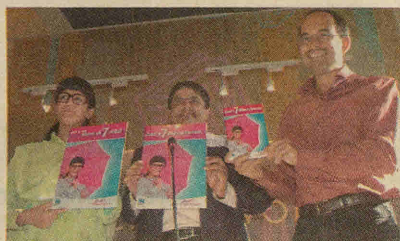


It's un'reel'

Perhaps Sony Entertainment Television knows something we don't; that real heroes are on the wane. Its latest marketing gimmick is a stunner: it has brought out a self-help book, *Jassi's 7 Steps to Success*, along with Popular Prakashan publishing house. In it, fans can read all about how **Jassi Walia** (left in pic) triumphed over the problems thrown her way in the serial *Jassi*



Jaissi Koi Nahin and learn how to become self-reliant and successful. A sure-fire success if only we lived in tellyland and had someone to rewrite our scripts every few days.



Unheard, not unsung

How did David slay Goliath if he was wearing a helmet? He was aided by a mosquito. The insect got into Goliath's helmet, irritating him enough to remove his headgear, giving David an opening. This is no joke, but the theme of a ballad that used to be sung by Jewish women in Kochi. The songs—in a folk version of Malayalam interspersed with Hebrew words—were discovered by anthropologists Shirley Isenberg and Barabara Johnson, who met descendants of Malabari Jews in Israel. They have since been compiled and preserved in the Jewish Music Research Centre in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

But no one knew what they meant until **Dr Scaria Zacharia** of the Sri Sankaracharya Sanskrit University, in Kaladi, Kerala, interpreted them. "There were eight communities of Malabari Jews, and each community had its own song," says Zacharia, who travelled around Israel and got the original songs from the women. The Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem has now come out with Zacharia's translations.

Challenging herself

She thinks of herself as an artiste first and then a woman. **Miranda Richardson**, who trained at the famed Bristol Old Vic Theatre in London, has won many accolades including nominations for the Oscar. Lekha J. Shankar met the British actress at the Bangkok International Film Festival, where *Phantom of the Opera* was premiered. Excerpts from an exclusive interview:

On her latest release, *Phantom of the Opera*.

I saw the play for the first time when I was offered the role. I was appalled—Madam Giri was a cipher! Then director Joel Schumacher explained



REUTERS

that I could be the emotional centre to the drama, and I realised the 'madam' was warm and compassionate. I always like to bring out the positive aspects of the women I enact.

On her role in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

The film's special because I'm back with director Mike Newell, with whom I did my first film. I play Rita Skeeter, a ridiculous journalist who has styled herself as the goddess of gossip. She's exaggerated in the script, but I have tried not to caricature her.

On India and Indian cinema.

I haven't been to India and the closest I came to a Bollywood film was when I saw *Monsoon Wedding*, which I adored. I also stayed up to watch *Barsaat*. It was fantastic.