

PINK CONNECTION

UBF

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**'Having
a double
mastectomy
was tough'**

Reveals breast
cancer survivor
Usha Jesudasan

**How Dr Raghu Ram
was inspired
by PM Modi's letter**

**The Walled City of
Ahmedabad:**
India's first
World Heritage City

BEHIND The Scenes

The Mumbai stampede was a terrible tragedy. Life is indeed cheap in India, as these disasters keep recurring in our country either in the form of a natural calamity or a travesty of fate. But, what stands out in such tragedies, is our emergency care facilities.

A dear friend lost an employee not in the stampede, but ostensibly due to negligence at a Mumbai government hospital. She was alive when she was brought to the hospital, with no more than a fracture. A day later, her family could not trace her in the hospital, nor were the staff helpful. After a frantic hunt, they found her in the morgue, and no one knew what had happened in the intervening time.

Our Indian doctors are as educated and competent as their peers around the world, we have well-equipped hospitals with trained para-medicals and five-star rooms. Our medical care is among the best in the world. Yet, this comes at a cost.

For example, if cancer patients have money or insurance they can get the best care.

How many can afford the consultation, let alone the treatment and medicines for cancer? Hospitals are milling with patients, and it is a nightmare to enter a government hospital in this country.

India's large population prevents the most well-intentioned public services to reach everyone. If the government introduces better trains, like the Delhi Metro for example, that also quickly reaches a breaking point. The white cards and Arogyasris issued to the poor to avail of healthcare is just not enough. Ultimately, the onus lies with the institutions and corporations. They need to join hands to give every Indian access to good healthcare. Doctors and hospitals need to look beyond profits to make health a basic right, as the Alam Atta convention demands.

Today, I am convinced we need initiatives like the ones undertaken by Dr Raghu Ram, who takes time to spread awareness about breast cancer and its treatment. Maybe, we need to be the change we want to see. And, step out of our comfort zones and do something.

Ratna Rao Shekar



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If life throws you a curveball, you don't duck but just face it. That's what the self-assured, plain-speaking Usha Jesudasan, an author of value education books for the CBSE did.

She did not whine or complain about her bout with cancer, and even went ahead and penned a book about it. Titled *Two Journeys, The Challenges of Breast Cancer*, she talks without reservation about her mother's and her own tryst with cancer, and frankly discusses her frustrations, questions God's will and seeks her purpose in life.

Before she starts narrating her story, the forthright Usha makes a disclaimer. That she had been careless and not done a mammogram regularly despite her mother having cancer.

It started with feeling a lump in her breast shortly after she turned 60 in 2015. Usha recounts, "I felt a lump in my breast one day, and I told my mum. She suggested I check it immediately." Her mother called her younger son John, pursuing his fellowship in Trauma and Emergency Medicine at the Christian Medical College and Hospital (CMC) in Vellore. He made an appointment with the professor of endocrine surgery, CMC, Vellore; who had treated her mother. She then called her older son, Jamie, an oral surgeon in Chennai. Having lost her husband when he was just 47, Usha shares a close bond with her children whom she has raised despite several challenges.

Of course, after an extremely painful mammogram, the diagnosis was breast cancer. She narrates, "My daughter Mallika was in her final year of college, and only 19. It was a difficult period but not the time to curl up and die. My mum would be driven to an early grave if something happened to me. So, I prayed for courage, when I knew I needed a double mastectomy. I was horrified but determined not to reveal my feelings to the outside world."

In fact, Usha sat and wrote down all her fears and how she could cope with them.

Eternal Sunshine of the Human Spirit

No stranger to a surgeon's scalpel, Usha Jesudasan has survived breast cancer after a double mastectomy. Stricken by polio fever as a baby, the disease returned as Post-Polio Syndrome, which made the cancer recovery even more challenging. Living with PPS and the side-effects of cancer treatment, Usha strongly pitches for a positive mind-set and a sense of humour to survive such an ordeal. This is her story

Minal Khona

Her Finnish friend Gert Reuppel landed in India the day she discovered the lump. They were about to leave for a holiday to Kerala, where they would plan their next book together. Instead, he turned out to be a strong support system. And, was by her side in Thekkady, as “a strong pillar of support” when she received the news about the malignant tumour.

Breast cancer turned her life upside down. However, Usha was also struggling with other health issues. Much before the cancer struck, she was suffering from fatigue, her knees would suddenly give way, and she would experience unbearable pain in her hips and legs. At that time, she was running a café called Amala’s, named after her mother. Once she dropped a big bowl of steaming hot pasta after she was struck by a sudden bout of weakness. “It slipped out of my hands and fell. I realised this couldn’t go on and decided to shut down the café,” she reminisces.

It was a difficult period but not the time to curl up and die. My mum would be driven to an early grave if something happened to me. So, I prayed for courage when I knew I needed a double mastectomy

Usha researched her condition on the Internet and discovered after consultations with doctors that she had a condition called the Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS). When Usha had polio fever as a one-year-old, it had left her paralysed from the neck down. Lots of Ayurvedic massages, medicines and prayers helped her recover but the illness left her with a limp, and one leg was shorter than the other. Later, when she moved to the UK, she underwent surgery to elongate the shorter leg, which had left a large scar from the knee to the ankle.



