

Dr. Raghu Ram Pillarisetti OBE

*MS, FRCS (England), FRCS (Edinburgh), FRCS (Glasgow), FRCS (Ireland),
FACS (USA), Hon. FRCS (Thailand), Hon. FCSSL (Sri Lanka), Hon. FCCS (China)
Hon. Fellow, The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland*

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

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

**OBE - Officer of the Most excellent Order of British Empire
conferred by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II (2021)**

Contact details

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Reference – Wikipedia page

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raghu_Ram_Pillarisetti

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 College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka
Hon. FCSSL (Sri Lanka) – 2020

Honorary Fellowship conferred by The Chinese College of Surgeons
Hon. FCCS (China) – 2020

Honorary Fellowship conferred by The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland - 2021

Appointments

Current:

- Founder, CEO and Director of Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation (since 2007)
- Founding Director & Consultant Surgeon, KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases, KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad, India (since 2007)
- Director, International affairs – Great Eastern Medical School, Srikakulam, India
- Chairman, Academic Advisory Board, Administrative Staff College of India (2020 - 2023)
- Immediate Past President, The Association of Surgeons of India (2021)

Previous:

- President, The Association of Surgeons of India (2020)
- International Surgical Advisor, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (2012 – 2020)
- 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, National Executive Committee, The Association of Surgeons of India (2013 – 2015)
- Member, Steering Committee & Technical Advisory Group, Cancer Screening, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (2016)
- 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 Pillarisetti 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 – this programme is currently being rolled out nationwide.

Inspired by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India's digital India dream, he developed the **World's First breast health mobile phone app** in **English & 11 commonly spoken Indian languages**, making women across the nation more aware about importance of early detection in a country where the subject is considered to be 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 (Ibrahimpur), where he has provided life-changing equipment and facilities through his **personal philanthropy**.

He is one of the **youngest surgeons elected to have served 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 83 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.

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 College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka (2020).

He was recently recognized in **Queen Elizabeth II's 2021 New Year's Honours** list that has been published in the "London Gazette" – the Official publication of the Crown on 30 Dec. 2020. He achieved the rare distinction of becoming **one of the youngest Surgeons of Indian origin in over 100 years** to be honoured by Her Majesty, The Queen with an **OBE – Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire**. This is the **second highest ranking Order of the British Empire award** (excluding a Knighthood/Damehood) conferred in recognition of his outstanding services towards *"improving breast cancer care and surgical education in India and to UK/India relations"*. Instituted in 1917 by King George V, The Queens Honours are amongst the most prestigious awards worldwide.

In July 2021, he achieved yet another rare distinction to become the **first & the only surgeon of Indian origin in 100 years** to be conferred **Honorary Fellowship** of the **Association of Surgeons of Great Britain & Ireland (ASGBI)**, an Organisation that represents the surgical fraternity in United Kingdom & Ireland. This is the highest honour & recognition that was bestowed upon him by the President of ASGBI during the Centenary General Body Meeting of the Association, which was held virtually on 20 July 2021.

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 to have been bestowed one of the highest civilian awards of the land. He is also one of the youngest Surgeons 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 516 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 successfully obtained structured Higher Surgical Training and sub-specialty training in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery at world renowned centres of excellence in the UK. 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 14 years, he has been working with missionary zeal towards bringing about revolutionary changes to the delivery of breast health care, and equally, he has made significant contribution towards improving surgical education in a country where he was born and raised. His remarkable accomplishments whilst in the UK formed the starting point for his life in India.

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 in the UK and Van Nuy's Centre in the USA. 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

Advocacy

Breast cancer is the commonest cancer affecting women in India. Due to lack of awareness, absence of a robust nationwide population based breast cancer screening programme and inequitable cancer care, the vast majority present in advanced stages with poor survival. In many parts of the country, it is still a 'closet' issue that is not talked about.

With a vision to make breast cancer an openly discussed one, and empower women about the importance of early detection of breast cancer in addition to spreading the message of Hope, Survival and Courage to those who have fought breast cancer, he founded **Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation** as a '**not for profit**' Charity in 2007 (www.ubf.org.in). To honour his mother's struggle & applaud her strength in the fight against breast cancer, the Foundation bears her name. Under the auspices of the Foundation, he launched 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 (2007 – 2021), this impactful campaign spearheaded through a number of unique & innovative initiatives championed by the Foundation made a huge impact, creating the much needed awareness about importance of early detection.

World's first mobile app on Breast Health in 12 languages

Inspired by **Prime Minister of India's dream of Digital India**, the Foundation developed the World's first mobile app on breast health in English & 11 commonly spoken Indian languages (*Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Oriya & Assamese*). The mobile application, "**ABCs 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.

Links for free download



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/abcs-of-breast-health/id1482487468>



<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=devatech.kims.avantari>

Screening

Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation in partnership with the Governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh has implemented **South Asia's largest Clinical Breast Examination (CBE) based Breast Cancer Screening Programme in rural Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**, which has very limited access to Mammography services. Underprivileged women in rural India are innately shy of doctors and reluctant to discuss anything as intimate as breast care. Therefore, Governments of the two States were approached with a request to utilise the expertise of existing healthcare workers. Core trainers in both the states were identified and trained to perform CBE under the auspices of the Foundation. These core trainers further trained all other healthcare workers across the region. Specifically prepared audio visual aids in English & Regional language (Telugu) were used to empower Healthcare workers before imparting 'hands on' training.

