



THE LITERATURE TODAY

MAGAZINE

Cover Story

Dr. Joseph K Thomas

*"Indian Army Veteran, Educationist
& Amazon Best-Selling Author"*

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*"Enter a world where words enchant and stories breathe.
The Literature Today Magazine opens the door to
timeless tales and pure literary beauty. Indulge in
storytelling at its finest."*

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FROM THE
Editor-in-chief



When we began our journey with **The Literature Today**, we could not have foreseen the heights this creative endeavor would achieve. Each edition has been a stepping stone, refining our vision and broadening our scope. Today, we take pride in being a dynamic platform that connects the timeless essence of literature with the transformative power of modern technology.

Volume 4 of this six-issue series represents another leap forward, bringing an exceptional blend of content designed to engage and inspire. From insightful book reviews to in-depth author interviews, this edition explores themes that resonate with the evolving interests of our readers. We are thrilled to feature exclusive interviews with renowned personalities, including **Rajiv Malhotra, Neelesh Kulkarni, Dr. Joseph K. Thomas, and Gargi Rawat**, offering unparalleled perspectives on contemporary issues.

At The Literature Today, our commitment is unwavering: to deliver content that enlightens, inspires, and fosters intellectual discourse. Each issue is a labor of love, striving for excellence to meet the expectations of our diverse readership.

We believe in building a community where readers and authors connect, engage, and grow together. Your feedback fuels our journey, and we invite you to share your thoughts at theliteraturetoday@gmail.com. Thank you for being an integral part of our story. Together, let's continue to celebrate the vibrant world of literature.

Happy Reading!



Dr. Mayurkumar Mukundbhai Solanki

Editor, *The Literature Today*, India

Best Regards,

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M. M. Solanki

DR. JOSEPH K. THOMAS

**VETERAN | CORPORATE LEADER | EDUCATIONIST | SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEUR | AUTHOR**

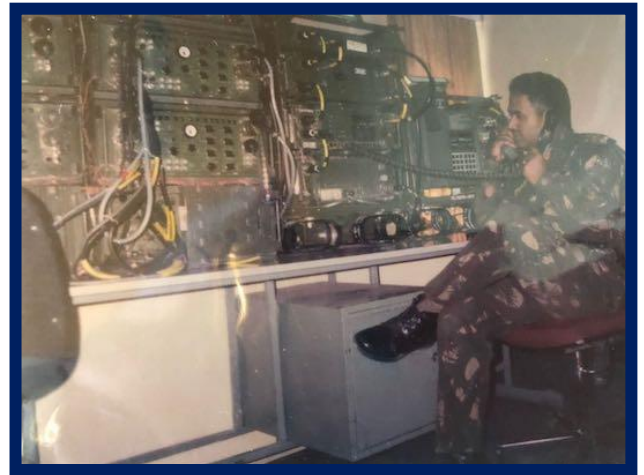


Dr. Joseph K. Thomas is a visionary leader whose journey from the war room to the boardroom and the classroom epitomizes resilience, innovation, and dedication. A man of humble beginnings, he served in the Indian Army for 20 years, participating in pivotal missions such as the Indian Peacekeeping Force, Operation Vijay (Kargil War), Operation Parakram, and others. Notably, he had the privilege of working with His Excellency, former President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, and the DRDO team during the Pokhran-II nuclear test, where he played a critical role in establishing a telecom network in the Pokhran desert.

Dr. Thomas was also a key member of the project team that installed satellite links (VSAT) at high-altitude areas along the India-Pakistan-China border, working in extreme conditions of -40°C after the Kargil War, including the installation of the world's highest satellite link. After his military career, Dr. Thomas transitioned to corporate leadership, a journey that was far from easy but driven by sheer determination, dedication, and a "never say no" attitude. Armed with an MBA in HR, he excelled in leadership roles across multinational corporations, leaving a mark in diverse industries like engineering, telecom, and customer service in countries such as Singapore, Israel, South Korea, and the USA. His passion for creating world-class workplaces and infrastructure has not only fostered collaborative spaces and attracted top-tier talent but has also strengthened employer branding and supported business growth on a global scale.

