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WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR

This woman entrepreneur started up to change the way OPD services operate in clinics and hospitals

Madhubala Radhakrishnan started mCURA to change the way the OPD functions in hospitals, with its integrated mobility platform 'SMART OPD', which provides the best service to the patients in terms of waiting, queue management, and digital prescriptions.

By Rekha Balakrishnan

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Navigating through hospitals and clinics can turn out to be cumbersome for many, for the sheer amount of processes and running-around involved from one department to the other. If you are an out-patient, then sometimes you have to wait for hours for a consultation or other tests.

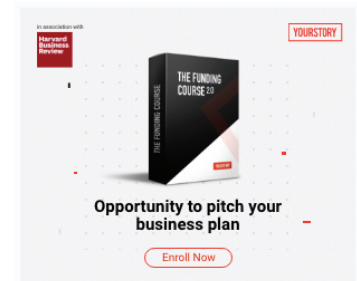


Madhubala Radhakrishnan, Founder of mCURA Mobile Health Pvt. Ltd., wanted to change patients' experience in the OPD in hospitals and clinics.

She explains, "The patient who is already suffering has to wait for almost two hours for a consultation which usually lasts for 10 minutes. The patient then again has to run from counter to counter to get the prescribed medicines from the pharmacy and likewise conduct tests in the lab. The whole process is very tedious and time-consuming."

"For doctors, they have to give prescriptions on paper every time (as the hospital remains generally overcrowded) a patient comes, and it was difficult for them to manage records of their patients," she adds.

Changing patients' experience

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To tackle the challenges faced by patients, Madhubala started **mCURA**, a Gurugram-based healthtech startup that is changing the way OPD services operate in hospitals and clinics.

The 46-year-old has more than 23 years' experience in the healthcare sector.

After completing her undergraduate degree in Computer Science from Bhartidasan University in Trichy, Madhubala went on to pursue an MS in Computer Science from the US.

She also gathered my Project Management Professional (PMP) certificate from PMI, and also received certifications on HL7, ISO 13485, ISO 14971, Six Sigma - Black Belt, and Scrum Master/Agile Certification - CSM.

Before starting mCURA, Madhubala worked for more than 18 years in different organisations across countries that include the **Apollo Group in Chennai, iMetrikus in the US, Country Head of mHealth division, Tata Tele Services, and Principal Consultant in NDTV Convergence.**

In her entire career span of 23 years, she gained in-depth domain knowledge of **healthcare and medical device integration, experience in technical programmes, and spearheaded project management roles in web-based portals, mobile, device integration, infrastructure, migration, and system design.**

“While working in the healthcare industry handling m-health division, I saw gaps in the hospitals which were still focussed on traditional mode from doctors' prescription, OPD services, to the pharmacy. My exposure to the global healthcare industry influenced me to start mCURA in 2013,” she says.



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Smart tech



The team

mCURA has introduced India's **first integrated mobility platform 'SMART OPD'**, which is fully tech-enabled to provide the best service to the patients in terms of waiting, queue management, and digital prescriptions, which not only is legible but also triggers pharmacy and labs automatically without the patient carrying handwritten orders floor by floor



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and also automatically, instead of patients carrying handwritten orders from a doctor's room.

"This adoption of printed prescription that includes all the details as suggested in the latest EHR standard by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has proven to eliminate the errors and confusion. Patients shall now be able to get a full understanding of medication advised to them with a concise and easy-to-read printed summary along with icons to suggest the right administration mode, so they are left with no confusion while making the purchase or consuming the medication," Madhubala explains.

Some of mCURA's major clients include Sir Gangaram Hospital, New Delhi and DCM Shriram Group. In these hospitals, the company has streamlined OPD operations and made it easier for the patient right from them entering the hospital until they get out of the hospital, through its mobile platform. This, according to the founder, will give freshers and homemakers from a Science background an opportunity to work for four to six hours daily.

These include patient relationship executives who receive and manage the transition smoothly to the new system by educating patients and hospitals staff on the use of hardware and technology. Also, clinical informatics secretaries who work as trained personal medico assistants for each doctor at their OPD chambers, digitising patient records in a structured format on a real-time basis.

Presently, mCURA has a team size of 90 and has plans on hiring 100 more soon.

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It has raised an investment of Rs 5.5 crore. Its annual revenue to date has been more than Rs 2 crore, and with a new contract with Sir Gangaram Hospital will ensure a revenue of Rs 4.3 crore and more.

Madhubala says being a single woman entrepreneur is a big challenge. "As it is a manpower-intensive solution along with technology, investors always had apprehensions in investing in my business model."

Contacting doctors in the time of coronavirus

With COVID-19 being declared a global pandemic and the country in a 21-day lockdown until April 14, mCURA responded to the situation by developing a virtual OPD with video-consultation model, so that patients can contact any doctor without leaving their homes.

"Any hospital can launch virtual OPDs in 48-hours with our plugin, and patients do not have to download any app and just need to click the SMS link. With data connectivity, they can connect with the doctor," she says.

Madhubala's future plans for mCURA include taking the technology to big hospitals and other geographical areas and to create a separate women workforce that can manage the entire healthcare ecosystem.

"Also, we expect a patient to be treated in an atmosphere similar to that of an airline lounge. We also aspire to change the current scenario of hospitals. Our goal is to reduce wait time, digitisation of medical records and bringing 100 percent transparency to the

wait time, digitisation of medical records, and bringing 100 percent transparency to the hospital management,” she adds.

(Edited by Suman Singh)

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