

DR. ABHAY BANG

Chief Guest at Jamnalal Bajaj Awards 2024 Ceremony

Born: September 23, 1950

Dr. Abhay Bang grew up in the Sevagram Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi whose life and philosophy have inspired him. He trained in medicine (MD) in India and in public health (MPH) at the Johns Hopkins University. He was active in social movements such as the *Bhoodan* movement of Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Youth movement of Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan.

Along with his wife Dr. Rani Bang, in 1985 he founded the voluntary organization, SEARCH (Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health) in one of the most underdeveloped districts, Gadchiroli, in the state of Maharashtra in India, where they have been working with the people in 150 villages to provide community-based health care and conduct research. They have developed village health care program which has now become a nationally and internationally famous model and influenced health care policies in India and world over. They first brought to the notice of the world that rural women suffer from a large hidden burden of gynaecological diseases.

They have also led a campaign against alcohol which led to the introduction of prohibition in Gadchiroli district and influenced the State policy. Dr. Bang has conceived and led a district pilot project called '*Muktipath*' which aims to reduce tobacco and alcohol consumption.

He has also showed how pneumonia in children can be managed and how newborn care can be delivered, in villages. Dr. Bang's work has reduced the infant mortality rate from 121 to 16. His model – Home-based Newborn and Child Care, has been adopted for national scaleup by the Government of India (GoI), in 2017.

He was Chairman of the Expert Committee on Tribal Health (GoI) which has produced the first ever comprehensive report titled Tribal Health in India, in 2018. Dr. Bang has 60 research publications in international and national journals.

In addition, to his numerous recognitions and accolades, some of which being Padma Shri by GoI, Public Health Champion by World Health Organization (WHO), National Award of the Indian Council of Medical Research for outstanding research in community medicine, Mahatma Gandhi Award for humanitarian service, etc., Dr. Bang has also been an eminent Member of the Central Health Council, Ministry of Health (GoI) and High-Level Expert Group appointed by the Planning Commission to plan Universal Health Care, in India.

Dr. Bang has lectured in 20 countries, including the Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Berkely and London University and at the global headquarters of organizations such as WHO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children, World Bank, etc.