

Lighting up product design

 By [Ann Nurock](#)

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The inspirational Yogita Agrawal hails from Mumbai and focuses on solving problems in emerging global communities with innovative products and sustainable technologies. She strives to make beautiful and meaningful objects and experiences that touch people's lives.

She graduated from New York's Parsons School for Design in 2015 with a focus in product design, and was one of the remarkable speakers at [Design Indaba](#) 2016.



Agrawal

Yogita's project at Parsons was to design an enduring product; something that's essential to one's life and improves it – a 'social impact' design. She called it the 'Jhoule': a wearable, human motion-powered device designed to light up homes in off-the-grid villages.

I sat down with Yogita during Design Indaba to better understand her Jhoule, which is designed to tap into the mobile lifestyle of people in rural India.

Yogita remembered how she spent her summers with her grandmother in India in Chhattisgarh where there were frequent power cuts that lasted up to six days at a time. Even worse, some villages had no electricity at all. This was a problem she decided to solve.

Walking power

First off, she really got to understand how the people in these villages lived and interacted with the environment around them. For instance, she learned that they're unable to install solar panels as there's a problem with protecting them. She then realised the villagers walked a lot and thus began designing Jhoule, ultimately a device that stores energy as people walked – and would then light up their homes at night.

Initially, no one would wear her Jhoule, as it wasn't a fashionable design. That's when she appreciated the role of design is not just to make functional products but also to create a feel-good factor when people wear it, much like a fashion accessory.



Walk and Charge

The Jhoule in action. Image © [Agrawal's website](#)

After many prototypes she finally developed a design that achieved these goals, an item people actually wanted to wear and simultaneously improved their lives.

And so the Jhoule was born, storing four hours of light for every hour walked in order to provide light at night when electricity is unavailable.

Yogita has since moved back to Mumbai to test and refine the Jhoule, and has been awarded and funded by The Michael Kalil Endowment for Smart Design and the James Dyson Foundation at Parsons.

A remarkable young lady whose design will improve the lives of not only Indians in rural areas but also those of other emerging markets, like South Africa.

Visit [Yogita's website](#) for images of the Jhoule in action.

ABOUT ANN NUROCK

Ann is a Partner at Relationship Audits and Management, a global consultancy that measures and optimizes client /agency relationships. Her proprietary Radar tool is used by 30 corporates globally and as a result she interacts with over 80 agencies of all disciplines. Ann spent 25 years plus in the advertising industry as CEO of Grey Advertising South Africa, and head of the Africa region followed by President and CEO of Grey Canada. Contact details: ann.nurock@relationshipaudits.com | Twitter [@Annnurock](#)

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