



B V Patel

...a visionary with a mission

Mini Nair • Harish Padh

B V Patel *...an inspiring journey*





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...a visionary with a mission

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assisted by
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A sepia-toned portrait of a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing round-rimmed glasses and a light-colored collared shirt. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The background of the portrait is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

Sunrise

*T*he year, 1914

The place, Lucknow

The date, 2nd August.

Dr. Vallabhbhai Patel and Kashiba Patel gave birth to a baby boy.

Dr. Vallabhbhai Patel was a medical practitioner, a MRCP from London and was eminent in the city of Lucknow.

Mrs. Kashiba Patel, Dr. Vallabhbhai Patel's wife was a homemaker.

They named their son, Bhupendra.

He was known as Bhupendra Vallabhbhai Patel.

And the son was destined to rewrite the history of India's Pharmaceutical Industry.

The sun had risen.

A sepia-toned portrait of a middle-aged man with short, dark hair and glasses. He is wearing a light-colored collared shirt under a dark sweater. The portrait is positioned in the upper right corner of the page, partially overlapping the 'Dawn' title.

Dawn

*B*hupendra had an ordinary childhood and studied at the Fergusson College, Pune. He graduated from The Bombay University in 1936 with the degree B.Sc (Bachelor of Science). He was twenty two years old then.

He was filled with a burning desire to explore the realms of science and study further.

Not wishing to squander time, he worked with Alembic Chemical Works, Baroda for a year. And as an honorary worker.

This can be documented as the start of his renowned career.

However his passion for studying further took him to England. After a year that is in the year 1937, he sailed for England and enrolled at the Chelsea School of Pharmacy and School of the Pharmaceutical Society, London.

Unknown to anyone he was shaping up to define the pharmaceutical scenario in India.

In the year 1940, at the age of 27, he returned to India armed with a Bachelor of Pharmacy (B. Pharm) degree and had also qualified the Pharmaceutical Chemist's examination conducted by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

The celestial journey had begun.

A sepia-toned portrait of a man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored collared shirt. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown.

Forenoon

*I*n the year 1940 Bhupendra returned to India and joined the Haffkine Institute as an honorary research worker in the Department of Pharmacology. Within a couple of years he comprehended all the methods that were employed in Experimental Pharmacology and performed all the biological assays that were referred to him. The young Bhupendra gained enough experience to achieve the position as one of the best experimentalists in India.

During this time, he worked under the guidance of Dr. B B Dikshit, the then Principal and Professor of Physiology, B J Medical College, Poona.

Bhupendra grappled with chemotherapy and immunity in monkey malaria, chemotherapy of plague, pharmacology of sulpha drugs and action of drugs on central nervous system.

It was very natural that with this experience he registered as a candidate for the Ph.D degree in Pharmacology in the University of London.

The world was in the throes of the Second World War and the situation made it impossible for him to continue. Chemicals required for the research were scarce. Bhupendra was firm. He did not give up. He registered himself as a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in the Bombay University. His subject was, 'Action of drugs and ions on the central nervous system'.



And Bhupendra chose one of the most difficult methods for that exploration, that is, the introduction of the drugs into the ventricular system of the brain.

It was on the 17th of February 1941, that he married Mangalaben Patel. She was a devoted wife who took the reins of the household allowing Bhupendra to make strides in the pharmaceutical industry. The couple had four sons.

Bhupendra actively helped and carried out investigations when the Department of Pharmacology was asked to, during the Second World War. He introduced the sulphathiazole paste that saw its wide usage as a curative agent for a number of septic conditions and his skill in pharmacognosy was useful in the examination of the problem of food adulteration.

Selected by the Bombay-Sind Public Service Commission May, 1943 saw him working, as an Assistant Chemist in the Department carrying out number of analyses of drugs and chemicals purchased by the Army Medical stores Inspection Depot in Bombay. Apart from the official drugs, he also analysed several indigenous drugs and chemicals that were not included in the British Pharmacopeia or British Pharmaceutical Codex.

Bhupendra Valabhbhai Patel was travelling the path where the footprints that he left would be cornerstones for the Indian Pharmaceutical Industry.



Noon

The year 1947 saw India become an independent and a sovereign republic. The years that were to come was shaping India's destiny and B V Patel was laying the foundation stone for the Indian Pharmaceutical Industry. In the years 1946 to 1949 B V Patel worked as Assistant Director in the Department of Pharmacology of the Haffkiene Institutue.

