

Dr. P. Raghu Ram

*MS, FACS, FRCS (England), FRCS (Edinburgh), FRCS (Glasgow), FRCS (Ireland),
Hon. FRCS (Thailand), Hon. FCCS (China)*

Padma Shri conferred by Hon'ble President of India (2015)

Dr. B.C. Roy National award conferred by Hon'ble President of India (2016)

President, The Association of Surgeons of India (2020)



Contact details

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Qualifications

MBBS: Siddhartha Medical College, Vijayawada, India - 1991

MS (General Surgery) - Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore, India - 1995

FRCS (Edinburgh) - 1997

FRCS (Glasgow) - 1997

FRCS (Ireland) - 1997

FRCS (England) - 2010

Fellowship ad eundem conferred by the Royal College of Surgeons of England

FACS (The American College of Surgeons) – 2014

Honorary Fellowship conferred by The Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand

Hon. FRCS (Thailand) – 2019

Honorary Fellowship conferred by The Chinese College of Surgeons

Hon. FCCS (China) – 2020

Appointments

Current:

- Founder, CEO and Director of Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation (2007 – present)
- Director and Consultant Surgeon at KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad, India (October 2007 – to date)
- President, The Association of Surgeons of India (2020)
- International Surgical Advisor, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (2012 – to date)
- Chairman, Academic Advisory Board, Administrative Staff College of India (2020)

Previous:

- Convenor, International Affairs, The Association of Surgeons of India (2017 – 2018 & 2009 - 2012)
- President, The Association of Breast Surgeons of India (2015 – 2017)
- Founder Honorary Secretary, The Association of Breast Surgeons of India (2011 – 2013)
- Member, Executive Committee, The Association of Surgeons of India (2013 – 2015)
- Joint Editor, Indian Journal of Surgical Oncology (2010 – 2014)
- Member, National Executive Committee (2009 - 2010) and Overseas Coordinator (2005 – 2008), Indian Association of Surgical Oncology

The unique achievements of a visionary

Amongst the foremost surgeons in the Asia Pacific region, Dr. Raghu Ram has revolutionised breast cancer care in India through a series of innovative measures. This disease ranks as the number one cancer among Indian women with around one in 22 women affected, half of whom will die from the disease.

He established South Asia's First comprehensive Breast Health Centre and founded a charitable Foundation to raise awareness of the disease nationwide. He implemented South Asia's largest population-based screening programme in the southern Indian states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, which has already demonstrably saved many lives – this programme is currently being rolled out nationwide. In addition, he has developed the World's First breast health mobile phone app in 12 languages, making women across the nation more aware about importance of early detection in a country where the subject used to be completely a taboo – so far, it has been downloaded by thousands of people all across India. He launched the world's first Life size augmented integrated reality for breast cancer awareness to further achieve the mission to transform breast cancer from a “closet” issue to a much commonly discussed one, particularly in rural India, where more than 70% of our population reside.

He adopted a remote village in the Southern Indian State of Telangana, where he has provided life-changing equipment and facilities through his personal philanthropy.

Alongside many prestigious professional awards worldwide, he is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and all four surgical Royal Colleges in the British Isles - Edinburgh, England, Glasgow & Ireland. He was conferred Honorary FRCS by the Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand (2019), Honorary Fellowship of the Chinese College of Surgeons (2020) & is due to be conferred the Honorary Fellowship of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka (November 2020)

He is one of the youngest surgeons elected to serve as President of The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) for the year 2020, polling the highest number of votes and securing the biggest ever landslide margin in the 82 years history of the Organisation. ASI is Asia Pacific's largest and the World's second largest Surgical Organisation representing practicing surgeons and surgical trainees in India.

In recognition of his outstanding academic track record, innovative initiatives that have transformed Breast healthcare in India & life transforming philanthropy in his adopted Village, he was conferred the prestigious **Padma Shri** by **Hon'ble President of India (2015)** making him one of the youngest surgeons in India to have been bestowed one of the highest civilian awards of the land. He is also one of the youngest to be conferred '**Dr. B.C Roy National Award**' by **Hon'ble President of India (2016)**, which is the highest recognition that can be achieved by a doctor practicing Medicine in India. He is the youngest ever recipient of the **International Gold Medal** in the 515 years history of the **Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (2013)**. He is one of the youngest to have delivered **Col. Pandalai Oration (2018)** instituted by The Association of Surgeons of India, which is the highest academic honour that can be achieved by a surgeon practicing in India.

