Thanjavur Santhanakrishna Kanaka

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S. Kanaka or Thanjavur Santhanakrishna Kanaka, also known as Tanjore Santhana Krishna Kanaka, (31 March 1932 to 14 November 2018) is Asia's first female neurosurgeon and one of the world's first few female neurosurgeons. Kanaka was one of the world's first female neurosurgeons; having qualified with a degree (MCh) in Neurosurgery in March 1968; after Diana Beck (1902-1956), and Aysima Altinok who qualified in November 1959.

She was associated with Madras Medical College, Tamilnadu, India for many years and she has been a mentor for many of the present neurosurgeons in Tamilnadu. She as a member of B. Ramamurthi and his team, became the earliest team in India to perform stereotaxic procedures since 1960. She pioneered in functional neurosurgery in India and presented many research papers in international conferences. She retired as a surgeon in 1990. After the retirement, under her parents' name, she ran Sri Santhanakrishna Padmavathi Health Care and Research Foundation, which offered free healthcare to the needy, located near her house at Chromepet in Chennai.

She was a great inspiration to many women neurosurgeons in India and she was the reason behind the formation of Women In Neurosurgery India in 2016. Her main interest was in fabricating deepbrain-stimulation kits in India by Indian biomedical engineers at an affordable price.

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