very strict selection criteria. The selection rate is very low, and less than one percent in most cases.

“You do some books knowing that perhaps they won’t do the kind of numbers that you would want a book to do. But that will not only add prestige to your list, perhaps earn you an award nomination, at least earn good reviews. And, add some value to your list. And some books you have to do, which perhaps won’t get the best reviews, perhaps the critics are not going to love it as much. But they’ll give you the numbers, and you have to maintain a balance.

All said and done, there is no romanticizing. It’s a business.”

Sayantan Ghosh, Senior Commissioning Editor at Simon & Schuster India, in *The Book People*

1. **Submission Received:** Commissioning editors read the proposal and sample chapters. If they think that an idea has potential, they request the author or agent to share the complete manuscript. Sometimes, especially for non-fiction, they may give a contract based on only the proposal and sample chapters. Estimated turnaround time: 6 months.
2. **Second Opinion:** The manuscript is sent to other editors and reviewed for a second opinion.

3. **Publishing Meeting:** The manuscript is discussed with other departments of the publishing house. Some of the factors considered are:



4. **Contract Discussed:** The publishing house invites the author to discuss the publishing agreement including the author's rights and royalties, delivery dates, and edits required. They may go through the author's literary agent if the author has appointed one.
5. **Contract Signed!:** Once the author and publisher signs the contract, a book is considered to be 'commissioned'.

WHAT DO EDITORS LOOK FOR IN A SUBMISSION?

I. Non-Fiction

1. Informative, Accessible. Engaging
2. Solid author credentials and expertise
3. Unique, fills a knowledge gap

II. Fiction

1. Basics: characters, plot, voice, and setting
2. Memorable and relatable stories
3. Popularity of genre
4. Success of similar books in the past
5. Unique angle

“

Sayantan Ghosh Gives Tips On Writing Book Proposals (An Excerpt from The Book People)

Keep it short. “I don’t need to know your life story. What will keep me interested in it? What would make me want to read it? And why are you right for this and what is the book about? Keep it within a page.”

Have an elevator pitch ready. “It isn’t easy to describe something I’ve written, 50,000 to 60,000 words in a sentence. It’s great if you can. Only then I’ll be able to help you produce something out of it as an editor that will make a reader out there want to read it.”

Treat editors like readers. “I’m not your friend. Treat me as a reader, don’t treat me as an editor when you’re sending me a message, or sending me a submission or proposal.”

”

LITERARY AGENTS

A literary agent acts as a medium of communication between an author and a publishing house. Like commissioning editors, literary agents read book proposals to decide which authors to represent. Literary agents have direct relations with editors and publishers who work at various publishing houses across the country. They represent writers and help them secure a contract with a publishing house. Literary agents typically charge between 15-20 percent of the royalties that the author receives from the book.

WHAT DOES A LITERARY AGENT DO?

1. Helps you write a compelling book proposal
2. Pitches your work to publishers
3. Negotiates your contract with the publisher
4. Represents you in all deals – audio, screen, translation, etc.

SELF-PUBLISHING

With self-publishing, an author chooses not to submit their manuscript to a traditional publisher, but publish it themselves. They take the responsibility of not only writing the book, but also editing, designing, printing and distributing it. This includes making the book available in bookstores, online platforms like Amazon or on a personal website. Authors can choose to publish their book in any format they desire: print or e-book. They can choose the number of copies they would like to print and even opt for print on demand services.

Self-publishing in India is growing rapidly. Amazon launched Kindle Direct Publishing in 2008. It's absolutely free and authors can publish their e-book within 48 hours of uploading it. In India, KDP gives authors the option to publish only e-books, not physical copies. Amazon announced that the number of authors who are opting for KDP services doubled in 2020 compared to 2019 (["Number of New Authors"](#)).

Authors can choose to upload and self-publish books themselves as in the case of KDP, or hire vanity publishing houses to take over these operations.

In the last decade, we have seen the growth of self or vanity publishing houses that help authors produce and market their books for a price. Whereas the traditional publisher makes money from selling books, the self-publisher makes money from the author. The production of the book is the service itself. Their packages to authors can include editing, printing, production, cover design, and marketing and distribution services.

For example, since its launch in 2012, [Notion Press](#) has published over 28,000 books. There is no consensus about how many self-publishing outfits exist in India or the number of self-published books. According to an article by the

Himalayan Writing Retreat, at least 40 options exist today for writers looking to avail of self-publishing services ([Namrata](#)).

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING	SELF-PUBLISHING
Expert editors, designers, marketing team working on your book	Complete creative control
Brand name attached to your project	You are responsible for differentiating yourself
Publishing house will make decisions about cover, etc. but pay all production costs	You will make decisions but have to pay for production cost from pocket
Established distribution channels, physical bookstores but lesser percentage of sales	A higher percentage of the sales
Nominations for prizes and awards	Publish niche books which don't fit a 'category'

Bookstores

There is no data available on the exact number of bookstores in India. The data that is available is reported data from bookstore owners themselves, in which owners report on total number of sales, industry trends and what kind of books are sold. In this section, we have analysed how bookstores have fared over the last ten years with the growth of e-commerce and social media, and what happened to them during the pandemic.

In India, there are chain bookstores like Crosswords, Oxford Bookstores, Landmark and independent bookstores: standalone stores like the famous Kitaab Khana in Mumbai or Champaca in Bangalore. Independent bookstores build small engaged reading communities with curated collections and regular literary events.

What Happened With The Rise Of E-commerce?

As e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart grew, bookstores in India suffered. In fact, Flipkart started its journey in India as an online book-seller. Today, online sales contribute to half of the total book sales in India ([Chandy](#)).

Chain bookstores like Crosswords have been making losses over the past few years. As of 2018, its net losses stood at 5 crores and the number of stores had decreased from 87 stores across India to 84 stores across India. 75 percent of its revenue came from books and 25 percent from merchandise ([Laha](#)). The fallout has also extended to book distributors: there are now only a handful compared to hundreds ten years ago. ("[Sabarhwal qtd. in "Insider Predictions"](#)")

How Did Some Independent Bookstores Sustain Their Business?

Some independent bookstores like The Bookshop Jorbagh and Champaca have adapted to the digital environment by focusing on online sales, maintaining a strong presence on social media, and engaging in community building activities online and offline. In *The Book People*, [Radhika Timbadia](#) speaks about how Champaca regularly hosts talks and events to foster community and increase footfall.

Stores like Kitab Khana who also engaged digitally and found new ways to retain customers witnessed an average daily footfall of 450 customers before the pandemic! Before the pandemic they had annual sales of around INR 5 crores ([Sheth](#)).

What Happened During The Pandemic?

As with all retail, book stores obviously suffered. Airport sales were negligible, and some bookstores like Om Bookstores, whose bookstores are in malls across the country, had to temporarily close their stores ([Sapru](#)).

Revered independent bookstores like the Full Circle in New Delhi ([Sapru](#)); Stores like Twistntales in Pune and Wayward and Wise in Mumbai could not survive the financial toll that the pandemic took on their businesses ([Bali](#)).

Bookstores started using innovative means to reach their customers. Midland in Delhi partnered with FedEx and Delhivery to reach the customers. Owner Mirza Touseef Baig says that 90 percent of their orders after the lockdown came through Instagram and WhatsApp. DC Books in Kerala partnered with Swiggy and Zomato for book deliveries ([Menon](#)).

Some bookstores even flourished during the pandemic. Bahrasons in Delhi opened online sales and set up a book delivery system, managing to open a new branch in Saket ([Malhotra and Malhotra](#)).

Champaca started an online store and a monthly subscription box. Timbadia says, "It's very exciting to see that our books are going all over India. They're going to Orissa, Bihar and Bombay and MP and Chennai, so many books are going to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. We're finally reaching other people outside."

There should be more communication within the publishing ecosystem – [Radhika Timbadia](#) of Champaca Books in *The Book People*:

"I do think people are reading, I do think that reading is relevant to a lot of people.

But I think one of the biggest setbacks is the industry not coming together. There is not enough communication between bookstores, and distributors, and publishers and the people who are doing the marketing for them or people who are readers. Why does Amazon have first access to books that independent bookstores should have? Like it just makes it easier for people to buy in different spaces? And I think one of the biggest threats to independent bookstores in India is this industry not coming together and not having enough communication. And I hope that that will change in the next few years."

Does The Overall Decline In Physical Bookstores Affect Discoverability?