As an educationist, Dr. Thomas is the Founder and Chairman of Mysore International School and St. Anthony's International School, where he has redefined the educational landscape. His institutions emphasize holistic development, leadership, and ethical responsibility, preparing students to navigate an ever-changing world while staying rooted in strong values. Dr. Thomas is also an accomplished author. His books, including *India: The Next Superpower*, *Conman: In Chief of Capitol Coup*, *India's New National Education Policy: 2020*, *Taliban 20*, and *Russia-Ukraine War*, have all been Amazon #1 bestsellers. His diverse expertise across military, corporate, educational evangelism, and social entrepreneurship has earned him six national and five international awards for his service and contributions.

He serves on multiple not-for-profit boards, actively working towards societal betterment. Dr. Thomas is often described as a soldier by choice, an engineer by profession, an educationist by passion, and an author by accident—a testament to his multifaceted life and relentless drive for excellence.



Army veteran Dr. Thomas brings his passion and dedication to create innovative workplace infrastructure along with providing high-quality education to students and grooming them to become responsible citizens.

Watch him on



AUTHOR INTERVIEWS

- **RAJIV MALHOTRA**
- **NEELESH KULKARNI**
- **DR. JOSEPH K. THOMAS**
- **GARGI RAWAT**

AN INTERVIEW WITH INDIAN-AMERICAN AUTHOR RAJIV MALHOTRA

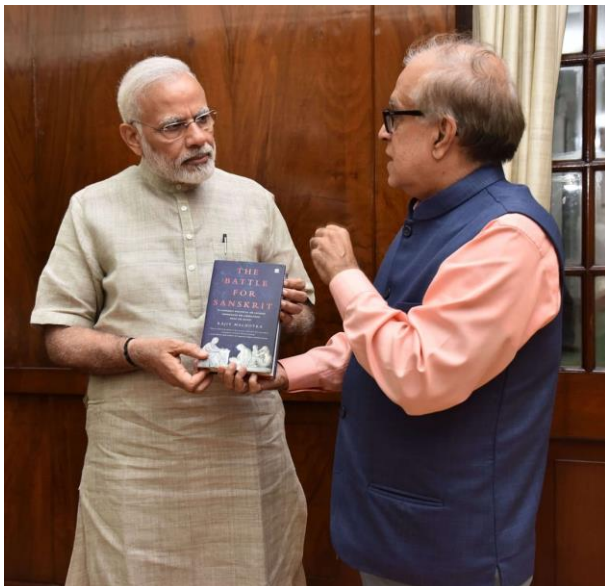
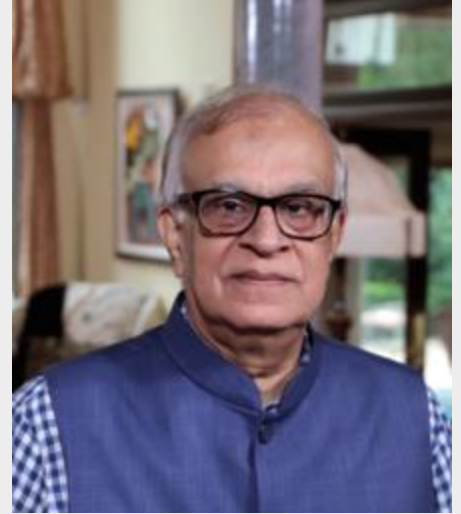
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Rajiv Malhotra is a renowned author, researcher, and thought leader whose work focuses on civilizational studies and fostering dialogue between Indian and Western perspectives. Trained as a physicist and later as a computer scientist specializing in artificial intelligence in the 1970s, he had a distinguished corporate career in the U.S. before transitioning to entrepreneurship. He successfully established and ran several IT companies in over 20 countries.

In the early 1990s, Malhotra decided to exit all for-profit ventures and devote himself fully to research and advocacy. He founded the Infinity Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Princeton, USA, through which he conducts in-depth research into history, social sciences, and mind sciences, often using an Indian civilizational lens.

His foundation is dedicated to creating knowledge, fostering dialogue, and promoting global understanding through books, videos, and public engagements.

