

Dr. Armida Fernandez, M.D (Paediatrics), DCH, FIAP, FNNE

Former Dean & HOD Neonatology, LTMG (Sion) Hospital, Mumbai
Former Medical Director, Holy Family Hospital; Mumbai Founder Trustee, SNEHA (India)

- Professor & Head of the Department of Neonatology, retired as Dean of L.T.M.G Hospital, Sion, Mumbai
- Pioneer in establishing not only India's but in fact Asia's first Human Milk Bank (1989).
- Former President of the National Neonatology Forum.
- Founder Trustee of SNEHA (India), Society for National Education & Health Action (1999).
- Former Medical Director at Holy Family Hospital, Bandra, Mumbai.
- Founder of Romila Palliative Care Center for patients with life limiting diseases & connect & care for Homebound Senior Citizens.

Goan by birth, she completed her medical graduation (MBBS) from Hubli & did her post-graduation from KEM Hospital, Mumbai. While working at Sion Hospital, her relentless efforts & research always centred around the survival of babies in the country with low cost resources. She was the one who encouraged mothers to step in the Premature Unit to nurse & care for their babies. She realized that breastfeeding & breastmilk had an especially important role to play in reducing the mortality & morbidity in the premature unit. This motivated her to work for Protection, Promotion & Support of Breastfeeding.

After establishing India's first Human Milk Bank at Sion Hospital, she delivered innumerable lectures on Breastfeeding & Milk Banking across the world. She also made an excellent Breastfeeding Manual (popularly known as the Blue Module) & Videos with the support from UNICEF. This was used for training Doctors, Nurses & Hospital teams across Maharashtra & other states within India. She conducted many trainings for Maternity Homes in Mumbai & across the state of Maharashtra for Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative supported by MCGM & Govt. of Maharashtra. Subsequently she also played an important role in starting MIYCN (Mother & Infant & Young Child Nutrition) Programme.

She founded SNEHA (India), an NGO which is committed to mother-newborn health-nutrition empowerment, health of adolescents and prevention of violence against women and children. SNEHA has entered communities in slums and chawls with 400 full-time employees and 750 volunteers who have reached a population of around 1 million in almost all districts of Maharashtra and other states too including Gujarat and Jharkhand.

She has presented several research papers and is recipient of many awards as follows:

- Honoured as an Ashoka Fellow in 2004.
- Dr. B. N. Purandare Outstanding Service Award (2010).
- QIM Platinum Standard in Healthcare (2013).