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Dr. Rajshree Dayanand Katke

Stewardship, Service, and the Making of a Legacy

Kaushal Kumar | The CEO Magazine

India's healthcare system runs on the quiet commitment of doctors who show up every day, long after the recognition fades and the pressure remains. In women's health especially, the work demands steadiness, skill, and the ability to make difficult decisions in moments that carry lifelong consequences. Over the years, this is the space where Dr Rajshree Dayanand Katke has built her professional life, at the intersection of clinical care, hospital leadership, and a sustained commitment to women's well-being.

The Foundation of a Renowned Obstetrician & Gynaecologist

Dr Rajshree's early years were shaped by simplicity, discipline, and a deep respect for education. Born in Omerga, a small taluka in Maharashtra, she grew up in an environment where access to basic facilities was limited and everyday life required effort and adaptability. Her parents were schoolteachers, and their postings often took the family to remote villages. In Ansarwada, where she studied until Class 4, there was no direct road leading into the village. Reaching school meant getting down on the main road and walking several kilometres, sometimes travelling by bullock cart. Learning began at home under her mother's guidance, where she was introduced to reading and numbers early, and her academic inclination became evident.

After her parents were transferred to Murum, she continued her schooling there until Class 8. As her interest in studies grew and opportunities in smaller towns remained limited, her father made the decision to move her to Latur for further education. The shift opened new possibilities, and she went on to excel academically, securing admission to Government



Dr. Rajshree Dayanand Katke

Professor Grant Government Medical College Mumbai, Former Superintendent of Cama And Albless Hospitals

Medical College, Aurangabad, after Class 12. There, she completed her MBBS and later pursued an MD in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, setting the direction for a life in medicine.

Three Decades of Clinical Excellence

After completing her MD in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Dr Rajshree began her career as a lecturer at Grant Government Medical College, Mumbai. The

role marked the beginning of a long and demanding professional journey that would span more than three decades, combining clinical practice, teaching, and patient care at scale.

Over the years, she gained extensive experience in managing complex and high-risk cases, often working in situations that required quick decision-making and deep clinical judgement. Her work included handling difficult surgical procedures, including the removal of unusually large tumours: a 30 kg uterine leiomyomatous tumour, a 20 kg ovarian tumour, and several others weighing 12 kg and 10 kg. She removed a 10 kg ovarian tumour from a pregnant woman and then helped her continue the pregnancy till 9 months, after which she delivered a healthy baby. She performed many life-saving surgeries with excellent results, while also supporting patients through critical stages of pregnancy and illness. These experiences strengthened both her confidence and her commitment to the field. At the core of her practice was a strong belief that every patient deserves the best possible treatment, regardless of their background or financial situation. She remained particularly attentive to those who were less privileged, ensuring they received the same care and dignity as anyone else.

Her career later expanded into leadership when she was given the opportunity to head Cama and Albless Hospitals as Superintendent in Mumbai. During her seven-year tenure, she played an active role in strengthening patient care while continuing to remain closely involved in clinical work. Much of her focus remained on high-risk pregnancies and the treatment of women's cancers, areas where her experience made a significant difference to patient outcomes. The role brought together her years of medical practice, teaching, and service and remains one of the most defining phases of her professional life.

Great Academician, Researcher

Dr Rajshree Dayanand Katke, Renowned Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Excellent Surgeon, Great Academician and Researcher. Author, Editor and Poetess. Former Head of the Dept. OBGY, Grant Govt. Medical College, Mumbai. Alongside her administrative and clinical roles, she has remained active in academics and research, having 100+ publications in National and International Journals. 444 citations and more than 2 lacs 15 thousand Global reads across universities and institutions in over 100 countries; she authored many chapters and is Editor of Books in the Gynaec Field. She is a great Poetess. She has authored books and chapters in gynaecology, including a Marathi book on women's health and pregnancy-related concerns.



With Mother Aai Kamal ji

Extending Care Beyond the Hospital

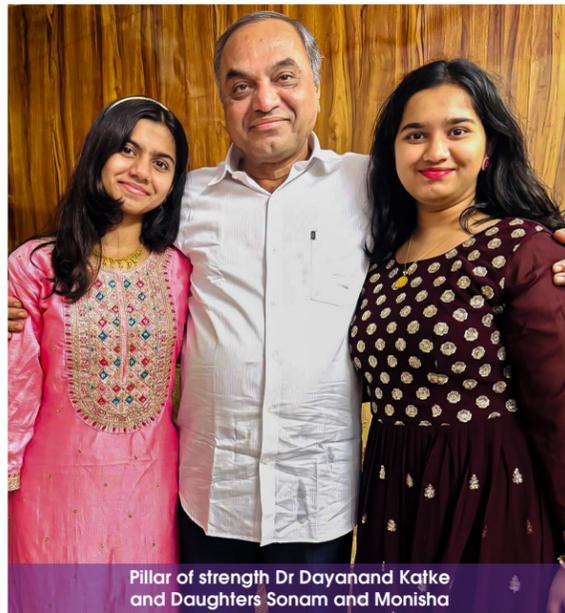
Beyond her hospital responsibilities, Dr Rajshree has been actively involved in spreading awareness on women's health through television programmes, public platforms, and community outreach. Her work has focused on issues such as breast and cervical cancers, breastfeeding, human milk banking, and high-risk pregnancies.

