



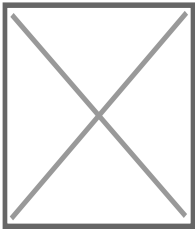
# BioSpect

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## **Shameful Episode**

04 October 2004 | News



The identity of the people behind the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against two industry leaders-Biocon and Shantha Biotechnics-was being whispered about in the small but growing biotech community. So far it were only whispers. Hereafter, it may be talked about loudly as BioSpectrum has traced the petitioner, a "dummy" non-governmental organization (NGO) found to be "located" in the home of a senior manager of Wockhardt Ltd.

Telephone records and site visits to the address of the petitioner, Mrs Preet Maju, 48, a trustee of the "NGO" indicate that the NGO is located in the home of Wockhardt's vice president (new businesses) Col. (retd) LJS

Gill.

This posh residential colony in Mumbai's Andheri West was an unlikely location for an NGO claiming to work for the advancement of destitutes and old people. When BioSpectrum and other media organizations followed the story when the Supreme Court admitted the PIL in late August, this residential address was thought of as a randomly chosen place by those claiming to run the NGO to mask their true identity. It was difficult to believe at that stage a top manager of a well-known organization like Wockhardt would be linked so directly to an attempt to use the highest court of the land to tarnish rivals. This in spite of the fact that the officials of one of the country's most respected industry organization had confided that they had known all along who were the people behind the PIL.

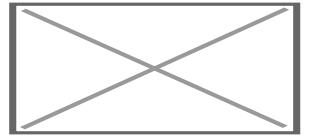
There are hundreds of NGOs doing phenomenal service to the people of this country under extremely difficult conditions in various spheres of life. Normally, public opinion would have been behind NGOs who take up issues such as those raised in the Writ Petition (PIL) No 91 of 2004 filed in the Supreme Court. And the people behind the NGOs would have been very proud to come out into the open and bask in the glory of a David taking on industrial Goliaths. The deafening silence and ADOPH (Aadar Destitute and Old People Home) who, the question that many in these circles asked each other, only heightened the mystery behind the whole issue.

The learned judges of the Supreme Court are handling the case. What is however distressing is the fact that genuine NGOs, who intend to take really important public issues, will have to tread with extreme caution after this episode. It will also become difficult for genuine organizations to utilize the services of eminent lawyers many of whom readily agreed to fight ADOPH's case, believing its noble intentions, and have since withdrawn from the case, for really good issues. ADOPH has tarnished the image of NGOs. It is not even a registered organization, a claim made in the petition. Indian Express has reported that ADOPH was not registered under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950 contrary to its claim.

Interestingly this is what Col. Gill told the aspiring managers in the careers section of Indian Express, a few years ago: "During my career in the Indian Army, the most vital learning that one imbibed was to base one's life on principles, values, character traits and respect for social, religious and cultural sentiments of humans. While in my corporate career, I have realized that

managing business is managing people. I firmly believe that corporate governance must contribute to the well being of society."

Col. Gill chose not to respond to a dozen phone calls and visits to home and office to throw some light on the great work being done by the NGO which operates from his house.



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