

History : Remembering the Stalwart

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Dr Vithal Nagesh Shirodkar was, in his day, one of the most famous Gynecologists of the world. He was born in 1899 in Goa and passed his MBBS from Grant Medical College, Bombay in 1923. He passed MD in 1927 and FRCS in 1931. His entire professional life was spent in Bombay. By 1940, he had become the Professor of Midwifery and Gynecology at his Alma Mater.

Dr Shirodkar was a gifted surgeon of world renown. He pioneered the surgical techniques for genital prolapse. Another of his path-breaking contributions in the field of Obstetrics was the cerclage operation of the cervix to prevent second trimester abortions. By 1955, his pioneering technique had become world famous as "Shirodkar Operation". Dr Shirodkar was one of the first doctors in India to realize the importance of video recording of surgeries and he meticulously recorded his procedures. These were shown in European



Vithal Nagesh Shirodkar

Picture taken from an article by Purandare CN et al. in 2012

conferences like the one in Paris in 1951, to critical acclaim.

Dr Shirodkar had numerous indexed publications and also contributed chapters in international textbooks of Gynecology and Obstetrics. In 1963, he was invited to New York to perform his surgery in front of an American audience. This was a rare achievement for a doctor of a country which had become independent only 16 years ago. His other notable contributions were those in the fields of tuboplasty and creation of neovagina. One of his most famous papers was published in JIMA:

Shirodkar VN — Surgical treatment of female sterility. *JIMA* 1957; **29**: 56-7.

It can be safely commented that along with Dr SubodhMitra and Dr SubhasMukhopadhyay, Dr

Shirodkar was instrumental in cementing the position of Indian Gynaecology in the world stage.

There is hope in dreams, imagination, and in the courage of those who wish to make those dreams a reality.

— Jonas Salk, *American Physician who developed the Polio Vaccine*