The year was still 1947.

In the month of April when the Drugs Act was enforced in the State of Bombay, B V Patel was appointed as Government Analyst.

B V Patel was appointed as the Drug Controller for the State of Bombay in July 1949. Being a B. Pharm he had the distinction of being the first professionally qualified provincial State Drugs Controller in India.

In those times the powers to formulate rules for manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs were assigned to provincial governments. B V Patel's contribution in framing the Bombay Drugs Rules 1946 was laudable. The state constituted Registration Tribunal, for the registration of persons having minimum qualifications prescribed by the Pharmacy Council of India for practising a profession of pharmacy, under the chairmanship of B V Patel in the year 1949.

He with his high thinking and simple living made an example of his greatness. Although he was the chief his lesson that greatness and humility are companions was not missed by anyone.



He gave the word excellence a new meaning. He never compromised and never tolerated anything shoddy. He was a meticulous man with an eye for detail. His speeches were carefully written special attention being paid to the language and the content. He fully understood the importance of the people who worked with him. He had no reservations about anyone sharing a cup of tea with him and made everyone feel at home in the laboratory.

He was an administrative head but he was also very current with scientific matters and this came to light whenever he discussed analytical problems with Government Analysts. He always kept himself up to date with journals and interaction with people from other places. He was humble and never bragged about his knowledge but whenever he heard something wrong he would gently take the person aside and inform him of the right. He was so updated that, at the seminar held by the World Health Organisation on Quality Control of Drugs in Bombay he could make a point about the enforcement law in the United States which the American participant did not know.

He paid special attention to the needs of his staff. His character was impeccable leading, Dr K C Chatterjee, a renowned pharmacist to remark, 'I can only say that I have not come across anyone whom I can place above Mr Patel with respect to character, integrity and honesty'.

The sun was shining at the nadir encompassing everyone who came in the path with rays.

A sepia-toned portrait of a man with glasses, wearing a white shirt and a dark jacket. He is looking slightly to the left with a thoughtful expression. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light brown.

Afternoon

B V Patel's work experience and his knowledge of the science made him develop a new vision for the Indian pharmaceutical industry. He visited the Drugs Laboratory in the erstwhile Princely state of Baroda and submitted a report to the Government. He believed that this laboratory could be developed into a full fledged drug testing laboratory for the northern part of the State of Bombay. Believing in his dream he proposed to the government of India that they retain this laboratory. A man to stand by his conviction, he left no stone unturned to make this a reality.

In the year 1954, The Government of Bombay formed the 'The Bombay State Pharmacy Council', and B. V. Patel was its president.

On the divergence of the State of Bombay into State of Maharashtra and State of Gujarat, the Government of Gujarat constituted the Gujarat State Pharmacy Council with B V Patel as its president. He was a Member of Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (M.P.S) and was later awarded with the Fellowship of the Society (FPS) and thus the right candidate for the post of the president.

In the year 1955, the Principal Drugs Act was amended and the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) was born. This new born body was an



important one as it had powers to frame and modify Drug Rules, 1954. Only two Drug Controllers were allowed to represent. B V Patel in his capacity as the Director of Drugs Control of the State of Bombay was the first to represent this body for a period of three years and more than once.

In 1959, 22nd February a foundation stone for a laboratory was laid by Dr Jivraj N Mehta, the then Minister of finance, Government of Bombay.

On the formation of the State of Gujarat in 1960, B V Patel was appointed as the first Director of the Drugs Control Administration of the State of Gujarat. It was during this tenure that he spent his energies in contributing to the building of the L M College of Pharmacy, Gujarat.

In the year 1964, December 26th, Dr Sushila Nair, Union Minister of Health wrote in the visitor's book,

'We need at least one such laboratory in each state'

B V Patel had set standards for the industry to follow.

The sun was radiating its warm glow and encircling everyone with the sparkle of knowledge and experience.

A portrait of B V Patel, a man with glasses and a white shirt, looking slightly to the right. The portrait is set against a light background with a vertical orange stripe to its right.

Twilight

B V Patel used his years of knowledge and experience for the development of pharmacy as a profession in general and regulatory affairs in particular. When he was holding the responsibility of regulation, he had trained enough number of lieutenants to share and shoulder his responsibilities. He gave more importance to training and widening of professional relations within the country and abroad.

