

## Dr Anupama Sen

Dr Anupama Sen has been a Soroptimist for 28 years on what she calls “an eventful and satisfying journey”. She joined SI Poona in 1991 soon after completing ten years as an army doctor. A graduate and postgraduate of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, she had gained a rich experience of working in various military hospitals of India and was a Major in the Army Medical Corps. Being from an army family background and married to an army officer, she is used to frequent transfers.

SI Poona President Gulshan Thukral introduced her to Soroptimist and since there has been no looking back. Projects always interested her: first providing medical services to a community in an urban village and later collaborating with another NGO ‘Mobile Creches’ gave her an opportunity to serve the underprivileged. A chance meeting with an AIDS scientist at NIV Pune gave Anupama the chance to conduct AIDS awareness workshops across Pune. She took a sabbatical between 1994 to 1998 when her husband transferred to Delhi. On her return in 1999 she rejoined SI Poona.

She started medical outreach in twin villages Phulgaon and Tulapur and was elected President of SI Poona from 2002 to 2004. Memorably, as President of SI Poona in 2004, the Club welcomed a delegation of twenty Soroptimists from SI Lahore and Karachi, Pakistan. Under the Focus of International Goodwill and Understanding, SI Poona were successful in their effort to build a bridge of friendship. This was the first time in the history of Soroptimist International India that Soroptimists crossed the borders and enjoyed the hospitality of SI Poona, Bombay and Hyderabad. It was featured on the NDTV channel on prime time. Then an invitation was extended by SI Lahore and Karachi to members of SI Poona and Bombay. Twenty SI Poona members enjoyed the hospitality of members of SI Lahore and Karachi. This was followed by a visit from Poona’s friendship link club SI Perth (Scotland) who raised funds for the rural medical outreach project. This friendship with the Scottish Club has stood the test of time and was a great fillip for the sanitation drive in Tulapur. 250 WCs were fitted in village homes with construction by villagers. SI Poona received a Best Practice Award at the SI Glasgow Convention in 2007 for this project. Subsequently a project on organic farming for the school children of Tulapur school also brought accolades in the form of another Best Practice Award for Environment.

In 2010, Anupama as Membership and Extension Officer, with six other SI Poona members brought around 30 members into the new club of SI Pune Metro East. The Club has grown from strength to strength and has received accolades each year since. Anupama served as President of SI PME from 2012 to 2014 and she was invited to speak at the SIGBI Conference in Belfast (2012) about the medical outreach project in Tulapur. The Club project SNAP (Sanitary Napkins Advocacy Project) started in 2012 in Tulapur, has now been shifted to Village Asu. It is a project for, of, and by rural women, where they manufacture biodegradable sanitary napkins at nominal cost. This has empowered, enabled and educated rural women. Alongside awareness workshops are held for the rural girls and women about menstrual health and hygiene. As NASI Extension Officer, she enabled the Chartering of SI Kodaikanal. Anupama says: “It makes me so happy that the work that I am doing in the Club makes some difference in the society for the underprivileged girls and women”.