With the rise of social media and online stores, we aren't sure. More on this in later sections.

E-BOOKS

E-book penetration before the pandemic was less than 10 percent. During the pandemic, many turned to e-books like never before. However, after the pandemic, this demand has flattened. Experts aren't sure whether the demand will go up in the future. New avenues like interactive e-book can be explored.

In August 2012, Amazon released its first Kindle device in the Indian market and was quickly followed by the release of Flipkart's e-books in November, 2012. In 2015, Amazon released e-books in regional languages like Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati and Malayalam for the Indian audience and expanded its reach. ([Bhargava](#))

How were E-books Faring Before The Pandemic?

The Indian e-book market has grown from \$85 million in 2016 to \$340 million in 2019 ([Tanay](#)).

70 percent of publishers in India have digitised their content to produce e-books, according to the Nielsen India Book Market Report in 2015.

In a 2018 interview with Juggernaut books, Ananth Padmanabhan, CEO of HarperCollins India, said, "People are reading more e-books, and for HarperCollins in India, we are seeing a steady increase in sales for our bestsellers, especially, and across the board too" ([qtd. in Williams](#))

Were E-books On Their Way To Replace Physical Books?

The answer is no. The market penetration of e-books in the pre-covid 2019 market was less than 10 percent. ([Tanay](#))

What Happened To E-books During The Pandemic?

When the lockdown was announced, e-books were the only option for readers.

When physical books became a scarce commodity readers turned to e-books and audio-books for comfort. The sale of e-books and audio-books doubled during the pandemic ([Ahaskar](#)).

According to HarperCollins, since its second “mega e-books sale,” there has been a 75 percent increase in its e-book sales. Roli Books has noted a 50 percent increase in the sale of e-books ([Shahidi](#)) and 80 percent more e-books were sold during the lockdown by Hachette (“[Dog-Eared Pages Turn To Digital](#)”).

While many titles were postponed and publishing schedules were shifted around, some books were published only as e-books during the pandemic. For example Ira Mukhoty’s *Akbar* and Anmol Malik’s *Three Impossible Wishes*.

Post Pandemic?

Post lock-down, it is unclear whether the demand for e-books will continue to rise. While the demand for e-books post lockdown has flattened, it has not gone down. ([Bose](#))

When it comes to e-books, [Vaishnavi Singh](#) in an interview with The Book People says “In five years, I would like to see interactive e-books where you could touch something and it comes to life. That’s our take.”

Here’s what the head of Niyogi books [Trisha Niyogi](#) has to say about e-books after the pandemic: “E-books remain static, they haven’t increased that much, but they haven’t decreased also in demand. But we also see people moving back to physical books. We are a country of touch and feel we love to see our books in our hands.”

Even though e-books don’t have the printing costs attached to them, pricing them remains a tricky business. [Sayantan Ghosh](#) says, “We just can’t sell an e-book at any price that we want. Because there are multiple other layers to it.”

PROS	CONS
Priced around 50-55 percent less than physical copies	Less revenue for the publishers
Easier to distribute and play around with formats	Dependent on the readers ability to skillfully operate technological devices
Growth opportunity	Tough to penetrate

AUDIO-BOOKS

Audio-books have been steadily growing and are expected to boom in the future.

Unlike podcasts that are specifically made for audio, audio-books are pieces of content that have been converted from book to audio.

What Was Happening To Audio-books Before The Pandemic?

The launch of digital platforms like Stoytel and Audible have contributed to the growth of audio-books in India ([Ghawri](#)). Storytel entered the Indian market in 2017 ([Gupta](#)) and Amazon launched Audible at the end of 2018 ([Mitter](#)). Audible India's Country Head Shailesh Sawlani says, "Since the launch of both Audible.in and Audible Suno, our growth has been strong and rapid but we believe there is still a lot of ground to cover. The expanse and diversity of India and its love for stories makes it one of the fastest-growing markets for us, globally." ([qtd. in Mitter](#))

There is a global increase in the demand for audio-books and India is expected to be part of the phenomenon. The industry is expected to grow from \$4 billion in 2020 to \$20 billion in 2030 on a global scale. ([Scroll](#))

Publishers are also seeing the merit of converting their books into the audio format. 25 percent of the total digital revenue of HarperCollins is a result of audio-book downloads ([Ghawri](#)). “We want to get all our books into audio-books,” says [Vaishnavi Singh](#), Digital Lead at Penguin Random House India.

But audio-books might be more expensive to produce than physical books. *The Book People* guest [Sayantan Ghosh](#) says, “It still hasn’t developed into a full fledged industry yet. We are also working with them trying to build a platform where people are able to purchase audio-books at an affordable price.”

What Happened During The Pandemic?

Much like e-books, audio-books got a huge push during the pandemic. And though experts are not sure about whether the uptick will continue for e-books, they say it most likely will for audio-books:

According to the Nielsen report on the impact of Covid On the Indian Book Consumer, reading and audio-book listening are up, increasing by a substantial 7 hours weekly on average to as much as 16 hours total, per week.

[Vaishnavi Singh](#) says, “Audio-books are increasing. A lot of people didn’t believe in the format. But I think the numbers are now showing to be otherwise.”

Bound community member Mehak Goyal prefers audio-books to e-books: “Books are readily available on Storytel and Audible even if Amazon couldn’t deliver them during the lockdown. After a long day of staring at the laptop, my eyes refuse to open for a book, irrespective of how much I love doing that. I started reading audio-books 6 months ago and I have read one per week since then. I also love how the reader’s voice changes for every character.”

What Can We Expect In The Future?

This will be an interesting space to watch.

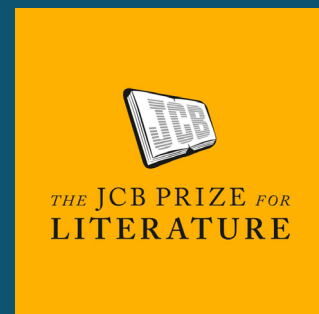
LITERARY PRIZES

Several new prize lists like the JCB prize, The Hindu Literary Prize, The DSC Prize for South Asian Literature have emerged in the last few years. Find a complete list of Indian prize lists [here](#).

Prizes are important because they can draw attention to hidden gems that are otherwise lost in the storm of book promotion and marketing tactics ([Dasgupta qtd. in Verma](#)). Entries to prizes come from independent, mainstream and regional publishers.

CASE STUDY

How the JCB prize has helped give more recognition to translations in India



JCB Prize is the richest literary prize in India today.

Moustache by S. Hareesh, translated from Malayalam by Jayasree Kalathil won the 2020 JCB Prize for Literature. *Jasmine Days* by Benyamin, also translated from Malayalam won the prize in 2018.

According to 2020 jury member Aruni Kashyap, "Translation of literature from Indian languages is here to stay, and it is slowly reclaiming and demanding its long-deserved place. ([qtd. in Goyal](#))

"I believe that the recognition that the book has received on winning the JCB prize would give it the opportunity to be better understood and read. I also feel that a platform such as the JCB Prize would foster more translations from Malayalam and other Indian languages into English and other languages," said S Hareesh ([qtd. in "My Book Will Now Be Better Understood"](#)).

Both Kashyap and Hareesh pointed out the need for upskilling translators in India. "I also felt that we need a lot more good translators – in all languages," said Kashyap in an interview with Scroll ([qtd. in Goyal](#)).

Bangalore based bookstore Champaca's online store now has a separate section for translation literature and a dedicated subscription box for the same, according to our interview with [Radhika Timbadia](#).

“

On the scenario of translations in the country, in an interview on Books and Beyond, India's foremost translator [Arunava Sinha](#) says:

“The best news is that there are very many more translators who are excellent at their work compared to say 10 years ago or even 5 years ago, and they are working out of different languages. Gujarati is becoming stronger, Telugu is beginning to assert its place. I'm quite sure that over the next 5 years we will see translations from other languages.

Certainly translations now are of a far higher quality both in terms of the rendition and as well as in terms of the choice of books. Translations are no longer on the margins of the total body of English Literature in India. They're very much centre stage.”

”

But Do Awards Really Affect Book Sales?

[Disha Naik](#), Publicist at Juggernaut Book, says no. “Have you ever picked up a book because the author has won awards? I don't know if it makes a difference sales wise, but I know it makes a difference price wise,” she says.

