

## Biodata

**Name** : Dr. Abhay Bang

**Qualifications** : MD, MPH

**Current position** : Director, SEARCH (Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health),

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**Work** : Dr. Abhay Bang grew up in the Sevagram Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi. He was inspired by the social ideals, and trained in India (MD) and at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, (MPH). He was a top notcher in the University and won 3 Gold Medals. Along with his wife Dr. Rani Bang, he founded the voluntary organization, SEARCH, (Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health) 25 years ago 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. It has influenced the health policy in India and globally at least thrice. They first brought to the notice of the world that rural women had a large hidden burden of gynecological diseases. He showed how the pneumonia in children can be managed in villages, and recently, how newborn care can be delivered in villages. Their work has reduced the IMR to 30 in this area. This approach, called the 'home-based newborn care' has been now replicated in several countries, has become a national policy in India, and resulted in the global guidelines (WHO/UNICEF – 2009).

They have established the famous community health care and research center 'Shodhagram' in the tribal area.

They also studied the problem of hidden child mortality in Maharashtra and subsequently launched a programme – Ankur – to reduce child mortality in the State.

They have led a campaign against alcohol which led to introduction of prohibition in Gadchiroli district, and influenced the State policy.

He has written 2 books of which the one on his own heart disease is extremely popular in Maharashtra. It has received the State literary award.

He was a member of the National Commission on Population, and of The National Commission on Macro-economics and Health. He is a member of the Mission Steering Group, of the National Rural Health Mission, Govt. of India, and of the National ASHA Mentoring Group, and several national and international committees.

Recently he and Rani were honoured with the highest honour of the state government 'Maharashtra Bhushan'.

The TIME magazine selected him and Rani as the 'Global Health Heroes' (2005)

### **The major research includes**

- The first ever community-based estimate of the magnitude of gynaecological problems in rural women (1989) which paved the way for the international policy shift to women's reproductive health.
- Training of TBAs to provide reproductive health care (1988-90)
- Developing surveillance system to record births and deaths, and determine causes of death in children.

- Field trial of ARI control by using VHWs and TBAs (1998-90)
- Developing a simple device – Breath Counter, to enable illiterate TBAs diagnose pneumonia in children. (1990)
- Participatory action-research against alcohol leading to a mass movement and change in the government policy. (1988-93)
- De-addiction in rural males (1994-2000).
- Studies on reproductive health problems in males (1992-95).
- Studies on burden of health problems in home-cared neonates (1995-96).
- A five year field trial of home-based neonatal care to reduce neonatal mortality (1993-98).
- A multi-site replication study of home-based neonatal care. (2001-06)

**Honors** : which he and his organization have received include :

- ‘Dory Storms’ Child Survival Recognition Award from CORE Group Washington (2010).
- Save the Children, US award for global contribution to saving newborns and children.
- MacArthur Foundation International Award for creative and effective institutions. (2006)
- The Global Health Hero, TIME magazine (2005)
- ‘Maharashtra Bhushan’ the highest state honour of the Govt. of Maharashtra (2003)
- ‘Bapu’ Award from Gandhi National Memorial Society, Pune (2009)
- ‘Navratna Puraskar’ from Doordarshan Sahyadri Channel, Mumbai (2005)
- National Award of the Indian Council of Medical Research for outstanding research in community medicine.
- National Award of the Voluntary Health Association of India for the best voluntary health organization.
- Mahatma Gandhi Award for humanitarian service.
- The award for the best literary article in Marathi in the year 1996.
- Yashwantrao Chavhan state award for social work, (2000).
- The Kelkar award for the best literary book in Marathi, (2000).
- The State Award for De-addiction – Government of Maharashtra. (2001)
- Satpal Mittal Award for Population – by the Indian Association of Parliamentarians, New Delhi. (2002)
- Vivekanand Manava Sewa Award, Pune, (2002)
- Ramshastri Prabhune Puraskar for social justice – Satara, (2002)
- Member, National Commission on Population, Govt. of India.
- Several other awards for social work.

**Chairman** of the ‘Committee for the Evaluation of Child Health and Malnutrition in Maharashtra’ appointed by the Govt of Maharashtra (2003)

- Member**
1. Mission Steering Group of the National Rural Health Mission, Govt. of India (2008 - )
  2. High Level Expert Group on Universal Access to Health Care, The Planning Commission Govt. of India (2010-11)
  3. National ASHA Mentoring Group, Ministry of Health & FW, Govt of India. (2008- )
  4. National Commission on Macro-economics and Health (2004-05)
  5. National Commission on Population (2001-2004)
  6. Institute of Medicine (IOM) U.S. committee on Improving Pregnancy Outcome in Underdeveloped countries (2000-2001)
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