

REVELATIONS OF A SENIOR LIVING PIONEER

EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS FROM 2 ICONS
PART 1: ANKUR & MANSOOR



BIOGRAPHY



Mr. Mansoor Dalal
Chairman & Managing Director,
Oasis Senior Citizen

Founder & Chairman,
Association of Senior Living
India (ASLI)

Mr. Mansoor Dalal, is an Architect, who after 32 years of practice has recently voluntarily closed operations, so as to devote his full time to the cause of Senior Living in India.

Mr. Dalal, has been through the last decade, concentrating on developing Senior Citizen communes across the country. His company's domain expertise is in Creating Senior Communes from concept to commissioning to operations. They are the only consultants offering these holistic services for the Senior Living industry. Mr. Dalal created the first such commune, Golden Nest in Pune in 2003 and has been operating the same till date. He has also launched THE NEST, the first senior commune of Central India in Bhopal, in 2012.

Additional projects in Bhopal, Indore and Pune are in various stages of development. He is also credited to have formed ASLI (Association of Senior Living India) the first national professional trade association formed to represent senior living providers in India and to protect the interest of Seniors. The acronym ASLI coined by him, meaning REAL, echoes the need for real and committed players in this nascent industry.



Mr. Ankur Gupta
Managing Director,
Ashiana Housing, India

Mr. Ankur Gupta is the Joint Managing Director of Ashiana Housing Limited, which is rated by Forbes as Best 200 under a billion dollar in Asia and has completed MS in Real Estate from New York University (USA). During his MS as well at Ashiana he has been focused on residential projects for senior citizens.

He was the pioneer in bringing the retirement resort concept (branded as 'Utsav') to India. Ashiana has a portfolio of 1500 units in retirement housing and are located in three different locations and one more has just got added. His success has been in selling the retirement housing concept where many have failed. He specializes in maintenance and management of retirement housing. He is also a founder member of Association of Senior Living India.

INTERVIEW

With **ANKUR GUPTA** and **MANSOOR DALAL**

1 Tell us briefly about your journey to senior living in India. How did you break into the industry and get to where you are today?

Ankur:

In the 1996-97 when the real-estate industry was not doing so good and we were selling houses at Delhi, we observed that lot of people who are buying the regular houses are retirees and they were looking for options which are economical and situated in a place, which is less polluted and near to Delhi. So when Dad saw it, he said why don't we do senior living in India because he had seen Senior Living in the USA when he was studying there. So that's how Senior Living was conceptualized at Ashiana Housing. So we started thinking about Senior Living and after 5 years of research, we launched the first Senior Living project in 2003. One of the biggest challenges was to cater to growing social need of providing dignified lifestyle to the elderly in the country and at the same time keeping it commercially viable. Our success lies in that we are at it and lot of training on the background side.

For example Dr Murlidhran (Manager Carehomes), Col Atma (Vice President) & Ms. Bulbul (Assistant General Manager) went

“ After **5 years** of research, we **launched** the first **Senior Living** project in 2003. ”

for a week of training in the US. I myself have trained all over the world on Senior Living. We have built-in training programmes for caregivers, for operational side staff and for sales teams etc. We always listen to our customer & measure ourselves whether we have lived up to their expectations. One more thing is that we never looked at a product or service at very standalone basis - we kept evolving!

For example, when we delivered the houses and realised that the residents wanted a transportation service/food delivery/dining facility, we've also added it. And thus we have been continuously learning and evolving throughout our journey. We are one of the pioneers in this field and serving the untapped market has given us recognition not only in India but internationally as well.

Mansoor:

I started my journey in senior living way back in 2001. I was seized of creating the first of its kind Senior Living community on International lines and was looking around for a developer who would see the merit in this sector. I had researched on all the fundamentals and needs of this sector for India and also had the project report, financial feasibility studies, basis designs, et all ready, but no land and no finance. Fortunately, VASCON stepped in, was convinced of the concept, took the leap of faith and Golden Nest was created in Pune.

2 If you had to choose 3 of your accomplishments that you are most proud of, what would it be? Any major product or leadership milestones worth citing?

Ankur:

The progress has been both successful and challenging. Utsav Bhiwadi, the first Senior Living project of our company was successful and helped us a lot in understanding our customers better. There has been a phenomenal change in the attitude of our customers. When we first started selling Utsav, people were not aware of the concept, the product and the facilities it can offer. They were not aware of what they wanted, but now they know and understand it very well. In fact their increasing demand help us improve upon our offerings on a continuous basis.