However, Rana Dasgupta, literary director of the JCB Prize says, “A kind of energy surrounds the Booker Prize even in this country. Many of them are new authors, but it leads to sales of upwards of 30,000–40,000. That is what a prize does. It draws attention to a book that no one has heard of... and, because of a prize, everyone wants to read it.” ([qtd. in Verma](#))

Either way, the recognition these prizes give the books they select is palpable. “The main reward, then, is to be able to discover these fine books, and then to recommend them to the reading public,” says JCB 2020 Jury member Tejaswini Niranjana ([qtd. in Goyal](#)).

LITERARY FESTIVALS

India has witnessed a boom in literature festivals in the last decade with over 75 literature festivals being conducted across the country every year.

The Jaipur Literature Festival witnessed a footfall of 4 lakh in 2019 ("[Jaipur Literature Festival Begins Today](#)"). Among other popular festivals are Tata Lit Live, the Taj Literary Festival in Agra, Bookaroo (the largest children's book fest), the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, and The Times Literary Carnival.

They are open to everyone and are sponsored by corporates like Zee, Times Network and The Hindu among others.

But Do They Lead To Sales?

In an interview with Telegraph India, Sayantan Ghosh, Commissioning Editor at Simon & Schuster India says "Actual sales are very low. As publishers we make peace with that. But it is the sheer number of people which is a huge boost for the authors." ([qtd. in Tripathi](#))

The biggest charm of these festivals is that they bring readers, seasoned and amateur authors, aspiring writers, editors and publishers under one roof and spark conversations about literature, writing and art among other things. Budding writers want to attend these festivals because they provide an opportunity to interact with seasoned and new authors, improve their craft through advice on writing and network with the people working behind the scenes of the Indian publishing industry.

Published authors want to attend them because it gives them a chance to interact with new and old readers of their work, meet fellow authors, get featured as panelists which helps both them and their books gain media coverage.

But How Did These Festivals Fund Themselves?

According to the last available data for costs and sponsorship, The Jaipur Literature festival cost approximately INR 8 crores in 2014. ([Pratap](#))

“It’s actually been 60 percent from sponsorship and 40 percent from ticketing in the festivals outside India (like Singapore, Hong Kong, New York) and from delegates in India. Eventually, we may ask for a contribution fee, which is what most online platforms do, to help us stay afloat.” says Sanjoy Roy of Teamwork Arts, the organizers of JLF ([qtd. in Sinha](#)).

Even before the pandemic, at least two of the prominent lit-fests in the country had been forced to close down on account of lack of sponsorship. “...despite herculean efforts, on account of a seriously floundering economy, no sponsors are available and that we have been asked to call off the event for this year,” wrote the curators of the Times Literary Festival in an email message circulated in 2019 ([qtd. in “Times Litfest Mumbai”](#)). The Hindu Lit For Life was cancelled with a similar email from organizers: “There is no opportunity at this juncture also to get a commitment of sponsorship amounts from our marketing and events teams as companies outside appear to be reeling under the current economic climate and have no money to spare for other people’s events.” ([qtd. in “Times Litfest Mumbai”](#))

During The Pandemic, The Festivals Went Virtual!

This allowed people to attend multiple panels from the comfort of their homes.

“At the physical festival at Jaipur, the maximum number of people we can squeeze into the front lawns on a good day is 12-13,000, perhaps 15,000 with Rana Daggubati. In the digital edition, an average session in season one got 32,000 views – and these are actual numbers, not vague visual impressions. Further, the average viewing time was about 18 to 20 minutes, far higher than the average on OTT platforms, which is about 7.5 to 8 minutes.” – Jaipur Literature Festival organizer Sanjay Roy ([qtd. in Sinha](#))

Bound community member Sangeetha Menon, who attended the 2021 virtual JLF, says, “I think one of the best parts of JLF being virtual this year was that I could switch between different panel discussions, rewind and pause videos when needed to, and that the sessions were made available on YouTube for future viewing.”

Are virtual literary festivals easier to organize? Sanjay Roy says no. "The people-cost remains the same. We have taken cuts in salary, but still have all our employees, and then we have designing and technology costs. So I would say that our costs are very different now, but not necessarily much lower."

Virtual events are yet to be monetised, he says. "Eventually, we may ask for a contribution fee, which is what most online platforms do, to help us stay afloat. Earlier a large chunk of sales came from ticketing the event." ([qtd. in Sinha](#))

Author [Ira Mukhoty](#) on how festivals encourage community in *Books and Beyond* with Bound:

"I have to say that a source for me of great, you know, wisdom and comfort has been the writing community, and this is what I have missed, because of the book coming out [in the pandemic]. Usually at this time I would be out, you know, maybe at talks, maybe the festivals would be beginning. And that's where I would meet not just the readers, but what is very important as the community, you know, the community of writers."

BOOK REVIEWS

The way readers discover books is going to evolve as we adapt more and more to a digital environment. The bookstagram industry, influencer marketing, and online communities like Goodreads are set to grow in the future.

Do People Still Read Traditional Book Reviews?

Publicist [Disha Naik](#) says yes. In her episode of *The Book People*, she says, “One question I asked everyone I read, how do you pick the book you read? And a lot of these people say, book reviews. And you’d be surprised some of them even read book reviews in newspapers, which is a relatively traditional form.”

But the space for book reviews in traditional newspapers is decreasing. Journalist [Deepanjana Pal](#) mentions in her *Books and Beyond* with Bound episode how there are fewer print avenues for arts and culture journalists to publish.

How Are Bookstagrammers Stepping In?

Book reviews are no longer exclusive to book journalists and columnists! India has the second highest number of Instagram users, with 120 million monthly active users ([Iqbal](#)). This has led to the rise of ‘bookstagram’ accounts, where creators share creative and personalized book reviews with aesthetic photographs. This has democratised the business of reviewing books ([Santhanam](#)). In an interview for *The Book People*, bookstagrammer [Resh Susan](#) ([@thebooksatchel](#), 57.7K followers) says, “When I write something about a book, I speak about how the book spoke to me personally – did I connect with something in the book? Or maybe I really liked the language or the way the author used a word.”

Bookstagrammers thus have the power to influence reader’s preferences and buying habits. For instance, bookstagrammers like South Asian Book Club ([@southasianbookclub](#)) and Japneet ([@millenial_reader](#)) focus particularly on South Asian writing and highlight books from this region.

Publishers approach them to promote their books to a larger audience. [Resh Susan](#) says, “When some book releases fit with my reading tastes, I’ll be sent an email asking would you like to have a copy for a review consideration? If it sounds like something I’ll enjoy, I accept it.”

Do Bookstagrammers Charge?

Some bookstagrammers choose their books organically, while others are open to charging for promotional services. From our research, we found bookstagrammers can charge from INR 2000–1,00,000 depending on the number of followers and engagement. These promotions can include a book review, promotional videos and book giveaways.

A bookstore may charge around INR 10,000–15,000 per month for a book pile display. These costs vary on the basis of a number of factors such as the customer footfall in the bookstore. For example, the Bound team was quoted INR 1 lakh by a prominent bookstore chain for a book display in a Tier 1 city. The bookstagram industry, influencer marketing and online communities are set to grow in the future and have the potential to take over traditional book reviews.

Has Goodreads Democratised Book Reviews?

In her interview with The Book People episode, [Naik](#) says, “When it comes to my personal book picks. I rely more on Goodreads. At least whenever I see I’ve picked a book that’s four and above four that’s got four and a half stars on Goodreads, it’s a good book, because it’s people voting for it.”

Host [Aishwarya Javalgekar](#) responds, “I think what Goodreads does is that it balances reviews with recommendations from friends, because word of mouth is such a big thing with books”.

The Bottom Line: How Books Will Be Discovered Is Going To Keep Changing As We Go Digital

“People are discovering what to read online through influencers, through so many more channels than they were before. And I think digital has just become such an important aspect of readers’ life.” says [Vaishnavi Singh](#), Digital Lead at Penguin Random House India.

BOOK-TO-SCREEN DEALS

As book to screen deals in India rise, they expose a gap between the content and publishing industries. “I think that India is a streaming country. And the amount of content that India and Indians have consumed is phenomenal. And that’s great for the business. That’s good for all storytellers.” says book-to-screen expert [Sidharth Jain](#) in The Book People.