B V Patel was the representative of The Government of Gujarat in the Council of Management of the L M College of Pharmacy and member of the Board of Studies in Pharmacy of the Gujarat University. He presided over the Indian Pharmaceutical Congress (IPC) two times. The first time was at the 15th IPC, 1963 held at Pilani and the second at 25th IPC held in Delhi.

B V Patel immersed himself totally in the Indian pharmaceutical field often disregarding his health. He raised issues that needed attention of Indian pharmacists. He is revered as one of the best pharmacists of India and had guided and controlled the trade, industry, academics and the science to new heights. He helped draft the curriculum in pharmacy and kept in touch with the universities that offered pharmacy as a course. He knew that only this could create better pharmacists for this country.



Mentionable is the fact that he was the main IPA delegate elected to represent Asia in the Commonwealth Conference organised by the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (PSGB). One of the main agendas was to prepare a draft constitution for the proposed Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (CPA). The draft was submitted and acknowledged by all at the second Melbourne meet February, 1972. It was at this meet that he was elected as Vice President for the term 1971-1976. It was at this very meet that he presented a paper, 'Commonwealth Convention on Inspection of Drugs Manufactured'. This led Mr. Albert Howell who chaired the session to remark, 'Mr. Patel's paper represented enormous amount of research. It was indeed a monumental piece of work'.

It is B V Patel's efforts that the Institute of Pharmacy was started in 1973 by the M S University, Baroda. He is remembered by them as the 'Chief Architect of the department'. He was engaged in drawing up a syllabus for the Commonwealth countries in pharmacy.

B V Patel was laying the building blocks for generations to build on. He would be remembered as a planner of institutions. About growth and development in the field, B V Patel said, 'Sky is the limit'

The sun was seeing another horizon.



The sunset

*B*V Patel undertook a tireless journey in the science of pharmacy. He radiated so much light and burned in the process.

He died on the 7th of June, the year 1974, leaving the pharmaceutical industry bereft. He carried with him unfinished plans and ideas that may have altered the industry. He had reached the end of his journey.

But he had left immense knowledge for the rest to gain. He remains in the institutes that he had painstakingly built and in the ideas that he propounded and implemented. And he would always be known as the mason who laid the bricks of the FDA in Bombay and Gujarat. His relentless efforts and his never-give-up attitude is remembered by all he left behind.

Mr. Albert Howell mentioned in the obituary notice in The Pharmaceutical Journal, 'India has lost one of its foremost pharmacists. We in the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association have lost a dedicated leader and a true friend.

The sun had set.



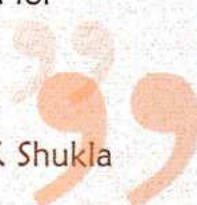
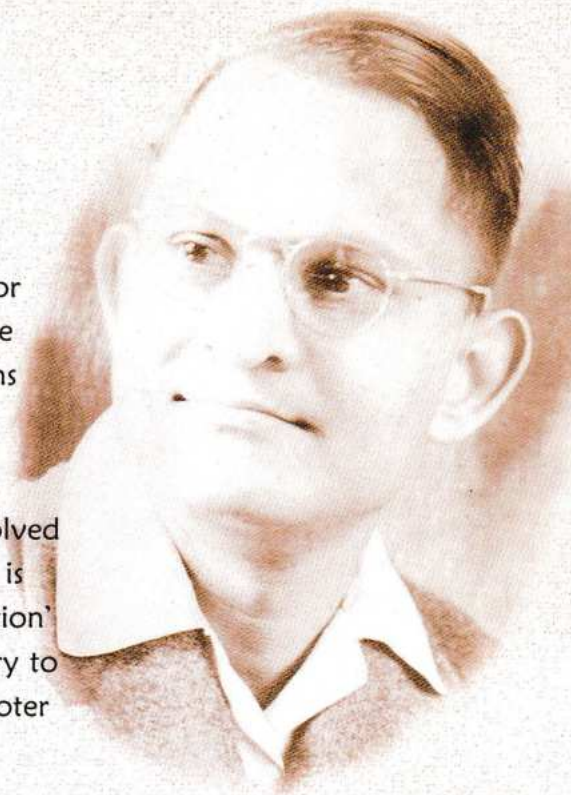
*I*t was indeed amazing to see that a senior Government Official was always willing to be disagreed. B V Patel was a man of convictions but not dogmatic. This is one of the many attributes of B V Patel that I am proud of.

