

Neonatal care is neglected in the State and country

The Mukul Madhav Foundation, a public charitable trust and an official CSR partner of Finolex Industries, has taken up several initiatives in the city in the field of neonatal care. **Ritu Chhabria**, Co-founder and Managing Trustee of the Foundation, spoke to **Prajakta Joshi** about the initiative and the foundation's other projects.

The Foundation is working hard in the field of neonatal care in Pune and around. Can you brief about the same?

Neonatal care is neglected in the State and the country. There is a need to take precautions during the neonatal stage so that many lives could be saved. We have requested for five to eight ambulances that will be readied by Finolex to cater to neonates only. The ambulances would be fully equipped with the latest technology. We are already talking to experts from the field to ensure the same. We have got the permissions. Hopefully, by the first week of September, we will have these ambulances ready. These



Ritu Chhabria, Co-founder, Mukul Madhav Foundation

ambulances wouldn't just be placed in Pune, but also in other areas like Satara, Ratnagiri, etc.

We are also trying to upgrade and uplift the Tarachand Hospital and the PMC-run Kamala Nehru Hospital with their NICU. We will be helping them with their infrastructure, as well as bringing in more doctors and nurses. With all this, we are trying to make the neonatal support system stronger in the Pune region. We are also planning to link all these hospitals via a portal.

We are tying up with government-run hospitals because the masses go there. These hospitals are usually neglected. We are trying to see how, in the given budget, these government-run hospitals can reach out to the people in the best possible way.

The Foundation works closely with children in rural areas. How are the

lives of these children different from what we find in Pune?

Honestly, I feel that villagers are happier than their urban counterparts. We are constantly striving, while they take each day as it comes.

As far as their problems are concerned, they have been neglected all this while. We need to bridge that gap. With education, more exposure, we can bring them forward. We need to have a helpful society.

Hence, the Mukul Madhav Foundation has started a school in Golap, a village near Ratnagiri. We are trying to give these students similar opportunities as any school in an urban area would offer. Our students are learning and gearing up to be global citizens.

Although the Foundation has been working primarily in the fields of healthcare and education, there are several other areas it has recently ventured into. What are a few of these projects?

Now, we have jumped into water conservation, which is happening in four to five different areas. We have planned a hospice named 'Savali', to be inaugurated in October in Kolhapur, where patients dealing with long term illnesses would be housed.

All medical facilities will be provided to such patients there.