

About Dr. S.C. Seal

Dr. Sirish Chandra Seal (July 3, 1903 – July 3, 2001) was an illustrious Indian public health expert, epidemiologist, bacteriologist, teacher, and administrator whose contributions significantly shaped modern public health practice in India. Born at Shahazadpur in the district of Pabna (now in Bangladesh), he was the son of Late Dr. Srimanta Chandra Seal, L.M.P. He was married and had five children—three sons and two daughters.

Dr. Seal demonstrated academic brilliance from an early age, securing a First Divisional Scholarship in Sanskrit in the Matriculation Examination in 1920. He passed his I.Sc. from Vidyasagar College, Calcutta, in First Division, standing 20th in the University. In 1929, he obtained his M.B. degree from Calcutta Medical College under the University of Calcutta with triple Honours in Pathology and Bacteriology, Public Health and Hygiene, and Midwifery and Gynaecology. He later earned a D.P.H. from the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health (AIHH&PH), Calcutta. His pioneering research on plague led to the award of a Ph.D. (Medical – Bacteriology) by the University of Bombay from the Haffkine Institute, and subsequently a D.Sc. (Medicine – Bacteriology) in recognition of his extensive research in the field.

A Rockefeller Foundation Fellow (1939–40), Dr. Seal received advanced training in the USA and Canada, further strengthening his scientific and epidemiological expertise.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Seal served in several key academic and administrative positions. He worked as Bacteriologist at Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, Chief Bacteriologist for Cholera Antigenic Structure and Epidemiological Research at AIHH&PH, and Plague Research Officer at the Haffkine Institute, Bombay. He later became Assistant Professor and subsequently Professor of Epidemiology at AIHH&PH, where he also directed the Central Epidemiology Unit and Morbidity Surveys. He served as Officer on Special Duty and officiating Deputy Director General of Health Services, Government of India. His academic leadership extended to the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Calcutta, where he headed the Department of Social Welfare and guided urban administration and public health training. He also served as Emeritus Medical Scientist of the Indian Council of Medical Research, Director of the India Fertility Research Programme, and later as Consultant and Honorary Chairman of the Calcutta Family Welfare Hospital and the Indian Institute for Population Education and Family Welfare Training.

An outstanding teacher and mentor, Dr. Seal developed innovative systems of epidemiology training and contributed extensively to postgraduate teaching

across disciplines including Public Health, Tropical Medicine, Medical Statistics, and Social Work. He guided numerous research scholars and conducted wide-ranging morbidity, fertility, and social health surveys. His research focused on communicable diseases, epidemiology, social and preventive medicine, fertility studies, and public health surveys, collaborating with 88 researchers across 34 Indian and international institutions.

Dr. Seal served as examiner for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and public health courses across ten universities in India. His academic excellence and leadership earned him numerous honours, including the Coates' Gold Medal for Medical Research, Fellowship of the Indian National Science Academy, Honorary Fellowship of the American Public Health Association, Fellowship of the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India), and Fellowship of the Asiatic Society. He was elected President of the Indian Public Health Association at Varanasi and also served as President of its West Bengal State Branch. He delivered several prestigious memorial lectures and orations, including the Dr. B.N. Ghosh Memorial Lecture, Dr. B.C. Dasgupta Memorial Oration, and Dr. B.C. Roy Memorial Oration.

Dr. S.C. Seal's century-long life was marked by exceptional scholarship, visionary leadership, and unwavering dedication to public health. His legacy continues to inspire generations of public health professionals, and the Memorial Oration instituted in his name stands as a tribute to his monumental contributions to epidemiology and public health in India.