

# Top Bollywood Mothers

By: Roshni Mulchandani

*We dote on our favorite Bollywood mothers. Who wouldn't? After all these very characters have gone on to form the epitome of the Desi mother; sacrificial, loving and hopeful. And who can forget the enormously popular dialogue which even A.R. Rahman couldn't resist when he won his Academy Award, "Mere Paas Maa Hai." Yes, Bollywood has Maas and a whole array of them. Off screen some of our favorite and most popular actresses, every now and then, play mother to their own children. Back in the day, Bollywood mothers were shy and reserved, choosing to guide their offspring from afar. Things have changed and modern mothers have not only shed the sari but also taken to the limelight. No more are they subdued and conservative but are flamboyant and liberal. In honor of Mother's Day, CityMasala counts down the Top Bollywood Mothers (in no particular order). Mum's the word and we wouldn't have it any other way and if it's in the Bollywood fashion, we love it even more!*

## Dimple Kapadia

If any actress has gone from beautiful to even more beautiful, it has to be *Dimple Kapadia*. She debuted at the tender age of sixteen where she played the title role in *Bobby* and has never looked back. After her marriage to *Rajesh Khanna*, she gave birth to *Twinkle* and *Rinke* and left acting to care for her children. While she later returned to acting, her focus became the acting career of her daughters. Unfortunately, even though *Twinkle* gained some credibility, *Rinke* failed to claim any stardom. The former went on to marry *Akshay Kumar* and is mother to a son while *Rinke* is mother to a daughter. Even now, *Dimple* plays an integral part in the lives of her daughters. She and *Twinkle* in particular share a unique bond and collectively have begun their own line of candles and home furnishing.

## Hema Malini

Even today *Hema Malini* is every man's *Dream Girl*. So beautiful was (and is) the actress, that heartthrob *Dharmendra* couldn't resist her beautiful smile and eloquent grace only to marry her by converting to Islam. After a few years of marriage, *Hema* gave birth to *Esha* followed by *Ahana*. While raising her children became a priority, the actress never gave up her love for film and dance. She continued to practice traditional *Bharatnatyam*, teaching her daughters the same, while she acted and produced a number of films. When *Esha* decided to venture into films, it was *Hema* who took it upon herself to ensure her debut was done with utmost perfection. However, *Esha* never really made it big in Bollywood, although she has been accredited with one of the fittest bodies in the industry. She has once again looked to her mother for help with her acting career. *Hema* is currently directing her daughter in the much awaited, *Tell Me Oh Khuda*.

## Babita

*Babita* is now better known for being *Karisma* and *Kareena Kapoor's* mother but there was a time when the actress of yesteryears was looked at as one of the top actresses of her time. When her marriage with *Randhir Kapoor* came under immense strain, she wasn't afraid to walk out, daughters in tow causing many mouths to drop in the early eighties. A doting mother, she has been praised by both her award-winning daughters for being the driving force behind their successful careers. A businesswoman by nature, *Babita* decided that her daughters would only work with the best in the industry and thus went on to make major decisions for both her daughters which

eventually worked in their favor. Thanks to their mother, *Karisma* and *Kareena* are now amongst the most sought after actresses today. *Babita* went on to give her daughters, what she only wished she could have achieved. While she was nothing more than a star, her daughters have acquired the status of star-actresses. *Karisma Kapoor* is also known for being a hands-on doting mother to her two children, *Samaira* and *Kiaan Raj Kapoor*.

## Tanuja

Whether it was serious parallel cinema, popular mainstream films or even Bengali regional films, *Tanuja* has seen success in all arenas. It was after her marriage to *Shomu Mukherjee* that she took a sabbatical from films to raise her own daughters, *Kajol* and *Tanisha*. While she has never been the interfering mother she has been completely supportive of both her daughters when they chose to venture into acting, her daughters have always looked to her for advice in regards to their careers. The veteran actress hasn't given up on her career just yet as she simultaneously plays grandmother to *Kajol's* daughter *Nysa* and awaits the arrival of *Kajol's* new baby. *Kajol* is a name that hardly needs an introduction; she is regarded as one of India's finest. *Tanisha* on the other hand, has tried extremely hard to work out a successful acting career but to no avail.

## Sharmila Tagore

Her beauty, her poise and her refined style puts *Sharmila Tagore* in a league of her own. These very traits were noticed by *Mansoor Ali Khan Pautadi*, who immediately made her his royal wife. Even after having three children of her own, the actress never stepped away from films. In fact, she managed a family, household and thriving career concurrently. *Tagore* took on additional roles more recently as the Goodwill Ambassador to UNICEF and has been a part of the Indian Censor Board. The renowned *Saif Ali Khan* has gained much of his mother's charm and after an initial struggle finally broke out as a full-fledged Bollywood hero. *Sister Soha Ali Khan* finds herself in a grey area as she works hard to create a niche for herself while she is constantly compared to her mother. And the youngest *Khan*, *Saba Ali Khan* has chosen to stay away from the limelight and is a well-known jewelry designer.