Soon after independence, B V Patel was involved in legislations related to pharmaceuticals. He is acknowledged as the 'Father of Drug Regulation' of independent India. He encouraged industry to comply with standards. He has been a promoter and mentor of the Indian Drug Industry.

~ I A Modi

*B*V Patel was an institution builder. He has contributed vastly to the development of Food and Drugs Control Administration in Gujarat, L M College of Pharmacy, Ahmedabad, Pharmacy Department, MS University, Baroda and Drug Testing Laboratory, Baroda. He felt the need for a proper training of pharmacists in Gujarat. He along with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel approached industrialists at that time who were primarily belonging to the textile industry. He convinced them to donate a good amount for the creation of L M College of Pharmacy. He also realised that one pharmacy college in Gujarat was not sufficient and he worked for several years to create a department at M S University, Baroda.

~ Ambubhai B. Patel/ Dr A K Shukla



Tributes



What impressed me most were B V Patel's qualities of leadership. He could inspire loyalty among his staff and colleagues. He was a builder of institutions.

B V Patel had varied interests in books and had collected a vast reading material in his DCA library. One day when I went around in his library I saw 'Whodunit' books featuring Perry Mason and Sherlock Holmes along with volumes of law books. The dichotomy surprised me and I asked him so. He replied that he read these detective books as they are very useful in catching people who deal with spurious drugs. He said that he had a separate department of intelligence, collecting evidence that can stand in the court of law. The task was risky and needed a lot of patience. His men were equipped with camera with tele-lens and tape recorders. This was his commitment to bring to book the elements who dealt with spurious drugs.

Tributes

~ Prof C J Shishoo



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*B*V Patel delved deep into any activity so that he could have a complete perspective. He interested himself in the history of Drugs Control in the world, and his orientation programs to regulatory personnel from the country reflected this. He stocked his library at his headquarters with great imagination and vision, personally selecting the titles. He had a lot of fascination for the medical treatises, records of flora and fauna of India, left by the British. Books that were long out of publication were located by him at the pavement markets of Bombay. Such rare collections are now a part of the library at the Food and Drugs Laboratory, Baroda.

Mr. Patel's family adored him. Mangalaben Patel kept an excellent table for his guests of whom there were many. Overnight stay at his house meant a lively table talk over good food. Picnics were also a part of entertainment.

~ Ms. S Satakopan

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Tributes



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When one analyst complained to Mr. Patel that it was difficult to make his assistants deliver good quality work when they lacked basic skills and knowledge, Mr. Patel said, “Well, that is your judgement of your assistant. My judgement of you will rest upon your skill in getting good work out of such staff because you are not going to get any better quality”.

Mr. Patel had the practice of making analysts carry out the analysis in controversial cases, in the presence of the manufacturer of that drug. This was not viewed with much favour and Mr. Patel knew this. Parodying Shakespeare, he once said, “The quality of analysis is twice-honed. It hones the doer and the viewer”, means, thereby that the benefits of such openness accrued to both. This was enough to chastise the analysts.

