



THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

SHIFT TO VIRTUAL LEARNING: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

YOGESH MAKKAR, FOUNDER, KAPDEC



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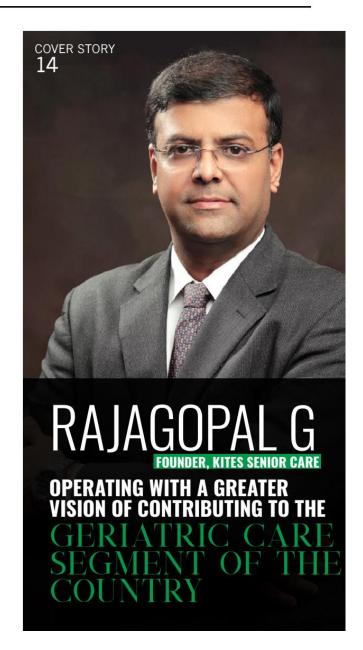
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RAJAGOPAL G

FOUNDER, KITES SENIOR CARE

OPERATING WITH A GREATER VISION OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE

GERIATRIC CARE SEGMENT OF THE COUNTRY

BY ROHAN A T

hile the 'out of hospital' geriatric care models are very popular in the developed countries, India is just in its early days of adopting these models. This 'out of hospital' care ranges from Nursing homes, Hospice, Memory Care centers, Psychiatric care centers to home based care as well. Home care has seen good amount of traction in India in the past decade. However, if one wants to achieve completeness in care continuum, we need the entirety of 'out of hospital' care components in place which is in its nascent & formative stages in India.

KITES Senior Care is pioneering this 'out of hospital' Geriatric care services and has been making impressive strides in the industry owing to quality of their services and innovative business operations. The company delivers protocol driven medically supervised care with top-notch standards like that of a hospital through technology oversight. The company has also won the 'Centre of Excellence Award' by Deccan Herald in 2021. Rajagopal G, the founder of the company has been an industry stalwart with a unique vision of piloting this single specialty concepts and developing KITES Senior Care into a prominent name to reckon with in this segment. "Premium', for us is from the 'quality of care' and not 'what we charge' our clients. In our line of business, care is the key element and it is people dependent. Hence, selection of people becomes crucial", says Rajagopal while talking about KITES Senior Care's operational philosophy.







In an exclusive interview with CEO Insights, Rajagopal talks more about his professional journey, the unique business operations of KITES Senior Care and the growth opportunities.

Kindly throw some light on your professional journey and what helped you to mould the strategic business modules for your company?

I am a management professional specialized in business finance, M&A and have held senior positions over the past 20 years. Initially, I have had the

privilege of associating with large multinational companies in Oil & Gas, Technology & FMCG sectors which gave me an opportunity to understand business operations, ethical processes, governance at scale and others.

After almost a decade and half in large corporations, I wanted to spend the rest of my professional career in healthcare and meaningfully contribute to it. I had the good fortune of associating with Motherhood, a boutique maternity chain from Bengaluru as its CEO at its inception. We also raised significant Series A funding and grew this brand to three

cities with multi-unit operations within few years. This gave me an opportunity to understand the single specialty operations. All these experiences helped me in foraying into geriatric care which was my long-term plan.

I entered this geriatric care space out of my passion. Elderly population is about 11 percent of our population now and poised to reach 18 percent levels soon (1 in 5 you will meet will be aged above 60). This is alarmingly high in volume terms and India is totally underprepared to handle this. Our country needs more innovations & participation

from private sector. Also, I was blessed to have been mentored by Dr. A S Arvind a gastroenterologist turned healthcare expert who had an extensive stint in the UK before returning to India. These motivated me to take the plunge.

There are unique challenges when you are pioneering a new vertical where the market is being developed which will require a learning curve. I was early into this market and went through this in the first 12 months which is an investment that is worthwhile. Also, there are two things that make this field very interesting (a) The nine yards of services that





HAVING COMPLETED THE PILOTS OF OUR SERVICES, WE ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO SCALE THE BUSINESS NOW

elders require outside of a hospital & (b) elders requiring these services from a single coordinated point of care provider. Further commercial viability was always under question in this sector as it was relegated to 'not-forprofit' category and there are no credible proven models which are emerging now like that of ours.

What opportunities do you foresee in the current healthcare & fitness industry? How are you navigating your company to achieve sustained success in this domain?

As I mentioned earlier, elderly population in India is about 11 percent of our population now and poised to reach 18 percent levels soon (about 24 crores) per the Economic Survey. While this a big challenge for any government owing to its sheer volume, this is also an opportunity for players like us. Geriatric care models have evolved in developed countries from which we can draw our learnings. Also, technology will play a crucial role in this sector in the coming decade. We are on the verge of releasing a tech platform to work with elders and gearing up for expansion. This sector has space for many innovative models and ample space for growth of all.

