



# FACE TO FACE

By: Dr. Madhurima Bhadra

She was born on the 10th of March 1945. She is the first lady Dental Surgeon of Nepal. She is Dr. Bina Kansakar and she has so kindly given the JNDA some time from her busy schedule. Here is an excerpt from my conversations with a dynamic and leading personality. Before you go any further, I must say it was a very interesting session and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

**NDA: Dr. Bina you are the first lady Dental Graduate of Nepal, what did you experience once you returned?**

When I first returned, more than it being difficult for me, my patients seemed to have a harder time accepting treatment from a girl. It seemed impossible to most that a girl can remove teeth. Many even saw it as a joke. Many of my patients when I first joined Bir Hospital were quite skeptical that I could give them treatment. In those days most of the dental practitioners were male and also there were a lot of quacks. I also experienced a lot of people pointing at me on the road to show their companions that I was the lady who removed teeth.

**NDA: What suggestions would you give to the younger generation of dentists?**

I suggest that the younger generation follow their duties sincerely and they should also be motivated to go out of the valley.

**NDA: Do you think there should be any changes made in the field of dentistry?**

Yes, I feel there is an over saturation of dentists in the valley so we dental professionals should be more spread out. That way more people will have access to our services. But it should not be only up to the dentists to go to other areas, the government also needs to play an active role so those who do provide their services will get reimbursed for it.

I think it will be a good idea if the interns had posting in emergency as well, because in our profession you never know when and what emergencies may occur so it is always best to be prepared.

**NDA: These days there are a lot of women taking up dentistry, do you think you have contributed to this profession as a pathfinder?**

Yes, I would like to think so, and it makes me very very happy to see so many women dentists.

**NDA: M'am you have had a long and illustrious career, please share some of your experiences with the rest of us.**

Well once when I was posted in Jaleshwor, I had a patient who apparently was a Pahalman, of course I had no idea, anyway he needed an extraction so I removed his tooth. After a few days I was in the market buying some magazines and the shop keeper teased me about being so famous for removing the tooth of the Pahalman. It was just too much for them that a young woman could remove the tooth of such a strong man! When I was first posted in Jaleshwor there was no electricity there so for surgical extractions I used a foot engine powered drill to remove the tooth surgically and also I commonly used the chisel as well. In some of the places where I was posted the patient flow was quite less so I would spend time at the Medical OPD, so I had the opportunity to learn a lot of Medicine as well. I also remember this very funny incident about my first day at Bir Hospital, the pale refused to let me in because he thought I was a patient and he had never seen a lady doctor before. Finally another doctor came along and said that I was the new dentist and the Pale let me in. Another not very funny incident I faced in Jaleshwor was that, people there get into a lot of fights and come to the hospital for certificates to give to police, so one edentulous person came with two teeth in his hand and claimed he had been beaten so bad, his only remaining two teeth fell out. I examined him and I could find no sockets, so obviously I wrote out a certificate stating that there was no

evidence that the patient had been beaten so hard that his tooth feel out. Such things were quite common in Jaleswor.

***NDA: Dr. Bina, we know you spent some time in England continuing your dental education, tell us about your educational back ground.***

I have double Bachelors one in, Bachelors in Science, Biology from Rrichandra Campus Dentistry, and BDS, which I completed from Govt. Dental College, Bombay (1967). I put in a year at the Eastman Dental Hospital, under London University doing general dental subjects full time for a year. I did my first part of FDS from the Royal College of Surgeons of England, London (1975) as the first candidate from Nepal. Unfortunately, I had some family problems so I was unable to complete the second part of my FDS.

***NDA: You have contributed immensely to the development of dentistry in Nepal, please share with us what you have been involved with.***

Recently, I have helped in the development of a curriculum for the Dentistry course in Nepal for Peoples' Dental College and Bhairawa Dental College. Infact, I am a Honorary Founder Member of Peoples Dental College.

***NDA: Aside from dentistry what else do you enjoy doing?***

As I am an Associate Professor of Dental Surgery with T..U, I teach the MBBS, BAMS (Ayurvedic), Certificate HA students theory and take clinical classes for Masters of General Practice(MDGP).

***NDA: Please share with us some of your qualifications and achievements.***

I was the President of NDA from 1997 to 1999. I was the Head of Department of Teaching Hospital Dental Department from 1995 to 2003. Besides being a life member of NDA and NMC, I am also life member of Nepal Red Cross, Nepal Family Planning Association and the Dharmodaya Sabha.

***NDA: You used to be a very active member of the Professional and Business Womens Club, please share what you did during your involvement there.***

I really enjoyed my involvement there because it was an opportunity to serve the less fortunate through a mode other than dentistry. My friends and I set up day care centers at

Balaju, Hetuda and Lalitputr. I used to take family planning classes at the day care centers for the mothers. We had opened a Family Health Clinic in Kamaladi, on whose Management committee I was. We had an OT and OPD there and we did minor operations there. But sadly due to lack of funding it had to close after three years. I also held free clinic for the children of Balaju daycare center at my private practice.

***NDA: Please share with us what a normal day in the life of Dr. Bina Kansarar is like?***

Well, I am quite a simple person and enjoy staying at home so, my normal day would start with half an hour of meditation. Then gardening and making and receiving phone calls take up my time until I start making breakfast. Then it is time to go to office where most of my day goes. Evening sees me back at home. Since I live alone I do my cooking and cleaning myself. On holidays I like to relax at home and potter around in my garden.

***NDA: What would you say are a few of your favorite things?***

I enjoy mostly what other people enjoy. I like to listen to Narayan Gopal, Udit Narayan and Lata Mangeshkar. I watch TV and Movies also. I enjoy Movies with social and love themes. Like I said before I love gardening and cooking as well. My favourite Nepali food is simple rice, kalo daal, chamsur-methi-palung saag, and dhaniya and aloo achar. Other than Nepali I would have to say that I like Chinese food the best.

***NDA: You have travelled much please tell us some places you have visited.***

Besides India and England where I studied, I have been to China, Japan and France. In Nepal I have visited 8 Anchals. I was posted in Jaleswor, Pokhara, Rajbiraj, Nepalgunj and Butwol.

***NDA: Thank you, Dr. Bina for your time and for sharing so much of yourself with us.***

Thank you for honoring me with an interview and thank you for your time.