

Dr (Smt.) Indumati Parikh

Recipient of Jamnalal Bajaj Award for Uplift and Welfare of Women and Children-1996

Date of birth 8.3.1918

Though basically a medical practitioner, Dr Parikh has a multifaceted personality and has numerous accomplishments in diverse fields of activities. She was deeply involved in the Radical Humanist Movement. She thus came to combine the qualities of an intellectual and an activist of social change.

An active Family Physician and Family Planning Practitioner, Dr Parikh practiced active Family Planning and Women counseling for a period of 43 years in her own dispensary between 1941 and 1984. A scientific innovation was done by her in 1964 using IUD as an OPD procedure in a small clinic in a simplified way. Between 1955 and 1965 at Shradhanand Mahilashram, Dr Parikh devoted her time working for the women and children.

She founded, established and developed a unique organization called 'Streehitkarini' in 1964 in the socio-economically deprived area of urban poor and started working for downtrodden and destitute women and children, She has dedicated herself all these years, undertaking about 24 integrated activities for the development of the community with the ultimate goal of improving quality of human life and status of women with a motto of 'Free, Full and Healthy Life; for women.

Current Areas of her activity:

During 1984-89 Dr Parikh directed a project "Community Involvement in Comprehensive Health Care" by USAID through Govt. of India. It provided along with basic health care, family planning and nutrition services to women and children for more than a lakh of population in some of the Bombay slums. Health education to the entire population has become a major activity in the area.

After this Dr Parikh directed two projects aided by Ford Foundation, UA, in the same area 1. Study of gynecological problems of women with the objective of starting an ongoing programme for women's reproductive health, and 2. Health monitoring of adolescent girls, which has led to a programme of Health and Sex Education for Adolescent Girls and Boys.

She has been co-editor of "Doctor Nasel Tethe" a Marathi version of "Where there is no Doctor" a renowned health publication for a common man. To date about 57,000 copies have been sold.

She has also written a monograph in English in "An experience in Community involvement in Family Planning in a Metropolitan City", in addition to regular contribution to popular and scientific periodicals in English and Marathi.

In the fall out of the riots in the city of Bombay in 1992-93, Dr Parikh demonstrated her humanist spirit by visiting the Muslim areas in Bharatnagar of Bandra East where she is developing for the last years a self-help and health education programme with the help of Hunger project. Streehitakarini organized relief work for refugees when genuine and needy families were given kitchen utensils and bedding, etc. Similar action was taken after the bomb explosion in March 1993 in the slums of Worli. This virtually single-handed operation was led and conducted by her at the young age of 75 years.

Currently Dr Parikh is engaged in developed a Comprehensive Programme of Integrated Human Development with Special Attention to Women and Youth. This is being done under the aegis of "CENTRE FOR THE STRUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE" of which she is the President at present. This work is carried on in collaboration with Streehitakarini and Indian Radical Humanist Association and would be housed in near future in M.N. Roy Memorial Human Development Campus at Bandra, Bombay 400051. Under this programme, several youth camps are being organized to motivate young men and women to undertake integrate community development programme.

Awards/Prizes, etc received earlier a. First recipient of the honour of publication of “Anubhav” of Ford Foundation series of case studies of success stories of voluntary organization in India; b. “Distinguished Humanist Award” conferred by international Humanist and Ethical Union (I.H.E.U.) at 10th International Congress held in Buffalo, U.S.A. 1988, c. Elected member of “Humanist Academy”, an honour received till date by only 60 persons in the world including many

