

## Ht Horizons

## GOVT MEDICAL COLLEGES ARE GOOD TRAINING GROUNDS

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## A veteran talks about 'doors opening to places where gods tread majestically'

How did you get into the medical profession? Your specialisation? I am the only son of immigrant parents from Quetta, Pakistan. I was born in Ludhiana in 1953. My decision to become a physician originated from an incident that had happened in the winter of 1967. On December 3, 1967, the world woke up to the seemingly impossible feat of Dr Christiaan Barnard having transplanted the human heart.

To my young mind it was as if a door had opened to a place where gods tread majestically. This was a life I thought I would love to live, shaping the course of the

lives of my fellow men, healing sick hearts, a life worth the living.

How did you get into medical college? Were preparations tough? In our times the premier examination was the objective common entrance test for entry into the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Wardha. I had qualified in this and joined Wardha in 1969. However, I soon learnt that I had qualified in my home state examination as well and shifted to the Government Medical College, Patiala - since it

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was closer home.

I believe that no competitive examination is ever a breeze and I ascribe my good performance in these examinations to the hard yards I had put in, in the two years prior to the exams.

Were you prepared for the rigours of medical college?

Medical school was an eye opener in the sense that the subject matter is way different from what I had been exposed to, to date and the course at best can be described as vast and intimidating. However, a few months into the curriculum my sense of wonder and curiosity overcame the fear

I had initially felt. Every day seemed filled with magical possibilities and learning new things about the human body was like walking into the proverbial Aladdin's cave. All this was tempered with the realisation that there was no subject I could ignore because my real test would not be a written exam, but the patient.

How tough is it to do MS?

I went on to do my masters in surgery from Medical College, Patiala. Those days are a blur in my memory. I was always in the wards, seeing patients, operating day and night, and oh the endless academic forums!

At the end of three years I knew I was ready for the next step - learning to operate on the human heart.

The institutes that provide the best training for MBBS and MS?

I trained for cardiac surgery at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh. I was selected as the first British Heart Foundation fellow in the world and I went to the United Kingdom to hone my skills, acquiring my Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons from Edinburgh and FRCS-CTVS from the intercollegiate board. I then travelled to Australia and obtained FRACS from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. I believe that all government medical colleges are good training grounds for MBBS and MS. The best training centres for superspeciality training in cardiac surgery are AIIMS and SCT Trivandrum.

Interviewed by Ayesha Banerjee