

Desi Supermen

-Mahesh Balasubramanian

The other day when I was returning home, a phenomenon sped fast very closely, leaving me bewildered –“is it a plane? No! Is it a UFO? No! Its’ the SUPER -MAN!!” Yes, the Indian version, of course.

I considered myself lucky. Today, people on the move, faced with a perennial shortage of time do not care to lend a helping hand and administer first aid, forget hospitalization, to the idiot concerned who was sadly reduced to tomato puree, just while crossing the road. Thank god & thanks to the distance of about 2-3 inches (or probably more) between the mobike and myself, that I am still one single piece. Yet, he carried a different air, hence this piece.

Still clueless about him? He needs no intro. He is “definitely male” (forgive me feminists for excluding *her* as we don’t have the women counterpart yet; as also because our own super man believes in “man for the kill & woman for the kitchen”!).

We have met or seen him sometime or the other. He is more often found on the roads in close proximity to the areas where the beautiful birds (of non-feathered kind!) reside. Like they say, “when a lion roars, a king is born”, similarly when a boy, waiting to be a man acquires the skills of driving a two –wheeler, a superman is born.

The Indian version’s claim to “power” is either a rented and flamboyant Opel-Astra or more commonly a hi-tech motorbike, depending upon how closely the city bears a resemblance to a cosmopolitan one. Our *desi* supermen are fed with the diet of Tom Cruises’, Van

Dammes' and Arnold Schwarzeneggars' right since their childhood. The *desi* manifestation is an answer to the western counterpart who at the drop of a hat leaps into action to save the mankind from the risk endangering it.

Come college days, and this breed, in keeping with the traditions of a rock -solid superman, remains engaged in dare –devilry on the roads, perhaps in a bid to impress that two –legged beauty across the street.

Our *desi* brand, more often, are branded as signal jumpers. They make their own rules. That is because, they believe in the saying –“don't' follow others, make others follow you”. What the public at large perceives driving ones' way through that miniscule space left untouched by the heavy traffic as “mission impossible”, sounds like “never say never again” to these stern – looking guys from heaven.

The mankind is often equated with a big jungle where “survival of the fittest” is the rule. In a jungle there are two kinds of companies- the fast & the dead. The *desi* superman obviously falls under the former.

To conclude, gone are the days when mothers convinced their babies into sleeping, otherwise *Gabbar Singh* might come. Today, mothers alongside the footpath wake –up their children, otherwise *Salmaan* might come!!