

India: Obituary for Dr. Jyotiben Trivedi (1922-2015) - Empowering women through higher education

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Dr. Jyotiben Trivedi, was the Vice Chancellor of SNDT Women's University from 1980 to 1986. Jyotiben was kind, sensitive to the problems of all the employees of SNDTWU and took genuine interest in our life, helped and guided us at times of difficulty, was generous in sponsoring education and health expenditure of the needy. Every time she met any one of them, first thing she asked was, "Have you sent money order to your mother? Never neglect your mother. If you don't have enough cash, I will give. For her all working for SNDTWU were her family members. He did not differentiate them on the basis of our position. To her all of them were equally worthy and cared for our children and parent.

To subsequent vice chancellors of the university also, she gave constructive suggestions and always stood by me. Dr. Jyotiben was very gracious and had generosity of heart. She was intellectually alert citizen and always gave serious thoughts to larger issues of society-community health, social change, and social justice. She was duped by her beneficiaries so many times in her life, but she never stopped her philanthropic work.

When she asked me, 'What should be our goal?' "I said, 'Academic excellence.' She said, "The most important goal should be hand-holding and enabling young women to enter institutions of higher learning and building their lives.' When I as selected for post doctoral fellowship at The London School of Economics and Political Science, I was hesitant to go as my 8 year old daughter refused to go with me to London, it was Dr. Jyotiben and then Vice Chancellor, Prof. Suma Chitnis who boosted my morale to make best of this opportunity. Dr. Jyoti Trivedi was always happy when we achieved recognition and laurels in our career. She was also interested in our work in the women's movement and community health. She played crucial role in development of Lady Thakersey College of Nursing with her visionary leadership, networking with medical and nursing community and patrons.

Prof. Vasudha Kamath, Vice Chancellor of SNDTWU presided over the function and concluded by saying, "Dr. Jyoti Trivedi has had a lasting impact on my personality. She was Hon. Vice Chancellor, when I joined as a young teacher in Education Dept. She had interviewed and selected me. M.Ed. lectures used to be in the evening, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. One day, a student started bleeding and fainted in the class. I was zapped and was running around and security guards of our university told me to contact Madam VC, Dr. Jyoti Trivedi. I told, at this hour will she be in her office? When I went to her

chamber and told about this medical emergency, she immediately contacted Bombay Hospital and told me to take the student there. The student got medical care and I was in the hospital till her family members arrived at 9 p.m. This sensitive handling by the head of the institution was a great learning for me in the initial period of my teaching career. Jyotiben always had great dreams for SNDTWU. During Golden Jubilee Year of L.T. College of Nursing, she questioned me, 'Why can't SNDTWU have a medical college? Start efforts in that direction.'

Her honesty of purpose and determination with respect to empowerment of women through higher education made her role model for thousands of university educated graduate and post graduate students as well as education leaders of our country.

Vibhuti Patel
