

Dr. Prathaap Rao, Ph.D.

Managing Partner, GroundReality & Arpitha Associates
Independent Director & Board Advisor

Sustainability, Innovation & AI · Global Expansion, Investments & M&A
India · UK · Europe · USA

From the cockpit to the boardroom.



Dr. Prathaap Rao helps boards, founders and leadership teams turn strategy into working systems. For 26+ years, across 30+ countries, he has led change from the inside as a global executive and from the outside as a consultant, board advisor and founder.

He is Managing Partner of GroundReality, which takes sustainability, innovation and AI from pilot to P&L and helps companies grow across borders, and of Arpitha Associates, which builds the leadership, learning and process excellence that make change last.

A former Indian Air Force fighter pilot and All India Air Force Best Cadet, he spent eleven years with global companies, from Citibank to HP, where he was Vice President for global quality, BPM and transformation. He went on to consult, teach and build ventures, including PotHoleRaja®, a citizen-led road-safety movement that has fixed 40,000+ potholes, and GridMats®, patented roads made from recycled plastic.

WHERE HE HELPS

- 01 Strategy, transformation & operating models**
From strategy to working systems through his 5D pathway: discover, define, design, develop, deliver.
- 02 AI adoption & innovation**
Start with the work, then apply AI: pilots that change real work and reach the P&L.
- 03 Sustainability, ESG & climate infrastructure**
Circular products, ESG that pays, and infrastructure built from waste.
- 04 Global expansion, investments & M&A**
Market entry, public-private partnerships and value creation after the deal.
- 05 Leadership development & corporate training**
Vision, values and learning systems; 10,000+ people trained and certified.

RM 165M

a year in savings reported
Construction group, Malaysia

LKR 240M

added to the bottom line
Listed conglomerate, Sri Lanka

RM 13,300+

saved per work order
Infrastructure services, Malaysia

57 leaders

certified in Lean Six Sigma and PMP
Specialty ingredients, India & APAC

Selected results from programmes led with Arpitha Associates. Case studies: groundreality.org/work

BY THE NUMBERS

26+

years of leadership and advisory work

30+

countries, on six continents

10,000+

people trained and certified

8+

boards and advisory roles

40,000+

potholes fixed through PotHoleRaja®

100+

media features, zero ad spend

LEADERSHIP ROLES

HP

Vice President, global quality, BPM & transformation; Global Tower Leader

Hewitt

One of its youngest AVPs; APAC quality & standards

Aditya Birla Group

AVP, APAC quality & certifications

Vanguard

Head of operations & quality

Mphasis · Citibank

Transitions, command centre & operations

Indian Air Force

Fighter pilot; youngest trainer for fighter aircraft

ORGANISATIONS ADVISED

Tenaga Nasional · Mashreq Bank · Siemens Healthcare · Landmark Group · Kemin Industries · UEM Group

And others across India, Southeast Asia, the Gulf, the UK, Europe and the USA.

Live. Love. Learn. Leave a legacy.

The life journey, from the foundation up: so far, and the way ahead.

Dr. Prathaap Rao, Ph.D.
LIFE JOURNEY

MY VALUES

Here and now

Let go

Innovation & agility

Seamless

Detached attachment

Systems before effort

Clarity before speed

"I survived a crash that could have ended everything, and it changed how I think about purpose."

ON HIS FIGHTER-PILOT YEARS



The cockpit. All India Air Force Best Cadet, presented by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



The road. PotHoleRaja®: 40,000+ potholes fixed.



RECOGNITION

- All India Air Force Best Cadet (NCC), presented by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- Global Best Cadet, International Air Cadet Exchange, UK
- Global Tower Leader, HP Global Business Services
- TEDx speaker: "Fixing the world, one pothole at a time"
- Shark Tank India, Season 3, with GridMats®
- Sustainable Infrastructure Innovator Award for GridMats®, Adani Green Talks 2025
- UN DRR–FICCI Sarathi "Made a Difference" award

BOARDS, FACULTY & MEMBERSHIPS

Boards & advisory

GroundReality, Arpitha Associates, BlueTiger, SurveyRigor.com, EFIL, LearnOD, Nidarshana Technologies, Vaidyagrama

Independent director

IICA-certified; listed in the MCA Independent Directors Databank

Visiting faculty

IIM Bangalore, Christ University, Alliance University, IFIM, Welingkar, Jain University, MS Ramaiah

Member

IGBC, FICCI, CII, NASSCOM, ASSOCHAM, PMI

BEYOND WORK

- Solo motorcycle ride to Umling La, 19,024 ft, the world's highest motorable road
- Everest Three Passes trek; full marathon and sprint triathlon finisher
- Karnataka State pistol-shooting medals; coach of India's Paralympic shooting team at a World Cup
- Pencil-sketch artist and aeromodeller
- Author of 4 books, 25+ research papers and 50+ articles