

How I evolved from shy boy to actor in Kannada films

The Kavaludaari hero is all set to marry Swathi on Nov 10. Family support is important to realise your dreams, he says in a special article

RISHI

I am a 1990s kid with a craze for music and films. Audio cassettes of the choicest of Hindi and Kannada songs were equal to my toys.

I grew up in a world of my own. I was a very shy kid and mostly an introvert. But I loved spending time in front of the camera, which included posing for pictures at school and in college. I realised that introverts find a friend in the camera, in front of which they feel more comfortable. They express themselves freely because there is no right or wrong in front of the camera.

I completed my civil engineering degree from Mysuru. But somehow my interest and inclination was towards the arts and cinema. Just like a painter has a canvas, an actor has the freedom to play different characters and be

different people. I was working in a regular job when I told my parents that I wanted to try my luck in acting. They were quite supportive and encouraged me to chase my passion. I moved to Bengaluru with the dream of making it big in the film industry.

Before getting into the film industry, I was apprehensive about the fact that I was not a star kid and didn't have any connections in the industry. I come from an upper middle-class family. My father, K.C. Nagaraju, worked as a senior bank manager and my mother, Anala Nagaraj, is a homemaker. My sister Netra is a popular RJ.

Though I didn't know if I would be able to establish myself in the indus-

try, my parents and sister stood by me like a rock. I made my debut in the Kannada film industry with 'Operation Alamelamma'. The film did well and the appreciation that I received from it made me more humble. Validation of your work empowers you to do better. The acceptance and love that I got from people boosted my confidence to perform better.

My second film 'Kavaludaari' changed things for the better. I was thrilled that I had got to work with some talented people. Many had wondered if I was a one-film wonder but I proved them wrong with my second film. The challenge now is to continue doing good work and maintain consistency.

Ready for the next step in life

I think it is important to have strong family support because it helps you strike a great work-life balance. If you don't have your loved ones next to you, you don't have a stable life. After my career took off, I realised that I was ready for the next big step in my life — marriage.

I have found a best friend and life partner in Swathi Parasuraman. She

was born in Japan and later moved to Chennai. She completed her education in Chennai and Hyderabad. She did her masters in engineering but chose to be a creative content writer for corporate companies. She has a creative inclination towards exploring new stories and generating new content. And she is a voracious reader.

I think the desire to chase our respective passions is the strongest common point between us. We first met at a play and began talking. The conversations got longer and longer. We both have a sense of curiosity and an eagerness to explore the new and unknown.

Building a strong relationship

Swathi and I are getting married on November 10. As we take this big step in our lives, I think it is important to respect each other's perspectives and accept each rather than imposing our beliefs on each other. No two people are the same. Nothing is right or wrong in this world. A lot of things may not move according to our liking. But the willingness to adjust and make the effort to strengthen a relationship is what will work.

(As told to Nina C George)



Rishi and Swathi will be getting married in Chennai on November 10.

'The camera has always been my first love'

Kishen Bilagali is a popular dancer and is now in 'Bigg Boss Kannada season 7'

RAJITHA MENON
TEAM METROLIFE

Starting off as a child artiste, Kishen Bilagali is now a familiar name in the entertainment industry down south. The Chikmagalur-born, Bengaluru-raised boy, who has been dancing from the age of 8, won the reality show 'Dance Deewane' in his category last year and is now part of 'Bigg Boss Kannada'. He now has his own chain of dance studios in the city, called 'Tryst Studios' and is also the owner of a luxury fitness centre. He speaks to *Metrolife* about his journey till now.

How did you become interested in dancing?

When I was a child, my mom loved to see me dance. It is because of her that I joined classes and persisted for years, initially reluctantly then passionately. I learnt dancing at Shiamak Davar's institute and became an instructor there later.

You were also a child actor. Did you want to become an actor too?

I always had a passion for film and television, though my areas of interest ranged from acting to production and behind-the-scenes work. When I got a chance to observe the happenings at close quarters, I would pay attention to the process of film making and other areas of production.

Is it difficult to make a mark in Karnataka? Does your market value increase only

once you make a name elsewhere, like Mumbai? I did enter the Kannada industry as a child artiste, but then I started focussing on dance. Once I left Shiamak Davar's company, I opened my own dance company in Bengaluru. I started exploring myself, though it was a difficult task. It took me a couple of years but I feel that as long as you keep trying and working hard towards your goal, the place does not matter.

What did you do after opening your dance company?

I always wanted to be in front of the camera. I became a contestant in the first season of reality show 'Dance Deewane' (which was judged by Madhuri Dixit) and was adjudged the winner of the 'second generation'. This win became a stepping stone for my success and eventually helped me be a part of 'Taka-dhimitha', a celebrity dance show on Colors Kannada. I was a runner-up on the show.