The beginning of his life's calling

After completing his Basic Surgical Training in India, he went to the United Kingdom in 1997 and obtained structured Higher Surgical Training and sub-specialty training in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery at some of the world renowned centres of excellence in the United Kingdom.

But in 2002 came a defining moment: his mother, Dr Ushalakshmi, a renowned Gynaecologist from Hyderabad, was diagnosed with breast cancer. The unexpected diagnosis of someone close to him, coupled with huge disparity in breast cancer care across India, became the turning point in his life. In spite of the fact that he had rewarding career opportunities in the United Kingdom, he relocated to India in 2007. Over the past 13 years, he has been working with missionary zeal towards bringing about revolutionary changes to the delivery of breast health care in the country where he was born and raised.

His remarkable accomplishments whilst in the UK formed the starting point for his life in India. He arrived home in 2007 with four goals:

1. To establish a dedicated centre for breast health
2. To establish a 'not for profit' breast cancer foundation
3. To implement a population-based breast cancer screening programme with the specific goal of reaching out to the underprivileged community
4. To establish breast surgery as a subspecialty in India

He has achieved three out of these four aims and has paved the way for the fourth one.

1. Dedicated Centre for Breast Health

Demonstrating extraordinary leadership, he conceived, designed and established South Asia's first free-standing, purpose-built and comprehensive Breast Health Centre in Hyderabad, the capital city of the southern Indian State of Telangana (2007).

KIMS–USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases (www.breastcancerindia.org) was established under the auspices of KIMS Hospital, which one of the largest Private Hospital group in South India. He designed the Breast Centre based on the best aspects of the Royal Marsden, Cardiff and Nottingham breast Centres. Clinical assessment, breast imaging, breast biopsy and counseling are all done in a unit that is dedicated to the management of all types of breast disease, both benign and malignant, by a committed multidisciplinary team. Named after his mother, KIMS–USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases has made significant and meaningful difference to many lives for well over ten years, in addition to bringing about a revolutionary change in the way '**Breast Health Centre** is understood' in the Indian subcontinent.

2. Breast Cancer Foundation & advocacy

Breast cancer is the commonest cancer affecting women in India. Due to lack of awareness and absence of an organized population based breast cancer screening programme, the vast majority present in advanced stages with poor survival. In many parts of the country, it is still a taboo subject – a ‘closet’ issue that is not talked about. With a vision to make breast cancer an openly discussed issue, and to empower women about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, he founded **Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation, a ‘not for profit’ Charity** in 2007 (www.ubf.org.in). Under the auspices of the Foundation, he championed the Pink Ribbon Campaign, which is a one of its kind large-scale breast cancer awareness drive across the southern Indian states of Telangana & Andhra Pradesh. For well over a decade, this impactful campaign spearheaded through a number of unique & innovative initiatives has had a huge impact, translating to more women in the region being diagnosed in early stages and consequently improved survival.

Inspired by Prime Minister of India’s dream of Digital India, he developed the **World’s first mobile app on breast health** in twelve commonly spoken Indian languages. The mobile application, “ABC’s OF BREAST HEALTH”, which is freely downloadable in both Apple and Google play store provides information about every aspect of breast cancer and benign non cancer breast health issues explained in simple easy to understand format. The aim of this landmark initiative, which was launched in 2017, is to counsel, guide & educate people across the nation about various aspects of Breast health so that they are well informed & better prepared, thus filling a huge void in breast health care in South Asia.

As an adjunct to the landmark mobile app launched in 2017, in an initiative for the **first time in the world**, he has integrated **life size augmented reality technology** in the mobile app to spread the message of early detection of breast cancer to a large section of people. This is a futuristic technology has a potential for the ‘celebrity and doctor’ to enter into people’s homes and create awareness, without actually physically being present. Since 2019, he has been conducting breast cancer awareness sessions in rural India (where more than 70% of the population reside) through this creative effort.

3. A population based breast cancer screening programme reaching out to the underprivileged

Screening mammography is not a viable option for population-based screening in India. Reasons are enormous costs, early age at diagnosis, huge variation in mammographic reporting and quality assurance issues. With the singular aim of ensuring early detection of breast cancer and to find an ‘Indian solution’ that would save many lives, particularly in rural India, under the auspices of Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation, he has implemented **South Asia’s largest Clinical Breast Examination (CBE) based Breast Cancer Screening Programme** in southern Indian States of Telangana & Andhra Pradesh. Since 2012, over 200,000 underprivileged women between the ages of 35 and 65, spread across 4,000 villages in the region have been screened for early signs of breast cancer by way of CBE performed by 3,750 trained healthcare workers, employed with the Governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The innovative idea of using healthcare workers was Dr Raghu Ram's brainchild. He knew that underprivileged women in rural India were innately shy of doctors and reluctant to discuss anything as intimate as breast care. Therefore, he approached the governments of the two States to suggest they use existing healthcare workers, who were known and trusted. Both the State Governments readily agreed to his proposal. Core trainers in both the states were identified and trained to perform CBE under the auspices of Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation. These core trainers further trained all other healthcare workers across the region. This programme detected 392 cancers, as well as numerous other non-malignant conditions. Breast cancers detected through this initiative are being treated free of charge through the State Government-funded Aarogyasri scheme.