Link to training film (English version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjwcvePhROo>

Link to 'awareness film' (English version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHlamm6SHz8&feature=youtu.be>

Between 2012 – 2016, **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. 392 breast cancers detected through this initiative have been **treated free of charge** through the State Government-funded Aarogyasri scheme. This milestone project made national impact in 2016 and a high-powered **Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Group (TAG) set up by the Government of India's Union Ministry of Health**, of which he was a member, approved the proposal to implement CBE based Breast cancer Screening Programme all over India. This initiative is currently being rolled out nationwide.

3. Standardising Breast Healthcare in India

Up until 2011, there was no dedicated Surgical Society that focused exclusively upon issues surrounding breast disease. Recognizing the need to standardize the delivery of breast healthcare in India, he garnered support from colleagues majorly practicing breast surgery and was the principal driving force in establishing **The Association of Breast Surgeons of India (ABSI)** in 2011, which is the **First & only Organisation in South Asia** that represents General Surgeons, Surgical Oncologists & Plastic Surgeons treating patients with Breast Disease. ABSI was established along similar lines to The Association of Breast Surgeons in the UK & The American Society of Breast Surgeons. The formation of ABSI (www.absi.in) in many ways is the **first step towards developing breast surgery as a distinct subspecialty in India**.

During his term as ABSI President (2015 – 2017), '**ABSI Training Module**' was launched in twelve two-tier 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. During the same period, he had also spearheaded the '**ABSI-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, several trainees from India have completed their training in the UK & have since returned back to India. In an endeavor to streamline the management of breast cancer during his Presidential term, he brought out a **ready-to-use practical consensus recommendations for breast cancer management**, which was published in the Indian Journal of Surgery (June 2016).

4. Academic contributions to the development of breast surgery

In addition to publishing several editorials and articles in peer-reviewed journals, he has contributed five chapters to four books on surgery, which includes a Chapter in the world renowned '**Bailey & Love Companion Guide**' (2015). Over the past two decades, his pioneering work in India has been recognised with invitations to deliver Key Note addresses & Orations world over. The presentations focus upon the innovative & unique initiatives that he has been spearheading to improve breast healthcare in India.

5. Improving standards of Surgical Education in India

Royal College Courses, Examinations and Training

Over the past two decades, he has contributed enormously to surgical education in the Country. In an effort to help surgeons from the Indian subcontinent prepare for the prestigious Intercollegiate final MRCS examinations, he has been conducting courses that prepare surgical trainees sitting the final component of the Intercollegiate MRCS Examinations since 2000 and has been convening this prestigious Examination annually on behalf of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh & England in Hyderabad since 2008. As International Surgical Advisor for the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh between 2012 – 2020, he has provided strategic direction to the Royal College's academic activities in the Indian subcontinent.

Contribution to The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI)

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. For well over a decade, he has played a key role in fostering a close relationship between the ASI and Surgical Associations all over the world. He has paved the path for many bright young surgeons from the India, who have 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. Several trainees from India have obtained their training in the UK have since returned back to India to serve the Country.

COVID 19 Response @ ASI

During the months of April, May & June 2020, in his capacity as President, The Association of Surgeons of India, he championed a major fund-raising movement raising over **Rs 1, 25, 00, 000 (£ 121, 000)** from the surgical fraternity and organised the procurement/delivery of the much needed Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for healthcare professionals across India, which was in acute shortage at that time. **UNICEF** India invited him to feature in their COVID 19 awareness campaign and his message was posted on UNICEF India's social media pages on 20 April 2020. In July - August 2020, in partnership with Amway India, he coordinated delivery of 12,000 hand sanitizers, which were made available to frontline healthcare workers in 47 COVID designated Government Hospitals in 16 cities and towns across India.

Reference: Dec. 2020, Indian Journal of Surgery

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12262-020-02675-0>

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.



. *Dining room and internet access for the school, solar panels, new crematorium in Ibrahimpur*

The Swachh Bharath' campaign, aimed at making India clean

Inspired by a letter written by the Prime Minister of India in September 2017 urging Dr Pillarisetti to dedicate some time to 'the Swachh Bharath' campaign, aimed at making India clean, he spearheaded a cleanliness drive in his adopted village - Ibrahimpur, which is now considered to be one of the cleanest villages in the state of Telangana. The village has received many local, regional & national awards for cleanliness by the Government of Telangana.

Letter from Prime Minister of India



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)

Other Philanthropic initiatives

Over the past 14 years (2007 – 2021), he has made several other substantial contributions towards various charitable initiatives as outlined below:

- ❖ Government of Andhra Pradesh towards implementing the population based Breast Cancer Screening for underprivileged women in the State (2012).
- ❖ Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation towards treating underprivileged women affected with breast cancer (2007 – to date).
- ❖ Red cross Society towards installation of water purification system in Narasimhapuram village (Nalgonda District, State of Telangana), which is one of the worst affected Village by endemic Fluorosis, a disabling chronic condition affecting teeth and skeletal system (2012).
- ❖ Flood relief fund to Red Cross, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Staff flood relief fund at Association of Surgeons of India in Chennai (Tamil Nadu State in India) and to rehabilitation of earthquake victims in Nepal (2009, 2013 & 2015).
- ❖ LV Prasad Eye Institute – a world renowned non Governmental not for profit Eye care Centre primarily located in Hyderabad with 176 branches spread across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The donation was made towards subsidizing treatment for non-paying underprivileged patients in rural areas and towards an active ongoing Research Programme (2016).
- ❖ In an endeavor to reach out to the permanent office staff serving The Association of Surgeons of India for several years, from his personal resources, he procured a robust Health Insurance policy for them & their immediate families and pledged to annually renew the policies for the next five years (2020 – 2025).

Reference: Dec. 2020, Indian Journal of Surgery
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12262-020-02089-y>

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. Raghu Ram 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 settled status and 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.

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**

Conclusion

Dr Raghu Ram Pillarisetti'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. Pillarisetti 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.'**"*