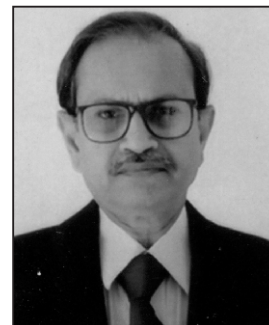


Meet our Teacher - Dr. S. M. Patil

Interview By - Dr. Tankhiwale & Dr. Nikhil Balankhe

It was 5 PM on 26th January 2011 when myself and Dr. Tankhiwale reached Dr. S. M. Patil's House. We were received with an extremely warm welcome by his grand daughter who very fondly showed us her 2 new beautiful rabbits which were moving around there all throughout the interview. Rather than the interview our interaction was more of "Dil-Khullas Gappa" by Sir & Madam. At the end we could know so many aspects of sir - A great teacher, fantastic Clinician, Avid reader, Gardener, Photographer, Family man, Rotarian, Organiser, Motivator, a very warm person etc-etc. To sum it all I think he is a 'Mulukha Vegala Manus'. I am presenting few excerpts of our "gappa".



DR. NNB - Sir tell us about your childhood.

Dr. SMP - Nikhil, I come from a very small place called Hiwarkhed in Morshi Taluka. There the schooling was only in marathi medium & that too upto 8th Standard. So for 9th Std. I had to move to Dharni at my sisters place. This was purely a Hindi Medium school and adapting to this change was difficult but it helped me later as it improved my hindi and I could read & understand each and every book written by Munshi Premchand and other hindi writers. For 10th std. I moved to Amravati. I did my schooling in Academic High School as that was the only one of the two schools with hostel facility that time. Then I took admission in VMV college Amravati & then to GMC Nagpur in 1963.

Dr. NNB - What influenced you to join Medical School?

Dr. SMP - I was more interested in Arts & Literature. My Uncle was the first one to make me change my mind from Arts to Science and then my maternal uncle (a Veterinarian) & my father who was a 'Vaidya' finally changed my mind to pursue medical education.

Dr. NNB - Who were the teachers who influenced you during your medical education?

Dr. SMP - To begin with I was not sure which Speciality to select after MBBS. However, there was a strong impact on me by our teachers like Dr. Chaube, Dr. Lele, Dr. K L Jain, Dr. Subhedar, Dr. Sainani, Dr. Mr. & Mrs. Shivade, Dr. V.R. Joshi etc who were all Physicians and I also decided to pursue post-graduation in Medicine. I was predetermined to go into teaching after MD. There was immense job satisfaction in institutes in those times. During that era all difficult to treat & diagnostic dilemma patients used to come to Medical Colleges. Medical collage was an apex institute where all recent therapeutic & diagnostic facilities were available. I had no thought of not continuing in Medical college as a teaching fraternity.

Dr. NNB - You were considered amongst the best of teachers and still you left teaching very very early and started private practice.

Dr. SMP - In the last phase i.e. last 3-4 years of my teaching career I was also involved in other activities. I was a member of MCI then. I formed junior teachers association and was also president of MSMATA. In the same context I moved all over Maharashtra and met many many Medical colleagues. I also met bureaucrats and said to be

"decision making people." I found that none of these Govt. officials had any soft corner for doctors plight and had no sympathy towards the teachers or the Medical Colleges and no desire to upgrade medical education. Pay of Medical teachers till 3rd Pay commission was very meager & low. Frustrated with this attitude I spoke to one of the high Govt. officials who said "Tumhala Jayacha Asel tar Ja Tumchaya Sarkhe Chappan Milatil". I realized that if I have to continue in teaching I will have to continue participating in institutional politics which I was not comfortable with. Hence I spoke to Dr. B.S. Chaubey (Dean) & Dr. B.C. Waghmare (HOD). Dr. Chaubey tried to persuade me but I was determined & left the job.

Dr. NNB - Any compromises in Private practice.

