

## Obituary

### Prof Bijayalaxmi Nayak (1937–2018)



Prof. Bijayalaxmi Nayak

Prof Bijayalaxmi Nayak was one of the pioneers in plastic surgery and was the first woman to be a qualified surgeon in the state of Odisha, India.

Born on 16 August 1937 in the silver city of Cuttack, Prof Nayak completed her matriculation from Utkal University in 1952. She did her MBBS from Sriram Chandra Bhanj Medical College and Hospital (SCB Medical College) in 1960 and postgraduate in MS (General Surgery) in 1970 from SCB Medical College, Cuttack, under Utkal University. She became the first general surgeon in the state.

In 1962, Prof Nayak joined the Government of Odisha services and started her remarkable career as an assistant surgeon at City Hospital of Cuttack and subsequently, in 1964, moved to work in the J. P. Clinic in the district of Buro. She was a voracious reader and a keen learner. In 1965, she had worked as a demonstrator at the Department of Forensic Medicine in SCB Medical College, Cuttack.

Dr. Nayak pursued her higher studies for M.S. in (Plastic Surgery at Prince of Wales Medical College of Patna University. After the completion of the super-speciality course in 1972, she joined SCB Medical College as a medical officer. Within a year, she was promoted to the post of Registrar and then to the assistant professor in the Department of Plastic Surgery in SCB Medical College. In 1989, she was posted as Associate Professor and the Head of the Department of Plastic Surgery where she worked for nearly three years. In 1993, she was promoted as Professor of Plastic Surgery and worked as the Head of the Department in the SCB Medical College, Cuttack, till her retirement on 31 August 1995.

She was an outstanding surgeon and was much respected during her time when surgeons were almost exclusively men. She was not only the first surgeon of the state but

also the first female plastic surgeon, who performed significant work in the field. She was much interested in lymphedema surgery, hypospadias, cleft surgeries, and all regular contemporary works. She regularly performed surgeries for leprosy deformities. She was a pioneer in starting the Burn Unit at SCB Medical College, on the land donated by her husband. Her outstanding contribution during Baripada Burn Tragedy in 1997 was a great service to humanity.

She continued to practice in Cuttack after her retirement. She was married to Prof Ratnakar Das, another eminent personality in the field of medicine, who retired as the Director of Medical Education of Odisha state, and has the distinction of having served as the Dean, Principal and Medical Superintendent of the Medical College. Prof Bijayalaxmi Nayak passed away on 3 March 2018. She is survived by her husband and her son, who is a software engineer.

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