

Dr. Rani Bang



Dr. Rani Bang's work in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra has changed the face of health care in this area. She showed that her new approach, the Home-based Newborn and Child Care (HBNCC) could reduce the infant mortality to the level of 30 from the baseline of 121. She raised a movement that resulted in liquor ban in the district. Where healthcare was once non-existent, there are now a tribal-friendly hospital, experienced health workers in villages, and trained traditional birth attendants. By using rigorous research methods, she showed that her new approach, the Home-based Newborn and Child Care (HBNCC) could reduce the infant mortality to the level of 30 from the baseline of 121. In 1990, the couple raised a movement for liquor ban in Gadchiroli district. The movement resulted in liquor ban in the district in year 1992, being the first example in India of liquor ban due to public demand. They have received 53 awards – international, national, state and private, including the gold medal of the Indian Council of Medical Research, 'Maharashtra Bhushan' the highest award in the state and the 'Global Health Heroes' by the TIME magazine.

Dr Rukmini Rao



Rukmini Rao is the Executive Director of the Centre for World Solidarity (CWS) and on the Boards of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Gramya Resource Centre for Women. She also was a founding member and worked for many years with Saheli (Saheli Women's resource Centre) in Delhi. She has invested over 40-odd years in the women's movement. During her extensive work in Delhi in the mid-80s, Rukmini along with her autonomous group, Saheli helped bring in changes to 12 laws, including the 498A on domestic violence and the law against pornography. Rukmini moved to Hyderabad in 1989 and worked with the Deccan Development Society, to bring awareness regarding feminist issues and for land rights and access to credit for underprivileged women, including Dalit and adivasi women. Rukmini also helped in exposing the sale of baby girls being trafficked for adoption in the State. In recent years she has also been involved with Watershed Development Programs to ensure women have access and control to common property resources such as land and water.

She is an activist promoting women's rights, child rights. Rukmini campaigned to stop dowry deaths. she founded Saheli to provide a safe place for women. It worked to bring about new legislation to promote women's rights (change in rape law, anti-sati legislation, Section 498A recognizing domestic violence for the first time). At Gramya, she is working to prevent female feticide and infanticide.

Chetna Gala Sinha



An economist, farmer and activist, Chetna Sinha works for social change in some of the poorest and most drought-stricken areas of rural India. Chetna went on to develop India's first rural co-operative bank owned by women. The Mann Deshi Mahila Bank, a micro-enterprise development bank, works with low-income women and provides business loans. She also established a B-school for rural women that provides training in entrepreneurial skills. Since 1996, Sinha has been organizing women in rural areas of Maharashtra in the fight for the land and housing property rights and launched a community radio station, providing a valuable platform for information sharing and creative self-expression. Chetna is also behind the unique new "Mann Deshi Chamber of Commerce with toll free number" initiative and "Finance Company" for rural women. Mann Deshi aims to launch one million rural women entrepreneurs through partnerships with social enterprises and mainline financial institutions in India. Taking into account Chetna's great contribution to the holistic cause of female empowerment, India's Ministry of Women and Child Development has nominated Chetna as a member of the Governing Board (GB) of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK). She was also named India Social Entrepreneur of the Year for her work with Mann Deshi and in 2014, was named a Schwab Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year.

Dr. Chhavi Rajawat

Sarpanch, Village Soda



She is India's first woman Sarpanch with an MBA degree. Chaavi was successful in providing regular supply of drinking water to drought hit region, felicitating the construction of many roads to connect Soda with the main roads and other villages. She was diligent in pursuing issues such as lack of proper sanitation, use of solar electricity and independent operation of a Water Conservation Project.

Binalakshmi Nepram



She is a humanitarian, author, female activist in advocacy of gender-rights and women led disarmament movements with the objective of arresting the gun culture and bring about peace in northeast India. She established many institutions such as the Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI), Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN), Manipur, and Secretary General Control Arms Foundation Of India (CAFI).

Manjula Pradeep



Manjula fought fearlessly for the justice of several Dalit women who were victims of gang rape and sexual trafficking. She is the Executive director of Navsarjan- an organisation dedicated to empower Dalits. As a lawyer she continues to train several Dalit activists, defending cases of sexual violence and providing legal support to caste-based issues. Manjula is an epitome of inspiration, having spent her entire life fighting for the rights of Dalit women in India without losing hope.

Ajeet Singh



He began the fight against sex – trafficking and child prostitution. Guria-his organization has developed a successful strategy to create & sustain the first ever child prostitution free red-light area at Varanasi. Ajeet has adopted a holistic approach to revert power balance & end slavery within brothels, through activities like opposing bails of traffickers, protection of witnesses and seizure of brothels.