Dr. SMP - Not many. Initially Patients used to demand for Symptomatic treatment but however educating them regarding source identification & then treatment, solved many issues. What I was missing in Pvt. Practice was teaching. I was pleasantly surprised when I was invited in Medical Collage to speak. However the anticlimax was that the topic given to me was "How to do Private Practice."

Dr. NNB - Any advise for today's Private Practitioner.

Dr. SMP - Every one knows and has his own way of practice. However I can only tell them one more mantra of success. One should have complete knowledge of his subject; have an excellent clinical approach; should be sympathetic to the patients; should be good at counseling and should have desire to go to the root cause during diagnosis.

Dr. SRT - How should a medical teacher prepare himself for the lecture.

Dr. SMP - Every one has to prepare for the class.

Though teaching is an art, every one has to have in depth Knowledge of the subject. Every teacher should first have complete understanding of the topic, then only he can make his pupils understand the subject.

Dr. NNB - Even after leaving teaching you were always amongst the most well read and updated private practitioners. How could be manage that?

Dr. SMP - I have an habit of reading various text books, in context to the patient I am managing. If I have a case of Wegeners I will read it from all available text books regarding wegeners granulomatosis. Apart from text books, Initially I was subscribing to NEJM; Lancet; Annals of Internal Medicine also. Later on I used to Subscribe to Medical Year books and Year book of Drug treatment.

Dr. NNB - We have seen a fantastic library of even non medical books in your house. What are your other interests?

Dr. SMP - I am deeply interested in reading. I used to read one novel / day with a speed of almost 1page /min. I used to read fiction, science, history, arts, spiritual, almost all kinds of books. In my collage days I read almost all books by J Krishnamurthi. Once the author Ramchandran went ahead to say that Spirituality is more of biological phenomenon. All these "Sakshatkars" or oceanic experiences are nothing but representation of temporal lobe hyperexcitability. I was also interested in Hindi novels. I have also read the books of Munshi Premchand. I have read full Volume of Story of Civilization which is on India. There are 14 volumes of this book by Will Durand. Myself and Dr. Divekar used to read for 2 hrs daily. We used to discuss various topics. I was immensely influenced by Dr. Divekar's participation in reading program.

Dr. SRT - Do Philosophical or Theosophical reading influence any individuals life?

Dr. SMP - It definitely does. Such reading makes a

person more rational, logical and takes him away from his prejudices.

Dr. NNB - Any other hobbies?

Dr. SMP - I used to love photography & I still love Gardening. (Then sir showed us 2 tulip flowers. 1st time to be seen in Nagpur; then varieties of Crotons Cactus, roses etc, etc in his very beautifully landscaped garden. To have tulips in Nagpur, he had brought the bulbs from Amsterdam) I also love listening to songs - Classical and semi Classical. Kishori Amonkar, Bhimsen Joshi and Ghulam Ali are my favourites .

Dr. NNB - You were closely associated with Rotary. Tell us regarding your experiences.

Dr. SMP - Rotary is an excellent organization for social interaction. It is a place where service and enjoyment are simultaneously occurring. I was a part of Pulse polio eradication programme which was a huge success. For this I also received the Service above Self award. During my presidency 'Melghat Camp' was started which was also great success. Mr. Prakash Thosare was of great help in initial days of organizing this camp.

Dr. NNB - You were instrumental in reviving API Vidarbha chapter in Nagpur. What is your vision of API in Nagpur.

Dr. SMP - Physician is the most important health care provider. Having no specific organization for the Physicians in Nagpur was the biggest lacuna. And hence I wanted to revive API in Nagpur. I wanted people from outside the medical college also to be a part of this organization. I initially approached Dr. Subhedar & Dr. Chaubey and then got MAPICON for Nagpur during Goa conference. API was found at my residence. Dr. G.K. Dubey was the first president & then was Dr. Viresh Gupta. My vision for API is that it should be an excellent academic body with a very strong journal.

Dr. NNB - What's your message for the journal.

Dr. SMP - It should be readable. It should have some topic based issues annually. People should publish their own experiences. It should promote research activities and publish them.