

WHO India honours public health champions

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At a national consultation held on 7 April 2016 at New Delhi jointly with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India (GoI) to commemorate the World Health Day 2016 (7 April), the WHO Country Office for India gave out awards for Public Health Champions.

The award winners were: Dr Paresh Vamanrao Dave, Government of Gujarat; Mahan Trust, Maharashtra; and SEARCH, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra for sustained contribution to public health. In the category of innovation, the awardees were Dr Bindeshwar Pathak, Sulabh International and Sangath, Goa.

Amongst other stakeholders and dignitaries, present on the occasion were Mr Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW); Mr Shripad Naik, Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare and Minister of State (IC), AYUSH; Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (IC), Prime Minister Office, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space; Mr B.P.Sharma, Secretary, MoHFW; Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Secretary, Department of Health Research & Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), MoHFW; Mr K B Agarwal, Additional Secretary, MoHFW; Dr Arun Panda, Additional Secretary, MoHFW; Mr C.K. Mishra, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, National Health Mission, MoHFW; Dr Jagdish Prasad, Director General Health Services; Mr Anshu Prakash, Joint Secretary, MoHFW and Dr Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India.

Highlighting the importance of the public health champions awards, Dr Henk Bekedam, WHO Representative to India said, "Public health is key to improving people's health. The individuals and organizations who toil hard to bring about impactful, innovative and sustainable changes in this field are often unsung heroes. These awards are our attempt to bridge this gap and recognize the talented individuals and organizations in public health. We do hope that the Public Health Champions awards will encourage others to emulate them."

The rationale for recognizing public health champions is to honour efforts of both, individual(s) and institution(s) who have made an outstanding contribution to public health through advocacy for and involvement in impactful health policies and programmes with proven public health achievements and substantial improvement in equitable health outcomes in the country.

The awards comprise two categories: sustained contribution to the field of public health, and innovation. The scope of the awards covers contributions to significant advances in population and person focused services and inter-sectoral actions. In addition, contributions that have assisted WHO in performing any one of its six core functions are taken into consideration.