

Obituary

DR SUSHILA NAYAR

Dr Sushila Nayar died on 3rd January 2001 at the age of 87 years. Dr Nayar was born in 1914 in the Gujarat district of Punjab. She graduated from Punjab University and completed her studies at Johns Hopkins University in the USA. She worked for some time as Registrar and Assistant Professor at Lady Hardings Medical College and was Chief Medical Officer at Faridabad. Later, she was Professor of Community Medicine in Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Sevagram, which was founded by her in 1969. Dr Nayar was also a member of several national institutions concerned with women's problems and the handicapped, and was the author of several books.

Following the founding of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Dr Nayar and her colleague, Dr R. V. Wardekar, treated many patients with leprosy. She became deeply involved in the problems of these patients, and remained so for the rest of her life. In 1946, Dr Nayar was instrumental in blocking a bill for compulsory sterilization of leprosy patients.

Dr Nayar and her colleagues established the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation in 1951, and the Foundation conducted trials of chemotherapy in leprosy in 10 endemic states in India. The National Leprosy Programme in India was based on the results of these early trials.

Dr Nayar's contribution to the field of leprosy was extensive, and she will be remembered for her initiative in bringing the care of leprosy patients from the close confinement of leper colonies into the wider community.

*(Condensed from a longer article written by
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