

**IN MEMORIUM**  
**Dr. V. GOVINDAN NAIR**

By

N. G. PANDALAI, M. D., D. T. M., F. R. C. P. (Edin.)  
Retired Principal of T. D. Medical College, Allepey, Kerala

The late Dr V. Govindan Nair, L. M. S., M. R. C. P., F. R. F. P. S., was born on August 26, 1888, at Koduvayur, a village in the Palghat District of Malabar. He passed away on Sept. 13, 1964, in a private nursing home at Madras, following an operation for some urinary trouble. He is survived by his wife, three daughters and a son. He was an elder member of the I. M. A.

Dr. Nair had his early education first in a primary school near his village, then in the Sircar High School at Chittur and later in the Victoria College at Palghat. In 1908, he entered the Madras Medical College and qualified for the I. M. S. in 1914. After house-surgeoncy and through a competitive examination, he joined the Madras Medical Service, as an Assistant Surgeon, in 1916, in which capacity he served the then composite Madras State, in various district hospitals. He had also served as a lecturer in the medical schools at Madura and Tanjore and later as Assistant Professor of Pathology in the Madras Medical College and subsequently for a short period as Assistant Professor of Bacteriology in the Andhra Medical College at Visakhapatnam. In 1931, he took his M. R. C. P. from Edinburgh, specialising in venereology and dermatology. On his return from abroad, he was appointed Lecturer in Venereal Diseases & Dermatology, Medical College, Visakhapatnam and Venereologist and Dermatologist, K. G. Hospital, Vizagapatam. Later, he was promoted as professor in the same discipline and in the same institutions. He was also specialist in Leprology. On superannuation, his services were extended, finally retiring from the State Service in Sept., 1947. In 1949, he accepted a professorship in the Vellore Medical College, where he worked for sixteen months.

Dr. Nair was a clear and brilliant teacher and clinician, very much loved and respected by his students, colleagues and patients. He was an authority in venereology and dermatology, and although severely handicapped by heavy routine work and in spite of restricted assistant staff and facilities, he was able to do some original work and publish more than twenty papers. He was one of the earliest to observe and describe what is now known as Govindan Nair Syndrome. He was a hard worker and had little time to waste. Work was his motto. He detested all empty talk and show. He was a loyal and kindhearted friend.

A characteristic trait of Dr. Nair was sincerity of purpose that was quite evident in all his undertakings. Any work he undertook he went into it heart and soul. In the early thirties, when the Indian Medical Association was started, Dr. Nair saw clearly the need for such an All India Organisation for the medical profession of the country, which had no representation till then but working under

the jack-boots of the I. M. S., and notwithstanding all serious and risky opposition from all quarters, he worked strenuously and sincerely for its cause. It was to his credit that he succeeded in organising and starting the first branch of the Association at Vizag. He was the secretary of the I. M. A. for the Andhra branch for about six years. In order to fully appreciate the magnitude of his work in this context, it is necessary to remember that during those early days, when the Britishers were still the ruling power, the association was under governmental taboo, off and on. The State officers had been discouraged from becoming members and they were even directed to have no connection with the Association. Undeterred by such official frown, Dr. N. continued to work as its secretary, and it was mainly through his efforts that the Association continued to be a living force there, albeit often precariously. For this Dr. N. deserves unalloyed praise. As a recognition of his valuable services, he had been several times elected to responsible offices of the Association. He was for a term the Deputy President of the I. M. A., Even after retirement from service and until his demise Dr. N. continued to be an active member of the I. M. A. and his advice had been sought from far and wide.

At the time of his retirement, he found that the affairs of the Madras Medical College, whereof he was a member, were all in confusion and offered his help to set them right. Taking up the post of its Registrar, he worked hard and in the course of a year created order out of chaos and brought the files up to date, himself not accepting any remuneration except conveyance allowance.

Dr. N. has also served as an elected member of the I. M. C. and as a representative of the Nurses' Council. He was a member of the Madras Medical Council for about nine years and a senator of the Madras University for twenty-one years and at the time of his death he was a sitting member of the latter. He presided over the All India Venereological and Dermatological Conference at its session at Calcutta in 1963.

Finally, he settled down at Kunnamkulam (Cochin), deciding to devote the rest of his life to the service of the ailing rural population. There he opened a consulting room and gave free medical aid, and many a time financial help too, to hundreds of patients. On the side, he was also rendering free service in two charity hospitals.

He was also a keen social worker and was president or secretary in several committees, not for name but for actually getting work done. Work was his motto and in spite of failing health, he engaged himself in active work until the last few weeks of his passing away.