Mother and daughter: Usha with her mother Amala

PPS is a condition which affects polio survivors, years after recovery from an attack of the poliomyelitis virus. They experience gradual weakening of the muscles previously affected by the virus. The symptoms include slow progressive muscle weakness, fatigue, and muscular atrophy; pain from joint degeneration and scoliosis. Though not life-threatening, PPS can be debilitating.

Regular exercising, painkillers and walking around with a stick helps her get through her day. She says, “I plan my schedule because I get tired easily. If I have to go out in the day, I ensure I take a nap in the afternoon. If it is a long evening event, I take the next day off.”

The breast cancer diagnosis came at a time when she was just learning to cope with the PPS. It was a double whammy which came along with a new set of difficult challenges.

Usha needed a double mastectomy for her cancer. “After the surgery, I found it hard to even cut an onion. My maid was a big help at that time. She still is a part of my small support group. My arms would swell up and I had to loosen every sari blouse I had. The swelling would come and go without any warning because the fluid from the lymph nodes would collect in my arms. I felt like I had two anacondas on the sides of my body.

It happens even now but I do exercises and stretches to keep it under control. Moreover, my body doesn’t heal well. The scars in the place of my breasts are still extremely sensitive.”

She candidly admits losing her breasts was hard. “I am a person who makes a lot of effort to dress well and take care about the way I look,” she relates. But, that was just the tip of the iceberg, she discovered.

She points out, “As a writer and a public personality, I was photographed often, and looking good was not only a pleasure but also an



Usha at a book signing event

important part of my life and career. I conducted a lot of international workshops. Any beautiful dress I tried on, hung on me loosely. When I wore my sari blouses, the darts crumpled into a hollow heap. My daughter was a great blessing. The first time I went out after the surgery, she helped me get ready. Seeing my flat chest, she suggested I wear an old bra and stuff it with cotton wool. I wore a heavily padded one and she was horrified, and remarked that I looked like a porn queen. Then we went with the cotton stuffing inside a regular bra. One of them fell out and we giggled and fixed it up with medical tape. But later, she was very upset about the whole thing and cried a lot. Mallika has suffered because of my cancer and has put on weight because of the stress when I was ill."

To soften the scars, Usha applies organic coconut oil and wears only the softest fabric available in loose fits. She stopped colouring her hair because the chemicals made her sensitive skin break out in a rash.

Why did she decide to opt for a double mastectomy and not a lumpectomy that would have saved her breasts and the inconvenience of stuffing her bra and the trauma around it. She says, "There was cancer in both breasts, and I was told about the choices I had. I had seen a close friend go through the distress of radiation therapy. I lived alone and though my children were very supportive, I did not want to go through radiotherapy and opted for a double mastectomy.

Her oncologist advised her to take hormone receptive tablets — Letrozole, an oral, non-steroidal aromatase inhibitor for the treatment of hormonally responsive breast cancer after surgery; instead of the much harsher chemotherapy. Usha remembers how her own sons cornered the oncologist to ask him what he would advise his own mother, if she were in a similar situation. He advised taking Letrozole and not chemo.

The tablets, which Usha has to take for ten years, are no picnic either. They



Usha with her brother Sunil, her mother Amala, sons Jamie and John, daughter Mallika; and her daughter-in-law Bidisa and grandson Rishab

came with severe side-effects. For starters, her hair has turned a silvery white. Though, she did colour it earlier too, the tablets turned the remaining black strands silver. Since she felt tired all the time, she stopped answering the phone. Severe nausea, bouts of hunger followed by a lack of appetite, when the food was in front of her and ultra-sensitive skin, are a few side-effects.

What remains consistent about Usha, is her indomitable spirit — rooted in faith in a higher power and passionately holding on to the belief that a positive mind-set is the best way to stay ahead

Usha is not a great one for hugging people because any strong fragrance triggers off an outbreak of itchy rashes that spread all over her body.

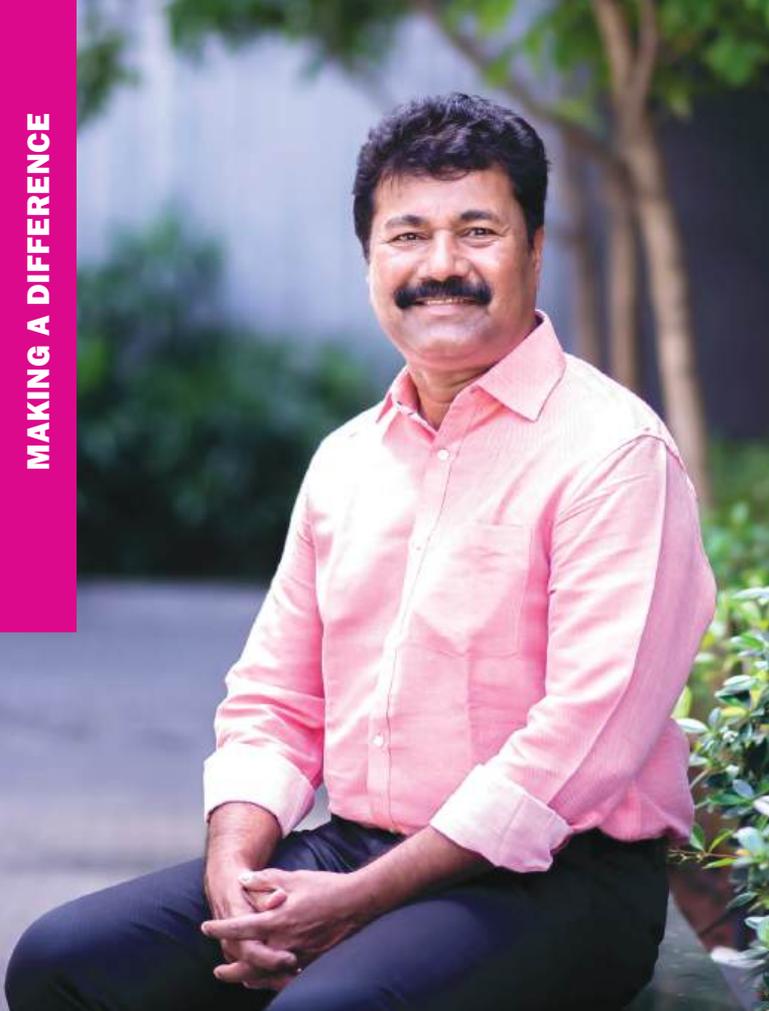
"My daughter-in-law Bidisa found me a bunch of fragrance free products. It can be someone's perfume, paint, soaps, a household cleaner, shampoo, deodorant, mosquito repellent or even after-shave. Any strong smell can trigger the rash. So, I don't go too close

