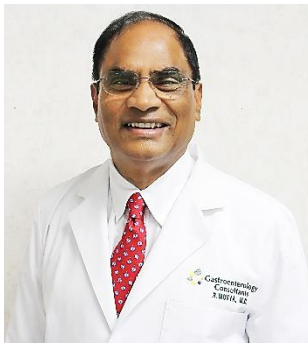


An autobiographical Account



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I was born in a lower middle-class family. My father was a small farmer in a small village with a population less than 50. My grandfather was also a farmer near the coast of Bay of Bengal, in a village called Ghantasala, in Andhra Pradesh, India.

We lived 1 mile away from our village and I always wondered why. When I asked my father about it, he told me that when he was an infant in 1920s there was a Tsunami which wiped out half of the village. It was a miracle that my grandfather's family survived and moved away to upper grounds where I was born - a village named Ventrapragada.

A landlord offered my grandfather a place he can live on the farm, but only if he works there. My grandfather had no other choice and to survive he worked there and set up a residence there along with my aunt's family members. A few other families joined later and named the area Sivapuram which was annexed to the main village (Ventrapragada).

My father and his elder brother divided the house and lived in each half of the house that was built my grandfather, 90 years ago. We had a great childhood. Mom and dad loved each other, and they gave us excellent values. We received unconditional love not only from my parents but also from all my aunts, uncles and especially my maternal grandmother. They worked extremely hard and even starved themselves many times to enroll us in school as they realized knowledge is powerful. My ancestors never went to high school. In fact, I was the first one to attend college in my entire family, thanks to my parents. They gave us good education as they realized the world is changing with industrialization and modern technology. It was extremely important, especially after our independence from the British rule.

My dad unlike others in the family, was a self-taught wise man. Everyone in the village highly respected him, looked up to his advice for solving minor disputes among villagers. He used to let me take part in these discussions. I enjoyed it tremendously and learned a lot from that and it had a major influence on my success in life. Every evening he used to sit with us while we were having supper and would discuss various issues of the day including what was in the newspaper. He was the only person who could read the newspaper in the entire village. He used to help everyone in the village, writing promissory

notes, marriage agreements and etc. I remember that we did not have television or telephone in the entire village and not even running water. We learned a lot from our parents those days without any distractions. It was a delight that all the family used to be together especially in the evenings. All of us used to sleep in the backyard, under the sky gazing at the stars.

My mom had 14 pregnancies and 9 of them died in infancy. Infant mortality was highest at that time due to lack of facilities & medical care. This was also true with maternal mortality. Even today, India has almost 10 times higher infant and maternal mortality than the western countries. That was where my interest came from, to decrease maternal & infant mortality. I have experienced tragedy of losing 9 of my siblings due to lack of Neonatal care. (One infant dies in less than one minute in India even now). Only 5 of us survived out of 14. Especially my dad told me "MAKE A DIFFERENCE" when my mom died during childbirth along with the baby. She had placenta previa and died of massive bleeding, which was again due to lack of transfusions (a preventable death). All our siblings including myself were born at the farmhouse. Only for severe cases, they used to go to the hospital as they could not afford it otherwise.

My father had to sell 2 acres of land to send me to a private school rather than a government school. Despite many relatives telling him not to sell the land, he had trust in me and went ahead with his intuition. I completed med school and came back to Guntur Government Hospital for internship.

On the eve of my coming to this country, he gave me a great advice on humility & getting along with people. I still remember us sitting on a bench in f facing the pond which was at the back of my house. It is my favorite spot even till today. Various domestic animals were coming back from the farm, and he showed how animals behave when they see a different stock (usually picks a fight with the new one but gets along with same kind of animal living with them for a while). Without telling me openly, he was inferring, that I am going to a new place and face new kind of people and will have to face some struggles). He told me to be submissive and try to understand them. He said, "BEING HUMBLE TAKES YOU A LONG WAY."

My dad could not swallow solids and only lived on milk thrice a day. Looking back with the current knowledge, he might have suffered from either an esophageal ring or eosinophilic esophagitis. We commonly take care of them now easily; endoscopy was in infancy even when I was an intern in New York in 1974. It was the primary motivation for me to become a gastroenterologist. By the time I was trained in GI, my father passed away following surgery for urinary retention followed by gram negative sepsis in 1974, which was a preventable death.

I never forgot his words. I remember an incident in Moline, when one famous physician confronted me saying "You, gastroenterology guys charge too much". I quietly said "yes sir, I am new in town. I do not know what to charge, let-alone for procedures but also for office visits." He suddenly calmed down and said, "Come to office and talk to my secretary." He and his friends ran entire local hospital and became the biggest referral base for me.

I happened to be in the right place at the right time. Prior to 1965, few Asian could immigrate to this country. United States congress had laws that only allowed the citizens of Western

European nations like England, France etc., not even Eastern Europeans to emigrate to the USA. The idea was to allow same racial and ethnic groups living by then in the US and to keep homogeneity.