OTT Platforms Need More Content Than Ever Before

The entry of OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime in 2016 has led to a surge in the demand for content. According to Abhishek Rege, CEO of

Endemol Shine India, “For a while now we have been focused on developing quality content, not just for the Indian market but something that would elicit curiosity across the world.” ([qtd. in Laghate](#))

Do you know the original authors of your favourite films and shows?	
FILM / SHOW	BOOK AUTHOR
Sacred Games	Vikram Chandra
Leila	Prayaag Akbar
Selection Day	Aravind Adiga
The White Tiger	Aravind Adiga
A Suitable Boy	Vikram Seth

Since 2018, book-to-screen agent [Siddharth Jain](#) has taken over 140 books to the screen. According to him, there is limited talent in the movie business and the industry needs more storytellers.

If A Book Is A Bestseller Does That Mean It Will Do Well On The Screen Too?

‘Not all stories that do well as books might do well on screen,’ [Jain](#) says. “So you know, there’s a big divide in the two worlds because the audiences are different. The most avid readers may not be the most, you know, avid streamers. So there is a distinction there. And hence, there’s been a big gap between our industries in India, between the publishing and the content industry all these years.” ([Jain](#))

"If the industry aligns itself to utilise this tremendous opportunity, then we can make a big leap in terms of book to screen between 2020 and 2030." ([Jain](#))

Which Genres Work Best For The Screen?

According to [Jain](#), mystery and thriller genres work very well for screen. There is potential in horror (though there isn't too much of it in Indian publishing) and real life stories. Literary fiction doesn't translate well to screen. He is cynical about pandemic fiction for the screen.

While romance and speculative fiction work well for publishing houses, particularly digital outfits like Wattpad, they are also difficult to convert to screen.

"Romance is difficult, because if you see romance, primarily dramas, right, love dramas, they don't have the simpler benchmarks in their stories. So they work more for movies. And then to drag out audiences in movies, you need to have their favorite stars, with the popular music. So the book story is not always the best format to pick from. And I think for a series, romance has been a very, very slow uptake." ([Jain](#))

On How Jain Selects Books To Take To Screen

"It's about the story. The most important aspect in our business is how to pitch, what to pitch, how to pitch, when to pitch. And the key pillars of any story pitch is the title of the story, the cover of the book, the synopsis, and the logline: the hook of the story. So I don't really need to read the entire book to figure whether it's suitable or not. I can just look at the title synopsis. And I can quickly make the decision whether this will work for screen or not. And then on the shortlist, the ones that work for screen, then dive into those books in greater detail to figure out is it good for a film? Is it good for a series? Is this the right time to pitch the story? Or should the story pitch next year later? So you know, it's my own instinct."

For more information on the book-to-screen market in India: the process, selection and growth listen to our episode with Sidharth Jain [here](#).



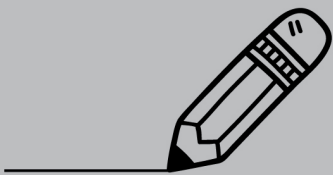
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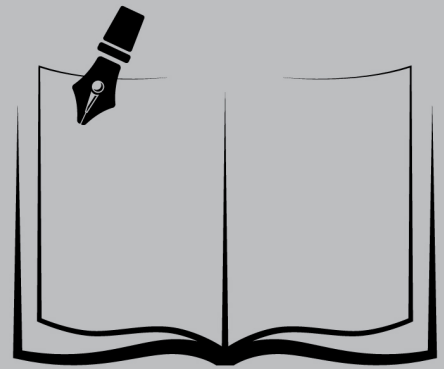
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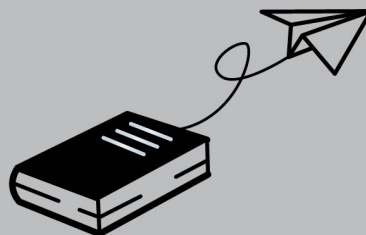
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02

PUBLISHING DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Publishing During The Pandemic

While the previous decade saw the publishing industry grow at a steady pace, the Covid-19 pandemic caused a major disruption. It became a catalyst that forced the publishing industry to adapt to the digital environment and led to innovative approaches to publishing and readership.

Here are the highlights of what happened during the pandemic:

Publishers Had To Adapt To The New Reality By Changing Launch Dates

Many publishers had to postpone existing launch dates and prioritize books about the pandemic. [Sayantan Ghosh](#) recounts “The distribution network suffered. We were not able to publish the books that we had planned. We had to shuffle the list around a little bit.”

In an interview with *The Book People*, freelance book cover designer [Harshad Marathe](#) adds, “I know that some clients were not hiring any freelancers for a period of time or were on a very tight budget”

These decisions were based on the new priorities of 2020. “You have to also understand the kind of books that you’re publishing. If I published a travel book in the middle of 2020 that would be suicidal. I was mostly looking for more hopefully material...” [Ghosh](#) adds.

Publishers Adopted A Digital-first Approach

The Indian publishing industry, which earns almost 85 percent of the total sales revenue from physical books ([Bose](#)) witnessed zero print sales for almost three months (between April to June) during the lockdown ([PTI](#)).

[HarperCollins India](#) announced a mega sale in May 2020 and offered massive discounts on their diverse collection of over 1300 e-books. Juggernaut Books started a #ReadInstead campaign where they offered their large catalogue of bestsellers and mobile reads for free on the Juggernaut app ("[Getting Through Covid-19 Lockdown](#)"). Juggernaut and Wattpad also offered shorter fiction and non-fiction formats for readers who were looking for entertaining 20-30 minute reads ("[Getting Through Covid-19 Lockdown](#)").

Publishers had to rethink marketing strategies so that audiences could still discover their books. [Disha Naik](#) equates the situation to war-time. "For the very first time. There were no bookstores selling books. There was no Amazon, there was no Flipkart. So it was very strange"

"We were one of the first publishing houses to switch over to marketing e-books during the pandemic," says [Vaishnavi Singh](#) from Penguin Random House India. "We switched from clicking pictures of physical books to clicking device images to showcase that the world of e-books was available to people."

Thomas Abraham, Managing Director of Hachette India says, "Online did really well in holding up lists, but new books and the lesser known titles which needed the discoverability at curated stores lost out badly." ([PTI](#))

Authors Adapted To Changed Priorities

[Udayan Mukherjee](#) wrote his collection of pandemic stories in three months. In an interview with *Books and Beyond* with Bound, he spoke about how writing helped him channelize his lockdown induced anxiety.

Some authors edited their books to include the pandemic.

“

“The book was already lined up to be released in May (2020). When the pandemic happened, it just seemed like everyone was talking about anxiety. The book has some mention of COVID because around April, when I was doing the final edits, I tweaked it for it to fit in the context of what was happening,”

Sonali Gupta, Clinical Psychologist and Author of Anxiety: Overcome It and Live Without Fear

”

Content Consumption In India Increased

According to Nielsen’s report on the Impact of COVID-19, reading time increased from 9 hours a week to 16 hours per week. Subscriptions to OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Hostar increased by 31 percent in four months and touched 29 million by July. ([Shahidi](#))

“

“Wattpad witnessed a 151 percent increase in new stories from January through April and overall writer activity increased by 200 percent in the same period.”

Devashish Sharma, Country Head of Wattpad India

”

Pandemic Literature Emerged As A Genre

Many books showcasing the impact of Covid-19 and people’s experiences during the lockdown were published. Senior Commissioning Editor [Sayantan Ghosh](#) says, “It’s necessary to document this tremendous year that we’ve all had. None of us have seen something like this.” Shobha De’s book [Lockdown Liaisons](#) explores the lockdown through 24 stories and internal monologues. Udayan Mukherjee’s short story collection, [Essential Items: Stories from a Land in Lockdown](#), also showcases diverse experiences across India.

Mukherjee says, "We have to keep the faith alive that people are going to read more like they did after the World Wars." What kind of stories can we expect in the future? [Ghosh](#) thinks that pandemic romances are going to storm the market. [Sidharth Jain](#), on the other hand, is cynical about pandemic fiction. "I haven't really come across a terrific story set during the pandemic, which I think deserves to go to screen," he says.