to people when I meet them to avoid the rash," she narrates.

Having a sense of humour helped her cope. She continues, "Losing my breasts was not easy but I learnt to accept the reality. I have heard husbands are completely put off sex after their wives have had a mastectomy. I believe however, it helps to have a husband around, even if it is an indifferent one. I think having both breasts removed is better than having just one taken off, which gives a lopsided appearance. My hair turning silver means women older than me call me aunty but I laugh it off."

Unlike other stoic people, who are reluctant to share their burden or ask for assistance, Usha readily reaches out and asks for help. She says, "People are more than willing to help, but many don't know how to offer it. If I have a friend or family member visiting and I need help I just ask them — be it to help me chop vegetables or go shopping for me."

Usha continues with her life today despite the many challenges she faces. Coping with PPS and at the same time, dealing with the after effects of breast cancer, is a tough call. But, what remains consistent about Usha, is her indomitable spirit — rooted in faith in a higher power and strongly holding on to the belief that a positive mind-set is the best way to stay ahead. ■



The Postcard Man

A believer in the adage that India can be found in its villages, Pradeep Lokhande's mission is to empower rural Indians with knowledge. His innovative schemes involving the creation of libraries in villages and slipping in postcards inside the donated books to receive well-intentioned feedback, have earned him the moniker of Postcard Man.

Here, **Minal Khona** briefly encapsulates his amazing work

Pradeep Lokhande's career trajectory has always led him down the path less travelled. Twenty years ago, he had the vision to realise that India's villages will one day be a vast, untapped market for MNCs and a fertile ground for long-lasting social change.

Narrating his life-story, Lokhande recounts, "I come from a humble background and I was not a bright student. As an employee of a big company, I opted for working in sales in rural Maharashtra because no one wanted to go to the villages. As I travelled around the villages, I realised there was untapped potential here for business and I started gathering data about the demographics."

Over the next three years, as he travelled across Maharashtra on work, he interacted with the villagers and started to develop a rapport with their opinion leaders.

Lokhande had lots of information and decided to sell this data to companies interested in expanding into these markets. Tata Tea did buy the data from him and also asked him to analyse it. He also ended up providing them with a list of possibilities for marketing their products and earned a good sum for his efforts.

Later, another company offered him a six figure amount for the data. Within six months, Lokhande had turned around his data gathering efforts into a profitable business. To date, this remains his finance model. Lokhande is a resource partner for major companies like Telco, P & G, and Tata Tea, etc.

Gradually, there was a paradigm shift in Lokhande's business model. He reminisces, "In 2000, when the IT industry was booming, I saw village schools teaching students about computers on the blackboard. I felt I had to do something and I convinced corporates, my friends and family to donate their used computers." Due to his intervention, 28,000 second-hand computers were donated to 20,000 schools across 10 states.

Lokhande is the founder and CEO of Rural Relations; the company he set up in 1996. It started as a business but somewhere along the way, he wanted to do humanitarian work. His interactions with villagers had taught him that he had to target the younger generation—the middle and high school kids—to bring about social change.

His most creative scheme, *Gyan Key Vachanalaya* was put into practice, which went on to earn him the moniker of 'Postcard Man'.

Under this scheme, he purchases books of interest for secondary school students from donations. "It is a completely transparent model, where the money goes directly to the book distributor/publisher and I just facilitate the delivery of the books to the schools," points out Lokhande.

He also started slipping in a blank postcard into the books, which the students could use to write to him and to the donor about what they gained from the book. "Postcards are the cheapest mode of communication, and this helped building a rapport with them," he says.

Lokhande did not stop with organising book donations in villages. He also started setting up libraries in India's 6 lakh villages, hoping to touch the lives of people through books.

To date, 3,640 *Gyan-key* libraries have been installed in rural secondary schools in as many villages, benefiting over 10 lakh students. Nearly 1,75,000 students have sent in their analysis of the books they have read on a postcard. It has gone on to become the world's largest rural reading initiative; and more than 7, 60,000 books have been sent out into the villages. The books are in different languages and include the translations of reputed classics.