This milestone project made national impact in 2016 and he was invited to be part of a high-powered Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Group (TAG) set up by the Government of India's Union Ministry of Health that approved the proposal to replicate this CBE based Breast cancer Screening Programme all over India. The pan India initiative is currently being rolled in 220 districts nationwide.

4. Establish Breast Surgery as a subspecialty in India

Recognizing the need to develop Breast Surgery as a distinct subspecialty in India, he garnered support from colleagues and has been the major driving force in establishing **The Association of Breast Surgeons of India (ABSIS)** in 2011, which is the First & only Organisation in South Asia that represents General Surgeons, Surgical Oncologists & Plastic Surgeons treating patients with Breast Disease. He served as Founder Honorary Secretary (2011 – 2013) and President (2015 – 2017) of this Association. ABSIS has been established along similar lines to those of The American Society of Breast Surgeons & The Association of Breast Surgeons in the UK. The formation of ABSIS (www.absis.in) in many ways is the first step towards developing breast surgery as a distinct subspecialty in India.

During his term as President, '**ABSIS Training module**' was launched in twelve cities and towns all over India. This pan India training module initiated in 2016 achieved the objective of imparting standardized teaching to trainees and surgeons regarding management of patients presenting with various breast disorders. He also spearheaded the '**ABSIS-UK Fellowship Programme**', which allows surgical trainees from India selected on merit to obtain 'hands on' one year subspecialty training in breast centres of excellence in the UK. Commenced in 2016, five trainees from India have completed their training in the UK.

He served as a member of the **Board of Advocates at the American Society of Breast Surgeons in 2009**, the first & the only surgeon from outside USA to have been a member of this Board.

Academic contributions to the development of breast surgery

In addition to publishing editorials & articles in peer reviewed Journals, he contributed ten Chapters in five Textbooks of Surgery. This includes Chapters on Breast Surgery in the world-renowned 'Bailey & Love Companion Guide', Recent advances in Surgery and Breast Cancer – Global Quality care" (Oxford University publication).

Over the past two decades, he has delivered several Orations/Guest lectures, and equally, conducted various Symposia/Panel Discussions on various aspects of Breast Disease at National & International Meetings.

His pioneering work in India has been recognised with invitations to deliver Key Note addresses/Guest lectures & Orations world over. The presentations focus upon the innovative & unique initiatives that he has been spearheading to improve breast healthcare in India.

- *American Society of Breast Surgeons (2014)*
- *Association of Breast Surgeons in the UK (2015)*
- *The Association of Breast Surgeons of Australia & New Zealand (2016)*
- *College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka (2017 – Tony Gabriel Memorial Oration)*
- *Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand (2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019)*
- *Malaysian College of Surgeons (2019)*
- *Philippine College of Surgeons (2019)*
- *Japan Surgical Society (2020)*
- *Chinese College of Surgeons (2019, 2020)*
- *Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland (2021) – deferred 2020 Centenary Congress)*
- *Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (2021) – deferred 2020 annual Congress)*

He achieved the rare honour of being invited to deliver the **Colonel Pandalai Oration** (Chennai, 2018), which has been instituted in memory of Col. Pandalai, the founder president of the ASI. This is the **highest academic honour that can be achieved by a Surgeon practicing in India**

He was handpicked to deliver several other prestigious orations in India, which include - Dr. K.C. Mahajan Oration (2020), Dr. T.S. Jairam Lecture (2020), Dr. Lalit Mohan Oration (2020), Dr. K.P. Prabhu Memorial Oration (2019), Madras Medical College Institute Day Oration (2019), Dr AK Chary Memorial Oration (2018), Dr. R. Prasad Memorial Oration (2018), Dr M.J. Mehtha Oration (2018), Professor C. Williams Oration (2018), Dr Kodali Varaprasad Memorial Oration (2017), ABSI Presidential Oration (2017), Satyapal Tuli Memorial Oration (2017), Ghatge Memorial Oration (2015), 'Dr TVS Chalapathi Rao Memorial Oration (2015), International Medical Sciences Academy Oration (2012) & Prof. Krishnamurthy Golden Independence Commemorative Oration (2011).

