

## DEDICATION



**Dr. Banoo Coyaji**  
*President and Chief Medical Officer*  
**K.E.M Hospital, PUNE**  
**1944–1999**

### Great Visionary

In 1963, Dr. Anjaneyellu, Dr. Paranjape, Dr. Phadnis, and Dr. Banoo Coyaji rejuvenated Pune Obstetrics and Gynecological Society. Pune Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society was founded in 1953. This society was in a dormant state for the first 10 years. The society was rejuvenated on 22nd November 1963, from then the regular meetings and continuing medical education (CME) programs were started. Dr. Banoo Coyaji became the first president of this rejuvenated society.

Dr. Banoo Coyaji had worked in different fields and had done monumental work in every area. KEM hospital today is 550 bedded multispecialty hospital with all facilities for all types of patients. In 1944 Banoobai started with 40 bedded maternity hospital – catering mainly to women. With Banoobai's vision, enthusiasm, efficiency, and management skills, the hospital has evolved into what it is today.

KEM research center and Vadu Rural Health Project started in 1977. These two projects have become an institution in themselves. A team of community health workers was trained to bring critical public health education and first aid to villagers. A more important and interesting fact is that Banoobai and the great social worker Shakuntala Paranjape started the first family planning center in Pune in 1948! Her work for women and children expanded beyond the geographical area of Pune or Maharashtra. She was an advisor in many ICMR projects and Health policies of the Government of India and was on World Health Organization advisory board.

She received many awards for her social work. To name a few:

- Padmbhushan – 1989
- Punyabhushan – 1989
- Rameshwardas Birla National Award – 1992–1993
- Ramon Magsaysay Award – 1993
- D.Lit. Pune University. – 1995

Banoobai's management skills were not restricted to the medical field. She entered the 'Sakal' newspaper management at the request of Dr. Nanasahab Parulekar and stayed there for many years as director, contributing substantially to the growth of the newspaper.

Innovation, passion and compassion were her qualities. Innovation is always doing things differently. It is all about converting an idea into practice, in reality. She could see end-to-end and this persistence, and passion could be seen in whatever she did. For patients, women, girls, society – everybody – she would work with the compassion in her heart. She was disciplined, had determination, and decision-making power. She had a kind of authenticity and authority that came not because of her positions but because of what she was!

Pune Obstetrics and Gynecological society flourished under her leadership. Her style of work, her punctuality, and her insistence on excellence in everything being done; all these things have contributed to the growth of society. In 1982, POGS hosted the National Conference in Pune. Dr. Banoo Coyaji was the chairperson and Dr. Umranikar was the organizing secretary. The conference was the most significant academic event in Pune, organized under her leadership, guidance, and through her contacts. The conference was a big success and changed the shape of POGS because the seed capital was generated through the conference. She was a perfectionist. Many young doctors working with her did learn many things from her. Once, when the biannual conference was being organized, the organizing committee was worried about the financial aspect and was thinking about whether the event should be cancelled. But Banoobai said, "don't worry, we will manage. The organizing secretary gets bouquets for good work and kickbacks for problems. I will help you." She handed over a cheque of Rs 50,000 before she left for her tour abroad – for some meeting – and told the organizing committee that they could use this money if there were a shortage of funds. But she insisted that the conference must be a class conference and there should be no compromises! That was Banoobai!

Around the 7th – 8th decade of the 20th century, there were about 60–65 members of the society. Now this seed has grown into a big tree. We have about a thousand members of society today. We must remember, that the fruits we enjoy today are because of these stalwarts' relentless work – Dr. Anjaneyellu, Dr. Paranjape, Dr. Phadnis, and Dr. Banoo Coyaji! We will always be grateful to them!

**Dr. Kurus J Coyaji**  
**Dr. Pratibha Kulkarni**