

Parmesh Shahani

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Career summary I am an author, culture curator, and inclusion advocate. My hyphenated career has spanned academia, media, and the corporate world, and involved founding India's first youth expression website, editing an avant-garde fashion magazine, setting up a media convergence think tank at MIT and re-imagining the future of two of India's largest business conglomerates through innovative cultural experiments, one of which was the award-winning [Godrej India Culture Lab](#) that I founded and ran between 2011-21. Through the Lab, my book *Queeristan*, collaborations with organizations like the UN and my personal advocacy, I have also helped many other companies further their LGBTQ inclusion agendas.

Education

September 2005 **MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**
[Master of Science in Comparative Media Studies](#)
100% Merit Scholarship. Presidential Search Advisory Committee Member. MIT Art Scholar. MIT Public Service Center's Community Connection Award (2004).

May 2003 **BOMBAY TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI**
Bachelor of Education

April 1997 **XAVIER'S INSTITUTE OF COMMUNICATION, MUMBAI**
Postgraduate Diploma in Film and Television

July 1996 **SYDENHAM COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI**
Bachelor of Commerce

- Books**
- [Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion at the Indian Workplace](#) (Westland Business, 2020) – winner of the 2021 CK Prahalad Award for Best Business Book of the Year
 - [Gay Bombay: Globalization Love and \(Be\)Longing in Contemporary India](#) (Sage Publications, 2008, revised edition 2020)

- Fellowships**
- [TED Senior Fellow](#), 2018 (TED Fellow, 2009)
 - [Yale World Fellow](#), 2014
 - World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, 2014
 - Utrecht University-Impakt Festival Fellow, 2012

- Honorary positions**
- Board member, KHOJ International Artists Association, 2021
 - Member, FICCI task force on Diversity and Inclusion, 2020

Select talks Harvard India Conference (February 2020), [Brandeis University](#) (April 2019), Edinburgh Culture Summit (August 2016), World Economic Forum on Africa (2015), [Women in the World](#) (2015), [Yale School of Management](#) (November 2014), [Wheeler Center Melbourne](#) (May 2014), Nokia World London (October 2010), X Media Lab Auckland (May 2009)

Work

August 2010-
October 2021 **GODREJ INDUSTRIES**
Vice President and Head – Godrej India Culture Lab + D&I

I founded and ran the Godrej India Culture Lab in Mumbai between 2011-21, as a [unique public space](#) that cross-pollinated people and ideas from across academia, business and the creative industries to explore the textured nature of Indian modernity. The Lab engaged with multiple audiences via [events](#), installations, screenings, performances and [digital projects](#). It also conducted student [leadership programs](#) and fellowships, produced [white papers](#) and [mapping resources](#) and powered [collaborations](#) with other national and global cultural institutions. In 2015, the Lab received the inaugural *India Today Award for*

Corporate Commitment to the Arts. I also worked on other Godrej projects dealing with human capital and innovation. In 2012, I helped conceive [Godrej LOUD](#), a unique MBA campus recruitment drive that funds the personal dreams of students alongside their internships. From 2014, I served as the curator of the annual [Godrej Leadership Forum](#), a conference for senior management across the Godrej group, and in March 2021, I also took over the responsibility of heading diversity and inclusion group wide.

- December 2006 – July 2009 **MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA / VERVE MAGAZINE**
Head – Vision and Opportunities, Incubation Lab / Editorial Director
 In the quest to re-imagine Mahindra as a global Indian conglomerate, I helped set up a venture capital initiative for the group. Companies invested in included d.Light Design, Zoomin and Cleartrip. I also worked on other innovation projects, like an intrapreneurial ideas challenge for employees, an international film festival in New York, and helped develop the [Mahindra Universe](#) executive education program at Harvard in 2007. As Editorial Director of *Verve* magazine (2008-9), I spearheaded innovations which included provocative editorial themes, an ever-evolving design vocabulary, [product placement in a hit 2009 Bollywood film](#) (*Dostana*), community building events, and an enhanced web presence including social media. As Editor-at-large (2009-18), I continued to comment on global culture and events through my monthly column ‘Parmesh’s Viewfinder’.
- November 2005 – April 2006 **MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**
Research Manager, Comparative Media Studies
 I helped conceptualize and manage research for the [Convergence Culture Consortium](#) at MIT and also organized the first annual C3 conference: *Convergence 2006: There is No Box*.
- February 2001 – January 2002 **SONY ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION**
Assistant Vice President, Business Development
 I helped with the strategic diversification of Sony's channel *Max* into the area of cricket as a pre-cursor to the T20 format that changed the game.
- October 1999 – January 2001 **FRESHLIMESODA INTERACTIVE**
Founder and Editor
[Freshlimesoda](#) was India's first online youth website. I founded and edited the website, organized events to foster an online-offline community experience (poetry readings, art exhibitions, music festivals, movie screenings), raised money for its expansion during the dotcom boom and presided over its eventual bust.
- July 1998 – April 1999 **SIC PRODUCTIONS**
Assistant Film Director, Rockford
- May 1997 – April 1998 **ELLE MAGAZINE**
Features Writer
- Select media coverage**
- [How do you like it so far?](#) (Podcast with USC’s Henry Jenkins and Colin Maclay)
 - [Parmesh Shahani’s model of Jugaad Resistance](#) (Book review – *Bloomberg Quint*)
 - [Indian companies are not homophobic, just ignorant](#) (Interview – *Forbes India*)
 - [Queeristan is a blueprint for a better normal](#) (Interview – *GQ India*)
 - [All we ask for are equal rights](#) (Interview – *The Times of India*)
 - [We the Women – conversations for change](#) (Video interview with Barkha Dutt)
 - [In conversation with Sir Ian McKellan](#) (Video)
 - [The renaissance man of Vikhroli](#) (Interview – *Hindustan Times*)
 - [Drawing inspiration from Mumbai](#) (Alumni profile – *MIT Tech Review*)