Lokhande, who receives anywhere between 150-450 postcards every day, says, "My target is to set up 94,000 libraries by 2019."

The library project inspired Lokhande to start another initiative called the Non-Resident Villager (NRV) movement. He says, "When you think about it, most Indians have migrated to towns and cities from their villages; or their ancestors have done so at some point. So, it would be safe to say that almost every Indian is a non-resident villager. I have tapped into this demographic group to support the development of rural India."

A lot of NRVs were instrumental in helping set up the libraries. They are also contributing towards a new initiative, which Lokhande believes will be a game-changer.

"VillagewiKY" is an open information platform of key and feeder villages of India. This site invites NRVs to contribute, add and rectify information online about their village.

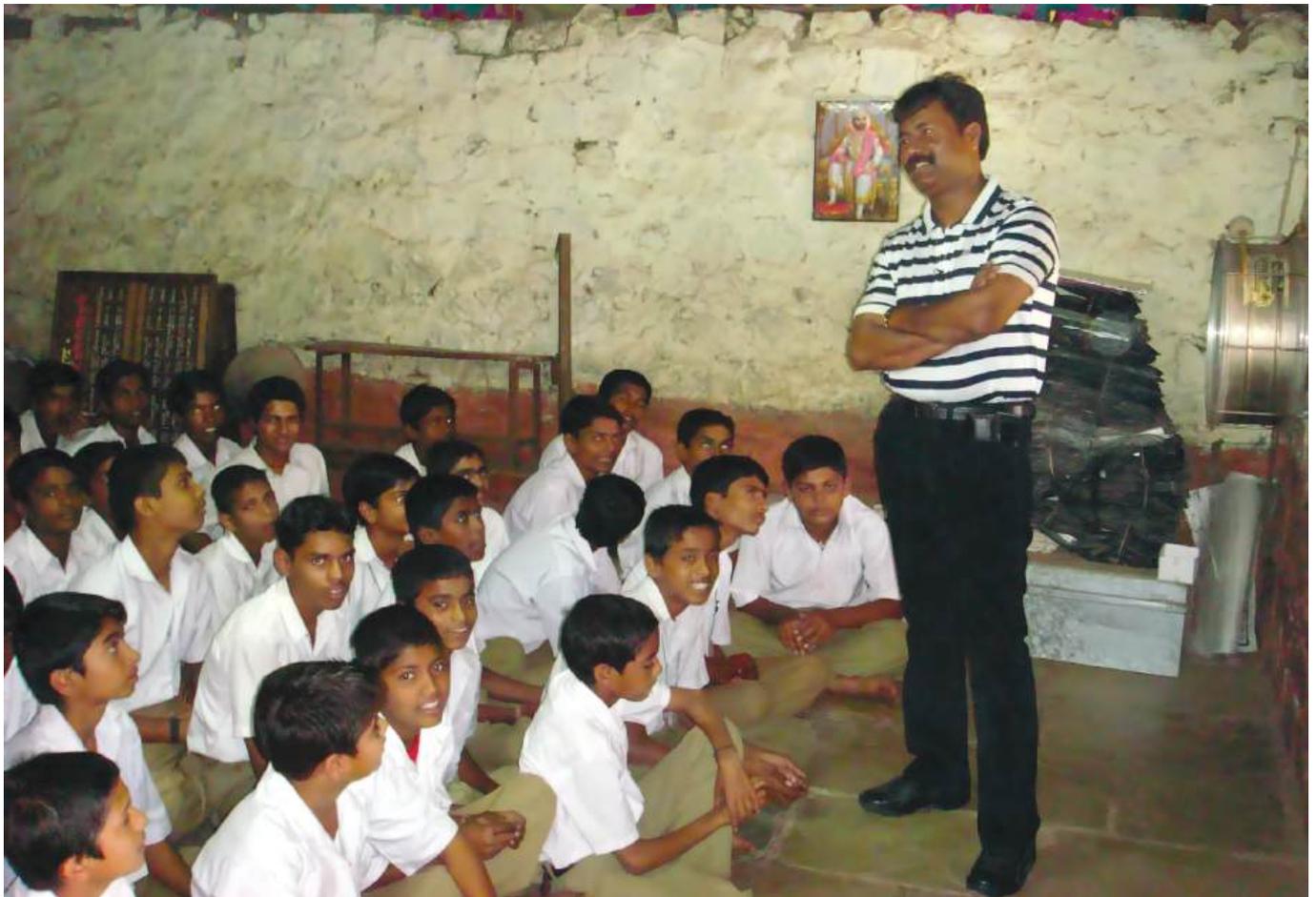
Gyan-key vachanalya has gone on to become the world's largest rural reading initiative; and more than 7, 60,000 books have been sent out into the villages

"We add the information with the help of villagers, NRVs and village developers. The target is to have 85,000 VillagewiKY villages in 1,000 working days," he says.