Reading Habits

YA fiction sales rose 21.4 percent and non-fiction sales increased 38.3 percent. Indian nonfiction readers bought historical/political biographies followed by self-help/personal development and self-study like learning new languages. ([Nielsen Report](#))

Women are less likely than men to have changed their fiction reading interests since the outbreak of Covid-19! ([Nielsen Report](#))

Both genders are more interested in crime/thrillers and literary/classic fiction, alongside historical fiction (men) and romance (women). ([Anderson](#))

Readers In The Bound Community Reported A Strong Preference For Non-fiction, Self-help, Romance And Memoirs Over Other Genres

"I began to prefer paperbacks because I could not look at another screen, even though I used to read a lot of e-books. I studiously avoided dystopian fics/specific/sci-fi during the pandemic. I found myself reading a lot of books I had already read before - because I liked the certainty of knowing the plot. I also fell in love with modern day retellings of classics (especially a book like Meg and Jo by Virginia Kantra, which is a modern adaptation of Little Women) I also found myself reading books I used to love as a child (I dug out my Calvin and Hobbes hardcover collection!) Reconnecting with that child reader in me was super delightful."

Kavya Srinivasan, Bound community member

Here's What Some Bookstore Owners And Industry Experts Reported

- According to [Radhika Tambadia](#), Champaca sold a lot of fiction during the pandemic. Things like cookbooks, Indian fiction and humour among others that they didn't sell much before.
- "We pivoted to customise a lot of our content towards the lockdown with health and wellness titles," says Shailesh Sawlani, country head, Audible India. ([qtd. in Biswas](#))



Head of Wattpad, [Devashish Sharma](#) on what genres are popular on the platform:

"Along with Bollywood, people in India are obsessed with cricket. So I wanted to see what cricket-related stories there are on Wattpad and I found a lot of sports romance stories ... which is also an upcoming, trendy genre on Wattpad in India. One specific book I love is [The Cricketer's Ex-Wife](#) (409k reads). It's a romance story about a relationship between a popular cricket player and a female protagonist, and my favourite part was that, even though it's written, it felt like I was watching a TV show."

"The data shows that romance is overwhelmingly one of the most popular genres on Wattpad in India — specifically stories about forbidden love and arranged marriages."



- Bookstagrammer [Resh Susan](#) said that she would like to read more joy inducing books in the future. "As a reader, I do hope we have more hopeful books and books that bring joy. And not just books that remind us of that terrible year we've had. As a reader, that's my wish."

WHAT BOUND DID DURING THE PANDEMIC

Bound adapted to the new norm set by the lockdown as well. We launched our online classes conducted by seasoned experts like Pragya Bhagat, Mohit Parikh, Abhijeet Kini, and Michelle D'costa among others.

We also launched our literary podcast, Books and Beyond with Bound, with hosts Tara Khandelwal and Michelle D'costa. We interviewed authors to understand their creative processes. It quickly developed into a platform for writers who were promoting their books in a brand new digital setup.

Our signature writers' retreat also went virtual! With a little brainstorming, we were able to create a relaxing and inspiring virtual atmosphere for twelve selected participants. You can read more about our journey through the lockdown [here](#).



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BOUND'S INSIGHTS & FUTURE TRENDS

03

Bound's Insights and Future Trends

Bound works with Indian writers and interacts with the writing community closely on a daily basis. Since March 2017, we have worked with over 2000 writers to help them polish their craft. With the help of internal and external instructors, we have conducted over 120 classes on different aspects of writing, 8 writing retreats, and mentored over 150 aspiring authors to get their work publishing-ready. Since Bound operates at the nexus of the writing and reading communities and the Indian publishing industry, we have developed our own insights into the interesting developments in this industry via focus groups, surveys, secondary research and feedback forms. Here's a look at our observations:

THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN WHAT WRITERS WANT TO WRITE AND WHAT TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS WANT TO PUBLISH

In our interactions with first-time writers, writers consistently report their preference for writing fiction. The limited options in the traditional publishing industry can be frustrating for the rising number of fiction writers. That's why many are opting for other means to get published. Approximately 80 percent of our mentorship clients and queries want to write fiction.

In her work with Writer's Side literary agency, Tara Khandelwal has observed that fiction, especially debut fiction, is much harder to place than debut

non-fiction. For example, [Rheeda Mukherjee](#) got rejected more than 45 times. In his interview for The Book People, Senior Commissioning Editor [Sayantan Ghosh](#) says, “Many writers have come out with more innovative ideas in nonfiction than in fiction.”

Non-fiction books also tend to have a wider readership. “Non-fiction books are even picked up by non-readers if the topic is compelling enough.” Khandelwal adds. Over the last decade, non-fiction comprises more than fifty percent of mainstream publishers’ lists.

Publicist [Disha Naik](#) says, “Non-fiction is easier to get press for because when it comes to news — whether it’s TV or newspapers — people want something new and topical.”

WRITERS ARE LOOKING AT ALTERNATIVE METHODS TO GETTING PUBLISHED

Writers in our community and beyond are increasingly opting to put their stories out there via independent publishers or non-traditional means, be it via self-publishing outfits, digital first publishers, literary magazines and journals and independent publishers. With the growth of the digital content industry, writers are open to telling their stories through other mediums like podcasting and screenwriting.

Literary Magazines And Online Literary Platforms

Writers are actively looking for places to publish short fiction and poetry like literary magazines and writing contests.

For example, Bound’s poetry contest which was judged by Arjun Rajendran witnessed over 300 applications in 15 days! Michelle D’costa, who has been published in over 50 literary magazines, says, “There is a lot of scope for finding the best storytellers in online magazines and publishers should make the most of it. Literary magazines have helped me grow as a writer through their feedback and even through rejections.”

Many writers also use literary magazines as a way to build their profiles and bios. Many hope this body of work will help them establish credibility when it comes to getting published.

“At The Quarantine Train, we recently hosted our 100th session, wherein our contributors recited poetry in more than twenty languages, from places as far flung as Iceland, New Mexico, and Wales. We beam with righteous pride that our members have been published in leading poetry journals, both national and international. As we celebrate our first anniversary on the 6th of April, we relish the final stages of judging the Deepankar Memorial Prize, and acknowledge that we are no longer simply a workshop, but a community, and a moving home (in both senses of the verb), that’ll always strive to reach new frontiers. When I started it, it was meant to be a continuation of the workshops I was already doing with the Pune Writer’s Group since 2007 i.e meeting in cafés. We are constantly reinventing ourselves, pushing boundaries, and expanding our vision: these are some of the most challenging and unique aspects that make us what we are.”

Arjun Rajendran, Founder Of The Quarantine Train tells Bound.

Self-publishing

We introduced self-publishing in the [previous section](#). In this section, we look at why self-publishing is increasingly becoming an option for writers.

“Meghna Pant, author of *How to Get Published in India*, talks about why self-publishing is a viable option (an excerpt from *The Book People*):

“You’re not going to make money as an author. It’s very, very difficult to get published in the first place, which is why self-publishing has become so popular. You navigate all those hurdles, you surpass them, and then get the contract and negotiate that. And then in your advances, if you get one nowadays, apparently, you will get a payout or something like 20 to 40,000 for the entire book. Some of the top writers in our country are getting paid 20 to 40,000, for writing brilliant pieces of fiction. It’s actually quite alarming. But it seems like you know, what, with 90 to 95 percent rejection rates, most authors end up self-publishing,”

In addition to monetary concerns and concerns about the difficulty of getting traditionally published, here are some of the other reasons writers are opting for self-publishing:

- **Creative Control**

"I decided to self-publish my book because it gives me more control over the material and aesthetics of the book as I know what my audience likes to read. Also, I can manage the timeline of publishing and then market the book on social media platforms accordingly." Bound community member Mehak Goyal

- **Makes Economic Sense For Writers With Existing Platforms**

Pant says, "If you have a few contacts, if you have networks, self-publishing is not a bad way to go. Remember Amish Tripathi, Ashwin Sanghi did it when they started out their career and look at where they are today."

Pastry-chef and entrepreneur Pooja Dhingra who at the time of writing this paper has a following of over 7 million on Instagram decided to self-publish her third and latest book, *Can't Believe It's Eggless*. Bound community members like Mehak Goyal ([@poetic_quill](#) 40.5K followers) and Archana Pidathala ([@archana.pidathala](#) 17k followers) feel more comfortable taking the self-publishing route because of their existing platforms. "Since I have a good audience on social media, I feel more comfortable marketing the book across my pages," says Mehak Goyal.

- **Topics / Books Not Picked Up By Mainstream Publishers**

Another reason why writers are going for self-publishing is because the books that they are writing are on topics that may not find a large enough audience for a mainstream publisher to invest in, such as writers of poetry or personal histories. Bound community member and author Gopika Kapoor published her guidebook on autism for parents, *Beyond the Blue: Love, Life and Autism* through Notion Press.