One of our accomplishments is that 1100 residents have put their faith in our Senior Living Projects. We presently have 3 Senior Living communities (Bhiwadi, Jaipur and Lavasa). We recently organised the first Inter Senior Living communities competitions named Jashn at Bhiwadi. Our residents from all three senior living communities participated in large number in various sports competitions such as Table tennis, Chess, Carom, Walking Competitions along with various cultural competitions such as dance, song, standing comedian, drama, etc.

Another milestone which I feel we achieved is the fully functional care home we have provided for the residents. Care home are for adults who need help with everyday tasks such as hygiene maintenance, health and medication management. They may need help with dressing, bathing, eating or using a bathroom but they don't need full time medical care. Services are shared in small groups, making it economical and also specific to their needs. These care homes will be part of all our Senior Living projects.

Mansoor:

Well, one of them would be that we were one of the firsts to create such a community 11 years back. Two, again we were one of the first to operate the same through an independent trust: our board of trustees consisted of trustees from HDFC, the developers, and residents. Third, we were the only consultants who got involved right from concept to commissioning to operations, straddling all aspects of legality, construction, educating a new concept, detailing, setting up management protocol and resources etc. More so this was almost a decade back, when this sector was yet to see the light of the day. Oasis has now evolved to a purely consultancy organisation.

INTERVIEW

With **ANKUR GUPTA** and **MANSOOR DALAL**

3 How do you address senior concerns and make retirement a positive experience? For example, how can a potential customer be confident that they are placing an elderly loved one into a good retirement community? What are best ways to approach that initial, difficult conversation?

Ankur:

We believe that true positivity foster from honest commitment, complete transparency and from never giving up attitude. One of the ways we facilitate positive experience in Senior Living is by creating lot of activities. Also because of likeminded friends, there is already a positive experience.

Thirdly, it is our layout - the way we design our green spaces helps in creating a peaceful and serene ambiance. Our residents apart from enjoying the company of others, they engage in regular activities like tambola evenings, movie shows, seminars, cooking classes etc. Every occasion, be it a birthday, an anniversary or a festival - is celebrated with zest and zeal. Little wonder, most of our residents feel that they are re-living their carefree college days. At Activity Centre, there are plenty of indoor and outdoor activities, where the residents are spoilt for choice. Generally, you will find them reading in the library, playing a hand of cards, honing precision skills at carom, learning the use of computers, or creating something new at the arts and crafts workshop.

About initial discussion, they are always difficult so when we meet the potential customer, we try to understand and comprehend every concern he/she has. We remain steadfastly true and transparent in what we offer.

Mansoor:

This indeed is a difficult conversation to engage in with a relative or a son or a daughter, looking for a secured, loving and caring home for their loved seniors. One of the best ways is to introduce them to other "older" residents who can share their experiences of the community. This was of course, a major challenge when we started, since we did not have any prior track record or experience. Today, we have cross referenced from one project to another and regularly encourage new clients to interact with residents.

4 You are one of the early believers of this segment & thus have a great deal of experience as well as exposure under your belt. What have you learned from early versions of your product or service?

Ankur:

We need to keep evolving and to listen to our customers. There will always be that tricky situation of balancing between what the customers want and how much they are willing to pay for it. As a service provider, how you mix it up with pay by use service and maintenance service remains a challenge.

Mansoor:

We, the senior living providers, must be prepared to "walk the talk". Providers will need to be personally and actively involved in a continuous day to day operations of the community. They will need to be on board of the trust / foundation / company/ whatever entity, which is overseeing the running of the community. Simply handing over the community to a facility management company for day to day operations with a manager may not be enough. Lastly we would need to evolve from the ownership model to the time tested deposit/ deferred fee or life time occupancy models.

This would ensure more accountability and involvement of the principal provider since the underlying asset will still be on their books, unlike in the case of the ownership model. The ownership model also carries a "risk" of the residents, forming a Co-op housing society or a Resident welfare Association and wanting to take over the running of the community. This is already happening in some of the earlier developments, wherein the residents have formed a society and now want to take over the management. Though legally all correct, this would in itself defeat the purpose of the senior residents receiving hassle free care and service.

