

Dr. V. N. Shirodkar
M.D., (Bom.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.).
Date of Birth 27-04-1899
Date of Demise 07-03-1971



Dr V. N. Shirodkar

Dr. V. N. Shirodkar was born in Shiroda, Goa on April 27, 1899. Graduating from the Grant Medical College, Bombay, in 1923, he specialized in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and did his M.D. in 1927, and obtained his F.R.C.S. (Eng.) in 1931. With his appointment as Honorary Obstetrician and Gynaecologist to the J.J. group of Hospitals in 1935, there began a most remarkable career of work and achievements.

Dr. Shirodkar was an inimitable teacher who captivated his students and many generations of students remember him with affection and gratitude. He was a peerless surgeon, delightful to watch, gentle to the tissues, quick and precise. But he was not content with doing set operations. He had an active and imaginative mind and liked to innovate. Thus, he brought up the concept of an incompetent cervix being the cause of repeated second trimester abortions and the operation of cerclage of the cervix during pregnancy to prevent these abortions. This is now universally called Shirodkar operation, and is an outstanding contribution to obstetrics for which posterity will always remember him. He had devised two operations for genital prolapse and was working with passionate zeal to improve the results of tuboplasty. Probably he has done more tuboplasties than any other surgeon in the world.

Dr. Shirodkar took an active interest in the family planning programme of the country and was a member of many official bodies. He was a member of the Shantilal Shah Committee on abortions, and was of the view that the indications for abortions should be liberalized in our country.

Dr. Shirodkar had travelled widely all over the world. He demonstrated his techniques of operation with coloured slides and films. These slides and films were magnificent. In 1960 Dr. Shirodkar published his "Contributions to Obstetrics and Gynaecology". He also wrote chapters in Vol. IV and Vol. V by Meigs and Sturgis, about his views on Incompetent cervix. His views on genital prolapse found an expression in the chapter entitled "A New Approach to the Understanding of the Anatomy and Treatment of Uterine Prolapse" in *Advances in Obstetrics and Gynaecology* by Marcus and Marcus (1967).

Honours were bestowed on him by many institutions and countries. The President of India awarded him Padma Bhushan in 1960 and Padma Vibhushan in January 1971. He presided over the 11th All India Obstetric and Gynaecological Congress in Calcutta in 1961, and Second Conference of the Asian Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology also in Calcutta in 1962.

Dr. Shirodkar was a gifted son of India and lived a full life. So great was the impact of his personality, teachings and work on the practice of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in our country, that with his passing away on March 7, 1971, verily, one might say that an era has come to an end.