

note-worthy



Staged support

AGE CORRESPONDENT

✓ You can now get an evening's dose of history and culture — and benefit a good cause. OMG, a play that promises to take a novel look at the life of Mahatma Gandhi is being staged at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel on the evening of April 27, to raise money for the Tata Medical Centre in Kolkata.

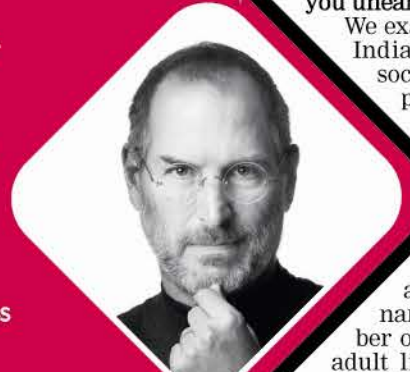
With veteran actor Dalip Tahil in the lead role, the play has already generated much interest among the cognoscenti, with its premise of offering the audience a ring-side view into the private conversations, letters and thoughts of a man "who remained at the centre of every controversy, exasperated every leader and yet led a nation to freedom".

Gandhi's archived journals provided the inspiration for the play, says Geeta Gopalakrishnan of the Tata Medical Centre, who has researched and conceptualised OMG. "The revelations contained in these archives were amazing. They reveal a very contemporary side of Gandhi, it's almost as though he's in conversation with us at this very moment!" says Geeta, inviting Mumbaikars to support the cause.

To show your support, call 66653366

supreme quote

I'm the only person I know that's lost a quarter of a billion dollars in one year...it's very character building.



— STEVE JOBS

Good governance not a pipe dream

Shaken by the events of 26/11, management guru Jay P. Desai ventured on a journey that culminated in a study on accountability

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Q From a background in science to working in the field of management and now, authoring a book on governance...could you tell us why you chose "accountability" to write about, and at this time specifically?

Terror descended on Mumbai on the horrific night of November 26, 2008. Over the next few days, citizens rallied in protest against poor accountability. The gnawing realisation that I had done nothing in my 45 years of life as an Indian citizen to help improve this situation, dawned within me. This launched an exploration into the world of accountability, a journey that took me three years.

India is now poised at a crucial juncture in its post-Independence history: The epidemic of unaccountability lurks beneath India's myriad tragedies, constraining India from unlocking its full economic and social potential.

Citizens are deeply concerned about the state of their nation, but unsure what role they can play in improving accountability. My objective in writing this book was to increase the public understanding of the concept of accountability among the citizens of India.

Q. What were the questions that you asked yourself before beginning this work? And were they answered in the course of your research and writing?

To tease out the nuances of accountability, we asked: How is accountability defined; how did accountability evolve in India over recorded history; can accountability be measured in some way; what is the relationship between accountability and the socio-economic potential of a country; which socio-economic factors are closely linked to accountability; and what role do existing policies, mechanisms and institutions play in ensuring accountability?

Some of the questions I asked were answered — but a few lead to even more questions!

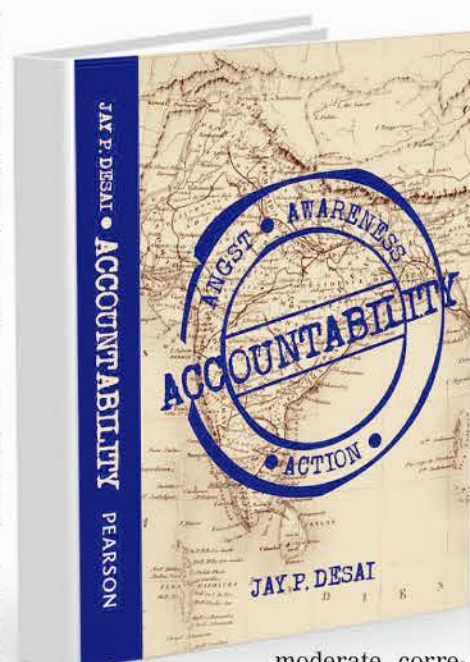
Q. Was there a startling fact or finding you unearthed?

We examined the societal fabric of India to explain the role that socio-economic factors could be playing in influencing the state of accountability.

We conducted a correlation analysis between those socio-economic factors that we thought may have some relationship with accountability, and the corresponding governance scores for a large number of countries. Factors such as adult literacy, social diversity and population size show only a weak-to-



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moderate correlation with governance scores. On the other hand, factors like income per capita, the level of individualism and social hierarchy have a moderate-strong correlation with governance.

Sadly, India's relative position on those

socio-economic factors that have a strong correlation with good governance, is weak.

Q. How would you describe the role of the citizen vis-a-vis the role of governmental agencies in enforcing and improving accountability?

Civil society organizations (CSO), citizens and the media play a key role in strengthening accountability. Building institutional capacity in CSOs is the easiest way for a citizen to play a role in the process of improving accountability.

Q. Lastly, could you tell us if the perspective that we see in the book is that of a management guru, academician or a concerned and engaged citizen?

The perspective I tried to bring to this book is not through the eye of an academic, or the heart of an activist, but through the mind of an ordinary citizen.