She has also conducted and participated in health camps across rural, tribal, and urban regions, providing diagnostic and treatment support to women with limited access to care. In addition, she has delivered motivational and awareness talks at various forums, sharing her experience and encouraging informed health practices.

What Keeps Her Grounded

Dr Rajshree's motivation has been shaped by the values she inherited from her parents, Smt. Kamal Sonkawde and the late R. N. Sonkawde, whose dedication to teaching instilled in her a strong sense of service from an early age. She also acknowledges the guidance of her mentors and the steady support of her family, including her husband Dr Dayanand Katke and her daughters, Sonam and Monisha. Over the years, the gratitude and trust of her patients have remained one of her greatest driving forces.

She has been practising Vipassana meditation for more than 20 years. It gives both scientific and spiritual experience and it has helped her to build inner strength and clarity while continuing her work in demanding medical environments. She believes in working without attachment to personal ambition and sees service to



Pillar of strength Dr Dayanand Katke and Daughters Sonam and Monisha

humanity as a central purpose of life. For her, true fulfillment comes from contributing to healing, peace, and the well-being of others, while striving to remain grounded, balanced, and guided by compassion.

Honour, Responsibility, and Reach

During her tenure as Superintendent of Cama Hospital, Dr Rajshree played a key role in strengthening patient care and hospital systems. The institution's work during this period was acknowledged during the visit of former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to India, when he visited the hospital and appreciated its efforts.

Her contributions have been recognised through multiple honours, including the Mumbai Achievers Award, the Best Superintendent Award, the Best Associate Professor Award, Republic Day recognition for dedicated service, the Waghini Puraskar, and the Sarojini Naidu Nightingale Award for working women. Certificate of Appreciation from the Honourable Governor of the state for work during COVID. World Record Book of London Commitment Certificate for COVID services.

She also remained actively involved during critical moments, including the COVID-19 pandemic, where she contributed to patient care, hospital administration, and public awareness efforts. Earlier, during the 26/11 attack at Cama Hospital, her unit continued to support patient care under extremely difficult circumstances. In the years that followed, including her appointment as superintendent in 2012, she worked towards improving hospital safety and care systems and led

efforts to dedicate a memorial in honour of those who lost their lives. Her public health engagement has also extended to large-scale initiatives such as the Beed Mahaarogyashibir, where her contributions were recognised at the state level.

Rising Through Challenges

Dr Rajshree believes that a woman's journey in any profession demands persistence, discipline, and emotional strength. In her experience, challenges are inevitable, but progress comes from staying positive, working consistently, and learning to remain calm in difficult situations. She emphasises the importance of handling problems with patience and balance rather than reacting negatively, and of continuing forward even during uncertain phases.

She draws inspiration from women in history and public life who have demonstrated courage and service, including Rani Lakshmbai, Ahilyabai Holkar, Savitribai Phule, Sarojini Naidu, Kalpana Chawla, and Sunita Williams. Their contributions, she believes, continue to motivate women to step forward and lead with purpose.

The Balance That Sustains

For Dr Rajshree, fulfilment comes from staying honest in one's work and maintaining balance between personal success and service to others. Her outlook has been shaped by years of medical practice, reflection, and lived experience.

"I feel we should work selflessly and develop our work in an honest way. Success follows. Don't be upset with obstacles; face them in life and come out of it. Always remember we have great potential inside; we just have to open it."

She believes that perspective and kindness are essential in navigating both professional and personal life. *"Once you understand that nothing is permanent and change is the only constant, it becomes easier to move forward. Forgive people, be kind, and love all – that helps in life. One should look beyond materialistic things to develop oneself and keep a balance between material life and service to humanity."*

Sharing her message for readers, she adds, "Eat healthy, exercise, meditate, and keep a positive approach to life. Use your abilities to do something meaningful for others. That is what stays with us." We should remember we are on a transient journey on this planet, so work for the betterment of humanity and to help the environment and other species of the planet accordingly. We are just mediators, so nullifying ego, pride, and excessive greed can help us achieve satisfaction and inner peace.