~ As told by Ms. S Satakopan

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Tributes

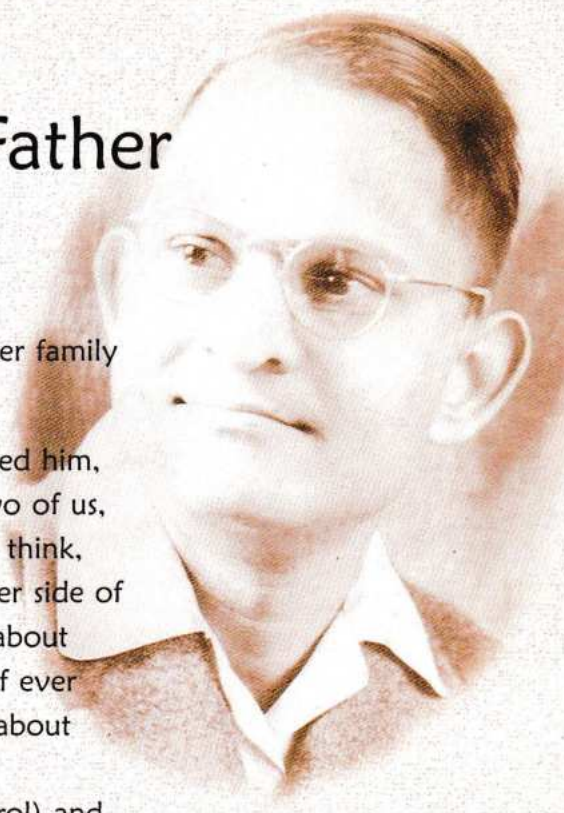
BHAI, Our Father

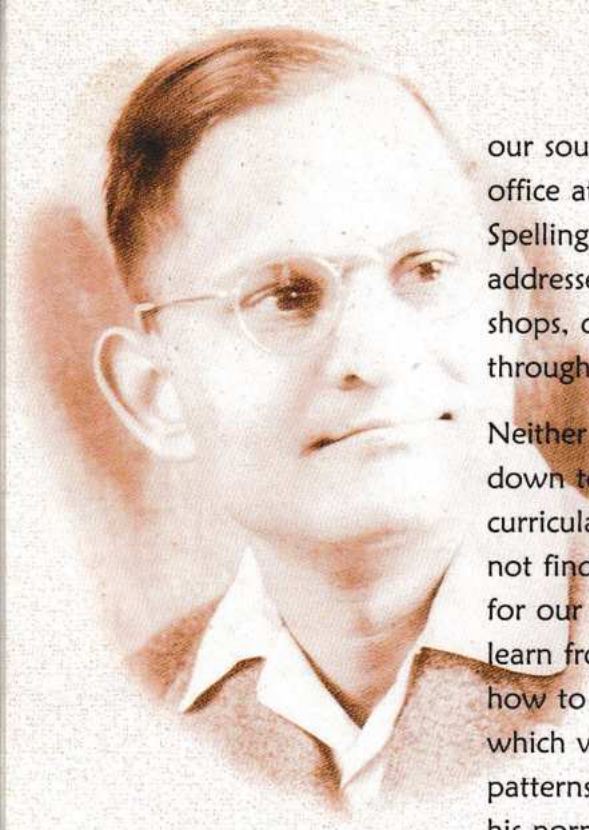
*R*eminiscences by Nimish Patel and other family members.

All of us miss Bhai, as we have always called him, and also Ben, as we called our mother. Two of us, Bakulesh & Girish, missed them so much, I think, that they decided to join them on the other side of the physical world. It is difficult to write about Bhai because he never talked about himself ever to any of us. I have come to know more about his early childhood through Shastrikakas's (Mr. MR Shastri, Rtd. Director Drugs Control) and Dr Harikishan Singh's persuasive enquiries about the details of his education. I have experienced, once again, his quiet presence behind me, while I write.

I do not recollect why we started addressing them as Bhai & Ben, but we have been doing so from the very beginning of our childhood. My earliest memories of our growing up at the Shivaji Park flat, Mumbai, are of the drives that they took us on in our Austin, of the Queen Victoria Zoo visits, and of his Haffkine Institute friends who visited us and played with us.

As per Bhai & Ben's convictions, all of us were educated at home till the age of 7, and then enrolled in the second standard directly. We learnt the basics of education from Ben. The Gujarati alphabet was introduced with the use of large letters on each card, which we traced with our fingers more for fun, and the basics of mathematics was taught through a game of cards. We moved to





our south Mumbai residence at Colaba, closer to Bhai's office at Kala Ghoda, sometimes in the late fifties. Spellings were introduced to us through the names and addresses he asked us from the sign boards on the shops, during our drives. We also learnt to be alert through this method of teaching.

Neither I, nor any of my brothers recollected him sitting down to teach us any subject out of our educational curricula. Those were Ben's responsibilities. He could not find enough time from his principal responsibilities, for our formal learning needs. But we continued to learn from him, quite often without knowing, about how to conduct our lives, and of the aspects of life which would later become integral to our behavioural patterns. Observing how he conducted his life, through his normal behaviour and responses to situations, contributed to our learning processes immensely.

One of my vivid memories, of the Colaba house, is that of the files of work he brought home in the aluminium boxes, which were kept near his working table in the dining room. Most days we found him working quite late in the night, and also from early in the morning. He cherished fundamental values of truthfulness, honesty, integrity, sincerity, fairness, meticulousness, diligence, forthrightness, openness to new & others' ideas and humility. He adhered to all of them throughout his life, irrespective of the numerous other opportunities he encountered. We always felt that his only focus was his work, his responsibilities to the field of pharmacy, and through it, to the nation. His cherished values were the sieves that he used, to work towards his established directions and goals, but were never the goals in themselves. Work was what he worshipped, and that has been the most important

message he has passed on to all of us, including to the generation after ours.

