

## Dr. Raj Tilak Basnet: The First Prosthodontist of Nepal

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Dr. Raj Tilak Basnet

**Dr. Raj Tilak Basnet** was born on 26th February 1956 in Kathmandu. He completed BDS in 1979 and MDS (Prosthodontics) in 1981 from King George Medical College, Lucknow University, India. After completion of the postgraduate studies, he worked at Bir Hospital, Siddhi Polyclinic, and Nepal Oral Health Society clinic during 1982-83. Thenafter, he joined Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in 1983 as Lecturer and was appointed as Head of the Department. He was the visiting scholar at Cleveland Clinic at Ohio, USA and TC White scholar at Glasgow Dental College, UK. He was appointed as the Visiting Professor at IOM-TUTH in 2002. Later, Dr. Basnet joined People's Dental College as Co-Principal in 2003, where he was promoted to Professor and initiated postgraduate program in 2010. He is the Founder Member of Nepal Dental Association and Founder President of Nepalese Prosthodontic Society. He has been conferred with Sewa Padak and Coronation Silver Jubilee Medal by the then His Majesty's Government. He maintains group private practice in Kathmandu.

Here is an excerpt of the interview with Dr. Raj Tilak Basnet.

**Q. Sir, please explain about your social and educational journey.**

**A.** When I stood board second in SLC, it was a huge thrust to push start my career in medicine. Thus I joined I. Sc. Biology at Amrit Science College (ASCOL) in an attempt to apply for medical college. Upon completion, I got selected for the BDS course at King George Medical College (KGMC), Lucknow under the scholarship as a government nominee. My parents guided me throughout the process and helped me to become a successful student and a sound dental practitioner.

**Q. As you were the first person to do MDS in Prosthodontics; which factor inspired you to do a Master's degree during those days when even BDS graduates were only in handful numbers?**

**A.** After completion of my BDS course, I was fortunate to be offered a seat to continue my MDS studies in Prosthodontics and Crown and Bridge program by the

Dean of KGMC Dental Faculty, Professor T. N. Chawla. This was the starting point of the exciting career start-up for me in Prosthodontics which led me to become the first person to pursue MDS (Prosthodontics) degree in Nepal.

**Q. How did you start your career path in dentistry?**

**A.** In early 1980's after returning home from the KGMC, I started my professional career in Nepal firstly by joining Bir Hospital Development Board. Concurrently, I started my private practice to serve dentistry to the public *en masse*. At the same time, I dedicated some extra time to the family. My next endeavour was at Institute of Medicine - Tribhuvan University; where I started teaching medical and health science students and was also involved in developing a Dental OPD at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital. Later, I was appointed as the Professor in Prosthodontics at the People's Dental College where I served as the Co-Principal as well.

**Q. How was the situation of dental service in the country when you started in early 1980's?**

**A.** Back in the days, a lot of people suffered from dental problems with less accessibility to dental care and very few were providing dental service in the country. I was keen on providing dental health service to the ailing people suffering from these diseases. In fact, it had drawn my initial attention towards the field of dentistry. Since that time, my passion and devotion towards dentistry has increased and now there is a sense of fulfilment as we are making progress in dental faculty, facility and outreach in the country.

**Q. Do you find any difference in the trend of dental practice during early days and now?**

**A.** Compared to few decades ago, present day dentistry has advanced many folds offering a wide horizon of treatment options through the ease of access to information and evidences. With the inclusion of three dimensional CBCT and multiplanar panoramic views, it is possible for a more accurate diagnosis and successful management of cases which were previously unseen and under-diagnosed. I have very much recognised that the modern day technology has helped us and guided us to perform the treatment that were difficult or even impossible in the past, with high success outcome for the present. I feel lucky and proud to have experienced this change in the state-of-the-art technology and encourage my colleagues and juniors to rightfully and judiciously utilize these technologies and evidences to the best of their knowledge and for the betterment of the patients.

**Q. What are the technological advancements in prosthodontics?**

**A.** A lot of artificial intelligence and algorithms have been developed in the modern or advanced dental field. Dental implantology has become more successful these days with the help of 3D design and guided stents. The addition of 3D scanners, printers, millers with reduced lab time is fascinating; this is how the technology is incorporated in human health and wellbeing. However, during these procedures, the algorithms and guided surgeries will not work if they are not calibrated and guided prosthodontically. In my view; 'always start with the end in mind' with respect to the successful treatment outcome.

**Q. You have been a successful clinician; can you highlight on the requirements of practice management in dentistry?**

**A.** Dentistry is a teamwork. It is of utmost importance that you have the best team who are technologically sound. Train them well and also learn from them. In my experience; an important part of becoming a successful professional is not to criticize other colleagues and their performance. It is important to do whatever is possible to correct and cure the problem and other existing conditions of the suffering patients. It is fine to correct the mistakes of the past, but always provide the best possible care and management with quality that your patient seeks and expects from you. Let us all offer a helping hands to the needy and provide a long-lasting solution for the patient with a smiling face that every human adores and deserves, along with a balance in personal, family and professional life.

**Q. Are you guided by any philosophy or beliefs in life?**

**A.** We are working in the service sector in the field of dentistry. With my strong belief, I say that we are guided by the grace of special divine power which is in each and every one of us. So it is utterly important to use that to the best of your mind, knowledge, skill and judgment while offering treatment to the suffering patients.

**Q. Would you like to convey some message to the younger generation of dentists?**

**A.** My personal advice to fellow colleagues is not to limit yourself within your brain and skill barriers; build up a good teamwork of practice and a good referral system. Let us utilize the best available science and technology for the betterment of your practice without abusing it, being true to yourself and to your patients so as to minimize the risks and challenges. Also, do not entirely rely on technology. The best approach is to use your mind, skill and judgment along with these advancements. Healthy practice for healthy living should be our motto in life.

