

# A WIN-WIN situation

It seems almost unfair that these bestselling authors also do exceedingly well at their demanding day jobs. NIKHIL VARMA and MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER try to crack the secret of their success

What do Upendra Namburi, Ashwin Sanghi, Mainak Dhar, Ravi Subramanian, Aroon Ram and Christopher C. Doyle have in common? Apart from writing bestselling books, these men are equally successful in their day jobs. Upendra is a sales and marketing professional, Ashwin is the Director of the MK Sanghi Group, Mainak is the Managing Director/CEO of the Indian business of a major US consumer products multinational, Aroon manages companies and conducts treks, Ravi is a banker and Christopher is the Founder of The Growth Catalysts & CEO Coach. And they are all happy being part-time writers.

Upendra, who has written 31 and 60, says, "I like to write as a hobby. I am not sure I have the temperament or discipline that you need to be a full-time writer."

Ashwin who followed his first book, the historical thriller *The Rozabal Line*, with bestsellers says, "In the early days of my writing career, I knew that book royalties would be insufficient to meet my cost of living.

Given that I was from a business family, I decided to continue to work in the family business while writing part-time.

Today, my royalties are more than enough to sustain me but I worry that if I give up on my business life, my writing may begin to resemble a job. That is precisely the



**FORTUNE'S CHILDREN** (Clockwise from right) Ashwin Sanghi, Aroon Ram, Christopher Doyle, Upendra Namburi, Ravi Subramanian and Mainak Dhar

reason that I haven't given up on work."

Ravi concurs saying, "I write because I enjoy it. If I leave my banking job and take up writing full time, I will start considering it as routine job. Writing is a space I like because I can tell stories, it helps me stay grounded and

offers a good learning experience. If I take it up full time, I may become more concerned about the bottom line."

Aroon, whose *The Shadow Throne* and *Skyfire* have been successful, enjoys all his different ventures. "I have never felt the need to give up any of

them. In India, many writers tend to keep a fall back option, since living with money from writing is a tough ask, even if you are fairly successful," Mainak, whose *Alice in Wonderland* reimaged against a zombie apocalypse has captured readers far and wide says, "So far, becoming a

full time writer is not something I have seriously considered. At this stage of my career and life, I am enjoying developing myself and making an impact at work and keeping my passion for writing alive at the same time. What has worked for me is that there hasn't really been a

question of choosing one over the other - they complement each other and help me lead a more balanced, fulfilling life."

Christopher's *Maaharata Quest* series has legions of fans. He has "considered becoming a full-time writer. There are a couple of reasons why I decided against writing full time. First, I enjoy running my company and my work. Second, I would not want writing to be my bread and butter."

Today, writing is a passion. I don't think I am ready to make it my profession, where deadlines and planning for future books become much more critical."

While Ravi says, "Banking and writing feed off each other," Mainak says, "The biggest pro of my day job is that at its core, it is about understanding people and communication. Empathy and communication are essential skills for any good writer - so a lot of what I do at my day job actually helps me get better at writing. Conversely, sharpening those core skills through my writing helps me at my day job."

Mainak balances his day job and writing by devoting "some time to writing every day when I'm not with family or at work." Christopher prioritizes, "Most of the time work comes first and I write when I get the time," while Ashwin has realised, "You can fit in everything that you want to do if you simply eliminate the unnecessary."