

## In first Person: Beyond Medical Practice

# From Medicine to Mediqueen

Dr Medha Bhave

It has always been our endeavor to pick stories of doctors who have exemplified certain different qualities in their journey of life, which is an example for others to emulate. In this issue we present the Journey of a student of our editorial board member Dr. Atul Shah. She is Dr. Medha Bhave, alumni of Tata Department of Plastic Surgery, Grant Medical College and Sir J J Group of Hospitals, Mumbai, who won Mrs. Mediqueen contest recently, in her own words:

### Magic of Plastic Surgery

After joining the plastic surgery course at JJ Hospital, I aspired to become the finest plastic surgeon. For 3 years I was guided by my mentors Dr. Swarna Arora and Dr. Atul Shah before receiving my degree at a convocation. I treasured the teachings of stalwarts in our department and set out to practice in Thane which was a semi-urban place. Thane hardly had big hospitals at the time. People were not aware of plastic surgery. I accepted every case that was referred to me, irrespective of remuneration so that people and even other doctors could see the difference that plastic surgery could make. I freelanced from Thane to Navi Mumbai up to Lodhivali near Panvel; driving around at odd hours, juggling between the home kitchen and ill-equipped operation theaters where I had to autoclave my instruments and make do with inexperienced staff. The magic of plastic surgery in trauma cases was so infectious that I soon became busy. The words of Dr. Atul Shah always kept ringing in my ears that "Do the best that your patient should not think of going elsewhere." Soon the trust built up enough. I was becoming well known for extrapolating knowledge of leprosy foot ulcer management learnt from Dr. Atul Shah who had been awarded prestigious Golden Peacock Award for his innovation of self-care kit to my patients with diabetic foot ulcers and added hyperbaric oxygen therapy to it, salvaging

**Dr Medha Bhave**, Plastic surgeon, Winner, Mrs. Maharashtra Mediqueen 22, Classic group. Director- Laser Cosmesis, Thane, Maharashtra.  
E-mail: lasercosmesis@gmail.com



many feet of poor patients. The satisfactory results I had in trauma cases became a stepping stone for me.

### Into Aesthetic Surgery

After about 8 years of busy practice, I felt the need to have my own set up to match the standards for which I was trained. Aesthetic surgery was just an upcoming branch of plastic surgery then. My thesis on liposuction fell under aesthetic surgery when I studied for my plastic surgery specialization. My husband, Dr. Anand Bhave by then had been a renowned physician

popular among doctors as a great diagnostician. We therefore designed the hospital with conducting my aesthetic surgery work in mind. Soon, I could produce original papers on axillary breast and drainless abdominoplasty which are still read widely and extremely popular. One interesting presentation on large volume liposuction prompted a senior plastic surgeon Dr Kalra to propose my name for the post of executive committee member of Indian Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons. Later I also participated as a treasurer in the organization of the Golden Jubilee Conference of Association of Plastic Surgeons of India under the presidency of another great teacher of mine – Dr Prabha Yadav. The experience in organization built up, which enabled me to form the Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons of Thane, Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. Through this new association I conducted many academic programs and developed camaraderie among peers. My life took a turn after I organized a one-day conference with the theme “Fat is the Future,” a catchy tagline. The conference was thronged by delegates who were happy to learn new concepts and lectures with the theme of fat transfer, a new idea which would change the horizon of aesthetic treatments and plastic surgery in general. The conference held in September 2018 focused on body contouring by fat removal, breast enhancement and wound healing by fat grafting in detail for the first time in India.

### Recapturing Personal Development

During this entire professional and academic journey, I realized that doctors barely spend time on personal development. My interest in fashion bloomed into creativity of designing my own clothes and my daughter's. After I delivered my duties as Visiting Professor in Cosmetic Surgery, and as secretary of two associations, my focus shifted to my own self. I realized that I was not doing enough exercise for both my mind and body. Looking at senior women specialists who had worked incessantly for years I also understood that there is no ‘tomorrow’ for health and fitness. I had been doing a lot of walking daily and dance classes intermittently. I decided to be a

➤ My life took a turn after I organized a oneday conference with the theme “Fat is the Future,” a catchy tagline. The conference was thronged by delegates who were happy to learn new concepts and lectures with the theme of fat transfer, a new idea which would change the horizon of aesthetic treatments and plastic surgery in general.

➤ I realized that I was not doing enough exercise for both my mind and body. Looking at senior women specialists who had worked incessantly for years I also understood that there is no “tomorrow” for health and fitness. I had been doing a lot of walking daily and dance classes intermittently. I decided to be a regular in fitness activities during lock down. I started taking online dance exercise lessons and soon found that it not only helped me shed flab and toned my body but also calmed my mind.

regular in fitness activities during lock down. I started taking online dance exercise lessons and soon found that it not only helped me shed flab and toned my body but also calmed my mind.

