



SHAKUNTALA CHOUDHARY

Nurturing Gandhian Values

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Srimati Shakuntala Choudhary noted Gandhian social worker and humanitarian was born in 1920 to late Hari Nath Pathak and Bidyadhari Choudhary in Panbazar, Guwahati. She was the second child in the family. She completed her early education in Nagaon & Dhubri and later on moved to Guwahati. On the insistence of late Rajabala Das, the then Principal of Handique Girls' College, she joined the college as one of the first two students. She was a brilliant student with special proficiency in Sanskrit and Assamese literature. Srimati Choudhary was not only academically brilliant, she excelled in dramatics and debating too as well. It was while she was serving as a teacher in T. C. Girls' School, She met Amal Prabha Das in 1947, who instantaneously recognized her potential and requested her to join Gram Sevika Vidyalaya and take charge of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (KGNMT), Assam Branch as its 'Pratinidhi'. Within a very short period, she gained patronage from the great leaders, like late Gopi Nath Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam, late

Omeo Kumar Das, the then Education Minister, Assam, late Harekrishna Das and others in expanding the KGNMT operations in Assam and other North Eastern states.s

Mentored by Amal Prabha Das and trained by Vinoba Bhave, she was responsible for managing and guiding 22 Sewa Kendras across the North East. She still continues to be a force in promoting Gandhian values by her work and ideals. In 1976, Vinobaji bestowed upon her the responsibility of the editorship of Assamiya Biswa Nagari. Srimati Choudhary is a low profile Gandhian lady who has dedicated her life for the uplift of women and downtrodden people of the society. She is the recipient of a string of recognitions and honours amongst which the prestigious Jamnalal Bajaj Award is the most recent and significant. She is also the recipient of the Samaj Sewa Ratna Award and Sati Jaymati Award.

The personality of Srimati Choudhary is such that one finds in her a rare blend of love, empathy and professionalism. Her dedication towards the uplift of women and the downtrodden is an inspiration to the younger generation and this has earned her many followers. □□