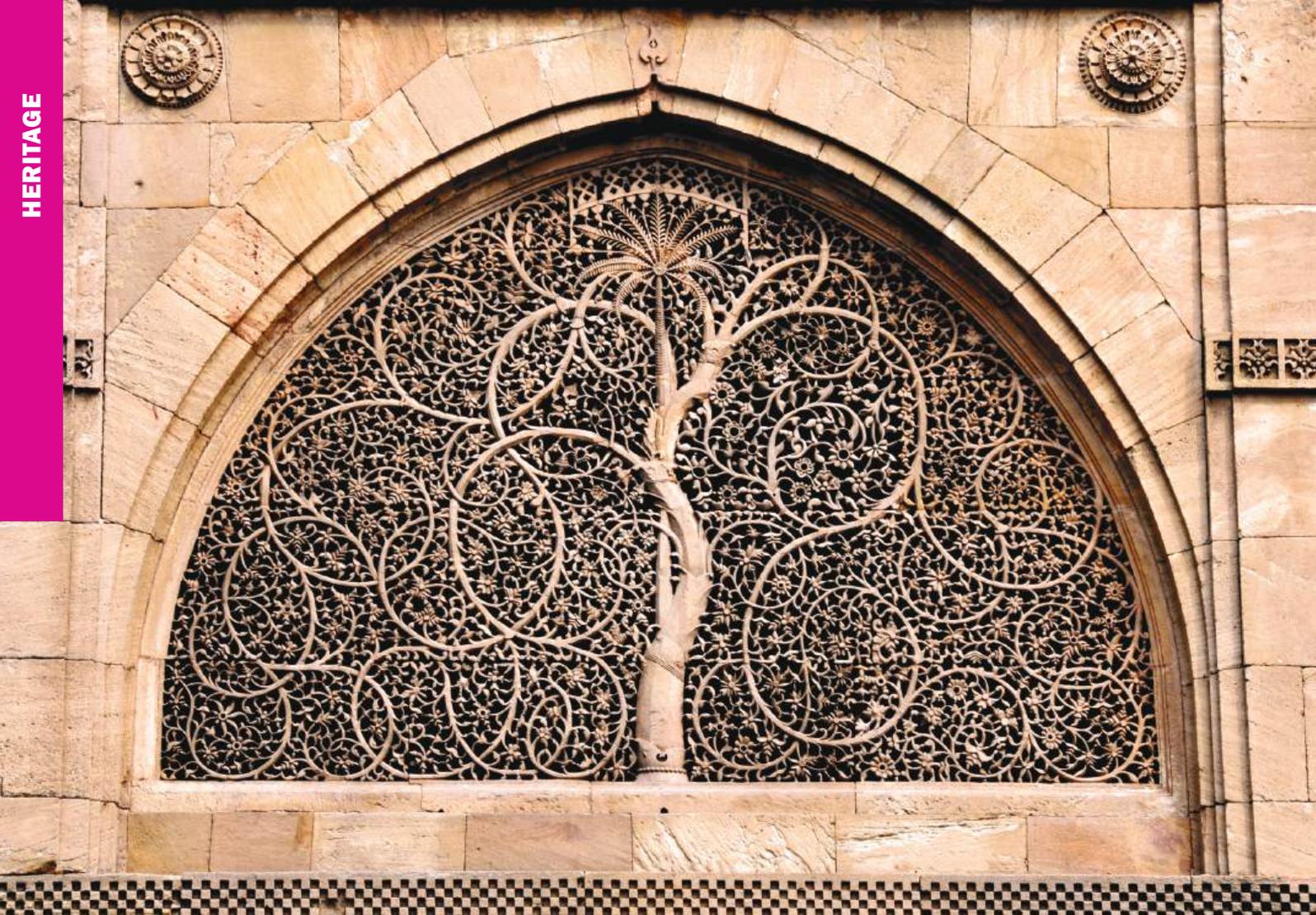
His mission is to touch the hearts of tomorrow's India through VillagewiKY, with the help of his team-members and stakeholders like organisations and corporates. There is information about 43,000 villages online today. Lokhande

and his team are working on several other projects also.

What drives him? It cannot have been easy to get the villagers to open up. This 58-year-old social activist summarises, "When I see the look on a student's face, when he or she realises that they have a computer; when a child looks up to me in gratitude for a book on Sunita Williams I have given her, it gives me immense joy. I want to recall that look when I am dying. If a child is motivated to read, if I can create that impact, what more do I need?" Indeed. ■



Pradeep at one of the rural schools with the students



Journey to the Walled City of Ahmedabad

The Walled City of Ahmedabad is caught in a time-warp. The narrow lanes are lined with carved wooden facades of aristocratic family houses called *havelis*, majestic mosques and mausoleum complexes, and colourful Hindu and Jain temples. In June this year, Ahmedabad was bestowed with a rare honour: the UNESCO declared the Walled City of Ahmedabad as a World Heritage City, the first ever Indian city to make it to the list.

Anil Mulchandani and **Dinesh Shukla** explore the Walled City of Ahmedabad and come away simply amazed

The Walled City of Ahmedabad dates back more than 600 years. In the 15th century, Sultan Ahmed Shah decided to move the capital of the Gujarat Sultanate from Patan to the Karnavati site, on the banks of the Sabarmati River. According to a popular folk tale, the ruler was inspired to build the capital here when he chanced upon the unusual sight of a tiny hare chasing a ferocious dog in the area. A spiritual leader foretold great deeds and action from this incident and so the ruler decided to build a new capital in the same vicinity and call it, Ahmedabad.