“ We, the **Senior Living Providers**, must be prepared to “walk the talk”. ”

INTERVIEW

With **ANKUR GUPTA** and **MANSOOR DALAL**

5 The current Indian senior living era is in a stage whereby it is still evolving & uptake is a challenge. How do you think traction can be accelerated?

Ankur:

We are doing lot of work on various fears or challenges which Seniors face while making a decision such as guarantee that we will return their money back in case they don't like the product even after a year or organising the inter senior living events such as Jashn. We have a trail apartment concept in which one can stay and experience senior living before making the decision. However lot needs to be done such as extending loan facilities to the seniors.

Mansoor:

This sector needs to come out from a real estate play to a dedicated vertical only for senior living involved in all aspects of its sector. Entry of corporates, not necessarily, involved in real estate ventures, REITS dedicated to this sector will need to come into play to provide the much needed traction and impetus.

Entry of entities who see the merit and dire need of this sector and who are willing to pour in serious money to create CCRC on large scale will be the tipping point for this industry. Entry of Life and personal insurers who will tailor a product for senior care, so that the insurer and the provider are covered for expenses. Look at China, they have innumerable CCRC communities of 3 to 4000 units each, while the total units available in India today, and that too mostly under Independent living, may not exceed 5000 to 6000.

7 What are your thoughts about our upcoming Retirement Living World India CEO Forum? Why should stakeholders attend?

Ankur:

I think it's a very good platform. It is very important that people are sharing ideas and big developers are venturing into Senior Living. I feel all stake holders should attend it to learn, network and share ideas.

Mansoor:

It is the only platform that is available for exchange of notes and ideas. It is also one of the first to be held in India after formation of ASLI. A must attend for all stake holders either involved or intending. This event promises to be a much needed catalyst for this nascent sector.

6 If there are 4 areas that will be particularly important for senior living providers to be watching and working on, what are they?

Ankur:

One of the important aspects is to understand the Indian ageing process. I personally feel that Indian Senior Living would be more spiritually and wellness oriented and so one need to understand ageing at different level. Also as life expectancy is increasing in India so does the scenario of Senior Living in the country. Another would be how medical market is changing vis-a-vis the Senior Living.

Mansoor:

The 4 areas for critical for the success of this industry would be:

- A. INTENT AND SCOPE:** Dedicated entities only for this sector, with a corporate structure to scale up services and offer all segments of care. A bundle of real estate, hospitality and health care.
- B. MODEL:** Deposit/ Fee/ Life time occupancy for more accountability and involvement.
- C. SCALE:** Large formats to achieve cost and service efficiency & encompassing all levels of care. A genuine CCRC.
- D. HUMAN RESOURCES:** To set up multi institutes/ universities for training personal so that a pipe line of specific and specialised talent /human resource is available to the sector with a visible career path.

8 Ok one final question - can you help us describe just who is the future Ankur Gupta?

Ankur:

Me.

Mansoor:

Someone who will tireless and passionately advocate the need to set up Senior living communities. Someone who hopes that one day ASLI will be the platform for this industry working for the cause of the seniors and providers in equal measure.

Someone who hopes that good operating practices, self-regulation and bye-laws will be implemented by all senior living provider, and finally someone who hopes to be involved in creating more such communities and be able to witness in my life time, at least about 200 large scale CCRC operating in this country, by dedicated teams of empathy personal.

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND?

- ◆ **Top Insights from Industry Leaders & Pioneers:**
Expect all of India's movers & shakers huddled together **revealing key insights.**
- ◆ **Easy Access to Decision Makers:**
Shorter your lead time where more than 80% are CXOs/VPx/MDs are in one roof.
- ◆ **Exceptional Content:**
2 Day highlights of **20+ tactic-packed sessions** that will help you become the most astute senior care professional.
- ◆ **Crucial Connections:**
Arrange meetings prior, during and even after the event in a secure, private environment using our **online event software.**
- ◆ **International Coverage:**
Participated not only by the country's **most brilliant** but also **the best** from major markets like Japan, South Africa and the USA.
- ◆ **Essential Conveniences:**
Stay productive and comfortable with delicious luncheons, all day refreshments, conference proceedings, and WiFi connectivity in conference halls.



11-12 December 2015
Intercontinental Marine Drive | Mumbai, India

To register now or for more information, please contact:

Amber Liang
Email: amber.liang@imapac.com
Tel: +65 6493 1871