

Jivraj N. Mehta, M.D.

1887–1978

In the death of Dr. Jivraj N. Mehta, India has lost an able administrator, a dedicated social worker, an ardent Gandhian, and a distinguished physician.

Born of poor parents on August 29, 1887 in

the small village of Amrelli in Sourashtra, Dr. Mehta was talented from his early childhood, and earned many scholarships during his merited scholastic career. While in England for further studies in medicine, he came in touch

with many politicians including Mahatma Gandhi whose personal physician he remained until 1947.

In 1924, Dr. Mehta became the chief medical officer of the princely state of Baroda and later took over as the dean of G. S. Medical College and K. E. M. Hospital in Bombay and held that post until 1942.

During his lifetime he held many posts of distinction such as Director General of Health Services, dewan of Baroda, and later became minister for public works and minister for finance in the earlier state of Bombay. After the division of the state of Bombay in 1960, he headed the Gujerat State as its chief minister.

He was high commissioner to Britain, and in 1969 received the Dr. B. C. Roy national award. He later became M.P. and retired from public life in 1975.

Dr. Mehta was closely associated with leprosy work in India. He served as vice-chairman of the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation from 1952 until he retired from that post in 1970 and was responsible for shaping its program of work. In spite of his many other commitments, Dr. Mehta always had time to spare to assist and give guidance to others relating to the many problems concerning leprosy. — (*Adapted from NLO Newsletter 7 [1978] 103*)