



## DR MALATI BARUA

### An Incredible Zest for Life

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If one wants to understand grit, determination, will power, professionalism and dexterity perhaps one of the best examples would be Dr Malati Barua, a lady who is 75 years old or young as one perceives. For most of her contemporaries life was not juggling profession, wifehood, motherhood, writing and social service all at once but then she had always been feisty, free spirited and independent enough to tread untrodden paths. She chose to pursue an MBBS degree at a time when getting married and tending to household responsibilities was the first priority in a girl's life. No wonder then that she was one among only eight female students of her time. But it was her innate independence that took her away from her family after marriage to pursue higher studies and work in places like Shillong, Kolkata, Vienna and Iran. Her seven year stint in Iran remains one of her most memorable experiences both professionally and personally for it was not just a different geographical terrain but a totally different cultural ethos for her. But as she speaks of her life one sees the strength in her face and knows that nothing is

impossible for her and obstacles are but challenges to be overcome or opportunities to be availed. Her inner strength has given her wings to fly.

She looks back and speaks in detail of her adventures while working for eradication of small pox and for initiating immunization programmes. She speaks also of her efforts, as Director of Health Services, Assam Govt. to stall corruption and improve the quality of medicines purchased as well as to provide quality medical services to the people of the state.

Her educational background is impressive with numerous degrees after her name endorsing her study and practice as a specialist in Gynaecology and Obstetrics and Child Care. A full time medical practitioner and mother of three, she feels that it is her determination and priority, planning and execution that has seen her through tough times in these two equally demanding roles. But she is grateful to her husband, late Niren Barua, who constantly encouraged and supported her whether it was her pursuit of higher studies or her medical practice. At times, she says that he singlehandedly managed the upbringing of their three children despite having an equally pressing career of his own so that she could concentrate on hers. His efforts have paid off as all their three children are well established in their respective fields today. She is also grateful to her father, late Nandeswar Barua, who proved to be a beacon light in her pursuit of higher studies.

Dr Barua has been honored with various awards like Life Time Achievement Award by IMA as well as recognition as a writer by Lekhika Samaroh, Assam. Writing is yet another area of interest of this multi dimensional personality. Despite her busy life as a doctor she has also forayed into the world of writing and has to her credit a published volume of poems *Kobitar Chanda Heral*, besides numerous articles in magazines. She plans to publish another volume of writing, this time, short stories.

Dr Barua has always been a dedicated social worker and has worked as Pranta Sanchalika of Rashtra Sevika Samittee of the N E region. In that capacity she visited the length and breadth of the country and worked for the uplift of the masses. At 78 now, she is retired but not tired and works and practises at her own firm, Nestor Nutrichord (P)Ltd, as its Director and is planning to write a travelogue of her experiences in different parts of the world. Even today, she radiates an energy and dynamism not to be found in many youngsters. As one departs one carries back the feeling of having met someone who still retains a twinkle in her eyes as she looks forward to life's new plans. □□