

**Land given for IIMA Campus before greening, in the 1960s**



**The Horizon View from the Library in the 1970s**



**The Horizon View from the Library in the 2010s**



## CAMPUS GREENERY

Monsoon is the time to appreciate the greenery of the campus. But the land was near barren, with only a few scattered trees, when it was transferred to the Institute in the early 1960s. Over the years, the Estate Department has been responsible for planting trees and raising nurseries. In the early days, S. S. Ahluwalia of ISRO advised the Institute; P.P. Bhagwat was the gardening advisor for a long time. In the 1970s, Madhusudan Mehta, a forester, who was the Divisional Forest Officer for Ahmedabad from 1972-76, recommended 'Neem' as a primary choice, and arranged for the supply of thousands of seedlings. The internal team, that included staff like Shelke and Shamrao Joshi, also had a legendary team of four gardeners, Ram Pyare, Ram Dulari, Ram Bihari and Narpal Malla. The work of such people, and many others, over the decades has resulted in the greenery that we see today.

The IIMA Archives Monthly Snippet | May 2022 brought the spotlight on Mr. Ramratan Pasi, the senior-most gardener of the campus in 1979. Mr. Pasi joined IIMA in 1965, coming from Uttar Pradesh at the age of 17, determined to earn, save and remit money back to his family. He retired in 2005 after serving 40 years at IIMA. He is one among a number of gardeners that have contributed to the greenery of the campus.

**Excerpts of email from Mr. Madhusudan Mehta to Prof. Errol D'Souza, Director of IIMA, sent on Aug 11, 2019.**

Dear Dr D'Souza

You may be surprised to get this email from a Retired Forester who retired in 1993. I am currently in USA leading a quiet retired life.

I was Divisional Forest Officer Ahmedabad from 1972 to 1976. I was lucky to have met and interacted with Ravi Matthai of IIM. I never knew him but one day I got a call from his office that he would like to meet him on Sunday at his Home in IIM at 8.30 am over breakfast. He was very courteous and friendly. He took me round the campus. Most of the buildings had not come up but roads were laid. He requested me to help clothe the campus in greenery. I suggested that NEEM will be the best species. I supplied thousands of seedlings and sent my foresters to supervise. It prompted and inspired Director ATIRA Dr. Mehta, PRL Director Dr. Devendra Lal, ISRO Thaltej Tekra by Dr Alag and Smt Mrinalini Sarabhai at Nehru Foundation, to undertake massive plantation in their campus. I am glad that I was of help to see that the greenery that has established.

**Madhusudan. B. Mehta**  
**Ex-Chief Conservator of Forests(India)**

The profile of Mr. Pasi, as published in IIMA's Contact magazine in 1979, as shared below.

## *Khet hi Sona hai*

The verdure around us is not just nature's gift. Some of it is manmade—at least the way it looks. Amidst the imposing grandeur of bricks, green lawns provide refreshing contrast. A scene that soothes the eye. Elsewhere, flowers of a variety of hues and shapes sprinkle a splash of colour. No wonder our campus inspires many.

But what about the men behind it all? We hardly see them, let alone knowing them. In the Institute parlance, there is no interaction. One such man is Ramratan L. Pasi, the seniormost gardener of the Institute.

Ramratan came to the campus 16 years ago not just with a spade. But with experience. He was working with Dr. Mehta of ATIRA and later with Prof. Kamla Chaudhuri, who brought him here. That was when, in the words of Ramratan, the campus was a jungle and the construction of what is now D-12 had started. From then, he has seen the campus develop brick by brick—no, lawn by lawn, plant by plant, flower by flower. "I have many ideas of beautifying the campus," he says but there is not enough people around. Being the seniormost, Ramratan supervises the work of others.

Hailing from Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh, Ramratan, 34, started his career as a farmer at a young age. But he was underemployed and so started looking for opportunities for employment. He and his uncle decided to seek out a career elsewhere. That brought Ramratan to Ahmedabad, to IIM. He was 17 years then. He picked up Gujarati slowly. He now speaks that language fluently.

He has no extra-curricular activities. He does not even see movies! "Ham ko



achha nahi lagta hai," he says. He knows about the Recreation Club but has not taken part in any activity. He does not like spending money on such items. He leads a simple life. Asked how he spends his leisure time, he said he works in a Professor's house and earns Rs. 30 extra every month to supplement his salary. This extra income is saved and sent home. He doesn't have any saving except the share capital in the cooperative society. Whatever money is sent home and even the loans taken from the society, he says, is used to buy land and cattle. In his own words: "Khet hi sona hai, dhaan hi dhan hai."

Ramratan has three sons. He doesn't want to educate all of them. Children

educated in city would not like to come back to village and settle there. Instead of utilizing their knowledge and ability in agriculture, they would go for office jobs. Moreover, they would go in for luxurious life and would spend lavishly. "However, I will educate one, so that he will be able to read and write. Others will do farming in my own agricultural land," he says.

What are his plans? "Till retirement, if possible, I will work here. By then I will ensure that I have my own house and enough land and cattle. I will then go back to my village and lead a peaceful life with my children."

*NKS Kumar*

## A NOTE FOR THE FUTURE, FROM 2022



Wouldn't you like to be reminded of your hopes, dreams and aspirations 25 years down the line, when you are older and certainly wiser? Exactly one week before the 2022 convocation, on April 11, 2022, the IIMA Archives launched **"A Note for the Future, from 2022"**, a unique campaign designed to connect the IIMA community with its future self. Graduating students, faculty, staff and other stakeholders were asked to write out notes to themselves by hand, and drop them into a box kept at Dorm 15. These notes will be preserved and released in 2047, to coincide with the silver jubilee of the graduating batches as well as the 100th anniversary of our independence. Graduating students: Please wake up after 25 years - your 2022 notes will be waiting for you.