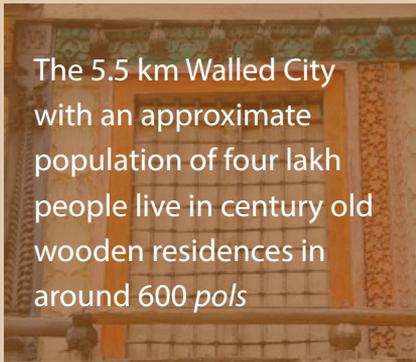
In 1411, the foundation stone was laid for the fort and the palace Bhadra and the Walled City of Ahmedabad was born.

The original city was designed by Sultan Ahmed Shah with shops circling the Jumma Masjid, and the Bhadra Fort nearby towering above them all. The city continued

to grow organically with the streets fanning out in a radial pattern and was fortified further by Sultan Muhammad Begda in the 15th century.

After the Mughals took over the city, Ahmedabad continued to grow forming micro-neighbourhoods called *pol*s circled by gates. A dozen gates still stand though the entire wall is almost demolished.

The 5.5 km Walled City's four lakh population lives in century-old wooden residences around 600 *pol*s.



Most *pol*s are clearly defined gated neighbourhoods and each inhabited by a single community like Jains or the Vaishnavs or the Nagar Brahmins. Each *pol* is equipped with water harvesting tanks and wells and ornate bird feeding tower like structures topped by an octagonal or pentagon shaped enclosure called *chabutras*. A stroll through the Walled City is exciting as the people lead traditional lives in the old houses and transact business in markets called *ols*. Many *havelis* have wooden facades decorated with woodcarvings on their balconies, brackets and pillars.

The UNESCO site describes the splendor of the Walled City thus: "...it presents a rich architectural heritage from the Sultanate period notably the Bhadra citadel, the walls and gates of the Fort city and numerous mosques and tombs as well as important Hindu and Jain temples of later periods. The urban fabric is made up of densely-packed traditional houses (*pol*s) in gated traditional streets (*pur*s) with characteristic features such as bird feeders, public wells and religious institutions."

The Walled City showcases many of the stunning temples of Jains called *Derasars*. Some temples are decorated with beautiful vegetable dyed walls and corbelled domes, featuring woodcarvings in concentric circles, which end in a pendant in the dome centre.

Since Ahmedabad lacked a strong central power after the fall of the Sultanate, the *pol*s existed on the fringes of society and were managed by guilds of merchants, weavers and artisans. The mercantile guilds called *Mahajans*, were institution builders and started schools and other institutions in the Walled City, in the 1800s and 1900s.

However, the Walled City became decrepit with time. Debashish Nayak, head of the Heritage Management department, Ahmedabad University says, "Many heritage structures started to fall apart out of neglect. Ahmedabad also started to expand beyond the walls, as new neighbourhoods sprung up on the west of Sabarmati."

In the mid-1990s, the Heritage Management department prepared a detailed plan to revive the old neighbourhoods along with the Heritage Cell of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. The 'Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad' was launched in the Walled City, which

not only boosted heritage tourism but also created a sense of pride and community feeling among the residents of the *pol*s.

Nayak points out, "The challenge was to create a plan to protect our important monuments, upgrade roads, and maintain public areas in the Walled City. An Indo-French cultural project also undertook the restoration of some courtyard houses and helped in coming up with a heritage conservation plan in the early 2000s."

The 2001 Gujarat earthquake also revealed how resistant and solid these old structures were in the face of natural disasters and people sat up and took interest in the Walled City, he adds.

Every year, the Ahmedabad Heritage Festival launched in 2007 encompasses a number of arts and cultural events, which unfold for a week from November 19. The events are arranged by NGOs, art galleries, associations, entrepreneurs, cultural groups, corporate houses, hotels and restaurants but collectively promoted by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC).

