

PINK CONNECTION

UBF

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**'I did not want all the
drama, the self-pity
and sympathy that
comes with cancer'**

Radha Kantipudi

**Decoding Breast Cancer:
A radiologist's view**

**A Gentleman's
Collection:
Stamps of
the Erstwhile
Hyderabad State**

BEHIND The Scenes

Frenzy and busyness are the base notes of our lives. We are either busy at work, or at home, or even when we are relaxing like going for a walk. I say even when 'relaxing' because when we are walking in the local park, we catch up with friends on the phone. While reading, we check our phone a zillion times to see if we have missed a Facebook notification or a WhatsApp message. In fact, the first thing we do when we wake up is to check our messages or a FB update. Gone are the days when we would wake up to the silence and expectation of a new beginning of another day.

We have passed on this frenzy to our children too. We do not allow them to sit still and waste time (as we imagine free time to be) and hustle them from one class to another during summer holidays.

We don't give ourselves a day when we do 'nothing'. I, for one, am happy doing nothing. Recently, when I was in the US, where I live in my daughter's house, I have no responsibilities. I eat, I read, I write and am happy taking walks in silence amidst broad avenues, ancient trees and mountains. I let my mind wander unfettered. And, let the day take me where it does.

I feel this lack of chatter is healing. I feel rested. As I am sure most of us would, if we let our minds and bodies be still. As for children, a little bit of boredom is a good thing, it will make them invent ways to be occupied.

Most ailments apart from external factors like food and environment, or genes are triggered by our busy life. In fact, as Susan Sontag said, even illness is a metaphor. We might want to think about that. An illness is a way our bodies are telling us to take off and rest.

On another note, we are amazed at the resilience of a human being every time we read a cancer survivor's story. This time it is Radha Kantipudi and her amazingly positive attitude which helped her to fight breast cancer!

Ratna Rao Shekar



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The Travelling Book Truck

In life, it is true that we measure a person's worth from the money they make and the job they hold. Why don't we give importance to our critical and independent thinking skills? ask Satabdi Mishra and Akshaya Bahibala.

This Odisha based couple, who are passionate about books and believe reading helps you broaden the mind, go on long road trips in their book truck to encourage the habit of reading among people. They do not wait around for children and adults to visit bookstores, instead they take books to small towns, cities and villages and get people to browse and read. It is truly a Walking Book Fair, says **Mallik Thatipalli** as he stops by their book truck to speak to the enterprising duo

“**W**hen I implore people to read books they turn around and ask me, *Usse kya milega* (What will we get out of it?),” confides the 36-year-old Satabdi Mishra with a laugh. Nothing deters this spirited bibliophile however who travels around the country in a van full of books to encourage the habit of reading among people. Yes, determined to spread the joy of reading and make books accessible even in villages and remote towns of India, Satabdi

along with Akshaya Bahibala have founded an unique library on wheels, ‘Walking Book Fairs’ in Semiliguda in Koraput district of Odisha in 2014.

The couple, who run a bookstore in Bhubaneswar started ‘Walking Book Fairs’ on the premise that if people don’t visit bookshops, then you have to take bookshops to them. So, Satabdi and Akshaya bought a Maruti Omni van and filled it with a medley of books ranging from mythology to children’s

literature, fiction, autobiographies, poetry and self-help books, and travelled around Odisha and many other states across India, to stoke people's interest in reading. They usually park their van at a particular spot like a school or a college or at a public space and invite people to come and browse through the books, read them for free or buy them for a discount. These books are mostly in English, Hindi and Odia.

What prompted the couple to embark on this adventure with books?

Satabdi feels that our society and educational system are obsessed with marks and top jobs. "Why should we aim to be engineers or doctors, why cannot we be thinkers or leaders? Our school curriculum doesn't have scope for out-of-the-box thinking. Reading is the only avenue then which will allow us to question this conditioning. That's why we make these challenging journeys," she confesses.

Akshaya quips that this interviewer too questioned him about his educational qualifications. He says, "Unfortunately, your education remains the only marker for success. We admire the Ambanis and Birlas, but don't care about any other aspect of life—the quality of life or our emotions. Education need not happen only through studying a curriculum."