Kindly throw some light on the various services that you offer. And during the pandemic, how did you ensure that you ensured both your patients' and employees' safety?

Our 'out-of-hospital' geriatric care services cover Post hospitalisation/ surgery Rehab care (where the focus is on optimal recovery of seniors & reducing readmission), Palliative care & Hospice (where the focus is on pain management and comfort care), Dementia care (providing for memory clinics, day care and residential care facilities to manage elders affected by various types of Supervised Dementia) and nursing care (where our nurses provide companionship, oversight & support).

These services are delivered at our specialized care centres and at the residence of the elders. Unique benefits that the family of elders get from availing our services include Ethical guidance on options available for care to help them choose the right care & environment that will be economical as well, Every patient has a physician oversight who becomes the trusted partner to the elderly and the family, Care is delivered and monitored thru our proprietary care plan process, and

Most importantly, managing the entire care lifecycle through our integrated approach.

We, as a responsible organization in healthcare have been very active during the pandemic to ensure that we keep our elders safe, staff motivated & serve the public at large as well to lessen the burden symptoms. Since 1st wave, our team of physicians have consulted few hundreds of patients online across India to their recovery. We launched covid rehab program wherein many elders enrolled and benefitted. Most importantly, in an endeavour to impart right knowledge to our elders/family

large as well to lessen the burden knowledge to our elders/family

on the overall healthcare system. Our staff were vaccinated as frontline workers in Jan '21 itself and we facilitated vaccination for our elders when it was allowed for them. We were authorized by BBMP, GoKarnataka to be a vaccinator and we were able to vaccinate many people through this initiative. In the 2nd wave we launched covid care plan to manage elders at home with covid. This was well received. Also, we are operating a 25 bedded CCC in Bangalore to help covid mild/moderate patients with

and public, we released continuous communications and held many webinars to corporates benefitting their employees as well.

Brief us on the professional experiences and expertise of your team? Also, how do you maintain the quality and authenticity of these services?

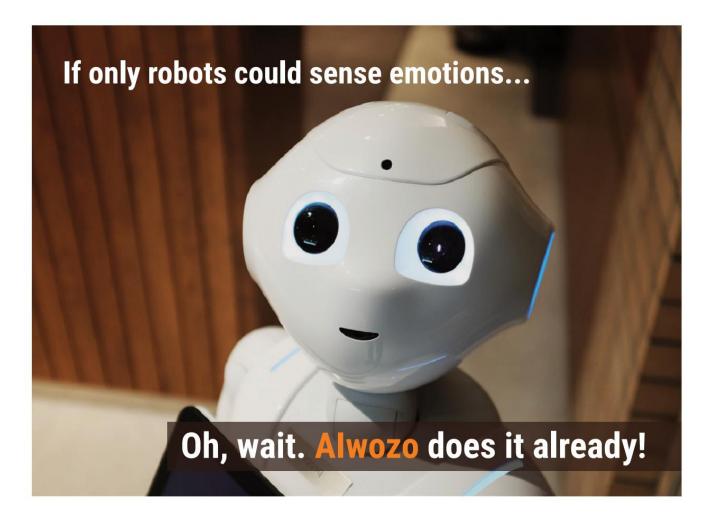
If you need to be successful, you need a strong team behind you. I am blessed to have a wonderful team. We have a strong and sup-

portive Board led by our Chairman Dr. A S Arvind, which meets once a quarter formally and frequently informally. Dr. Reema is our COO & Medical Director as well. Our 140-member team comprise of physicians, nurses and therapists with most of the decisions decentralized so that we have a lean and mean management team.

All our team members come with rich healthcare experience from reputed organisations. One of the earliest things that we did was to setup quality team headed by QA Manager. We have a well-defined process manual for all the service verticals. Our team is constantly coached and a robust audit mechanism is set in place to ensure the highest quality. We maintain protocols as good as required by NABH and that means we have hospital grade laundry, periodical swab collection from surfaces, water and food quality checks with external agencies, weekly pest control processes, biomed waste disposal through approved agencies and others.

Are you coming up with innovations or upgradations to enhance the quality of your existing services and what is the future roadmap set for your company?

Yes. Technology to manage health of elders & collaboration with a foreign partner are on the cards. Having completed the pilots of our services, we are in a good position to scale the business now. Our immediate plans for the future are to expand within Bangalore to become a leader in Geriatric care herein, enter three more cities, and rollout the technology plan.





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