



SEARCH

Society of Education Health and Research in Community Health, Gadchiroli

SEARCH in October–November 2015



In Search of Solutions for Tribal Health Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India conducted a national workshop on “The Best Practices in Tribal Health Care” from October 11th to 13th, 2015, hosted by SEARCH.

With the aim to review the present health and healthcare situation and to suggest alternatives for redesigning health care in tribal areas and

preparing the tribal health care plan, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, constituted an Expert Group on Tribal Health, under the chairmanship of Dr. Abhay Bang. The Expert Committee has, for the first time, compiled the data on the birth and death rates, main diseases and the barriers to health care in tribal areas at the national level. The committee has visited several states to observe the state of tribal health care and discuss the problems with the representatives of tribal people, civil society and the government officers.

The workshop saw over 50 representatives from 24 organizations present ‘Best Practices’ that they have been running to address problems ranging from malaria and maternal mortality to fluorosis and human resource constraints. The practices were selected from the 85 entries and were presented, analysed, evaluated and selected for recommending for national scale up.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, Health Research, Govt. of India, and the Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research, inaugurated the workshop, on 11th October in Shodhgram.



From left to right: Prof. Rakesh Kapoor, Director of SGPGIM, Shri Vijay Kumar Saraswat, Member of NITI Ayog., Dr. Rani Bang, Hon. Shri Ram Naik, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh., Dr. Abhay Bang, and Shri. Alok Ranjan, Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh and President of SGPGIM

SGPGIMS confers Honorary D.Sc. on Drs. Bang

Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), Lucknow, of the Government of India, has conferred Honorary Doctorate on Dr. Rani and Dr. Abhay Bang of SEARCH, Gadchiroli, for their exceptional contribution to the field of Rural Healthcare. The conferment took place during the 20th Convocation of the Institute, on 26th September 2015, by Hon. Shri Ram Naik, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Abhay Bang also delivered a public lecture on ‘Arogya Swaraj’, on the morning of 27th September 2015.



Aamchi Nirogi Aashramshala

SEARCH is working to improve health of tribal people in the Dhanora block of Gadchiroli. *Aamchi Nirogi Aashramshala* project was launched last year, as

SEARCH realised that to have a healthy tribal community one must invest time and effort in schools where the young minds are being educated for the future. Healthy habits formed at this stage will not only benefit the child but through him the knowledge and practices will also percolate to his family, village and the tribal community.

Last year three schools were included in the pilot project and now expanded to include two more schools. Several interventions are planned and conducted to educate the students of these schools about illnesses like malaria, diarrhea and scabies as well as to develop good health and hygiene habits like washing hands with soap, brushing teeth properly etc. They are provided with chemically treated mosquito nets to prevent spread of malaria. They are counseled and helped to overcome these habits. Last year's survey has shown remarkable improvement but lot more needs to be done.

On 1st and 2nd September of this year a residential workshop was conducted for *Aarogya Mitras* of three schools to develop team spirit and leadership qualities. Discussion about the movie clips, role play, songs, group discussions and presentations brought out the hidden potential in these kids. These trained students are now part of our resource pool. We have planned interventions for malaria, diarrhea, scabies, anemia, diagnosis of sickle cell, importance of good diet, dental care and consequences of tobacco and alcohol addiction.



'Nirman' in Gandhi Ashram Sixty-five of NIRMAN

youth working full time on various social problems gathered together in Sevagram Ashram between 2-4 October for the annual workshop. The workshop had the following objectives, to share the journey with the others and learning from peers, to have a thought clarity about some of the macro level issues while working at the micro level, and to strengthen the bond between these friends who have chosen the paths less traveled.

Senior mentors like Dr. Abhay Bang, Dr. Anand Karandikar, Vivek Sawant and Sarita Avad were present during the workshop to guide the participants and ask them the right questions.

Surgery camp SEARCH on completion of its 3-day Surgical Camp on 9th September 2015, has made it clear that the herculean task of attending to surgeries on 92 patients was no impediment to their will and determination.

The camp was conducted in the premises of SEARCH, from 7th to 9th of September, 2015 by Dr. Ravindra Vora and his team, from Sangli, Kolhapur, Karad, Lonand, Jalgaon, Akola and Buldhana. They have been providing affordable and high quality surgical care, the very raison d'être for surgical camps, to poor patients from the tribal and rural regions of Gadchiroli and neighbouring districts for last 13 years. The effort of surgeons and doctors ranged from major surgeries like thyroid surgery to minor ones like hydrocele surgery.





Tobacco and Alcohol free Gadchiroli Government of Maharashtra has banned gutakha and scented tobacco in the state and the COTPA Act bans its commercial supply, while alcohol is banned in Gadchiroli district. In spite of the ban, the people in the district consume alcohol and tobacco on large scale. Owing to the necessity to launch district-wide program on this issue, Dr. Abhay Bang visited Chief Minister Hon. Shri Devendra Fadnavis to discuss a programme for health and economic development, of alcohol and tobacco free Gadchiroli.

This plan will be a collaboration of various Governmental departments, social NGOs and educational institutions.