The couple who met in a bookshop in 2013, have been avid readers all their lives. While Satabdi grew up on a steady diet of O'Henry and P G Wodehouse and studied mass

communication, Akshaya dropped out of his graduation course but pursued his childhood enthusiasm to read.

In 2014, when they had embarked on their first tour in Odisha, they carried their books in their backpacks and travelled by public transport. Recalling those early days with a wry smile, Akshaya remembers that villagers used to look at them with "amusement". It was only a few months later, the duo bought a second hand Maruti Omni and they did three more Odisha tours and one pan-India tour in 2016. In the pan-India tour, with 5,000 books in their van they managed to cover 20 states in 19 days.

They have recently wrapped up a poetry tour in February called 'Poems on the Road', in which they showcased over 500 poetry books in 20 states in 60 days, covering a staggering 10,000 km. Why poems? "Poetry is a popular form on social media especially Instagram. But, you hardly find dedicated poetry

books in libraries," replies Satabdi. She wants people to spontaneously stumble upon different poets and their works while browsing through their books.

In their journeys, they have donated books to communities and government schools to enable them to open libraries of their own. It was in 2015, after a successful tour of Odisha that this couple decided to go on an all India tour, calling it 'Read

"Why should we aim to be engineers or doctors, why cannot we be thinkers or leaders? Our school curriculum doesn't have scope for out-of-the-box thinking. Reading is the only avenue then which will allow us to question this conditioning. That's why we make these challenging journeys"



Akshaya and Satabdi have been avid book readers all their life



People flocking to the Walking Book Fair



Akshaya and Satabdi with customers who have stopped by their van to browse and buy

More India'. With an improved version of their previous van, their aim was to make books accessible to every person in the country. And, they took their vans into educational institutions, book fairs, residential colonies, public spaces etc.

The library-cum-bookstore on wheels has traversed through the length of India and the couple has a bagful of stories to share. Akshaya recounts, "In Chandigarh, we could count 10 luxury car showrooms but not even four bookstores. In Kochi, our plans were derailed due to a local dharna and we attracted a crowd simply by camping in an open plot."

It was in smaller cities and towns—Sambalpur, Raipur, Khammam, Anantapur, Mysore, Coimbatore and Indore that they received the best response. "We also found that women read more and are generally more responsive to what we had to say," remarks Akshaya. He adds, "Children are always interested but they need to be encouraged. I always tell the mothers—don't give them a smartphone but give them a book—the colours, images and covers in a book will certainly excite a child's curiosity."

It's almost impossible to ignore a beautiful, colourful truck full of books parked in your neighbourhood. 'Walking Book Fairs' has been creating a steady buzz and has become popular through word-of-mouth and social media. Akshaya and Satabdi don't restrict themselves to being a library but create a gamut of ancillary sessions such as workshops, open mic sessions, book readings and discussions to sustain interest.

They encounter many challenges such as logistics, permissions and issues of safety trail them on their journeys. Akshaya

sums it up: "The biggest challenge however is to make people understand that books need to be an integral part of any thinking society. And, frankly, parents need to think beyond grades and jobs."

Satabdi, who drives the book truck, laughs as she recollects being stared at by other drivers on the highways. They find it odd that a woman is at the wheel on the highway. She is not concerned about safety but parking is the most difficult part, she admits. "This is a big vehicle and finding a spot to park is incredibly difficult in some cities," she says.

Sometimes, they ask friends in the city they visit for advice on good locations. They also pick spots like parks, market-places, pavements and bus-stops consciously to break the confines of the spaces that books have been limited to until now. Being on the road for long periods can be exhausting. But, the book lovers sustain themselves hoping that their efforts are bringing about a change in small, meaningful ways.

Akshaya recalls that most questions they face involve numbers. "It's always what are your future plans, how do we sustain ourselves and how many books do we sell?" he shares. "Life isn't all about numbers, we don't want to create more wealth as there is enough around us already," he says with a laugh.