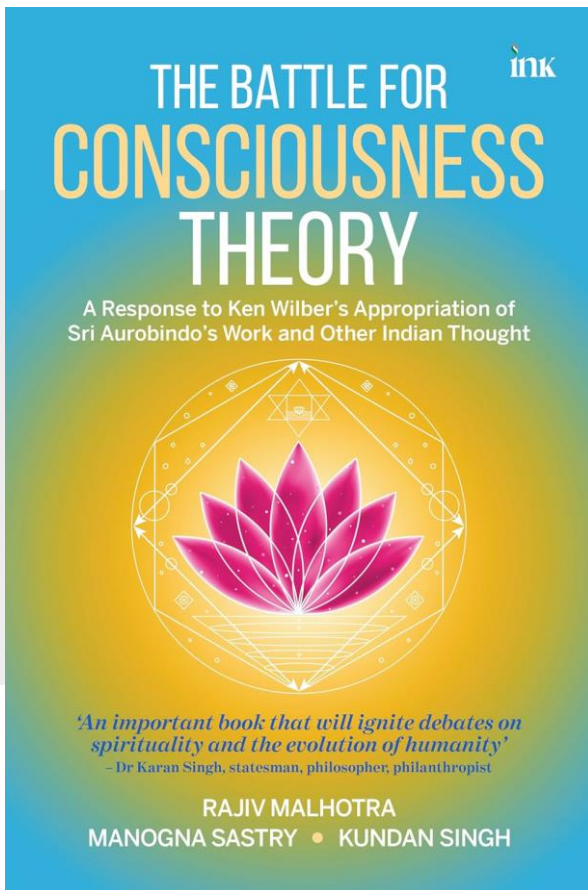
Malhotra's acclaimed works, such as *Being Different*, *Breaking India*, and *Snakes in the Ganga*, challenge Western interpretations of Indian traditions and emphasize the importance of preserving India's unique civilizational identity. He is particularly known for critiquing the assimilation and misrepresentation of Indian culture by Western frameworks. Today, his contributions span academic research, public discourse, and collaborations with like-minded organizations worldwide.



QUESTIONNAIRE:

TLT: Your book deeply explores the domain of consciousness, blending mysticism and science. How do you see consciousness studies influencing the broader understanding of human existence and its integration into fields like neuroscience and spirituality?

Rajiv Malhotra: Consciousness studies have been a focus of mine for two decades. Apart from the present book *The Battle for Consciousness Theory*, in earlier books, I highlighted how AI and allied technologies will impact how we understand consciousness. Newer research and advances in neuroscience are pushing the boundaries of materialism and we need to understand deeply the issues at stake and articulate the Dharmic position to this.



TLT: A recurring theme in your works is the critique of "Western Universalism." How do you propose that Indian traditions reclaim their narrative and assert their uniqueness against the homogenizing forces of globalization?

Rajiv Malhotra: An important counter to forces of globalization is to not only understand how Western universalism works but also put forth our own Swadeshi response. Sanskrit non-translatable, the concept of Poison Pills, the Hindu Good News – there are many methods I have written on countering this.

TLT: Your concept of the "U-Turn Theory" highlights how Indian traditions are often appropriated and rebranded. What steps can institutions and scholars take to preserve the authenticity of Indian knowledge systems while engaging globally?

Rajiv Malhotra: There are five major steps that I outline as a part of the U-Turn theory, which usually takes place: immersion into the source culture, appropriation of useful elements, erasure of traces to source, repackage as receiver's original idea, and lastly the export back to the source tradition. Understanding this pattern is crucial to first identifying the concepts and material that have fallen victim to this process. Once this is done, one can establish the trace and spotlight the source tradition in the correct context.

TLT: In your book AI and the Future of Power, you discuss "Five Battlegrounds" impacted by AI. Could you share your perspective on how AI is reshaping human consciousness and the ethical challenges it poses to civilizations like India?

Rajiv Malhotra: In my book AI and the Future of Power, I devote two battlegrounds to understanding the consequences of this important issue. The battle for the agency of the individual, the hacking of nature's learning systems, and the challenge to spiritualism are hugely important to discuss and debate, especially in India, which has its rich repository of theories on consciousness and at the same time, immense challenges due to the impact of AI on other socio-economic aspects. I address not only the practical issues but more interestingly the metaphysical issues raised – such as the possibility of artificial consciousness as distinct from artificial intelligence.

TLT: Your comparison of Integral Unity and Synthetic Unity is compelling. Could you provide contemporary examples where these paradigms manifest, and discuss their implications for societal and environmental harmony?

Rajiv Malhotra: Integral unity means that ultimately only the whole exists; the parts that make up the whole are only a relative existence; yet this relative existence is important as that is our present state of consciousness. The metaphor used to illustrate this unity is of a smile about a face: A smile cannot exist separately from the face; it is dependent and contingent on the face.

