

Writer has a responsibility towards his reader: Subroto Bagchi

Deccan Chronicle
Nov 1, 2015,

'I was quite a celebrity because of my columns, even Premji spoke about that during job interview'

Bengaluru: Mr Subroto Bagchi, founder of Mindtree, has been a prolific writer all his life and has authored ten books since 2016. His last book, *On Leadership and Innovation*, was released in 2014, preceded by the hugely successful *The Elephant Catchers* in 2013. Mr Bagchi, who spoke at the Bangalore Business Literature Festival – a first of its kind in India – said his writing was first published when he was about 12 years old. "When you're that age, you usually write poetry, which I did," he laughed. "There are also two popular themes – love and revolutions – both of which I used! When you're so young and you have a piece carried in a newspaper, it's like winning a little Nobel Prize."

By the time he got to college, he began writing for an English magazine, which was edited by the likes of Pritish Nandy, one of India's best known columnists. Mr Bagchi became a columnist in his own right – his work for *Business World* brought him a good amount of popularity. "I was about 28 and I'd have people coming up to me, saying they recognised me from my photograph. It was quite a heady feeling," he said.

Wipro founder Azim Premji unwittingly played a major role in Mr Bagchi's life as a writer. Before he went on to start Mindtree, Bagchi attended an interview at Wipro, which Mr Premji personally took.

"When I walked in, he said he had read my work. We spent 45 minutes talking about that and the importance of content," said Mr Bagchi. "It was amazing, he never asked me about what work I was planning to do at Wipro, he was so much more interested in my writing."

Writing is a responsibility, said Mr Bagchi, just like any art. "Even if you're a singer, it's pleasurable at first, you might even make a living off it. After a point, though, it does become a responsibility, you owe it to the people who listen to you, just like I'm accountable to the people who read my books." Mr Bagchi is a giant in the world of IT and outsourcing, but his work as a writer is something he holds dear. Even so, he has never attempted to enter the realm of fiction, saying, "Fiction is a sacred space, I can't be like Amitav Ghosh, we all have our own strengths."

Writing something down makes an idea start walking, he said. "Imagine Christianity without the Bible. Since saffron is the colour of the day, where would Hinduism be without the Ramayana or the Vedas?"