

LOK BIRADARI PRAKALP

Background:

Lok Biradari Prakalp (LBP), a project of the Maharogi Sewa Samiti, Warora, was started by the legendary social worker **Baba Amte** in 1973 for integrated development of *Madia-Gond*, the primitive tribals of Bhamragad in Gadchiroli District of Maharashtra, India. Baba's younger son **Dr. Prakash Amte** and his wife **Dr. Mandakini Amte** are running the project since 1974, forfeiting the opportunity of lucrative medical practice. Many dedicated volunteers like Vilas & Renuka Manohar, Gopal & Prabha Phadnis, Dada & Baban Panchal, Manohar & Sandhya Yempalwar etc. since then, have joined LBP. **Dr. Digant** and **Aniket** sons of Prakash and Mandakini and their wives Dr. Anagha & Samiksha respectively have also joined LBP. The following are the current activities of LBP.

(A) The Hospital – Medical Services

The MSS's Tribal Welfare Programmes have gained international recognition for their preservation of the culture of tribals of India, who are facing extinction through modern development, exploitation and disease. Dr. Prakash and Dr. (Mrs) Mandakini Amte have both worked tirelessly under extremely difficult conditions to help in the preservation of India's tribal people. Lok Biradari Prakalp (The People's Brotherhood) [Est. – 1973] situated in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra serves the Madia-Gond tribals who are alienated from the outside world. In this particular project primary health care was given top priority. Six sub centres were started in the interior forest area, geographically wide apart from the main hospital, of which three are still functional.

The early years of the project entailed a massive struggle in the extremely difficult conditions of a thick and remote forest. The centre, started in 1973, has recently developed into a full fledged hospital having 40 beds and caters to over 45,000 patients annually. At Hemalkasa the hospital is ensconced in the surrounding dense forest, where the Madia Gond tribal patients feel most comfortable in recuperating after their treatment. Hundreds of patients come daily to the hospital traversing long and difficult terrain on foot. Dr. Prakash and Manda treat almost 45,000 patients every year entirely free of cost and provide round the clock services for the emergency cases. The tribals have such high regard for them, that instead of visiting the nearby primary health centres run by the state govt., they prefer to come walking from long distances of upto 100 kms and carrying their sick on the makeshift stretcher of an ordinary charpai. It takes them sometimes 3-4 days to reach Hemalkasa.

(B) Educational Development – School

A residential school (1st to 12th Standard) was started in 1976 for the tribal children now giving free education to nearly 600 students. They are provided with hostel accommodation and given free lodging and boarding facilities. All education material is also provided free of cost to them. Apart from the formal education, they are also provided vocational training and guidance,

which will be useful in their day to day life. e.g.- practical training in farming, seed production, dairy, bamboo craft, ceramic art, greeting cards, tailoring, health education etc. These programmes are aimed at the survival of the tribals and all efforts have been made to bring about awareness of social rights and duties through continued dialogue and social exposure.

Dr.Kanna Madavi, Dr.Pandurang Pungati, Dr.Komti Durwa, Dr.Sudhakar Wachami the Madia Gond tribal boys from the area completed their schooling at Hemalkasa. Dr. Digant and Aniket sons of Prakash and Mandakini, also completed their schooling at Hemalkasa.

(C) Preservation of Wild Life

A small sheltered enclosure has been formed at Hemalkasa to keep orphaned babies of wild animals, thereby protecting them from merciless killing. This rescue-cum-orphanage, houses probably one of the largest one man collection of wild animals in the country and the world at large. The Hemalkasa community of workers live in complete harmony with a great diversity of wild animals still to be found in this relatively undisturbed, thick forest. Amte's Animal Ark – Orphanage cum Rescue Center at Hemalkasa includes panthers, bears, snakes, deer, wild boars, crocodiles etc.

(D) Unique Honour for Dr.Prakash and Dr.Mandakini Amte – Postage Stamp by Kingdom of Monaco

A French couple, Greet and Guy Barthelemy , who had worked with the Nobel Peace prize winner, Dr.Albert Schweitzer in the jungles of Africa, happened to visit Anandwan and Hemalkasa in 1993. **They were so deeply impressed by the work of Dr.Prakash and Mandakini Amte, that they christened them as the Schweitzer couple of India.** After returning to France, they followed up the matter with the Kingdom of Monaco and persuaded them to bring out a stamp in the honour of Dr.Prakash and Manda, just as it had brought out the stamp in 1955 to honour Dr.Albert Schweitzer. **The Principality of Monaco, acceded to their request and did bring out a postage stamp in honour of the life and work of Dr.Prakash and Mandakini in 1995 - just as they had done for Dr.Albert Schweitzer in 1955.** This was only the second time that the kingdom of Monaco brought out a stamp to honour a foreigner for its humanitarian work.

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Achievements:

Dr. Prakash Amte

Awards & Honours :

- **Adivasi Sevak Award, {Govt. Maharashtra State – 1984.}**
- **Adivasi Mitra, {M. Gandhi Charitable Trust Nagpur–1992.}**
- **Godavari Gourav Sanman [Lokseva],{ Kusumagraj Pratisthan Nashik 1992 }.**
- **James S. Tong Memorial Awards, {V.H.A.I. New Delhi-95}**
- **Ashok Gondhia Award Tabibi (Medical) Seva, { Y.M.G.A. Rajkot,Gujrat 1997 }.**
- **Postal Stamp Issued By The State Of Monaco To Honour Dr.Prakash & Dr. Mandakini Amte {The Principality of Monaco (Near France) – 1995.}**



- **Chancellor's Nominee on the Senate of Nagpur University, 1988 – 1991.**
- **Divaliben Mehta Award, {Mehta Trust Mumbai – 1997.}**
- **The Justice K. S. Hegde Award, {Justice K. S. Hegde Charitable Foundation Nitte, Karnatak State – 1997.}**
- **Mahaveer Award, {Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation Chennai 98.}**
- **Paul Harris Fellow Award, {Rotary Club – 1998.}**
- **Adarsh Karyakarta Award, {Jay Bhavani Trust, Pune – 99.}**
- **Venu Menon Lifetime Achievement Award, {Venu Menon Trust Delhi – 2000}. For wildlife protection.**
- **Padmashree-2002**
- **Indian Merchants Chamber Award (2005)**
- **Sahyadri Navratna Award (2006)**
- **Spirit of Mastek Award (2006)**
- **Nag Bhushan Award, Nagpur (2007)**
- **Sarathi Award, Nagpur (2007)**
- **Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership (2008).**

Dr. Mandakini Amte

Awards & Honours :

- **Adivasi Sevak Award, {Govt. Maharashtra State – 1984.}**
- **Ashok Gondhia Award Tabibi (Medical) Seva, { Y.M.G.A. Rajkot, Gujrat – 1997. }**
- **Postal Stamp {The Principality of Monaco (France) – 1995.}**
- **The Justice K. S. Hegde Award, {Justice K. S. Hegde Charitable Foundation Nitte, Karnatak State – 1997.}**
- **Mahaveer Award, {Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation Chennai -98.}**
- **Jean Harris Fellow Award, {Rotary International – 1999.}**
- **Baya Karve Award, { Pune – 1998 .}**
- **Savitribai Phule Award, { Govt. of Maharashtra State – 1999. }**
- **Vimlabai Tidke Award, { Nagpur – 1999. }**
- **Sahyadri Navratna Award (2006)**
- **Spirit of Mastek Award (2006)**
- **Nag Bhushan Award (2007)**
- **Rukhmini Award (2008) Y.C.M.O.U. Nashik**
- **Ramon Magsaysay Award for *Community Leadership* (2008).**