Continued Discussion

However, the face has an independent existence, whether it smiles or not. Yet, we cannot dismiss the existence of the smile. The relationship of every entity to the cosmic whole is similar: the dependency is unidirectional. The cosmos is the form of Bhagwan. You cannot dismiss Bhagwan's smile (the world) even though its existence is relative and not absolute. Synthetic unity is different: It starts with parts that pre-exist separately from one another. For example, the parts of an automobile exist separately until they are assembled into a single vehicle. Similarly, in classical physics, the cosmos is viewed as an assemblage of separate elementary particles. The Western scientific tradition has been reductionist rather than integral.

TLT: Transitioning from a successful career in technology to pioneering Indian studies is unique. What inspired this shift, and how has your technical background influenced your work in philosophy and cultural analysis?

Rajiv Malhotra: I was trained initially as a Physicist, and then as a Computer Scientist specializing in AI in the 1970s. After a successful corporate career in the US, I became an entrepreneur and founded and ran several IT companies in 20 countries. Since the early 1990s, as the founder of the non-profit Infinity Foundation (Princeton, USA), I have been researching on a full-time basis the Indian civilization and its engagement with technology from a historical, social sciences, and mind sciences perspective.

TLT: In *The Battle for Consciousness Theory*, you address the distortion of Sri Aurobindo's ideas. How can the global community of Aurobindonians effectively counter such misrepresentations and uphold his teachings?

Rajiv Malhotra: When I first began to expose Wilber's appropriation of Sri Aurobindo's ideas in the late 1990s, I found myself challenged by many Aurobindonians due to a variety of reasons – hesitation to rock the boat and potentially harm their careers, ignorance of the issue, aloofness and escapist attitudes towards the practical problems in the SA studies, and so on. It was due to the encouragement of Aurobindonian stalwarts such as K.D. Sethna, Kireet Joshi, and Devan Nair I continued my work. The first step to upholding Sri Aurobindo's legacy is to once again spotlight his work and counter the distortions and appropriations it is subject to by the Wilburites in the public domain.

TLT: You emphasize the importance of creating an "Indian Grand Narrative." What role can literature, education, and media play in fostering a cohesive and empowering narrative for India?

Rajiv Malhotra: All nations and communities have their own identity-forming stories which helps them build their national and global identity. These stories, a combination of facts and myths form what is called the grand narrative of a people. India lacks such a grand narrative. Instead, many narratives have become implanted by foreign invaders and colonizers. Worst of all are the narratives championing various divisive fragments that serve to emotionally and conceptually break up India rather than build it. Indian Grand Narrative should comprise the stellar contributions the Indian people made across millennia to the global discourse in material and practical ways – such as in science and technology and the mind sciences. The media and the school curricula have a crucial role in spotlighting these contributions, while also highlighting the present challenges, to create an effective "Indian Grand Narrative" for the public.

TLT: You've spoken about nurturing "intellectual ksatriyas" to defend dharma. What advice do you have for young scholars seeking to engage deeply with Indic thought in a global context?

Rajiv Malhotra: The first advice would be to understand one's own dharma, then get out of your comfort zone to immerse in the global Kurukshetra. This involves understanding the current dynamics of the Kurukshetra and how to use Purva paksha. We have many resources that we have put together over the years that can help, even as one identifies issues within one's circle of influence to take on.

TLT: With several acclaimed books and initiatives, what projects or areas of research are you currently pursuing? Can readers expect new frameworks or concepts to emerge from your work?

Rajiv Malhotra: Infinity Foundation (IF) is presently at a special moment – it celebrates its 30th anniversary soon. Over the next year, we have some highly important products scheduled for launch including books that will highlight IF's contributions over the past decades in various domains. I hope to complete the development and propagation of my lifetime work, which is my School of Thought, consisting of a collection of unique frameworks and models.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEELESH KULKARNI AUTHOR OF THE BOOK UPRISING