They have not chalked out any new road trips as yet. Akshaya who has written poetry in Odia wants to get back to writing. As the conversation comes to a close, we cannot help but ask about the one book that shaped them into the people they are today: For Akshaya, it is *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, while it is *The Outsider* by Albert Camus for Satabdi. ■

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Stamps as a Record to Hyderabad's History

Hyderabad was one of the most important princely states till its merger with the Indian Union and nothing amplifies the grandeur of its history than its stamps that were exhibited recently in New Delhi. Comprising three million stamps, this treasure-trove forms the core of The Ewari collection, one of the largest philatelic collections in the world. **Mallik Thatipalli** writes about the ongoing exhibition

In the age of WhatsApp and Instagram where communication is just a click away, conversation about stamps (of all things!) seems terribly dated. But, one look at the 120 odd stamps on display at the exhibition titled *Property of a Gentleman: Stamps from the Nizam of Hyderabad's Dominions*, one realizes the small-sized square bits of paper provide a powerful prism to the architectural marvels, customs and culture of the time gone by.

At three million stamps, The Ewari collection is one of the world's largest philatelic repositories. The current show presented by the Gujral Foundation, consists of rare pieces from Hanut Ewari's collection. These once belonged to his grandfather, Nawab Iqbal Hussain Khan, the postmaster-general under the seventh Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan. Curated by Pramod Kumar KG, managing director, Eka Archiving, the exhibition showcases all the stamps from the princely state of Hyderabad from 1869 up to 1949, when it merged with the Indian Union.

"This is a very diverse collection," shares Pramod Kumar. And, goes on to elaborate, "Hyderabad was one of the most important princely states in British India because of its wealth. In this collection, you can see the entire gamut of stamps which chart

the state's journey for nearly a hundred years. They share fascinating stories of the time."

Apart from the rare original postage stamps from Hyderabad, a lot of additional printed material ranging from entire stamp sheets, seals, monograms and related ephemera such as original letters, postcards, envelopes, revenue stamps of the region and erroneous stamps are displayed at the exhibition. Textile conservationist Deepshikha Kalsi created the mounts for the fragile stamps using superfine, strong silken threads.

The stamps on display are primarily of two types—one is the calligraphy stamp where the tughra or the insignia of the Asaf Jahi dynasty is mentioned along with the denomination of the stamp. The other, very interestingly, are in the four languages spoken in the Nizam's dominion—English, Telugu, Marathi and Persian (replaced by Urdu in 1930) indicating that inclusiveness was celebrated in the erstwhile princely state.

These seemingly insignificant stamps played an essential role in a complex and vast communication network that spread across the world. From their original role as payments to help transfer messages, stamps were also used to facilitate revenue collection, taxation and served other fiscal purposes. Apart from their practical usage, Hyderabad utilised stamps as a way of celebrating the region's material heritage and culture. The

The stamps at the display include the extraordinary Penny Black (the first adhesive postage stamp in the world), the Daulatabad stamp of which not many were circulated and a remarkable collection issued in Hyderabad to commemorate the victory of the Allied Powers in the Second World War



The First Stamp of Hyderabad is a fine example of a stamp which features calligraphic work



King George VI India postage stamps, a unique series issued during the British Rule in India

◀ Several stamps feature prominent monuments rather than names of the state. They are representations of the Nizam's dominion



Apart from their practical usage, Hyderabad utilised stamps as a way of celebrating the region's material heritage and culture. The use of exquisite calligraphy, multifarious languages and architectural tropes demonstrate the far-reaching influence of the erstwhile state of Hyderabad



These stamps though commonly used in Hyderabad were unique because they featured the value of the stamp in four different languages—Marathi, Telugu, English and Persian and later in Urdu

use of exquisite calligraphy, multifarious languages and architectural tropes demonstrate the far-reaching influence of the erstwhile state of Hyderabad.

"Since Hyderabad had Islamic rulers which prohibited description of human forms they hit upon the idea of using the state's architectural wonders in stamps," says Pramod. He goes on to explain, "Their use of architectural wonders was a secular move as they essentially highlighted whatever was important culturally irrespective of the community it belonged to. So, you have the Ajanta caves, part of the Nizams dominion; the Hindu Kakatiya gate in Warangal; the madrasa in Bidar; the Charminar at Daulatabad and the Charminar of Hyderabad."

Besides old monuments, during Mir Osman Ali's time, new architectural buildings were constructed and these included the Osmania University, the Osmania General Hospital and Unani Hospital, the Osman Sagar reservoir amongst others which grace the façades of the stamps. All the important architectural monuments, both historic and contemporary were used on the stamps and this was a way of showing early modernity of the state, as well as a means of putting out information about the glories of the state as against showing just the ruler's image, which was the norm elsewhere. Others include depictions of modes of transportation used for delivering mail including a dak runner, bullock cart, tonga, camel, train, steamer, lorry and mail plane.