Improving standards of Surgical Education in India

1. Royal College Courses, Examinations and Training

In a determined effort to help surgeons from the Indian subcontinent prepare for the Intercollegiate final MRCS examinations conducted by the Surgical Royal Colleges, he has conducted twelve annual overseas courses in Hyderabad since 2000. Held under the auspices of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCS Ed), these courses have helped well over 2,000 doctors – ***the highest number of courses ever held by the Royal College outside the UK.***

Since 2008, he has been convening annually the Overseas Intercollegiate Final MRCS Examinations in Hyderabad on behalf of Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and Royal College of Surgeons of England, thereby sparing the need for doctors to visit the UK.

As International Surgical Advisor for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and has been providing strategic direction to the Royal College's academic activities in the Indian subcontinent since 2012.

2. Contribution to The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) – the largest organisation in South Asia, representing close to 30,000 surgeons across the country.

Established in 1938, The Association of Surgeons of India is widely considered to be the 'voice for Surgery' in India. Starting from a humble beginning with 112 members, the Association of Surgeons of India has grown phenomenally and is currently the largest surgical Association in Asia Pacific region and the second largest in the world after The American College of Surgeons (which is the world's largest surgical body).

With Academics, Education & Training as his top priorities, he launched a number of skill based Courses for Surgical trainees during his Presidential term in 2020 (*ASI Basic Surgical Skills Course, ASI Critical Care Course, ASI Basic Laparoscopic Skills Course, ASI Anastomosis Skills Course & ASI Communication Skills Course*). 15 Courses were delivered in various parts of India over a three month period (January – March 2020).

In an earnest endeavor to enable trainees to present their work at international meetings whilst pursuing their MS/DNB Course, he has been successful in convincing key opinion makers and leaders in overseas surgical associations to create a time slot for trainees from India to present at their meetings. Arrangements were in place including funding for trainees to present at the 120th annual Congress of Japan Surgical Society in Tokyo (August 2020), 54th annual Scientific Congress of College of Surgeons of Malaysia in Penang (August 2020), 49th Annual Scientific Congress of College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka in Colombo (November 2020) and at the 106th Annual Clinical Congress of The American College of Surgeons in Chicago (October 2020). However, due to the ongoing pandemic, this initiative has been postponed to 2021.

In his capacity as Convenor, International Affairs for the Association of Surgeons of India (2017 – 2018), he played a key role in fostering close relationship between the ASI and Surgical Associations all over the world. Since October 2017, in partnership with The Royal College of Surgeons of England, he has paved the way for many bright young surgeons from the Indian subcontinent, who have recently completed their basic surgical training, to obtain two years' 'hands on' advanced subspecialty training at centres of excellence in the UK through the Royal College of Surgeons of England's International Surgical Training Programme (ISTP) initiative. 55 trainees from all over India have been selected for obtaining advanced training at various NHS centres of excellence in the following specialties – Breast Surgery, ENT Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Plastic Surgery, Trauma/Orthopaedics, Urology and Vascular surgery.

With a focus on introducing and exposing surgical trainees from India to world-renowned surgeons in the UK, he successfully conducted a joint academic meeting of the Association of Surgeons of India in partnership with The Royal College of Surgeons of England in Hyderabad (July 2017) and with The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in Vijayawada (July 2018).

Eager to promote mutual academic, surgical and professional exchange, as Overseas Coordinator for ASI (2009 – 2012), he proposed and coordinated the formation of the UK and Ireland Chapter of ASI. It has brought together surgeons of Indian origin living in the British Isles and encouraged them to contribute actively to the academic activities of ASI.

As Overseas Coordinator for IASO (2005 – 2008), he was instrumental in forging a closer relationship between IASO and the British Association of Surgical Oncology (BASO), the equivalent association for surgical oncologists in the United Kingdom.

Personal Philanthropy

At a personal level, he **adopted Ibrahimpur**, a remote village in the Southern Indian State of Telangana. Since 2015, he has championed a number of **life transforming initiatives** in the hamlet through a very generous philanthropic contribution, which attracted local, regional & national appreciation.