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KISHEN BILAGALI



Kishen Bilagali

You are now a part of the Kannada version of 'Bigg Boss', which has a controversial reputation. What made you decide to join it? The camera has always been my first love and a show like 'Big Boss' will help me fulfil my dream.

And as far as the show is concerned, it is completely up to the respective individuals how they portray themselves in the house.

I have developed social and interpersonal skills as a result of my background in performing arts; this lets me easily adapt to, communicate with and understand the perspective of others.

The 'Big Boss' platform will let me interact with

other artistes, take on a challenging role and also further my personal and professional development.

Some tips for aspiring dancers looking to make this their profession?

It is important to believe in yourself. If your passion is strong, you will reach your destination. Your journey might be slow but it will be fruitful.

I speak from experience here; there were times when dancing was difficult, especially after my mother passed away and when I broke my knees twice. But I continued to work hard to achieve my dreams and now I do what I love.

Always wanted to do romantic roles, says Siddiqui

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is taking a break from his brand of dark, gritty cinema and is focusing on romantic-comedies as he wants to reach out to the family audiences.

The upcoming 'Motichoor Chaknachoor' is his first romantic-comedy.

Siddiqui says the Debamitra Biswal-directed film "challenges the stereotype of a Bollywood hero, who should be tall and handsome."

"My love for romantic-comedies began very early on. For the first time, I am doing something in this space. I have always felt that



Motichoor Chaknachoor

I am cut for romantic roles. But others didn't think so. People never offered me something like this primarily because I don't look like a ro-

mantic hero. With this film, a long-standing desire has been fulfilled," Nawazuddin says. The actor says 'Motichoor

Chaknachoor' is a pure romantic film that can be watched by the whole family together.

"There is nothing new in this, we have used the (romantic) formula. But the film is very interesting. I wanted to do a film that my daughter can watch."

The 45-year-old actor said he will be focusing on both light-hearted and intense stories.

In 'Motichoor Chaknachoor', Nawazuddin is paired opposite Athiya Shetty. The film is scheduled to be released on November 15. PTI

Style tips for men to ace the office look

From a crisp white shirt to fitted slacks, here are some essentials for men

RUNA RAY

Times have changed and men's fashion, even when it comes to the usually staid office space, is no longer drab.

Here are a few basic essentials that should be included in your wardrobe to ace that look at work.

SHIRT

A white shirt is a wardrobe essential for formal occasions. Self-checks and stripes can also be invested in for a flamboyant feel and look but on a smaller scale. Avoid button-down collars for formal clothing. Instead, opt for a spread collar, for a corporate set-up.

If you do not want to opt for a tie, you can rely on a sleek button-up. This can be paired with a sport coat or can be worn underneath a merino or cashmere sweater.

NECKTIES

Monochrome ties are a safe



men, but most times plain fronts work on most men.

SHOES AND SOCKS

Shoes should be the same colour as your belt at all times — it is the basic rule of formal wear. Your socks, on the other hand, should match the colour of your trousers. Polished shoes are a must.

One should take good care of their shoes as that is what most people initially notice about you. Whether you opt for a casual or formal look, refrain from wearing workout shoes, though you can opt for designer old school trainers. The Oxford is a classic and enduring shoe that goes well with even the most formal workplace clothing.

ACCESSORIES

A smart wristwatch is a great accessory which is understated, but speaks volumes about your style, and your persona. Cufflinks may be a bit formal for daily office culture, but it always adds that bit of glamour in your otherwise serious attire. A tie clip or even a silk pocket square can accentuate your look.

JEANS

For those who are in the creative field, it is perfectly fine to wear jeans to work as long as you polish your whole look with proper lace-up shoes and a toned-down shirt jacket.

A striped crewneck sweater and crisp white sneakers will work for pretty much every day with your casual but professional formula. Make sure your denim is of a darker shade so you can blend it well with sweaters, shirts and casual footwear.

THE SUIT

The single-breast suit is the most classic. Make sure the jacket arm sits right to your wrist and the pant leg is just above your heel. The collar shouldn't restrict your neck. Invest in some tailored wool trousers and an unstructured blazer, which is more relaxed in fit.

Lastly pay attention to the details of grooming: clean shave, neat haircut, trimmed nails and no personal odour or strong eau de cologne.

With these styling tips, you can ace your way through work every day of the year.

(The writer is a fashion designer)



GLOSS & GLAMOUR

bet. Patterns and textures can be added for a mix and match effect.

Knots that suit your personality are a must.

Contrasting ties with the shirt is fine as long as it doesn't clash. You can opt for a silk or wool tie depending on which part of the world you are having your business meeting at.

TROUSERS

Khaki and navy are probably the most popular colours for office slacks while charcoal grey is popular for dressy looks. As long as the shades are neutral, they will go with all your shirts.

Slacks should fit comfortably at the waists, the hips, and at the drop between the waistband and the crotch. Pleated fronts and high-waisted trousers suit larger