The stamps at the display include the extraordinary Penny Black (the first adhesive postage stamp in the world), the Daulatabad stamp of which not many were circulated and a remarkable collection which were issued in Hyderabad to commemorate the victory of the Allied Powers in the Second World War.

Pramod says that *The Property of a Gentleman* also showcases just how systematic the postal system was back then. Stressing on the need to understand the hidden facets of the philatelic history of our country, he says that these gives a window into how information was passed on earlier. Extolling the importance of the collection he says, "The important stamps in the collections include full sheets—full sheets are stamps in which the entire sheets of stamps exist in a plate together and they are not broken down to individual pieces and across the collection you see many full sheets that were produced in Hyderabad. Other intriguing ones are those in which the colouring went wrong and were pulled out from the public domain. These give us nuggets of information regarding the technology used in those days."

The one exceptional stamp that excites both philatelists and history enthusiasts is the only one ever printed in Hyderabad, which shows a human figure. Brought out in 1945, it showcases a man being welcomed by his family after returning successfully from the Second World War. This blue and white stamp is a stunning reminder of Hyderabad's contribution to the World War and prominently features the name of the state in English across its visage. As mediums and modes of communication change rapidly, collections such as these have become critical to understand the communication, revenue and artistic patterns of the past. Pramod sums it up: "The scope of the collection is breathtaking. Additionally, the fact that there is such depth and diversity of stamps from the princely states of India makes it unique and worth studying." ■

Breast Health Issues:

Myths & Facts



Myth: Most breast lumps are cancers

Fact: Nine out of 10 breast lumps are not cancers. However, it is critical to investigate the breast lump with triple assessment (clinical breast examination, bilateral mammogram and ultrasound guided core needle biopsy) in order to get a definitive diagnosis.

Myth: Breast cancer affects only older women

Fact: Although majority of breast cancers occur in women over 50 years in the western world, it can, in fact occur at any age. It is alarming to note that majority of breast cancers in India are diagnosed at a much earlier age in India.

Myth: Breast cancer does not occur in men

Fact: Men can develop breast cancer as well. In fact, both men and women have breast tissue. It is important to be aware that a small proportion of men do get breast cancer each year. Although, the precise number in India is unknown, approximately 1 per cent of breast cancers in the country occur in men.

Myth: We know what causes breast cancer

Fact: Unfortunately, we do not know what causes breast cancer. Some risk factors are well-known and documented. Age is an important factor, the older you are, the more susceptible you become.

Other known risk factors are:

- Previously diagnosed breast cancer in the same or in the other breast
- Strong family history of breast cancer (close relatives with breast cancer)
- Early onset of menstrual period (before age 12)
- Late menopause (after age 55)
- Not having children and having first child after age 30
- Long term use of hormone replacement therapy
- Obesity (overweight particularly after menopause)

Myth: Breast self-examination is no different from breast awareness

Fact: Breast self-examination (BSE) is a regular and repetitive monthly self-examination of the breast performed by a woman at the same time each month to a set method. The BSE method has not proven to be beneficial.

Breast Awareness as a concept however is gaining increasing acceptance the world over.

Breast Awareness is about becoming familiar with the breasts and the way they change throughout a woman's life. It is a concept that encourages women to know how their breasts look and feel normally so that they gain confidence about noticing any change which might help detect breast cancer early.

Changes in the breast to look for

- Painless lump or thickening in the breast that feels different from the rest of breast tissue
- Change in size—it may be that one breast has become noticeably larger or noticeably smaller
- Nipple has become inverted (pulled in) or changed its position or shape
- Rash on or around the nipple
- Blood stained discharge from one or both nipples
- Puckering or dimpling of the skin overlying the breast
- Swelling under the armpit
- Constant pain in one part of the breast or in the armpit (uncommon)

Breast Awareness 5 Point Code

1. Know what is normal for you
2. Know what changes to look and feel for
3. Look and feel
4. Report any changes to your doctor without delay
5. Have an annual screening mammogram (x-ray of the breast) if you are 40 years and above