In 1965, 2 major legislations happened under LBJ

1. Immigration reform allowing skilled labor to immigrate this country
- 2 Medicare was introduced

All these things happened following civil rights movements. Fortunately, we happened to be in medical schools at that time and with the hard work and sacrifices of our parents, we were ready to immigrate. Hospitals at that time were very much in need for physician and trainees to take care of increasing number of patients. So, they opened doors even for average physicians like me and gave a chance to immigrate this country in early 1970s. Everyday hundreds of physicians came to New York and Chicago.

I got married to Veda in 1973. My luck went up steeply after marrying her. I came to Guntur to do my internship which happened to be epicenter for people appearing for (ECFMG). I went to Malaysia and passed ECFMG exam (current USMLE). It was easy to immigrate in early 70s, after passing the exam. Most of the physicians at that time immigrated to the United States with all expenses covered basis (air tickets, pickup at airport, furnished apartments with groceries and pocket money). I got into rotating internship training in Jamaica hospital, New York, which was my first choice because it was close to JFK airport, and I thought it will be very convenient for any travel to India. In 1974 I came to US with the help of my in-laws. I happened to come here with just \$8 in my pocket. Many my friends later used to stay with me & found jobs also.

I had 2 goals when I came here.

1. Make money to send it to my father who was in debt. This was accomplished by moonlighting in ER & House calls. I sent my father Rs. 50,000 and he was very happy. He could get rid of his debt with half of that the money and rest was meant for his retirement. But as a typical farmer, he tried to buy more land with that money.
2. Get into a GI fellowship, which was difficult to get into. But noticing my enthusiasm, Dr. Todaro offered me both internal medicine residency and GI fellowship at Jamaica Hospital

I worked extremely hard during my fellowship to learn whatever I can, mainly watching the Masters of endoscopy at Mount Sinai, Beth Israel Hospitals in New York, courtesy of GI chief. In 1970s endoscopy was in infancy. I learned most of the difficult procedures like ERCP, laparoscopy and EUS by watching the experts. This training gave me an edge in my practice. In 1980 I moved to Quad Cities IL & IA border. I was quite successful in private practice as I was the only GI in Moline IL.

With hard work, I got the attention of most of the referring docs. A John Deere executive helped me setup a multi-specialty surgery center. John Deere started an HMO and gave me exclusive contract for entire Quad Cities area (250,000 population). I recruited several specialists and the surgery center very successful. I am not exaggerating but some days, I used to see 50 patients a day. John Deere executive became good friend and later I took care of him also. I took great care of every patient and loved every minute of it. Even at 2 am I never felt tired. I never went after money, only cared about my work and money came after me.

I sponsored a computer training center at my village for the uplifting of the needy. At the inauguration ceremony of that center, a young student was asked what you want to be when you grew up. He replied in a loud voice my name. I said to the young man "if you give me your youth, I will give you my assets and I love to do it all over again." I meant it. I loved my job and I never actually understood why they were paying me.

My father's words "Make a difference" keep ringing in my head even today. I felt happy and relieved after pledging 2.5 million dollars to set up a mother-Child Center in Guntur General Hospital where I did my internship & residency.

This country gave us good training. I started my GI practice in Midwest with good values. With the background of good values, hard work, tremendous help from local leaders (John Deere's family & Executives) my practice was hugely successful. We raised a good family (all the credit goes to my wife Veda). I finally sold my practice, surgery center, Anesthesia & Pathology company for 8 times of EBITDA. I thought I would never move out of quad cities. My children were supposed to take over the management of my practice and surgery center. But they had their own plans (destiny) and did great in their endeavors on their own.

Now I am happily retired and moved to Chicago & Miami Beach (depending on weather) mostly spending time playing with my grandkids and taking care of my health. Honestly, I do not need my pension money in my lifetime as my kids are very successful themselves. So, I decided to donate funds for the right cause upon my family's (kids Arvind, Shanti, and my wife Veda) advice.

I was excited when past Guntur Medical College students (GMCANA members Dr Uppuluri Subbarao, Dr Ram Raj Bushan, Dr Lokesh Edara, Dr Srinivasa Reddy Alla, Dr Babu Prasad) requested me to be the primary donor (\$2.5m) for the Maternity & Child Care Center. I have been observing the generosity of my friend Dr Podila Prasad for past many years. I also saw the excitement of GMCANA members, pledging over 1 million \$ in brief period of time in the presence of then Health Minister Dr. Sreenivas Kamineni, at their reunion. This project for which I am donating \$2.5 million, nicely aligns with my father's wish of decreasing infant and maternal mortality, which is still over 10 times more in India than in western countries.

PS:

Dr. Movva wanted to narrate his life story, which he feels, if it makes a difference in just one person's life and attitude, it will be worthwhile. We thank him for sharing some intimate family details.