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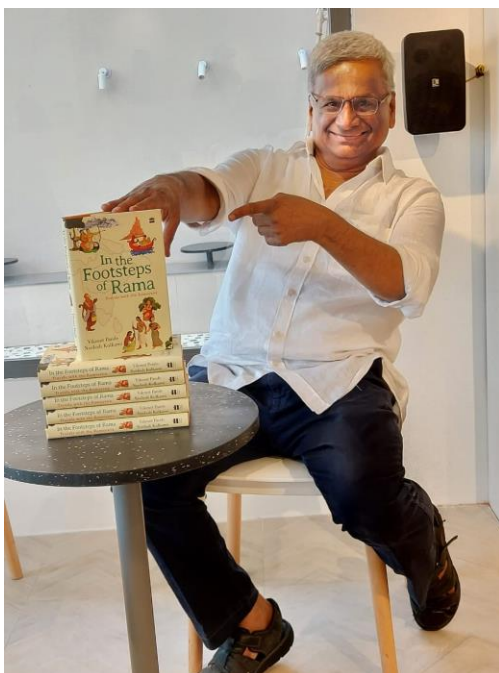
Neelesh Kulkarni is a management graduate, entrepreneur, and passionate reader and traveler. He is also a poet, theatre actor, voiceover artist, and former cricket commentator. Neelesh frequently conducts corporate workshops on public speaking, storytelling, and creative writing. He is an author with HarperCollins and Westland Books and is currently under a three-book contract with Westland. His debut book, *In the Footsteps of Rama: Travels with the Ramayana* (HarperCollins), is available in hardcover, paperback, and eBook formats, and has been adapted into a six-part web series. The Hindi translation, *Ram ke Path Par*:



Ramayan ke Sang, was named the best non-fiction book of 1923-24 by FICCI and is being translated into Marathi, Gujarati, and Bengali. Neelesh also contributed to the best-selling anthology *Where the Gods Dwell: Thirteen Temples and Their (hi) Stories* (Westland), where his essay "Vithoba of Pandharpur" received acclaim.

His book *Open Sesame: My Little Book of Magic Tricks for Kids* was published by Westland in June 2024. His seminal work on the successful people-led armed struggle in the Indian freedom movement, *Uprising: The Liberation of Dadra and Nagar Haveli*, was released by Westland in August 2024.

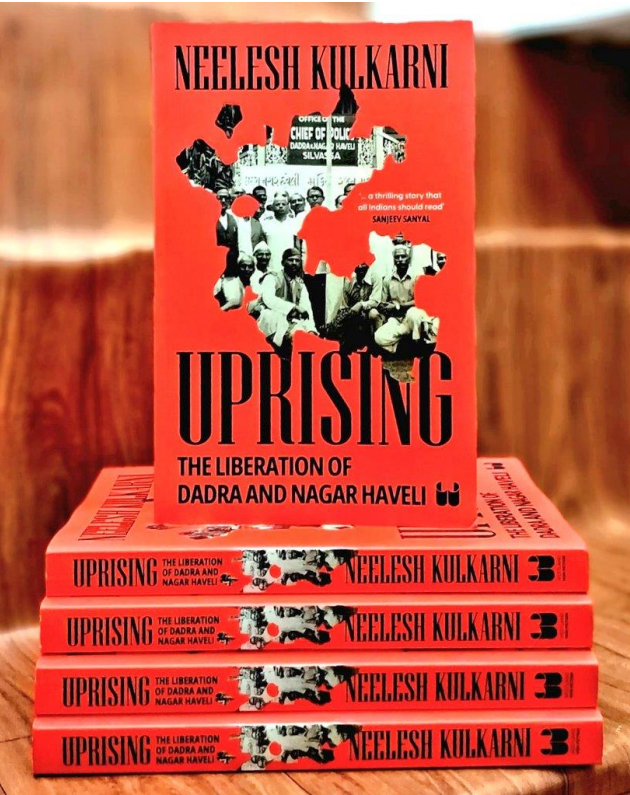
Akashvani: A Century of Stories, about All India Radio, will be published by HarperCollins in February 2025. Neelesh is currently working on a children's book, an anecdotal history of Delhi University, and a book on the Varkaree tradition.



QUESTIONNAIRE:

TLT: Welcome to The Literature Today magazine, Neelesh! Your book *Uprising* sheds light on a largely overlooked chapter of India's history. What inspired you to write this story, and how did you navigate the challenges of piecing it together through interviews and archival research?

