



DR ALAKA GOSWAMI

Nurturing Hippocrates' Legacy

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Recalling her childhood determination to become a doctor, Dr Alaka Goswami says that a seemingly small incident in her school days left a strong imprint on her mind to decide the future course in her life. A girl named Dharmi at her parental home got seriously ill and her condition deteriorated causing concern among those attending to her. Dr Bhubaneswar Baruah, the eminent physician of those days came to their house and the girl got cured after detailed check-up and prolonged treatment. Dr Alaka Goswami could realize how important a role the doctor plays in the life of a person and that of the society and she decided that she would become a doctor for mitigating the health related problems suffered by humanity. Dr Goswami, now a Gynaecologist of great repute is still practising at the age of seventy with the same utmost care and concern for the mother and the new born as she had felt at that tender age of her life. Dr Alaka Goswami was born in 1937 to Tirthanath Phukan, a renowned advocate of his day and Kalindi Devi Phukan, a woman with a great

interest in philanthropic work. Dr Goswami completed her MBBS from Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh in 1958 and soon after that she went to Lucknow to pursue MS in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in King George's Medical College. Dr Alaka Goswami received Colombo Plan Fellowship for working in several hospitals in Australia in 1967. Dr. Alaka Goswami started her career in the field of medical profession as a resident surgeon in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Gauhati Medical college in 1962. Then she became Assistant professor, Associate Professor and Professor and remained in the post of the Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Gauhati Medical College till she retired from the institution in 1995. She was also the Dean, Faculty of Medicine during 1992-1995 and member of the Executive Council of Gauhati University in 1995-1997 besides being the Director of ICMR, Guwahati centre and currently a senior member of the Medical Board, Gauhati University.

Dr Alaka Goswami served as the Secretary, Vice President and President of the Guwahati Obstetrics and Gynaecological Society and was Chairperson of the ISOPARB, Eastern Zone in 1998. She was the President of Global Organization of Life Development (GOLD), an NGO dealing with the problem of trafficking of women and children, providing a destitute home for destitute women and children. Dr Goswami has rendered voluntary professional services to society in numerous ways such as attending to free health check-up and sterilization camps and motivation and awareness camps on population control in several districts of the North East with ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) support. She also provided professional and technical guidance for upgradation of health care facilities, both antenatal and postnatal in public health camps for 80 villages in the Nalbari district, trained about 200 doctors in MTP and sterilization methods and also trained 200 midwives in maternal and child health care. Now she has been involved with such welfare activities as providing free consultation services to women in association with the Govt. Pensioners Association, Assam, and also with Dr Kuntal Goswami child and mother care Hospital at Mother Teresa Road, Guwahati. Dr Alaka Goswami has been actively taking part in child and maternal health care and other health related programs sponsored by Prasar Bharati on All India Radio and Doordarshan to create awareness about health among the masses.

In recognition of her lifelong services, unflinching commitment and academic and research contributions, Dr Goswami has been awarded the fellowships of the Indian College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and fellowship of the Indian College of Maternal and Child Health. Over the years, Dr Goswami has also been nourishing taste in the field of creative writing as some of her poems, songs and short plays have been published in the journals and souvenirs of the Pensioners' Association and Chandmari Sahitya Sabha. Besides writing articles on maternal health she has also composed two anthems – one for the Guwahati chapter of FOGSI and other for the Sanjeevani Sangha, the lady

doctors' Association of Guwahati Medical College. Dr Alaka Goswami says that she always derives a sort of divine pleasure after each successful delivery of a new born baby. As she puts the baby in the mother's lap and the mother embraces the baby with a smile forgetting her unbearable labour pain, Dr Goswami finds her ultimate satisfaction in realizing the mystery of creation finding an expression in the mother's smile. □□