• Flexibility In Printing And Distribution

Kapoor says that she decided to publish through Notion Press because she wanted control over the way it read, looked and felt; and the second was the distribution.

“Print runs in India by new authors are very minimal – maybe 2000 copies per run to be distributed all over the country. As a result, everytime someone wanted to order my [previous] books, they were out of stock.

With self-published books, they print on demand, so if someone orders 1 book they get it, if someone else orders 10,000, they get them. The paper and print quality is marginally less but not so much to make a huge difference. The only drawback is that they don’t distribute in bookstores but with the lockdown, no one was visiting stores in any case. My books are available on Amazon and Flipkart, as well as on Amazon in the US and UK. The e-book is available on four platforms: Kindle, Play Books, Kobo and iBooks. Every month I get a statement, and I get paid every 40 days for all books sold. It’s all very clear and simple.”

Digital Publishing Platforms

Digital publishing platforms like Wattpad, Juggernaut and Pratilipi allow writers to put out work quickly in any language they desire, experiment with form, and build a community. Writers do not have to publish the entire book in one go, but instead can publish chapter by chapter and get feedback from other writers on the platform as they go.

The number of writers and readers on these platforms is increasing. Pratilipi has over 25 million monthly readers. Juggernaut has 1.5 million readers on its app, according to its website and 1,500 writers as part of its community ([Narrain](#)).

“There are more than 3 million Wattpad people in India reading and writing on Wattpad, and 90 percent are Gen Z and millennials between the age of 15 to 30. [...] Another exciting stat is that our users spend an average of 37 minutes reading and writing on Wattpad on a daily basis. If you think about it, that’s actually almost the same time period as an episode of their favorite Netflix show, right? So, the amount of time our users are spending on the platform is quite incredible.” [Devashish Sharma](#), Country Head of Wattpad in The Book People.

Will These Numbers Go Up After The Pandemic?

Sharma thinks so: “Even as people are coming out of lockdown in different parts of the world, we’re seeing that digital reading and writing continues to be a popular pastime for Wattpad users. After lockdown, we believe the number of people reading and writing online will continue to grow around the world.”

“As people are coming out of lockdown in different parts of the world, what we see is that digital reading, and writing is still continuing to be a popular pastime for them”

HOW THESE PLATFORMS FOSTER WRITING COMMUNITIES

With Wattpad. If you’re a reader, and you start reading something, you develop friendships with other readers, that brings you back to the platform, even after you’re done reading. You have these human relationships that you develop while discussing the books that you love.

And for the writers, it’s, it’s the same magic. Once they start writing on a platform like Wattpad, they also find their tribe, as we say, a community. So they also find people who not only love to read their content, but also believe in them as an author.

Apart from the ease of publication and access to community, writers on digital publishing apps have the chance to be discovered for traditional publishing programs after gaining popularity on these platforms. Both Wattpad and Juggernaut’s traditional book publishing arms look to discover new voices on their digital platforms. They also look at this pool of writers when it comes to licensing stories for audio and movie rights (“[Juggernaut Books](#)”).

To learn more about content synergies between digital publishers and writers, listen to our episode with Wattpad Country Head, [Devashish Sharma](#), on The Book People.

Podcasts & Screenwriting

According to a FICCI-EY report, the Indian media and entertainment sector will grow to \$23.7 billion in 2021, up 25 percent from the previous year. The demand for content has never been higher, from OTT platforms (as discussed in the sections above) to audio-books to podcasts.

According to a report conducted by [Pricewaterhouse Coopers](#) in 2020, India is now the third-largest podcast market in the world. The monthly podcast listener base in India will increase at a CAGR of 30 percent for the next five years, according to the report.

Writers are increasingly experimenting in different forms. In our community, writers report being flexible as to the kind of format they would like to explore. Habits are changing and there is fluidity and cross-pollination in storytelling in a way there never has been before.

Publishers like Juggernaut are already taking advantage of these opportunities. In 2020, it released its first serialised audio first book: [A Spy In China](#) by Yamini Pustake Bhalerao. Amazon Westland is compiling popular episodes of journalist Amit Varma's chart-topping podcast [The Seen and The Unseen](#) into a series of books.

Meghna Pant on why she is choosing to write screenplays over books: "It's a larger canvas, it's accessible to more people. But also the money to pay out is very good, which is why a lot of writers are sustaining their livelihood, what you don't get in writing books is what you get for writing TV episodes, or web series or movies. The payoffs are huge, like 40-50 times, sometimes 100 times what you get for writing a book."

And you're basically writing a story, right? So how does it matter to you what canvas it's on?

Writers Are Sometimes By-passing Traditional To Sell Their Own Screen, Audio, Rights

Usually, authors sign away their screen and audio rights to traditional publishers as a part of their publishing contract. It is the publishers' responsibility to then pitch the book for screen or audio to production houses. But writers are now retaining these rights in their contracts and taking the initiative to pitch for screen and audio by themselves.

[Sidharth Jain](#) says that while at first he started reaching out to publishers for rights, he quickly realised there is a gap between what publishers think will work on screen and what actually does.

"I stopped chasing the publishers. And I started seeking out books, which I thought were interesting. I reached out to those authors. Most of the authors that I reached out to fortunately control their own rights," says Jain.

Here's [Meghna Pant](#) on why writers are by-passing publishers to sell rights themselves:

"I've published five, six books now. My book, that's coming out in April is the first time that I have held on to my audio and video rights. The reason this happened is coincidental. I wrote the screenplay of this book first, because it's been picked up to be made into a movie. So its journey was very different. It started out as a movie. And then because the author in me can't resist that, I converted it into a book. Audible is now picking up the audio rights also.

So this is something new that is happening in the publishing industry, where we are retaining movie rights and audio visual rights. Because what happens is, otherwise, in the contract, mostly, you have to share the profits with the publisher. And it's 50-50 60-40, depending on how well you are negotiating, or what stage of your career you're at.

Of course, if you're a new writer, you cannot negotiate with publishers. But just be aware that this is happening. This is a trend that is taking place, you know, it's getting more and more sort of commonplace."

INCREASED DEMAND FOR WRITING MENTORSHIP AND UPSKILLING OPPORTUNITIES

More people from non-creative backgrounds want to become writers. They lack formal training and thus there is an increased demand for upskilling opportunities. Creative writing is also on its way to becoming a formal discipline.

A substantial part of the Bound writing community of 25,000+ writers comes from diverse backgrounds like law, engineering, medical sciences, business, nutrition etc. with no formal education in literature. More people from non-creative backgrounds are entering the creative industries than ever before. According to our respondents, the growth in these numbers has emerged as a result of the growing acceptance towards arts in the society and a rising demand for content creators.

Writers are passionate and curious about learning the skills of storytelling, but lack the resources and knowledge that will help them understand the publishing industry enough to actually get their work out. Bound community member Aishwarya Bhatt, shares her experience with switching from a career in softwares to writing: “The challenges were multi-fold, beginning with what to write, how to write, not liking your own words, feeling frustrated again and again not knowing when to do what. I really feel that a formal background in arts would certainly have helped in tackling these insecurities and also saved a hell lot of time!”

We have seen the need for these services ourselves. Bound has worked with over seventy writers in the past year as a part of our writing mentorship programmes. Writers want to learn the basics of fiction, non-fiction and poetry writing, and want guidance on the nuances of specific genres like speculative fiction or memoir-writing.

When author [Sonia Faleiro](#) announced a pro bono South Asian literary mentorship in November 2020, the program received over 500 applications in a matter of weeks. Among other prominent mentorship programmes in India are [Anita's Attic](#), [Bangalore's World-Famous Semi-Deluxe Writing Program](#), [Bangalore Writers Workshop \(BWW\)](#), and [The Dum Pukht Writers' Workshop](#).

The rise of liberal arts universities is also leading to a formalisation of the creative writing discipline. Universities like Ashoka have instituted BA Minor In Creative Writing. Students can also do a BA in English and Creative Writing.

"I did my MFA, and I was very privileged and lucky to do my MFA, but I feel like now in 2020, there's enough resources online, enough community is willing to engage, where I think it's a very unnecessary degree. Also, if that's what you want to do, there are a lot of ways to do it." – [Rheea Mukherjee](#) tells Bound.

