

**“There was more glamour in 1979 in Delhi University than there is in the film industry today!”
3 - time National AwardWinning filmmaker alumnus Sudhir Mishra 2016**

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Sudhir Mishra at the Crime Writer's Festival in Delhi January 2016
Photo: Virendra Singh Gosain

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The idea of meeting Sudhir Mishra, the **three-time National Award-winning filmmaker** with a 30-year career and a French equivalent of a **knighthood** is intimidating. The writer-director is known for his hard-hitting, realistic and richly political films.

What sort of research do you do to create your characters?

I never research. I never make films about things I don't know. I had lived in Mumbai from 1982-83 till 1990 when I made *Dharavi*, which is possibly about my experiences in Bombay. I was around when the Emergency happened. I was 16-17 years old, starting college. I knew all the characters – that's why I say they are my imaginary elder brothers – in the beginning of *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi*; they were all 23-24 at that time. I didn't have to ask anybody when I started writing *Hazaaron...* in 1998-99.

Your films always have strong female characters...

Because those are based on women I know! I grew up with a paternal grandmother who single-handedly took care of five sons. In our household, women were stronger. Even my cousin sisters are far more independent than the guys.

Do you think filmmakers depend on a glamorous cast for box office success much more now?

There was more glamour in 1979 in Delhi University than there is in the film industry today!

A trend in Bollywood you detest.

In the '90s and early 2000s, Bollywood had become synonymous with a certain lifestyle. It was as if those who led ordinary lives were vermin. *I detest it when the poetry of the ordinary is ignored.* I detest it when people state their views in conversation and not in their work. If you have a political opinion and something upsets you, it's your job to reflect it in your work because that's where it will have the maximum impact. Tweeting doesn't fulfil the purpose.

Tell us about your upcoming movie.

I'd say: "Abhi tak aapne Dev ko Das bante dekha hai. Ab aap Das ko Dev bante dekhenge". In *Aur Devdas*, I've brought together Sarat Chandra (Chattopadhyay) and William Shakespeare. Because **nobody understands power, its ambiguity and its lack of moral imperatives better than Shakespeare.** The movie's almost like a thriller.

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