

Short Communication

DR. RUPA BAI FURDOONJI: FIRST LADY ANAESTHETIST

She was one among five lady medical students who joined Hyderabad medical school in the year 1885 A.D.



Surgeon Major Edward Lawrie, assumed charge as Principal same year, and probably he was instrumental in encouraging lady scholars of Hyderabad to take up medical course.

She acquired diploma (Hamkeem) from Hyderabad Medical School in the year 1891 A.D. As medical students she had acquired proficiency in administering chloroform anaesthesia. She participated in the deliberations of second Hyderabad Chloroform Commission of 1889 A.D.

Edward Lawrie, has mentioned her name as proficient anaesthetist, in the book 'A report on Hyderabad Chloroform-Commission' (Page 274). This book was published in 1891 A.D.

She proceeded to Edinburgh in the year 1909 to acquire higher knowledge in the field of anaesthesia. In those days there was no separate specialty called anesthesiology. But it was presumed that one, who handles anaesthetics, should be proficient in the subjects of chemistry and physics. Hence she received qualifications in these subjects from Edinburgh University. She returned to Hyderabad after two years stay in Great Britain. She served in British residency (Sultan Bazaar Hospital) as full time anaesthetist.

She is probably the world's first lady anaesthetist, she took anaesthesiology as full-time career. It is noteworthy that, after acquiring diploma from medical school, she chose anaesthesiology as her career. In those days, surgeons used to administer anaesthesia. A nurse in the operation theatre used to take over administration of anaesthesia from surgeon, when he was busy with the surgery. They were called nurse-anaesthetists. Dr. (Miss) Rupa Bai Furdoonji, was a lady- physician who took over anaesthesia as full time career. A lady anaesthetist of her calibre around 1891 A.D. in the world, can be counted on the finger tips.

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