School Tobacco Cessation Programme Tobacco trial in the month of

October comprised of three components - Clinical examination by dentist on selected classes, individual counseling and behaviour mass counseling (eg: frequency and techniques of brushing, gargles after food and no tobacco usage) for oral hygiene. Students were given pictorial parent post cards, on how to be healthy, as a takeaway for the parents to keep a check on the healthy condition of their child. Students were encouraged to form 75 Peer led Support Groups in the 25 schools along with 25 anti-tobacco committees in each. This will then be followed up with overall monitoring and supervision of tobacco usage and activities within the schools.



Garanji Village Nashamukti In the face of impossibility stands

Garanji inaugurated by Dr. Abhay Bang on 20th October, 2015, as a village reborn and liberated from the clutches of addiction of alcohol and tobacco - *Nashamukth*. The village located in Mulchera Tehsil of Gadchiroli district in Maharashtra, prevails as an inspiration to the other villages in the district.

Vijay Karkhele, the head master of the Zilla Parishad School of the village, hailing from Ahmednagar, learnt Gondvi to communicate the importance and impacts of abandonment of alcohol and tobacco. Dr. Abhay Bang praised Vijay Karkhele for the transformation and stressed every village to have a teacher like him actively participating to bring a difference. He also appreciated and idolized the village's zeal, raising the necessity for addiction-free campaigns, trainings and workshops for teachers and media broadcast of respective benchmarks set, throughout the district. He iterated on the increase of Tobacco users in Gadchiroli district from 50% in 2011 to 60% in 2013 and the expenses from 73 crores in 2011 to 260 crores in 2013. Irrespective of the ban on alcohol in 1993, after the 'Liberation from Alcohol Movement', 41% of the people are still consuming alcohol, by spending 79 crores.



IMA Lifetime Achievement Award Dr. Rani Bang was

conferred upon Dr Wankar memorial lifetime achievement award by chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, at annual conference of Nagpur branch of Indian Medical Association (IMA), NIMACON. State IMA president Dr TC Rathod and Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) president Dr Kishor Taori were the guests of honour. President Dr Ajay Kate, secretary Dr Sarita Ugemuge, organizing chairman Dr Subhash Dhawale, organising secretary Dr Ashish Disawal and scientific committee Dr Avinash Wase were present.

Inauguration of Shirish Building Shirish, a tribal friendly building, was inaugurated on 17th September, 2015, by Drs. Rani and Abhay Bang. Six offices were moved to it, namely Tribal Health, Home-based Newborn Care, NIRMAN, Alcohol and Tobacco control (*Vyasanmukti*), Non-Communicable Diseases, and Sex Education of Youth and Adolescents.

The construction started in December 2013 and completed in September 2015. The building was constructed by Manish Samarth, designed by Parag Pandri Pandey and supervised by Tushar Khorgade.



The construction was supported by the MacArthur Foundation.



A life saved... For Mahadev Satpute visiting a tribal village of Gathanyeli in Gadchiroli was a general supervisorial job. On reaching the village, Dudhram Parse, a Community Health Worker (CHW) told them of a family who according to their prevailing tribal practices had placed the mother and the baby in a separate dark hut, and none of the outside people including the SEARCH CHW or the ASHA were allowed to see them. They at once rushed to the house.

The infant was 8 days old weighing 1.6kgs and was suffering from severe sepsis, showing 5 signs - fast breathing, hypothermia, low birth weight, lethargy and breastfeed refusal. The mother, on the other hand, didn't know how to breastfeed. Mahadev showed a flipchart on the positioning and methods of feeding the baby. The mother was advised to start immediately, minimum 8 times a day. The CHW, administered cotrimoxazole, and sent for an ambulance to bring the child to Maa Danteshwari Hospital, SEARCH.

The child now is out of danger, and slowly gaining weight. The breath count now is 42, which earlier was 61 and its temperature is back to normal from 95.

When a ventilator helps those at the bottom of the pyramid On the early mornings of 24th



July 2014 Sainebai, a resident of a tribal village where SEARCH works had a snake bite. Due to the toxic effect of the venom of krait her muscles were completely paralysed. When she was brought to the hospital of SEARCH she could barely breathe due to muscle paralysis and without appropriate intervention, death was eminent. A tube was immediately inserted into her airway by the hospital team and artificial breathing was provided using a ventilator. She was also given anti-snake venom. Over next two days the weakness in her muscles gradually improved and she could breathe on her own. She was discharged home on the fifth day.

Care using ventilator is usually provided in the intensive care units in urban hospitals with advanced facilities. This is the first time when a ventilator was used in the hospital of SEARCH to save a life. As snake bites are common in Gadchiroli, SEARCH was in need of a ventilator to help save lives of snake bite patients who have muscle paralysis. Currently SEARCH hospital is the only place in the entire district which has a ventilator.

Our Website:

www.searchgadchiroli.org

Write to us on:

SEARCH

Po, District Gadchiroli,
Maharashtra,
Pin - 442605,
India.

Contact us on:

Phone: +91 7138 255407

Fax: +91 7138 255411

E-mail address: search.gad@gmail.com

To [contribute](#) please click [here](#) for bank details.



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