PUBLISHERS ARE COMBINING THEIR STRENGTHS TO PUBLISH BOOKS

In theory, publishing houses are competitors. They compete with each other over book sales, shelf space in bookstores, media attention in literary festivals and events, and for the attention of readers. But we have noticed a new trend of collaborations leading to interesting and unique lists. Karthika VK, Publisher of Westland Publications says, "Small publishers and small bookstores are collaborating, very interesting partnerships are forming. Independent players are coming together and trying to come up with plans to deal with the problem. There is a sense of community that we have to get through this together. This is not about competition any more, this is about collaboration." ([qtd. in Goswamy](#))

For instance, Serendipity Arts Foundation is collaborating with [HarperCollins India](#) to promote writing in the arts from South Asia. Penguin Random House India has partnered with independent feminist publishing house [Zubaan Books](#) to create the Zubaan-Penguin joint list. Zubaan commissions and edits the books while Penguin produces and markets them. [Yoda Press](#) has collaborations with Simon & Schuster India and Sage Publications. [Sayantan Ghosh](#), Senior Commissioning Editor at Simon & Schuster India says, "I think we should be encouraging independent publishing to produce better, not cut into their space."

GROWING INTEREST IN CAREER IN PUBLISHING

While there is a huge lack of information about the different roles within the publishing industry, we have noticed a growing interest in publishing-related careers. We were unable to find data about how many people were hired into the publishing and adjacent industries in the last few years.



You don't need to study English to become an editor! Here's [Sayantan Ghosh](#) on his journey to editing:

"I didn't have any plans to become an editor. I don't have a publishing or an English degree as well, I studied economics, which became a problem, which became a huge problem for me to enter the industry. I hope things have changed a little bit. Now, when I meet young people now who are trying to get in and they don't have an English degree, I try to encourage them because it's important, but it's not the only important thing. I mean, as long as you have an understanding of the language, it's fine. A degree often, more often than not, doesn't really teach much in India."

Fun fact: Bound's founder Tara Khandelwal studied Economics and History before becoming a book-editor!



India has seen the rise of publishing courses to meet this growing demand. [The Seagull School of Publishing](#) and [National Book Trust](#) offer short 3-month publishing courses whereas [Indira Gandhi National Open University](#) and [University of Calcutta](#) offer 1-4 year postgraduate diplomas in book publishing.

Bound has also noticed the growing interest in freelance editing as a potential career opportunity. Our two-week intensive Editing and Publishing

course received a tremendous response when it was announced in December 2020. Participant Sangeetha Menon says, "When I started writing, I was curious to know more about editing and publishing but I honestly had no idea where to start. Personally, I thought it was a great starting point. It's definitely shown me different avenues that I can explore in the industry." In addition to honing their editing skills, participants are looking for guidance on building their portfolio and establishing themselves within the industry.

MARKETING IS A BIGGER AND BIGGER PART OF PUBLISHING. AUTHORS ARE MORE WILLING TO INVEST IN THEIR OWN MARKETING.

With the number of books being published every year and the amount of content options available to readers, it has become harder and harder to stand out without marketing. In previous sections we established how marketing is going digital first and bookstagram is gaining importance. With everything going online, a book or an author's marketability is now being taken into consideration as early as the commissioning stage in traditional publishing.

The Idea Of Marketability Is Now Important At Every Stage Of The Publishing Process

Marketability is important from the idea, to the pitch, to the editing, to the actual selling of the product. Publishers want someone who can play an active role in promoting the product as well and comes with a ready made consumer network. "Everything is a sales pitch," says [Sayantan Ghosh](#).

"Every publishing meeting, or editorial meeting, when a new manuscript comes in, one of the questions that that's raised by marketing is, how many Twitter followers do they have? What's their Instagram following, because without that, a publishing house can push a book to a certain extent..."

"I have let go of manuscripts and authors I've been dying to work with, but somehow are not a perfect fit for our list. Because our sales guys perhaps have not been as convinced as perhaps someone else would be," says [Ghosh](#).

Book Covers And Titles Matter

Here's [Sidharth Jain](#) on their importance: "For me, the title and synopsis is really the most important parameter. It's also how audiences decide to buy a book. They look at the cover, they'll check the blurb and see if it's for them. We look at a trailer and a poster and we decide if we want to watch the show or film or not."

Authors Are Realising The Importance Of Marketing Themselves And Their Books

In an article for Social Samosa, [Vaishnavi Singh](#), Digital Lead at Penguin Random House India says, "When is a good time to start working on your social media accounts? We tell our authors to start as soon as they sign the contract. But don't let that stop you – build your social media presence anyway; there's an interesting story in the struggles of writing a book!"

Investment In Marketing Is Needed More Than Ever When It Comes To Authors Opting For Self-publishing

"So the problem of self-publishing is that because there's so many: Just for Amazon KDP, there are one lakh writers, self-published writers just on that single platform. So imagine all the other self-publishing platforms, there's so many of them looming all over the place. Now, the problem is quality control. So if you're a self-published writer, nobody's going to take you seriously. So how do you then get taken seriously, as a self-published writer. So if you're self-published, please, please market the hell out of your book. Do yourself a service and, and focus a lot in your marketing," says [Meghna Pant](#).

Authors Who Opt For Traditional Publishing Are Also Investing In Marketing Their Books Themselves

Even authors who are traditionally published opt for book-marketing and PR services from outside agencies. Bound provides authors with customised marketing services targeted towards our communities. So far, we have only worked with authors who have been published by a traditional publisher, though we get book-marketing services requests from self-published authors on a weekly basis. In our experience, authors want social media engagement, cover reveal, interviews / podcasting platforms where they can discuss their book writing process etc.

“

Bound community member and author Priyanka Pradhan on why she opted to do her own book marketing, despite having a publisher:

“I come from a journalism background and I've seen, first-hand, the kind of leverage a brand can get, through good publicity and efficient marketing. So, I decided to hire an agency myself, to market my book despite having the support of my publisher.

Firstly, I wanted more control over the marketing and PR strategy and secondly, I realized the publisher will not be able to dedicate the kind of time and effort for my book in particular, considering they have multiple books to market at any given point of time. It's expensive to hire your own agency or independent publicist but I think it's worth it. If you do a cost-benefit analysis, it makes sense to do it- the book will definitely benefit!

I looked for books that are featured prominently in the media - books that are being talked about. Then I tried to find out which agency did work for them. Narrowed down about 5 agencies and picked one according to budget and ideas.”

”

Book Marketing Agencies Are On The Rise

Some agencies like [Market My Book](#) specialise in a 360 degree approach to book marketing, while others like [El Sol](#) work with select authors among other clients. PR agencies like [Moes Art](#) have book departments, while those like Atika Gupta specialise in books.

HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE BOOK MARKETING INDUSTRY? HERE'S ATIKA GUPTA'S ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRY POST-PANDEMIC:

"The pandemic has impacted the publishing industry and book marketing on a global scale. This has in turn given rise to the trend of establishing a book (or the author) online first before creating demand in the offline space.

As we are well aware, marketing of a book begins long before it's been published, it is becoming more and more important to have a marketing strategy that focuses on the genre of a book and helps understand its target audience and reach them effectively. It is, therefore, more relevant than ever to have smart marketing and promotional strategies in place before a book is even published.

As more people spend time online and on social media, it is imperative to take into account what the post-COVID world is going to mean in the digital marketing realm. Marketers can no longer ignore platforms like Instagram which have entire communities where readers share their reviews and recommendations either through visual narratives or by way of curated experiences termed as 'influencer marketing'. With audience targeting capabilities of these social media channels, one can reach readers based on gender, age, location, interests, profession, etc. These communities are far more profitable than bringing a bunch of people together at book launch events.

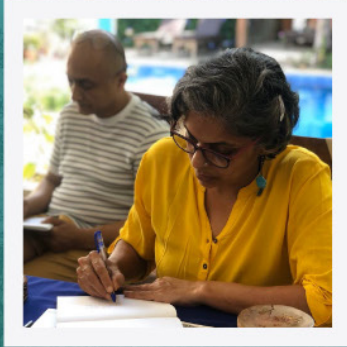
The Future Of Book-marketing

"There is no denying that digital marketing and PR will continue to play a critical role in helping authors/publishers maintain a strong connection to their readers, and remain an effective way to sustain the industry." - Atika Gupta

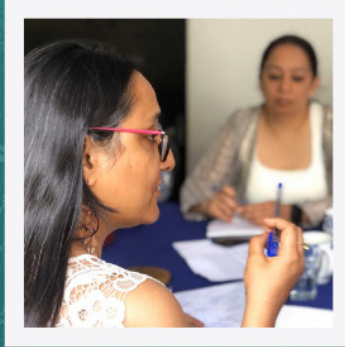
Book-marketing requires considerable investment in time if not money, and oftentimes authors have to pay out of pocket. Solving the discoverability problem of books might be an opportunity for players in the publishing industry in the future.

