Ramji Raghavan

Ramji Raghavan (born ~1950s, age ~70s) founded Agastya International Foundation in 1999, transforming rural education through hands-on STEAM learning for 17M+ children.

Education

- University of Delhi (undergraduate).
- London Business School (MBA).
- Rishi Valley School alumnus, inspired by experiential learning ethos.

Career

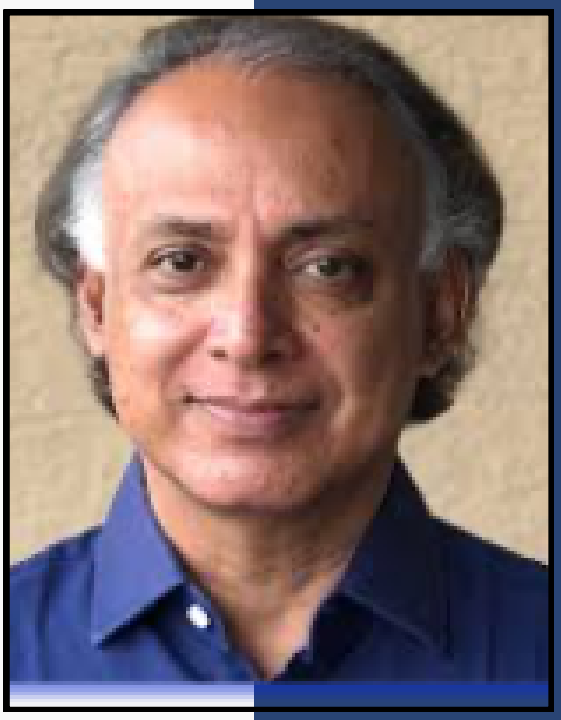
Global banker: Citibank Vice President (Mergers & Acquisitions), senior roles across US, UK, Europe, Caribbean, Asia; London-based until 1998. Quit corporate career to found Agastya International Foundation (1999) after conversations with scientists P.K. Iyengar, K.V. Raghavan; built 172-acre Kuppam campus from barren land via Andhra Pradesh govt MoU. Scaled to world's largest mobile science network: 190+ vans, 90 lab-on-bikes across 21 states.

Awards and Recognition

- Google Global Impact Award (2013).
- Rockefeller Foundation NextCentury Top 100 Global Innovators.
- Central Advisory Board of Education member (Govt of India); Marico Innovation Foundation Governing Council.
- CNBC Awaaz "Bharat Bhagya Vidhata" (2012).

Ramji Raghavan's Story

In 1998, London-based Citibank VP Ramji Raghavan visited rural Indian schools and was horrified: children memorized textbooks without understanding basic science—"Where's the spark of curiosity?" Conversations with atomic scientist P.K. Iyengar ignited his vision: bring hands-on experiments to villages. He convinced AP CM Chandrababu Naidu for 172-acre barren Kuppam land, but construction stalled due to funds. Genius pivot: "Don't build labs—take labs to children!" First Mobile Science Van launched 2001; when even vans couldn't reach remote hamlets, invented Lab-on-a-Bike (90+ today). From corporate boardrooms to dusty villages, Ramji's "Aah! (wonder), Aha! (discovery), Ha-Ha! (joy of learning)" became reality, proving scale through mobility over infrastructure.



Leadership at Agastya Foundation

RaAt the helm of Agastya International Foundation, Ramji Raghavan has engineered one of the world's most expansive experiential learning ecosystems, redefining how science education reaches underserved communities. Through 190 Mobile STEM Labs serving nearly 2 million children annually (with a strong 50% participation from girls), 90 Lab-on-a-Bike units penetrating ultra-remote geographies, and over 100 fixed Science and Creativity Centers, he has ensured that inquiry-based learning is not limited by geography or infrastructure. His model goes beyond access—training over 250,000 teachers and cultivating a network of 30,000 Young Instructor Leaders (YILs), the world's largest peer-learning movement, which amplifies impact nearly 10x by embedding leadership and curiosity within communities themselves.

He further transformed a 172-acre arid landscape in Kuppam into a globally celebrated innovation hub—often referred to as the "Taj Mahal of Creativity"—housing immersive learning spaces such as Chemagicaa, the Bio-Discovery Center, and the Ramanujan Math Park. Post-COVID, his swift pivot to digital through platforms like wE-Learn ensured continuity of experiential education in hybrid formats.