

probably can take credit that I selected those that worked. The idea of making the trailer was by some friends. By the time *The Oath of the Vayuputras* was released the scale had become such that revenues of the book was nearly as much as a mid-scale Bollywood movie and we had the budget so we made a music video. And the trailer film for *Scion of Ikshvaku* will be shown in theatres across India.

Is it hard to write about religion and God in India?

No in fact there is no better country than India to write about religion as most Indians are deeply religious and deeply liberal irrespective of their faith. By liberal I mean the attitude of respecting another point of view.

What is the kind of research you do for your books?

Simply stated, I have been doing research for these books all my life. I have grown up in a deeply religious family. My grandfather was a pundit and a teacher in Benares Hindu University. My parents and other family members are very religious and we all are academically inclined. So it's a good fortune of birth where scriptures were part of our growing years. Also all of us read a lot and in our family everyone has a library of a thousand books. We read books that are recommended by each other. I have read at least four-five books every month for the longest time now and that definitely helps my research.

What is the kind of pressure you are facing as your last series has been so successful?

While writing I do not care about anyone's opinion. Once I finish the book and enter the marketing phase, I cannot deny that I am nervous. But the initial feedback has been positive.

What do you think of the quality of new writing in English in India?

Some are good and some are bad and the question is by whose opinion do you judge that. The way I see it as an author is



that when a book has just been released anyone's point of view is just an opinion. You get to know whether a book is good or bad 20 years later. If it has survived and had an impact then it is a good book, if it has been forgotten it is a bad book. The only true judge is time. Much like movies. You know when *Pyaasa* released it was panned but today it is considered a classic.

How many books can we expect in the Ramachandra series?

There will probably be five in the series, could be more but probably five.

Tell us more about the philosophy behind *Scion of Ikshvaku*.

At the core of *Scion of Ikshvaku* is the question "What is an ideal society?" I am a follower of the ancient ways across the world and they are never prescriptive. The entire approach of ancient philosophy was to treat you like an adult and you have to make up your mind. Also that is what

I am saying in this book - do we follow laws understanding what they mean or otherwise?

What about making movies from your books?

The Indian language rights of the Shiva trilogy have been bought by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions to be directed by Karan Malhotra. In fact Karan Malhotra and his wife Ekta are writing the script and that's where it is.

What is your advice to youngsters who want to be authors?

An author's career is like an actor or singer or artist or cricketer - a few make it but most people do not. It's not like banking or IT. If your purpose is to make money do not write. Write to satisfy your heart and soul. And it is important to have a job on the side so that you do not have to compromise on writing. Be a practical pragmatic marketing guy as your book does not sell itself.