The author is consultant radiologist at KIMS Hospitals and Head of Breast Imaging, KIMS-USHALAKSHMI Centre for Breast Diseases ■

UBF Diary

January 2019

Medical Education in India – a Paradigm Change

Dr Raghu Ram was invited to address a distinguished gathering of directors -Medical Education, deans, principals and professors during a two day intense workshop held on January 12, 2019 at Gandhi Medical College. This landmark event was organised by Prof NVN Reddy to sensitise and empower the key teaching faculty in Telangana about the structure and content of the new curriculum. From August 1, 2019, the medical curriculum in India is all set to bring about a paradigm change from traditional subject centered rigid learning to the new Competency Based Medical Education (CBME).



Dr Shriram Kumar, Principal, Gandhi Medical College with Dr Chalam and Dr Raghu Ram

MASICON 2019, Aurangabad



Dr P Raghu Ram was guest of honour during the inaugural function at the 41st Annual Congress of the Maharashtra State Chapter of Association of Surgeons of India held in MGM Medical College, Aurangabad on January 24, 2019.

He took this opportunity to create awareness about the importance of early detection of cancer at the MGM University Radio Station, Aurangabad, which was aired on World Cancer Day.

Dr Raghu Ram alongside Dr Pravin Suryavanshi, the organising chairperson, MASICON 2019

Hoisting the National Flag as Chief Guest at ASI headquarters



Dr P Raghu Ram, Vice President (President elect) of The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) hoisted the national flag on the occasion of India's 70th Republic Day celebration on January 26, 2019 at ASI headquarters in Chennai. Established in 1938, ASI is Asia Pacific's largest and world's second largest surgical association that represents the surgical fraternity all across India. Several professors of surgery and eminent surgeons in Chennai were in full attendance at the ASI headquarters.



The surgical fraternity from all across Telangana felicitated Dr P Raghu Ram on his election to the post of the President, The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) for 2020.

The team of examiners from the Royal College of Surgeons of England and The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh also felicitated him for the same reason. Rich tributes were paid on his election victory with landslide margin and for polling the highest number of votes ever in the 80 years of the Association. He was featured prominently in the quarterly issue (March 2019) of the RCS Ed Newsletter that reaches out to the Fellows of the College worldwide.



Guest of Honour, VASICON 2019



Dr Raghu Ram lighting the inaugural lamp alongside the Governor of Telangana and AP, Smt Sangita Reddy, joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals group and Dr Pinjala Ramakrishna, organising chairperson, VASICON 2019

Dr Raghu Ram was the guest of honour and he shared centrestage with the Hon'ble Governor of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh at the inaugural function of VASICON 2019 – the annual conference of Venous Association of India held on January 19 and 20, 2019 in Hyderabad. He emphasized that there was an urgent need to empower the 'common man' about prevention of venous disorders. He cited the example of police constables, who spend hours standing as part of their job requirement, which could cause varicose veins in their legs resulting in quality of life issues and loss of wages due to sick leave. He suggested that the Venous Association take up the task of screening this vulnerable group.

March 2019

Pink Ribbon Walk, Nagpur



Dr Raghu Ram was invited as guest of honour to flag off the Pink Ribbon Walk held in Nagpur, in partnership with Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation and The Association of Surgeons of India.

Dr Raghu Ram emphasised the importance of early detection of breast cancer in saving lives as he flagged off the Pink Ribbon Walk along with Mrs Kanchan Gadkari (the wife of Mr Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Union Minister).



Standing by India's Bravehearts



Dr Raghu Ram contributed Rs 1, 00, 000 to the corpus fund set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to support the families of bravehearts, who sadly left this world in the Pulwama Terror attack, which has been the deadliest attack on India's border security forces since 1989.

Dr Raghu Ram Inaugurates Puducherry Chapter, ASI



Dr P Raghu Ram, Vice President (President elect) of The Association of Surgeons of India formally launched the Puducherry Chapter of The Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) on March 17, 2019. This state chapter was until recently part of combined Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry Chapter of ASI.

Several seniors and teachers of the Surgical Society in Pondicherry shared their views and conveyed their good wishes. Delivering his chief guest speech, Dr Raghu Ram explained the meaning behind 'NEW ASI' and elaborated on the vision and mission of the Association (2019 & 2020).



**Happiness is a choice,
with or without cancer.**

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