BOUND

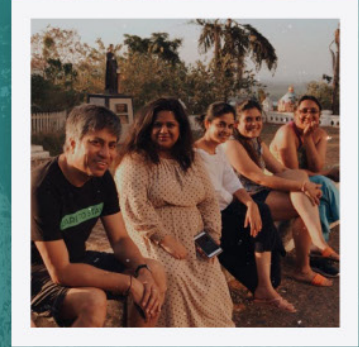
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04

CONCLUSION

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Conclusion

The aim of this report was to provide writers and readers with a comprehensive overview of the publishing industry, key trends over the last few years, how the pandemic may have affected the industry and our insights about the future of writing. We believe that this knowledge will be beneficial for amateur and seasoned writers alike in order to make decisions about their careers, and for prospective entrants into the publishing industry who want to understand the different opportunities and avenues available.

We also want this report to be a stepping stone for further detailed analysis on each part of the industry, and for a detailed analysis into how adjacent creative fields like film, audio, self-publishing, podcasts and more can contribute to a thriving ecosystem of writers and readers.

Through the report we wanted to shine the spotlight on certain gaps in the industry, in which there might be space for opportunity to grow. For example:

- **Greater alignment between publishers and OTT platforms could lead to more opportunities for book to screen deals.**
- **There is an opportunity to solve the problem of how books are discovered.**
- **The changing nature and demand of e-books and audio presents a growth opportunity.**
- **The power of online communities like Wattpad, Pratilipi, Bound and more can be leveraged.**
- **Publishers and bookstores collaborating.**

There is a need for more transparent data to be made available to the public. More data was needed on the sales of bookstores, on writing communities, how many editors were hired into the industry, how literature festivals obtained sponsors, the number of books.

The more data is available, the more transparent the communication between all members of the industry, core and adjacent, the more space there will be for writers and readers to work together to create a thriving ecosystem.

This was an exploratory report. We hope that it will be a stepping stone for more research in the future. We want this report to be the beginning of many more detailed studies on the different aspects of the publishing industry. There is so much yet to uncover in each of the sections we have included. Research is to be done on regional language publishers in India, more is needed on translations and the accessibility of children's literature in India. A deeper analysis of book to screen deals in India and how publishers and platforms work together can be beneficial to the writers interested in supplying stories.

We leave it up to you, our readers, to draw conclusions and use this information as per your discretion. We hope that this report assists us in building the platform that is required to make data and information more accessible to people working within and outside this industry.



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06

Appendix

PUBLISHING HOUSES IN INDIA

MULTINATIONAL PUBLISHERS	
NAME	CONTACT
Penguin Random House India	submissions_penguinpress@penguinrandomhouse.in
Harper Collins India	writetous@harpercollins.co.in
Hachette India	crsubmissions@hachetteindia.com
Bloomsbury India	submissions@bloomsbury.com
SAGE India	commissioning@sagepub.in

Simon and Schuster	submissions@simonandschuster.co.in
Pan Macmillan India	paneditorial@macmillan.co.in

HOMEGROWN PUBLISHERS	
NAME	CONTACT
Jaico Publications	jaicopub@jaicobooks.com
Aleph Book Company	editorial@alephbookcompany.com
Rupa Publications	editorial@rupapublications.com
Roli Books	editorial@rolibooks.com
Juggernaut Books	contact@juggernaut.in
Amazon Westland Publications	social-westland@amazon.com

INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS

NAME	NICHE	CONTACT
Zubaan	Feminist literature, Academic	contact@zubaanbooks.com
Seagull Books	Translations into English	info@seagullbooks.org
Yoda Press	Contemporary discourse on sexuality, sociology, etc.	info@yodapress.co.in
Navayana	Anti-caste literature	anand@navayana.org
Women Unlimited	South-Asian feminist literature	womenunltd@gmail.com
Niyogi Books	Translations, Illustrated books	acquisitioneditor@niyogibooksindia.com
Blaft Publications	Translations, regional literature	blaft@blaft.com
Adivaani	Platform for indigenous people of India (Adivasi)	info@adivaani.org
Stree Samya	Women and under represented communities	bhatkalsenss@gmail.com
Speaking Tiger	Diverse fiction and non- fiction	info@speakingtiger.com

BOUND RECOMMENDS: LITERARY AGENCIES IN INDIA

Writer's Side Literary Agency

Website: <http://www.writersside.com>

A Suitable Agency

Website: <https://www.asuitableagency.com>

Jacaranda Literary Agency

Website: <http://www.jacaranda-press.com.sg>

Sherna Khambatta Literary Agency

Website: www.shernakhambatta.com

Siyahi, A Literary Consultancy

Website: <http://siyahi.in>

Lotus Lane Literary Agency

Website: <https://lotuslit.com>

Authors: Shobhaa De

Labyrinth Literary Agency

Website: <http://www.labyrinthagency.com>

Authors: Bombay Balchao, Jane Borges

PRIZE LISTS FOR INDIAN AUTHORS

Here is a list of some of the most affluent prizes that are available for Indian authors.

1. SAHITYA AKADEMI BEST BOOK IN ENGLISH/ SAHITYA AKADEMI YUVA PURASKAR/BAL SAHITYA PURASKAR

Best work in English. The Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar is awarded to writers under the age of thirty-five and its past recipients include Raghu Karnad and

Janice Pariat. The Sahitya Akademi Bal Puraskar is awarded to the best children's book in English.

2. JCB PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

The winning prize – INR 25 lakhs. Fiction.

3. KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY NEW INDIA FOUNDATION BOOK PRIZE

INR 15 lakhs. First and richest for non-fiction.

4. THE DSC PRIZE FOR SOUTH ASIAN LITERATURE

INR 25K. Non-fiction.

5. THE HINDU LITERARY PRIZE

Open to all works of fiction, non-fiction, translations from regional languages and short story collections. The past recipients of this award include Manu Joseph, Rahul Bhattacharya, Ashok Srinivasan and Kiran Doshi.

6. TATA LITERATURE LIVE AWARDS

Award categories: First book (Fiction), First book (Non-Fiction), Book of the year (Fiction), Book of the Year (Non-Fiction) and Business Book of the year, Lifetime Achievement in Literature and a Poet Laureate award. Previous recipients include Manu S Pillai, Sujit Saraf, Easterine Kire and Prayaag Akbar.

7. CROSSWORD BOOK AWARDS

Award categories include: Fiction, Translated fiction, Non-fiction, Children's fiction and a separate category of popular awards which are decided on the basis of sales and public voting. Past winners of this award include Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Chandra, Pankaj Mishra and Ranjit Lal.

8. SHAKTI BHATT BOOK AWARD

The Shakti Bhatt Award honours an author's body of work. Past recipients of this award include Naresh Fernandes, Rohini Mohan and Anuk Arudpragasam.

9. ATTA GALATTA-BANGALORE LITERATURE FESTIVAL AWARD

Four categories: Best Fiction (English), Best Non-fiction (English), Literary Achievement Award in Kannada and Popular Choice (English). Past winners of this prize are Ruskin Bond, Anees Salim and Twinkle Khanna.

10. THE HINDU YOUNG WORLD - GOODBOOK AWARDS

USP - Children's literature. The awards includes four categories: Best Picture Book (Story), Best Picture Book (Illustration), Best Book (Fiction) and Best Book (Non-fiction).

11. VALLEY OF WORDS BOOK AWARDS

Categories: English fiction, English non-fiction, Hindi fiction, Hindi non-fiction, English young adult and Hindi young adult.

12. PRABHA KHAITAN WOMAN'S VOICE AWARD

Only accept books originally written in English or translated into English.

13. MUSE INDIA AWARDS

Two prizes: The Young Writer Award for writers under the age of thirty-five and the Muse India Translation Award for an outstanding translation into English from any regional language. Previous winners include Karan Mahajan, Shahnaz Bashir and Priya Sarrukai Chhabria.

14. PADMA AWARDS FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERATURE

The Padma awards include the Padma Shree, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibushan. Given for lifetime achievement in literature, past winners include Khushwant Singh, Amitav Ghosh, and Nirmal Verma. They are one of the highest civilian honours of India and are conferred on the eve of Republic Day.



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