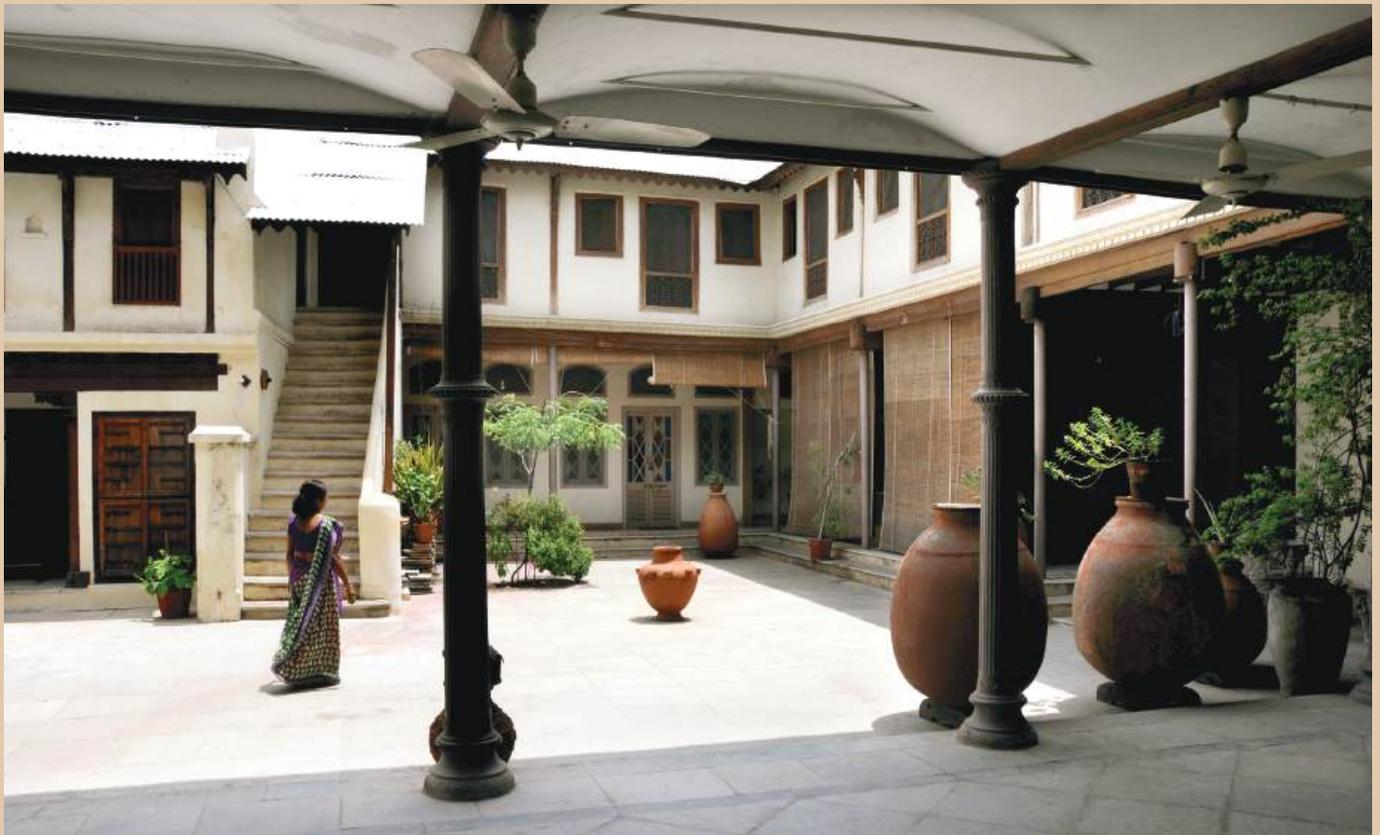
"This festival is an attempt to showcase Ahmedabad as a heritage tourism destination to the world at large, create awareness about the historical and living heritage among the residents, and get public or



The carved wooden facades of havelis evoke the sense of the old heritage of the Walled City



The 15th century Jamma Masjid is one of the most impressive monuments in the Walled City



The open courtyard of a prominent family's house has now been converted into an institution

institutional support for restoring the structures", says Nayak.

By 2009, a civic group was formed by local real estate developers committed to invest in the restoration of historic buildings within the old Walled City. Says Rajiv Patel, one of the promoters of City Heritage Centre, an Ahmedabad based NGO

to create awareness about heritage conservation, "We needed to take up the cause of Ahmedabad's heritage as a corporate social responsibility. We undertook many projects and also bought *havelis* for restoration. These *havelis* have become self-sustaining enterprises adapted for homestays,

Survey of India, together with a number of NGOs, individual activists and entrepreneurs, agreed to cooperate to revitalise Ahmedabad's historic neighborhoods and to jointly manage the city's monuments. The movement gathered momentum in 2011, when the city celebrated its 600th year with a series of landmark events.



The woodwork

The 'Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad' was launched in the Walled City, which not only boosted heritage tourism but also created a sense of pride and community feeling among the people living in the *pols*

heritage hotels, hostels, craft centres or institutes." The economy of the Ahmedabad's old city significantly improved after the *havelis* were converted into homestays on a large scale.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the Archaeological

In July 2017, the historic city of Ahmedabad was made a World Heritage site by UNESCO. "There are many conditions to be fulfilled over the next few years. The certification is only the beginning of the journey to strengthen Ahmedabad's position as a World Heritage City," says Gupta passionately.

Truly, the Walled City is a significant site for all Indians today because it is a perfect example of how dominant Hindu, Islamic and Jain communities peacefully co-exist together in the area and have done so for decades. Besides the architectural marvels of wooden *havelis*, one has to remember the city was the epicenter of India's non-violent freedom struggle that led to the country's independence in 1947. ■

UBF Diary

August 2017

Congratulations!

Dr Raghu Ram met with Sri Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Vice-President of India at his home in New Delhi to congratulate him on being elected to the second highest constitutional position in the country. During his interaction, he appraised the Vice-President regarding the pioneering initiatives championed by the Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation and KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, to improve the delivery of breast healthcare in the Telugu states over the past decade (2007–2017). Sri Venkaiah Naidu meanwhile was appreciative of Dr Raghu Ram's accomplishments in breast cancer awareness and wished him luck.



A Role Model for the Young

Dr Raghu Ram was the chief guest at the 71st Independence Day celebrations held at Chirec School at Gachibowli, Hyderabad



Orations Galore...

Youngest Doctor ever to deliver the Tony Gabriel Memorial Oration at Sri Lanka

Dr Raghu Ram achieved the distinction to become the youngest doctor ever, to deliver the prestigious Tony Gabriel Memorial Oration in Kandy, Sri Lanka at the 46th Annual Congress of College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka held in association with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and SAARC Surgical Care Society.

This oration was instituted in memory of Professor Tony Gabriel, a legendary surgeon widely considered to be the 'godfather' of surgical oncology in Sri Lanka.

