

Women In Need holds the unshakable conviction that every individual matters and that each life saved or transformed is a major triumph



Thanks to your donations Ashwini is cancer free and planning her future

21 year old Ashwini (left) lives in a village on the outskirts of Yavatmal - 120 miles away from Nagpur and the nearest place for cancer treatment.

When she was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma (HL) 18 months ago, doctors told Ashwini's parents their daughter would have to travel the 8 hour round bus journey every week and on some occasions daily to undergo tests and treatment.

As farm labourers they just could not afford the cost of travel, tests and symptomatic medication, so Ashwini's parents made the heartbreaking decision to discontinue treatment and let fate take its course.

After hearing about Ashwini's plight WIN stepped in to pay for her expenses – travel, food, medication – everything she needed.

A year ago Ashwini didn't think she had a future. Today she is daring to plan ahead.

When Manda (right) was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2019 she knew her chances of survival were slim. Battling the disease required financial and emotional support, and she lacked both.

Her alcoholic husband and youngest son were abusive at the best of times, but following her diagnosis, the abuse increased. Undergoing a mastectomy and starting cancer treatment made it difficult for Manda to continue working as a domestic help. Unable to earn meant she was no longer needed or wanted. Her only champion was her daughter, but as any married Indian woman, Manda's daughter was powerless to help her mother financially, and limited in the time she could give her.

Fortunately, women in Manda's community directed her to WIN for help. And as with every woman the charity helps, our care packages are tailored to the individual's needs. In Manda's case – 2 years support with financial aid for treatment and living costs, and legal aid to address domestic violence.

Recently Manda shared her incredible news... the cancer is in remission!



"Without WIN I wouldn't be alive today"

Sunita – brave at such a young age



UNICEF

“There are risks, violations and vulnerabilities girls face just because they are girls. Most of these are directly linked to the economic, political, social and cultural disadvantages girls deal with in their daily lives. This becomes acute during crisis and disaster”.

<https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/gender-equality>

17 year old Sunita’s story has parallels with that of Ashwini’s. She lives in Zari, a village in the district of Yavatmal. Her parents are also farm labourers, and when Sunita was diagnosed with blood cancer, (in this case Leukaemia), her treatment was stopped due to financial constraints.

But for Sunita’s father, the decision to stop treatment was not a difficult one. For as long as Sunita can remember, her father resented having a daughter and an extra mouth to feed. And his resentment would often manifest in violence.

A diagnosis of cancer for any 17 year old would be traumatic. And most would expect unconditional support from their parents. Sunita’s diagnosis however led to more resentment and more beatings from the person who was supposed to be protecting her.

Fortunately, her 19 year old brother got in touch with WIN and today Sunita is responding well to treatment and it is hoped, will make a full recovery.

With WIN fighting her corner Sunita has developed drive and determination to beat cancer and to make something of her life through further education (which the charity will help her with).

She wants to show her father being a young woman doesn’t make her a burden. That given the same opportunities as boys, girls can excel.

This is what she said:

“I don’t want to live the life my mother’s lives – married to an abusive husband and too sacred to stand up for herself. I want to learn and get a good job - one that allows me the freedom to make my own choices in life. I would also like to help my brother and support my mother in old age”.

The Union budget allocation for children for 2021-22 is the lowest in a decade, NGO Child Rights and You (CRY) has expressed concern that this has happened in a year that saw huge overall impact including health and education of children due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our passion is improving women's health in the poorest communities

It's well documented that underprivileged Indian women have limited access to decent health care. Yes, government hospitals offer a range of health services, but they're not accessible to all, and not everything is free. Then there is the issue of women struggling to take time off work or away from their duties at home to undergo tests and treatment. The cost of travel is another barrier for most living in villages far from major government hospitals. Usually the alternative is a visit to a local private clinic where many can and are misdiagnosed and exploited.

Over the years WIN has developed a vital role in bridging the gap between available health services and those struggling to access them. The charity does this through a variety of means: community health surveys, in-situ clinics and health awareness programs, assisting women with travel and other expenses, and accompanying them to hospitals to ensure the right attention and guidance is received.

WIN supports an average of 4000 women a year with their health care needs



Two months ago 10 year old Shruti was looking after her mother – today WIN is taking care of them both

In January 35 year old farm labourer Premlata was referred to WIN by social workers at Nagpur's antiretroviral department. Widowed and with a 10 year old daughter to look after, TB positive Premlata was too sick to work and struggling to make ends meet. Food was scarce and the electricity had been cut off. Though her husband died of TB 5 years earlier, Premlata was unaware he was HIV+ and that she too was infected with the virus. Within a year life as they knew it changed significantly. Ill health and a diagnosis of HIV led family and friends to abandon contact and support. Isolated, Premlata's daughter Shruti left school to carry on work and to look after her ailing mother.



