



Dr. Rani Abhay Bang

Recipient

Development and Welfare of Women and Children Award 2006

30 years ago, when I finished my medical post-graduation, my father who was a doctor wanted me to go abroad to pursue higher education. My grandfather was a lawyer and a member of parliament from Chandrapur. He wanted me to become advocate and politician and my mother was just a mother, was only mother and a women, wanted me to help the women during their sufferings. Defined everybody's wishes when I married Abhay and I entered the Gandhian family in Wardha. Now after 30 years I feel that I have fulfilled the desires all of three. I went abroad to pursue higher education in Public Welfare Research. I started working as a social worker in Gadchiroli and as in my humble capacity without getting into politics. I could become vital of change of social and political in Gadchiroli district and by identifying the health and other problems of women in Gadchiroli of Maharashtra, India and all the world and I could fulfil my mother's desire too. I think probably they knew the best what I was destined to do.

Today when you honour me, you honour all those people who have contributed to my growth, you honour the social Bang tradition of Bang family through which I came to this Gandhian field. Most of all you honour all the rural and tribal women who have been not just our beneficiaries but they have been our great teachers and hundreds of dies health workers and number of team members who have been working with us in that very difficult areas in the past several years.

I won't speak about the work which have been done by us but I will speak about the work to be done and three major challenges are awaiting (1) Nearly half a million women and five million children die all over the world in an year and India contribute its maximum to this death toll. This is national shame. The approach developed by our organisation SEARCH to empower the women to solve this problems has a potential to reduce children's death by 50%. I am very happy to say that recently the National Rural Health Mission, Government of India and Planning Commission have accepted this model to change the health of women and children in India. But now there is a challenge for us. To scale up this model approach from 100 villages to 5 lakh villages that is big challenge awaiting us. (2) Rani & Abhay Bang are nearly very small products of Gandhian legacy but they are too small. India is very big. The challenges are very big. New innovators, new leaders, new pioneers, need to be developed by younger generation. We have recently began a programme called "Nirman" to encourage youth to felicitate them to become the leaders of social change in the future (3) Our third challenge is the world is entering into knowledge era, but rural and tribal people in vast tracks of India are still lagging behind and are living in pre-industrial era. We need knowledge, super harvest to bridge this digital divide, more than technology human beings are needed to bridge this gap that is big challenge and alongwith my husband Abhay and I propose here that this Bajaj Award money we want to utilize to start a pilot project in Gadchiroli to enable the rural and tribal youth to cross the abyss if ignorance by gaining access to computer revolution. This is not the field of our expertise but this is need of future and so I invite all the leaders in this field to support us in our new endeavour. Woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promised to them long time to sleep, Thank you so much.