From his own resources, he provided:

- ❖ A study room to help the student community in the village prepare for competitive examinations, with state-of-the-art internet facilities
- ❖ A dining room at the village school, so students do not have to eat their lunch in the open compound, particularly during summer
- ❖ A modern crematorium, which is also being used by people from surrounding villages
- ❖ Home solar system, which provides reliable source of 100% free electricity to the poorest of the poor 26 homes in the village

- ❖ 46 sheds for all the 46 families with cattle; constructed in the outskirts of the village, these minimise cattle-borne infections in the community (a first of its kind initiative in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh)
- ❖ A community library, which provides access to newspapers, magazines, and books, in addition to an internet cafe for residents. This space will also be used to conduct targeted awareness sessions by community healthcare workers using the audio-visual facilities in the library.
- ❖ A community function hall that can host 200 people which can be used by residents of the village for weddings and other large family functions.
- ❖ A modern open Gym to ensure people exercise regularly and look after their health
- ❖ Funding of tuitions after school hours – a unique initiative to ensure the underprivileged school children secure good marks in exams.

A life in film

Dr Nikhil Kaushik, a consultant eye surgeon based in Wrexham (United Kingdom), was inspired to make a Bollywood film about Dr. Pillarisetti's life. The film, '*Bhasvishya - The Future*', centres on the bold decision taken by Dr. Pillarisetti and his wife, Dr Vyjayanthi, to relocate to India, despite having lucrative career opportunities in the UK. It explores the broader issue of medical migration between India and the UK. Exactly ten years after its release (2016), the film was celebrated again at a red-carpet event in Hyderabad (India).

Dear Editor

Medical Migration

International Medical Graduates provide much valued service to the NHS in the UK. Most overseas graduates come to the UK for training and plan to stay here for a short period but then opportunities open up for permanent career posts and settlement in the UK. Balancing personal and professional opportunities between the comforts of a developed nation versus the challenges one may have to face on return to their homeland is never easy.



There are many who return to their homeland. There are some who return but then come back to the UK because of the inability to adjust to a system that is so differently executed that one is unable to adjust to. There are a few who carefully weigh up the choices between a promising career in the UK and the harsh reality of hard and competitive professional life in countries such as India.

It has been a decade since I explored professional migration between India and the UK, in a Bollywood style film, "Bhavishya-The Future". Drs Raghu and Vyjayanthi, active members of the North Wales division of BIDA was one such couple, who carefully considered and weighed up their choices, with Raghu being on the verge of being appointed a Consultant Surgeon and Vyjayanthi pursuing a career in the field of IVF. Their thoughts and considerations were reflected in the screenplay of my film.

Raghu and Vyjayanthi have been back in their native Hyderabad for over a decade now and have been involved with the state of the art KIMS hospitals, with Raghu having conceived and designed and established KIMS-USHALAXMI Centre for Breast Diseases, the subcontinent's first free standing purpose built comprehensive Breast Health Centre, while Dr Vyjayanthi heads the single largest fertility Centre in Telangana & Andhra Pradesh.

I was pleasantly surprised to be invited to a symposium focusing on Professional migration, acknowledging Drs Raghu and Vyjayanthi's dedicated service and celebrating a decade of the film "Bhavishya-The Future". A well attended symposium, on the 14th April 2016, heard from several participants from medical as well as other professions, detailing difficulties they faced on return to India as well as the joy of being back home. Most speakers highly valued their association and time spent in the UK.

As I left Hyderabad hearing so much good about the British NHS, I wondered why we in the UK are not very satisfied with it. Why many of our senior professionals feel marginalised and junior trainees feel undervalued. In despondence many are considering resigning and emigrating. I wonder if those leaving the UK, will possibly return and bring to the NHS something like what Drs Raghu and Vyjayanthi took with them from the UK to India. Their example and the message from my film 'Bhavishya-The Future', that the Future is not a fixed point and that medical migration is and will always remain relevant to the benefit of global health!

Mr Nikhil Kaushik

*FRCOphth
Consultant Ophthalmologist
Wrexham Maelor Hospital*



1ay 2016

Letter to the Editor, BIDA News Review, United Kingdom, May 2016

Conclusion

Dr Raghu Ram's distinguished academic tract record, love for his motherland and passion for social service are very strong characteristics of the Man. He has been an advocate of best practices in his chosen field, coupled with a human touch and many altruistic values. His significant contribution towards improving breast healthcare and surgical education in India through his strong links with the United Kingdom, have been his trademarks.

Announcing his return to India in 2007, Dr. Raghu Ram stated:

*"I would like to echo JF Kennedy's words to his fellow Americans that relate to Indians through a very poignant and thought-provoking speech given by late Dr Abdul Kalam, the former President of India – **'Ask what we can do for India and do what has to be done to make India what America and other Western countries are today.'***