

Document of the Month

This March, as we celebrate International Women's Day, Godrej Archives cherishes the seminal work of Alooben Mowdawalla, the first welfare officer at Godrej.

After completing her diploma in Social Work from TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) with specialization in Industrial relations and Personnel Management as well as a post graduate diploma, Alooben worked at B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital as a Medical Social Worker. After she joined Godrej in 1950s, she first took up the mammoth task of conducting a socio-economic survey of households in Godrej Industrial Garden Township at Vikhroli, the outcome of which provided the basis for the number of welfare activities here. She was instrumental in the initiation of Pragati Kendra - the nucleus of all Godrej welfare activities in 1955, Bal Mandir – the pre-primary school (now Udayachal), Kreedra Kendra (Sports Centre), adult literacy classes conducted in vernacular languages and in providing skill training and self-employment opportunities especially to women.

However, Alooben's most remarkable contribution remains in the field of family planning. Through the family-planning centre started in 1957, she held counselling and orientation sessions for trade union leaders, supervisory staff, shop-floor workers and even for their wives to educate them about the benefits of having a small family. Contraceptives were made available at concessional rates. In 1962, a family planning exhibition was organized to bring about greater awareness among employees and residents of the Godrej Industrial Garden Township.



In recognition of her contribution and outstanding achievements towards these family planning initiatives at Godrej, Alooben Mowdawalla was felicitated by Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, with an award (1968) instituted by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on 15th March 1969. Take a look at the snapshots of this ceremony here:

