



## SEWALI CHOUDHURY

### Promoting the NE Banking Sector

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Born in 1949 Sewali Choudhury's father Baloram Neog was an Assam Civil Service Officer and mother Khirada Neog was among a handful of Assamese women graduating from prestigious Cotton College, Guwahati, in the year 1937. Sewali pursued her school education in various small sub-divisional towns in different parts of Assam due to her father's postings. She passed HSLC in the year 1965 from Nagaon Girls' High School and Pre University Examination in 1966 from Nagaon College, with highest mark in Assamese. Sewali Choudhary passed BA with Honours in Education from Handique Girls' College in 1969, securing second class third position in the Gauhati University, there being none in the first class. She passed MA in Education in the year 1971 securing second class first position from Gauhati University. She was married off in the year 1970 which, however, did not deter her from achieving her ambition of completing MA and she did it the year in which she also became a mother. Sewali was General Secretary of the Students' Union of Handique College in the

year 1967-68 and took leading part in various activities of the College during her years of study there.

Educated family background, exposure to diverse cultural background of Assam, opportunity to develop leadership qualities in student life, made it easy for Sewali Choudhary to seek out and face courageously new experiences in life. She joined All India Radio as Transmission Executive in the year 1976 and in the year 1982 shifted to Reserve Bank of India as an officer in Grade B after qualifying in an all India level examination and interview. She became the first woman from the northeastern region to join RBI directly as an officer. Banking was an untrodden ground for Assamese working women during those days and Sewali without economics, finance and banking background, was apprehensive when she reported at RBI Staff Training College at Chennai for induction. She was thrown into a group of young boys and girls from all over India educated in different streams, many from top educational institutions in India. With grit and determination, patience and hardwork, Sewali received her training and plunged finally in the Bank's workfield. She worked in the offices of the Bank at Guwahati, New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata in various capacities in different Departments of the Bank and slowly climbed up the ladder competing with others in each stage, to finally become the Bank's Regional Director for the northeastern states of the country, the first person from the northeast to hold this post. As Regional Director, Guwahati, she supervised the banking developments in the region including currency management, payment systems, financial inclusion and economic developments in coordination with the banks, financial institutions and the state governments of the seven northeastern states, besides managing RBI Guwahati Office with a strength of 600 staff. As senior officer in the Bank she also participated in programmes and seminars focusing on the diverse activities of the Central Banks of different countries, in India and abroad. She retired from Bank's service in June 2009. She also took care to bring up her three sons with good education. She is interested in literature, reads different types of books and is actively engaged in various social issues and concerns. □□