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# BOOK REVIEW: KARMA AND OTHER STORIES

By K. A. Patel

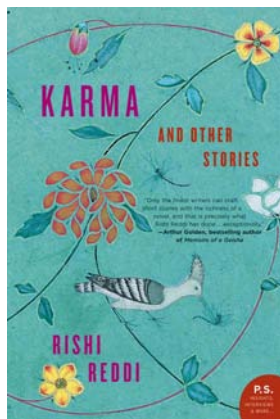
I recently went to an Ethnic Writers' Workshop and had the good fortune to meet a very talented, up-and-coming writer named Rishi Reddi. Her wonderful book, entitled *Karma and Other Stories*, is a collection of short stories about Indian Americans and their struggles with balancing their Eastern culture and background with their Western lives. She has gotten much praise for this debut collection of stories and has even won the prestigious 2008 L. L. Winship-PEN/New England award.

The book includes 7 short stories with characters that many in the Indian community will find familiar and be able to identify with. *The Validity of Love* and *Devadasi*, both about young women who struggle between traditional expectations and their own modern way of thinking, stand out as stories that most young Indian women growing up in America can relate to. *Lord Krishna*, a story about a boy that is singled in his high school because of his distinctly different name and culture, will also be familiar to many of us.

I think the stories that I found the most surprising and touching, however, were actually the ones about older characters, characters similar to many of the parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents we see in our Indian community. Rarely do we step out of ourselves and imagine how hard life must be for them, adjusting to a new culture and trying to find a way to reconcile the differences. *Justice Shiva Ram Murthy* and *Bangles* both have elderly characters, while *Lakshmi and the Librarian* and *Karma* have middle-aged characters.

I think my favorite stories were probably *Justice Shiva Ram Murthy*, which was about an ornery, old retired judge who is struggling to maintain his former dignity in the face of declining

health and having to adjust to living in America, where he is not as respected as in his native land, and also *Karma*, which is about a man who decides to move to the United States to live with his very successful younger brother but finds himself kicked out and having to make a start on his own when he doesn't meet his brother's expectations. All the stories were moving in their own way, and very enjoyable to read.



Rishi is very busy, but was able to answer a few questions for me. Check it out:

Q: *Why do you write?*

A: I write because I want to answer some questions for myself--I think I'm basically writing to the 20 year old woman that I was, explaining life, as I understand it, to her.

Q: *How did you get the idea for your book?*

A: There were certain circumstances that I wanted to explore--each of them became the main plot event for a story in the book.

Q: *What is the writing process like for you?*

A: It always seems like painful work in the beginning, then once the early drafts are done, it's far more fun.

Q: *Do you plot out your story or just see where your*

*characters go?*

A: I usually have a combination of both in mind: an interesting character and a main climactic event that I want to have happen.

Q: *Tell us a little about your next project.*

A: It's about the early South Asian immigrants who came to California in the 1910s and 1920s and settled down as farmers in the Imperial Valley.

For more information about Rishi Reddi and her debut novel, please check out her website <http://rishireddi.net>.

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### Neetu Singh Kapoor

Neetu Singh starred with every top actor in the industry in her time and eventually married the cutest of the lot, Rishi Kapoor. She made no bones about giving up her acting career, a custom in the Kapoor family, claiming it was her personal choice only to manage her household and raise her children. She quickly became the foundation of the family and till date is known as the favorite Kapoor daughter-in-law. As a mother, son Ranbir Kapoor claims she has been ever dotting and supportive of every choice he chose to make. By the same token, Neetu Singh openly admits to being her son's biggest fan, watching all his films and being a part of his career in any way that she can. Neetu Singh is also extremely attached to her only daughter, Riddhima who is now married and settled in Delhi.

### Jaya Bachchan

Jaya Bachchan may be small in size, but the actress has lived life large and how. After marrying Amitabh Bachchan and being a part

of the blockbuster hit *Sholay*, she gave up acting to raise her children Shweta and Abhishek. Putting her husband on the backburner and focusing completely on her children, Jaya played an essential role in aiding Abhishek's entry into films. And in turn, Abhishek seeks the approval of his "Maa" in every major decision, professionally and otherwise. It was only when Jaya approved of Aishwarya Rai that he finally proposed to her and married her in an extravagant celebration.

*Bollywood mothers have pretty much done it all on and off screen. And it doesn't look like they are about to give up anytime soon. The veteran actresses are ready to rock-n-roll into the new decade giving not only their children a run for their money but the younger actors too. On the occasion of Mother's Day, we salute all the mothers in the world—Bollywood and otherwise; for their sacrifices, their unconditional love and support; for just being Maa.*