



## RENU DEVI

### Mentoring Young Minds

“A distinguished scholar, in her own field, Dr. Renu Devi is a beacon light for the young generation in their search for knowledge and wisdom.”

Born in the year 1933 in Chenikuthi, Guwahati, to Punyadhar Baruah and Suryaprava Baruah, Dr. Renu Devi played a very active role in consolidating the pillar of higher education and empowering women, particularly in the North Eastern part of the country. She was the third amongst her seven siblings, but her parents encouraged their children to pursue education, despite heavy odds. Renu Devi had an illustrious academic career with a first class first position in M. A. in Education in 1957 and also an LLB degree in 1958 from Gauhati University. She was the first girl student to have got the LLB degree from Gauhati University. Renu Devi was awarded the Ph. D degree in 1972 for her research work titled 'Progress of Education in Assam' (1882-1931) done under Dr. U. Venkata Rao. Dr. Renu Devi became the Head of the Department of Education G.U. for two terms from 1984 to 1987 and from 1991 to 1993. She was also the first woman professor to have become the Dean, Faculty of Arts, G.U. in 1991.

Besides holding a number of responsible positions in various educational bodies such as UGC, NCERT,

NEHU, GU Academic Council, NIPCCD, NIEPA, etc, Dr. Renu Devi was closely associated with research activities. She also authored number of books on education both in English and in Assamese, in addition to three books for children and a book on the marginalization of women, titled *Ananya Nari Anadrita*, Dr. Devi visited a number of foreign universities under the cultural programme of UGC. She delivered a series of lectures on Indian education in various universities of Germany. She visited Stanford university, Sanfransisco State university and the univesity of California under the Indo-Us fellowship programme. The UGC, in recognition of her contribution to higher education, awarded the special distinction of 'Emeritus fellowship' to Dr. Devi during 1994-96. She was the honorary director of the newly established 'Women Studies Cell' of G.U. in 1989.

Dr. Renu Devi had to face tragic loss in her personal life as her only daughter died an untimely and unnatural death after her marriage. But with her strong will and unflinching devotion to social cause, she could overcome, to some extent, the personal crisis in her life. In 1996, she started an NGO- 'Manikuntala Mahila Unnayan Kendra' with a view to generating awareness amongst women about the need of education. This NGO has been successfully conducting a number of projects such as imparting training to primary teachers, counselling courses for women and children, undertaking research projects on such social issues as child-labours in Assam, cultural diversity and ethnic identity of the North-East, nutritional status of the women living in the slum areas and so on.

A distinguished scholar, in her own field, Dr. Renu Devi is a beacon light for the young generation in their search for knowledge and wisdom, and a teacher with a friendly disposition reaching out to those in need of help and loving care.□□