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<http://www.thehindu.com/books/books-authors/yandamoori-veerendranath-interview-turning-a-new-page/article18831079.ece>



**Besides a directorial debut with a Kannada film, Yandamoori Veerendranath has come up with a book that guides parents on raising a millennial teen.**

Author, playwright, screenwriter and personality development trainer Yandamoori Veerendranath is touching 70, but is as active as ever. He made it a point cut down on his tours for motivational speeches because he doesn't want to wake up at 5 am to catch a train to Srikakulam or Vijayawada and return that very day. The veteran's book *Teens: Pillala Pempakam Oka Kala* that offers parenting tips on raising teens is due for a launch soon. Meanwhile he returns to films after a long gap, this time as a director for a Kannada film. The book, he says is a rather detailed version of his earlier work *Mee Pillalu*

*Mimmalni Preminchali*. What Yandamoori wants to convey through the book is the need for parents to be educated first.

“This generation is not spoilt, they are a product of a spoilt generation, is the first sentence in the book. The young girl who watches television till 12 pm in the night and wakes up at 9 am suddenly becomes a mother. The guy whose life was once occupied by Facebook, gambling and late night drives turns a father some day. What is to be expected? This book advises parents to change before children do,” he says.

When Yandamoori announced a new book, a few parents asked him why similar material wasn't available during their generation? He tells them the situation was different then. “There's so much competition now; back then people used to get jobs immediately after completing studies and lived a life sans Facebook, Twitter and the likes. There were more joint families too. Even a teenager had a mis-step, the families would realise it soon as the world was small,” he mentions.

### **Stating misconceptions**

For this generation though, there's a need to state the misconceptions, Yandamoori adds. “Teenage is a crucial phase where for every situation, there's a protagonist and an antagonist in a

child's heart battling to know what's right or wrong. It's a parent's responsibility to guide them. Advice from peers isn't ideal, because they aren't experienced enough in life. There are some parents who fall under that category too, the book is for people like them."

Didn't he realise the complexities of this phase when he wrote *Mee Pillalu..?* "That was nearly 20 years ago, I may not have been mature enough to understand these details back then."

The book is based on the life positions of 'I'm not okay, you're okay' phase, teenagers develop an inferiority complex over aspects like beauty, height, appearance. Then in the 'I'm okay, you're not okay' stage teens may not have a regard for parents and believe that friends are the only ones who understand them. They crave more independence, a new room, a mobile, privacy.

"The challenge is to bring them to an 'I'm okay, you're okay' stage where they achieve a balance in their lives, the book tries to lead them towards that stage."

He firmly believes that parents have to come out of *Oke pani cheste medhavulavutarani antaru* phase.

"If a father tells his daughter to study only for IIT and do nothing else, there's every chance that she might use her free time for social media. But if the father gives her a chance to learn music, paint and encourage her to play sports, besides studying for IIT, she learns to use her time more constructively."

Yandamoori is honest to add that he too as a parent couldn't gauge aspects like these.

Talking on changing people's mindsets, he believes books have a more lasting effect than speeches.

"Whenever people felt low and needed inspiration, I've had calls to tell that *Vijayaniki Aidu Metlu* has given them a positive outlook towards life."

### **As a director**

The next step in his life is his role as a director.

"All the films that I worked in the last few years, from *Sakthi* to *Anamika* to *Mrugaraju* have been flops. Actors no longer approach me. But I kept wondering if the fault was the director's or mine. I went to Kannada because I'm running the show there and I'm a director. If this succeeds, people might say I proved those critics wrong, but if the film fails, I have enough people wanting to tell me, '*Eppudo cheppam kadandi*'"

He certainly doesn't miss the letters he received from his fans during his prime. Now people send him messages on FB, but he's blunt enough to admit the medium is only a promotional tool; he doesn't read any of the comments.

He hasn't watched a movie in decades and feels Telugu writers have stopped writing quality fiction.

“There are hardly any Telugu fiction writers today. Digitising does help for more readership, there's permanency of sorts, but the copyright violation is an issue, people upload the digital version of our books without publisher permissions, that needs to be sorted out.”