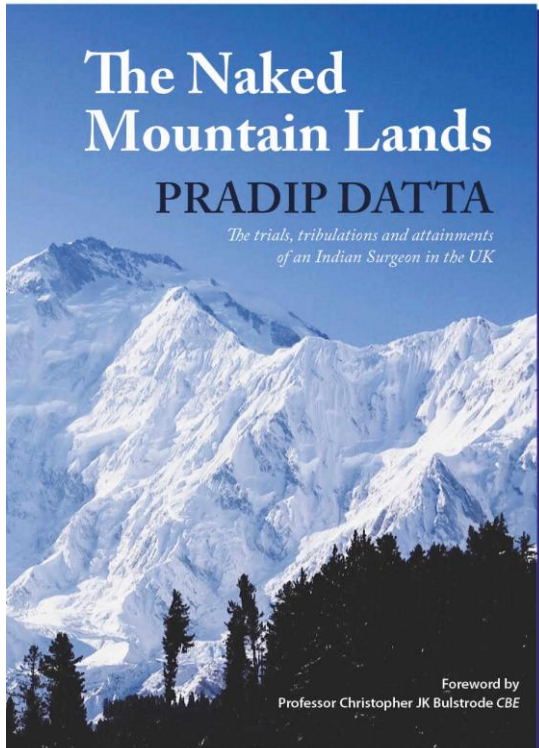
Two months on and Premlata is feeling much stronger. Shruti is back at school, enjoying time with her friends.

Another 2 months to go and Premlata will be cured of TB and able to return to work. For women like Premlata WIN is the only source of help



How is WIN helping?

- * Providing food & paying for all other living expenses
- * Medication for the side effects of ART and TB drugs
- * Counselling
- * Help with accessing concessions for HIV + widows.



All proceeds from book on Amazon will be divided between 3 charities- one of which is WIN

A retired consultant general surgeon has written a new book telling the story of the 50 years since he left India and arrived in the UK.

Pradip K Datta MBE MS FRCS, is a recipient of the Farquharson Award for his services in training overseas doctors entering the NHS. A former Honorary Secretary of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, Mr Datta established his world-renowned teaching course for surgeons in 1981.

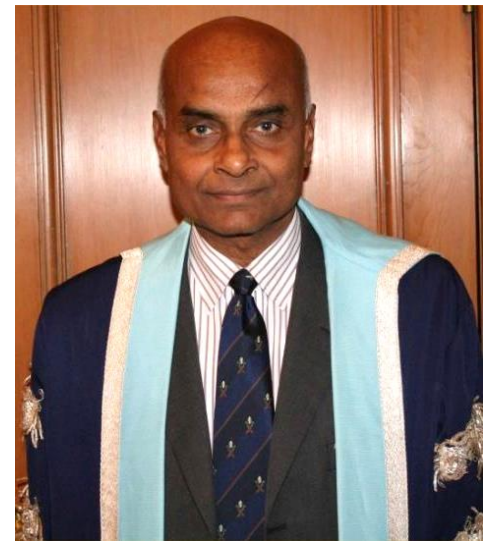
Tragically a couple years ago Mr Datta suffered a stroke. Suddenly finding himself on the kitchen floor one night after doing the washing up he was luckily found by friends after being alerted by a concerned neighbour who had got into the habit of calling him each evening after his wife died.

Explaining a little about his latest publication Mr Datta said:

“It is quite cryptic, including the name of the book. It was my first ever flight and I noticed on the fuselage of the aeroplane in Calcutta that the aircraft was called Nanga Parbat, the naked mountain.

“In those days all Air Indian aircraft were named after the Everest ranges, this was one of the highest ranges.”

Mr Datta landed at Heathrow on July 13, 1967, and he outlines his experiences since that day in his memoir which took him five years to write. It has 41 chapters and all the titles are cryptic. The book outlines the trials, tribulations, and attainments of an Indian doctor in the UK. With many humours anecdotes it encompasses surgery, sport, particularly squash which Mr Datta played locally, and family life, especially fishing forays with his son Sandip in Caithness.



Published by the Doctors Academy, the biography is now available to buy on Amazon

Over the last 21 years of the charity's operation in India, I have met women who have shown unbelievable courage in the face of unimaginable adversity. No exaggeration – there are incidences too horrific to share.

Today I continue to be inspired by the women WIN supports, as each new case delivers a lesson in perseverance and humility.

For those we encounter who are sick, neglected, abused, and ignored – WIN is their only lifeline.

And none of this would be possible without your support - THANK YOU x
(Leah Pattison)