Although he was not too happy to move out of Mumbai when Gujarat and Maharashtra were bifurcated in 1960, he did not show it. His principal commitment was to the society and to the nation. He did not let situations, like relocating the entire family to a totally unfamiliar territory, divert his attention from this focus.

Embedded clearly in my memory is the time when Bakulbhai, my elder brother, and I accidentally overheard parts of our parents' discussions on the pros and cons of the shift to Gujarat. We heard of an offer, a multi national pharmaceutical company had made to him if he wished to leave the Government and join them to continue to remain in Mumbai. His salary from the Government, to the best of my recollection was Rs.1200/- per month. The offer was of Rs.5000/- per month as remuneration with additional perks of a flat, a car and a few other things. We were ecstatic. We were fully aware that the finances for our education, growth and development were not easy, and that they were always made available at the cost of other luxuries. We had seen Ben stitching our clothes, to save the tailor's charges. With this in mind, both of us found it difficult to understand why they were discussing the options. To our young, immature and irresponsible minds, the choice was clearly to remain in Mumbai. The decision to move to Ahmedabad appeared to be a strange one to us.

However, 29 years later, when the PERD centre was inaugurated, we fully realised the intent, the wisdom, the relevance and the impact of Bhai and Ben's decision, through the contributions he had made to his chosen field and to the society.





My late brother Bakulesh, who spent very little time with Bhai & Ben, not having joined us in our move to Gujarat due to his studies, attributed much of his attitude towards his work in trauma surgery to Bhai. When I joined architectural studies, Bhai gave me some of my required tools from his treasure of equipment. I was taken by surprise because he had no reason to possess them, and yet he did. My late brother Girish told me, when he started his furniture workshop, that he had learned all the basics of carpentry, finishing and chemistry of materials from Bhai. None of us had any idea about Bhai's background in carpentry. My youngest brother Sunil's drawings and visuals of his industrial design products are also partly a reflection of Bhai's approach to making drawings.

Bhai, to all of us, was a multi-talented, multi-faceted store house of wisdom and knowledge. But he revealed these only when the time was appropriate, and then too with the utmost simplicity and humility. He always managed to surprise us with the breadth and the depth of his knowledge.

We remember his principal doctrine that "Respect and Confidence are commanded, never demanded". He inspired us with his meticulous approach to understanding, learning and working. His journals from his college days set the standards for us. The neatness of his handwritings, in the notes he kept, still reminds us of how far we are from where he was. His clarity of thoughts, organisation of mind and single mindedness of purpose without compromising with any of the values he respected and cherished, continues to remain the guiding light of the lives of all of us.



Mini Nair, a published author with two books to her credit, works with Süd-Chemie Performance Packaging. Her first book was a collection of short stories and poems that got her critical acclaim and the second one was for children.

Harish Padh, director PERD Centre is a bio-technologist and has several scientific publications to his credit.

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**PERD
CENTRE**



B. V. PATEL PERD CENTRE

B. V. Patel PERD Centre occupies a unique position in our country, as the first postgraduate, interdisciplinary pharmaceutical research institute. The institute has been promoted by the Shri B. V. Patel Education Trust, Ahmedabad and was inaugurated in October, 1990. The institute aims to evolve into an internationally recognised multifarious activity centre, which will attract students, teachers, research scientists and pharmacists from all over the country and abroad, for interaction, training and pursuit of scientific and technological excellence.

SHRI B. V. PATEL EDUCATION TRUST

Shri B. V. Patel Education Trust was established in 1974, by the Indian Pharmaceutical Association (Gujarat State), to promote the cause of pharmaceutical education. Its activities have included the prestigious annual B. V. Patel memorial lecture, essay competitions, merit scholarships and industry - academy seminars. The 'Continuing Education Division' of the Trust was started in 1990, to serve as a forum for training and updating technocrats, scientists, academicians and practicing pharmacists, in the pharmaceutical industry, profession of pharmacy and pharmaceutical research. This division regularly conducts need based and relevant short intensive courses, up-to-date and pragmatically oriented, with continuing education in the country, and have received a tremendous positive response.

The courses are conducted by renowned experts chosen from both industry and academia. They are generally held on the campus of the B. V. Patel PERD Centre, but courses are also conducted in different parts of the country.

If you would like further details of our forthcoming courses, please ask our office to put you on our mailing list.