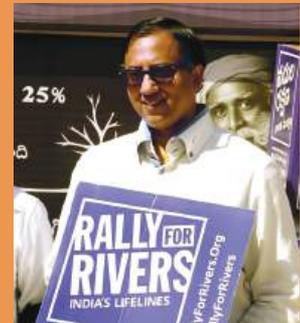


The Dr C William Memorial Oration at Nagercoil

Dr Raghu Ram delivered the Dr C William Memorial Oration, instituted by the Nagarcoil branch of the Association of Surgeons of India, in memory of a famous surgeon, who had significantly contributed towards the development of the art and science of surgery.

Championing 'Rally for Rivers' Campaign

Dr Raghu Ram, was one of the prominent people in the country handpicked by the Isha Foundation to lend his face and his voice to support the pan-India 'Rally for Rivers' Campaign spearheaded by Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev. Dr Raghu Ram's recorded message in English and Telugu was posted on Isha Foundation's social media platforms. He also joined volunteers in Hyderabad, to lend his support to the ongoing campaign held at the KBR Park.



The Mahatma and a Letter



Inspired by a personal letter penned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself, **Dr Raghu Ram** walks the talk and spearheads the ‘Swachhata Hi Seva’ cleanliness drive in his adopted village— Ibrahimpur. It turns out to be a fitting tribute to the late Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of Gandhi Jayanti

‘Cleanliness is more important than Independence’ – Mahatma Gandhi

On the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, Dr P Raghu Ram, director of the Hyderabad-based KIMS-Ushalakshmi Centre for Breast Diseases, spearheaded a ‘cleanliness drive’ in his adopted village, Ibrahimpur, a remote village in Medak district in Telangana. It was not just Mahatma Gandhi, who inspired Dr Raghu Ram to undertake this social cause but a personal letter written by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the letter, the Prime Minister had invited Dr Raghu Ram to lend his support to the pan-India campaign — ‘Swachhata Hi Seva’.

The cleanliness drive in Ibrahimpur was conducted near the Gandhi Statue, the water tank and at the Pochamma Temple locality. The one-day event was flagged off with Dr Raghu Ram garlanding Babu’s statue, situated in the heart of the village. Dr Raghu Ram too participated in the clean-up in three separate areas in the village ensuring all the waste reaches the village dump-yard in a newly-commissioned, battery-operated, sanitation van.

Along with the village residents, he also planted trees on an empty wasteland. Thus, Dr Raghu Ram was not just participating in ‘Swachhata Hi Seva’ campaign, he was helping to green the existing sparse environment.

In his address to the village residents, Dr Raghu Ram emphasized that as citizens of this great nation, it is important to respond to the clarion call given by the Prime Minister to keep our surroundings clean. He echoed Prime Minister Modi’s views that ‘coming together for cleanliness will be a fitting tribute to Babu and working for a New India’.

Dr Raghu Ram paid tributes to Harish Rao, cabinet minister, Telangana government, for implementing many innovative initiatives in the village making it a model Indian village. He appreciated the efforts of the village Sarpanch, P Yella Reddy for achieving the distinction of making Ibrahimpur a 100 per cent open defecation-free village. Dr Raghu Ram underlined the fact that in order to ensure a clean India, it was crucial to solve the problems of sanitation, safe toilet, and proper waste management.

There are 265 homes in Ibrahimpur, and there was a huge turnout for the cleanliness drive, thus helping Prime Minister’s pet campaign get maximum inspiration and impact.

The Swachh Bharat campaign was officially launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 145th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, in 2014. The ongoing pan-India mission is to ensure a clean India by October 2, 2019 to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary.





सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

New Delhi
09 September, 2017

Dr. Raghu Ram Pillarisetti ji,

I am writing to you on a subject that is very close to Mahatma Gandhi's heart- *Swachhata* or cleanliness.

In the coming days, we will commemorate *Gandhi Jayanti*. An inspiration to billions across generations and borders, Mahatma Gandhi recognized that our attitude towards cleanliness also reflects our attitude towards society. Bapu believed in achieving cleanliness through community participation.

Bapu also believed strongly that *Swachhata* is for each of us to practice. Inspired by his noble thoughts, and a faith in the spirit of 125 crore Indians, let us renew our pledge towards cleanliness. **Let us ensure that the coming days are about living the Mantra of 'Swachhata Hi Seva.'** Leading up to *Gandhi Jayanti*, we can encourage wide spread support for, and participation in cleanliness initiatives across India.

A clean India is the most noble service we can do for the poor, downtrodden and the marginalised. Unclean surroundings adversely impact the weaker sections of society even more.

Your contribution to the field of medicine has helped the nation attain distinction in the healthcare sector globally as well as provided relief to the ailing. Your involvement in the cleanliness initiative would be instrumental in building a clean and healthy India.

I personally invite you to lend your support to the '*Swachhata Hi Seva*' movement and dedicate some time for the cause of a Swachh Bharat. Your participation will further inspire others to be a part of the movement. You can share your experience with me on the Narendra Modi Mobile App.

Let us all come together for cleanliness, pay a fitting tribute to Bapu and work towards building a New India.

Jai Hind!

Yours,

(Narendra Modi)





Happiness is a choice, with or without cancer.

Karvy salutes the survivors and a million other battling with breast cancer.