Neelesh Kulkarni: The discovery of the story was pure happenstance! I was traveling by train from Delhi to Nasik to research my first book when I got into a conversation, as we all do on trains, with the gentleman seated across. He was then in his late eighties and revealed that he had been a freedom fighter who had taken up arms to liberate Dadra and Nagar Haveli from the Portuguese. He told me how he was part of a small group of idealistic young men who had formed a private militia, raised funds for it, purchased arms, and attacked and drove out over three hundred fully armed Portuguese soldiers from these territories. It sounded like dynamite, and there and then, I knew I just had to write the story.



There were many challenges to writing it. The primary one was that the battle had been fought by many freedom fighters in parts, and each knew only their particular part. Almost all who knew the larger picture had passed away, and of the ones still alive, only a few were traceable, and most of them were unwilling to talk. Their attitude was that they had done their duty towards their motherland and saw no reason to talk about it. Tracing them in Pune, Goa, and even the jungles of Nagar Haveli and gaining their trust were significant challenges. Through patience and tenacity, I managed to talk to them, obtain documents and memoirs available either with them or their heirs, cross-check them against newspaper reports and government documents, and then put the story together.

TLT: The book highlights the courage of ordinary civilians against well-armed Portuguese forces. How did you portray the emotions and resilience of those involved in this historic struggle?

Neelesh Kulkarni: I did not have to work hard on that at all. It was all there—the bravery, the resilience, and the raw courage. I just had to report it, which I did faithfully.

TLT: As an entrepreneur, poet, theatre actor, and more, how have your diverse experiences shaped your approach to storytelling and your writing style?

Neelesh Kulkarni: I believe one writes from the sum total of one's experience. Each one of my activities is, therefore, reflected in my writing. I think everything I do has made my writing more visual and readable. Even when dealing with the hard facts of history, like in this book, I adopt a style that makes it interesting. I guess that's why the book has been referred to as history that reads like a thriller.

TLT: Your earlier book, *In the Footsteps of Rama*, was adapted into a web series and translated into multiple languages. How did seeing your work transcend mediums influence your creative vision?

Neelesh Kulkarni: I have become more conscious of my responsibility towards what I write since my work is reaching audiences far bigger than initially envisaged. I have started going that extra mile to ensure that whatever I commit to my writing is authentic and genuine.

TLT: *Uprising* also showcases cultural icons like Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammed Rafi raising funds for the cause. What role do you think cultural solidarity played in India's broader freedom movements?

Neelesh Kulkarni: Each individual who participated in the freedom struggle, whether in this *Uprising* or the fight against the British, was first and foremost an Indian. Any differences in caste, creed, or religion were subsumed in this identity. In the case of this armed struggle, Lataji and Rafi Sahab performed free of charge in Pune to raise funds for it. In a telling aside, when the freedom fighters went to Rafi Sahab to request him to perform, he not only agreed to do so but, when a volunteer rose to book a train ticket for him, he stopped him and said, *"This country is as much mine as it is yours—if you are risking your lives for it, can't I even buy my ticket?"*



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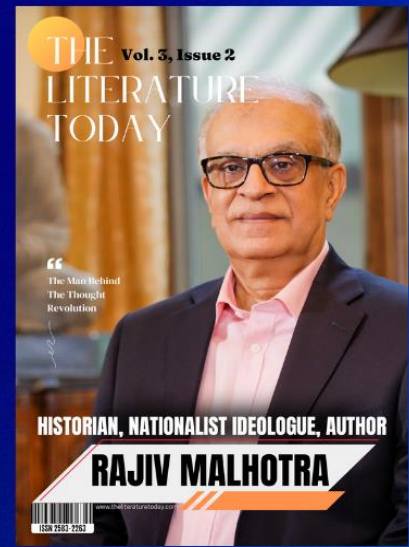
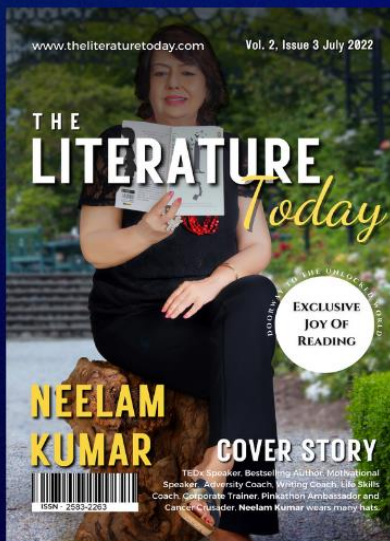
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