### The “MediQueen” Sofa

Then came the first ever physical meet during an IMA women doctors’ wing where I saw my colleagues who had participated in a state level beauty pageant—Mediqueen—doing a ramp walk. The Women Doctors’ Wing President Dr Rekha Karkhanis is a vivacious lady who pushed me to go for the audition. At the audition I was enthralled by the enthusiasm, talent and vivaciousness of the women specialists. They were from different streams of medicine, working against odds at diverse set ups. But they were quintessential, modern women managing not only families and careers but also social work. They had nurtured their hobbies and passions. Their beauty was laced with courage and confidence. As an aesthetic surgeon I could say that they were embodied with the body anybody will envy.

Mediqueen pageant has been organized by Dr Prerana Beri Kalekar who had the opportunity to participate in the “Mrs. World” contest, along with Dr Prajakta Shah who was one of the first participants in the first ever pageant for married medical women, which focused on their talent while continuing daily chores, practice and social service. The pageant is now entered in the “India and Asia book of Records.” Standing in front of mirror I said, why not? At least I will make an earnest effort and meet likeminded doctors.

### Grooming and Training Works

I prepared myself with YouTube videos on ramp walk, exercises with dance, which ran in our blood, thanks to Dr. Rujuta Lodha. I also had to introduce myself in 1 minute which I did by saying that I was there on behalf of the entire womankind to bust the myth that brain and beauty do not go together. I promised to propagate the women’s’ health theme of Mediqueen because health is the foundation of beauty.

The pageant was no less than my grooming as plastic surgeon as res-

ident. There were teaching sessions on makeup (Courtesy Lakme), ramp walk, chair yoga and Zumba. The first day was for exhaustive training while the real pageant started on the second day. The introduction round was a challenge- *to put oneself in a one-minute nutshell*. Western dress round with beautiful clothes designed by the official designers preceded by an official photoshoot. It gave the feeling of being an accomplished model. On the ramp, your graceful and confident walk, spontaneity of introductory speech and quality of content mattered. So did your body language, gestures and greetings. My learning as a plastic surgeon consisted of becoming confident in every aspect, which helped me conduct myself up to the talent round. All the ladies left no stone unturned to put up their best feet forward, from dances and skits, mono act plays to even rare hoopla hoop shows by a senior contestant left the audience craving for more. Most of the performances had messages such as the indomitable spirit of acid attack victims or woman empowerment pointing to the need of maintaining their health and beauty even with the help of aesthetic surgery.

### On the Ramp

The organizers sensitively observed everyone, and all the contestants got appropriate and creative subtitles like – Mrs. Beauty with brains or Mrs. Confident. After all, one had worked hard for two months after selection of 55 from 200 contestants during the audition. The next round shifted gear to get into a retro dress. Everyone then changed into their own evening gowns. I had the honor of walking with top 13 doctors with aprons and stethoscopes well-known for their excellent social work. All these ramp walks were on a professional stage with mesmerizing LED backdrops and music. The evening gown round was followed by declaration of top 6 contestants in my category for ques-

» At the audition I was enthralled by the enthusiasm, talent and vivaciousness of the women specialists. They were from different streams of medicine, working against odds at diverse set ups. But they were quintessential, modern women managing not only families and careers but also social work. They had nurtured their hobbies and passions. Their beauty was laced with courage and confidence.

tion-and-answer session.

My training in Tata Department of Plastic Surgery with internationally famous plastic surgeons and ward rounds came in handy for me for a smooth answer. I was asked to define a modern woman. My answer was, "The modernity of a woman lies in her attitude and not in the fashion she does. She is independent in thoughts and actions. She accepts and respects her womanhood. She extrapolates natural abilities like

empathy and multitasking into her professional life to provide a fresh perspective to the profession. She rises above gender and other biases and actively tries to change social fabric for other women." It was received with thunderous applause. At the end of the round, the first and second runners up were declared. My joy knew no bounds when I was declared the winner of the "classic group." I was crowned amidst cheers and a shower of colorful filigree. I got to walk with the two celebrity guests – Sameer Dharmadhikari and Tejal Wagh. All the three winners then walked in their full glory—crowned and sashed. It happened to be my birthday, and this became my best birthday present ever.

There were many hiccups, but I overcame them with the help of the Mediqueen team and my daughter, in a manner befitting the spirit of plastic surgeons—quick decision making and moving ahead undaunted.

The beauty of the experience outshone the hardships. It is the joyful journey and wealth of relations that fills one's life and makes it worth living. Now I find enough time to keep myself fit and to count my blessings since the time I entered the plastic surgery department as a student. I thank my seniors, colleagues and family for making me strong and decisive.

+