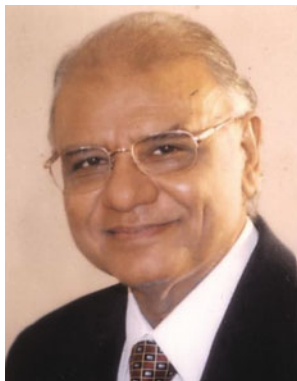


## Indian Contribution to Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Dr. D.K. Tank

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing.” said Abraham Lincoln. Nothing can be more apt than this in describing Dr. D.K. Tank, as he was popularly known. Dr. Dahyalal K Tank was the 33rd President of the then Bombay Obstetric

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and Gynecological society from 1986 to 1987 who went on to become FOGSI President in 1997, SAFOG President in 2002 and AOFOG President elect too.

To understand his achievement, we have to track the story of his life from a small insignificant village in Gujarat called Deesa several decades ago. He was born in Deesa on 26th March 1934 as the second of five children to a farmer who had to work hard to keep his family fed and comfortable. In those times, electricity was unheard of in this remote place and early life was very tough for Dr. D.K. Tank. Things only worsened when his father died and Dr. Tank was only ten years old then.

Where there is a will, there is a way. Dr. D.K. Tank pursued his education in spite of all his difficulties, with whatever resources that were available and became the first person from Deesa to pass SSC and stood first in his school. This is a very commendable achievement at that point in time.

He further pursued his education and joined Gujarat College in Ahmedabad to finish interscience and topped the class too. “All the toppers would receive invitations from medical colleges and so did I” said he on one occasion. “I opted to come to Mumbai because I had this great yearning to be close to sea.” And why did he choose Grant Medical College? Because it was the best college at that time and “Because the best cinema houses were in the vicinity and I was a keen movie buff” he said candidly.

After completing his MBBS with flying colours from the J.J. Group of Hospitals, he did one post with Dr. C.G. Saraiya at the same hospital. After that he could not pursue

it further as he was compelled to take up a job to support his family back home. His job as Assistant Medical Officer at Kurla Maternity home in the central suburbs of Mumbai helped him to achieve that. However, his ambition and hard work made him finish his MD in Obstetrics and Gynecology with practically no formal postgraduate training at all. In that sense he was a self taught man. He owns the position of being the first medical officer in Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation to appear for and clear his MD while continuing to work for them.

Dr. Tank became the Chief Medical Officer in Rajawadi Hospital at Ghatkopar where he worked until his retirement as the Head of their Obstetrics and Gynecology department. He then set up his private practice nearby in Ghatkopar and was very successful and renowned gynecologist of that area.

He joined the Bombay Obstetric and Gynecological society on the insistence of Dr. C.L. Jhaveri in 1968. He was perhaps the only doctor who wasn't attached to any hospital after his MBBS and never a recognized teacher in any medical school to have risen through the ranks to become BOGS President, which was considered a requirement those days. One of his significant contributions to the society was refurbishing the library. Dr. Tank took over as the librarian when the library was almost non-functional. He procured heaps of educative books, journals and also audio tapes which was popular at that time. The idea of voluntary funding from senior members to increase the corpus of the MOGS which exists till date was

conceived by Dr. Tank when he was the secretary. He also introduced "Overview" a brochure that collated the best reviews from various journals worldwide and had it circulated to all members.

Dr. Tank served FOGSI as secretary general first for 5 years and then went on to become its President. When Dr. Tank was the FOGSI President, he initiated the project on Safe motherhood, which was the need of the hour in India at that time. His year as President of FOGSI was the year of "Promotion of breast feeding" and multiple workshops were held all over the country for the same theme. The Government of Maharashtra and UNICEF appreciated his efforts and invited him to form a task force committee at state level and Central government level. He started the FOGSI's reproductive health care fund in which every FOGSI member voluntarily contributed Rs. 300 in 3 years for that cause.

He was also on the Editorial board of several books and journals in Obstetrics and Gynecology, both in India and abroad. He also served as Chairman of Ethics committee of AOFOG. Along with many other significant positions, he was also a member of Central Supervisory board of Government of India, Member of faculty of Medicine, University of Mumbai and Consultant with the National Human Rights Commission.

Big achievement indeed for a man who hailed from a small village where nobody made it past SSC!

We lost him suddenly while in Office as President of AOFOG in 2005 which was a big blow to FOGSI.