

## Dr Prof Shiv Sethi Interviews *Kapil Raj*

*Kapil Raj, the author of the novel Endurer is one of the bestselling Indian writers writing in English.*

Question 1: What inspired you to debut your literary career with such a sensitive topic?

Answer: At the time of Nirbhaya Incident, every news channel was flooded with the crime story, and the country was taken up by the mob demonstrations. Coincidentally, my housemaid lost her three-year-old daughter to a rape committed by the unknown preparator when she was out for work. The family



did not report the incident to the police fearing the rebuttal provoked investigation and a possibility that even their complaint will not be recorded. Their teary acceptance of this incident made me realise that the

problem was far from being over even after the media uproar. I started writing my thoughts along with the research, and crafted an idea of the story, resulting in a novel.

### Q 2: What is your take on the novel?

Answer: I wanted to confront existing social taboos like 'she deserved it' because of the way a girl dresses or the repercussions of her actions. Also, it was necessary to showcase the lives of women who face physical and emotional tortures in rural or semi-rural areas for things which are not considered as "need" any longer by a large stratum of society. All these concepts, along with violence and revenge, were blended in scenes and plot with an objective that reader can visualise the real-life conflict and feel the pain of a victim.

### Q 3: Do you think India is a Rape capital, and women are not safe in Indian society?

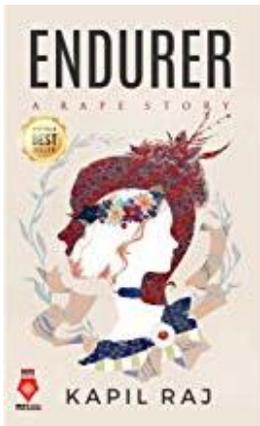
Answer: If I may coin, rape is a global epidemic. It has inflicted every society, culture, and nation. What I am surprised upon is the way it has plagued the Indian society. Our country is the birthplace of four religions. And without going into many details it is assumed that religion has a direct relationship with morality. We were supposed to show light to the world by our spiritual excellence for this darkness, but exactly the opposite is happening.

### Q 4: Women empowerment is a slogan or a reality? How do you define it?

Answer: It is a process, a long one. And what worries me that as a fundamental, we are far behind understanding it. People use this term for their personal motive without grasping that they are derailing the efforts of numerous social workers. In the simplest terms, women empowerment is about the balance in the society, be it macro (jobs, opportunities, salaries, policy-making) or on a micro level (family, traditions, personal responsibilities).

Q 5: What makes you choose this theme when writers are doing well on monetary or popularity aspect by selecting the themes like love & mythology?

Answer: It is hard to comment on the objectives of other writers, but I believe a writer is an invisible soldier. His battle is bigger, with the world, society, taboos, religions, ideas, and beliefs. His one line has the impact to change a life, to make someone come out of depression, or bring a wave of revolution.



Q 6: Tell me something about Palak, who is the chief character in your novel  
**ENDURER**

Answer: Palak symbolises the reality of modern rich Indian class teenager. Despite having all the luxury on tips, she is devoid of many things which are necessary on an emotional level in the growing age. But it is more about the journey of her becoming an ENDURER after the horrific

incident. When she is compelled by the circumstances to leave her world and witness the horrifying tales of women and girls in rural and semi-rural part of the country.

Q 7: What do u think about capital punishment which some intellectuals are in favor of. Do you think they must be hanged?

Answer: My answer would slight conflict as I am a firm believer that violence is always a temporary solution. Nirbhaya's perpetrators were hanged, was there any effect on the growing Rape cases? In the end, it is the *idea*, the thought process which changes everything. As a society, we should commit to not judge the victims and stop inflicting "secondary wounding" on them. The more compassionate the society will become towards the victims, more empowered they will be to fight with the rapists, which induces fear in mind of the person committing such crimes.

Q 8: They say art is for the sake of art, but your work is art for sake of life, do you think your work will engage with the audience?

Answer: I am non-conformist and do not trail behind the common opinions or trends. On a personal level, my art is definitely for the sake of life and to impact in a positive way making this world a better place to live.

Q 9: What about your next novel?

Answer: I have chosen Religion as my next topic. It will be focused upon how we have forgotten the essence of the fundamental and walking towards a deadlock, getting impacted by the environment. Already received a lot of words of caution.

Q 10: How do u believe mainstream writers, are doing justice to the profession of writing?

Many writers have found writing books as a medium to earn fame and recognition, but this is short lived. There are plenty of readers who want to discuss, liberate, and revolutionise the way society is trudging on. And my work would always resonate with such masses.

Q 11: What have been your tough times, writing ENDURER?

Besides choosing such a sensitive topic where even misinterpretation of one line could nullify the impact of the whole idea, writing in a female voice in the First person was one big challenge. Research on this topic in itself was a harrowing experience. When you hear the trauma, imagine those dreadful nights when even a pin drop might scare the victim enough to get a heart attack. While people responsible for such crimes are either on the run or under the trials are doing well – getting a full night sleep. At times, drafting a few paragraphs made my heart weep, but eventually became the fuel and let me complete this book taking three years of my life.

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**Kapil Raj** is an author and a professional based in New Delhi, India. His writing reflects the understanding of the social functioning and human psychology.

With the heart of a philosopher, mind of a realist, and a deep-rooted non-conformist, he lives many lives, yet stealing the time for the most precious thing which matters to him: crafting plots, playing with characters and weaving the stories with inscribed messages.

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**Dr Prof. Shiv Sethi** is an internationally acclaimed columnist, literary critic and book reviewer. He has reviewed the works of the most famous authors all across the globe.

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