

International Gandhi Award for Leprosy

1 Background of the Award

World over Gandhiji is acclaimed as apostle of both truth and non-violence. We in our own country hail him as the Father of Nation for freeing the country from Britishers. However, it is sad thing we have forgotten the values he preached and the life style he practiced. Most important contribution made by Gandhiji was in the matter of Khadi and several other constructive programmes. After Gandhiji's death Gandhi Smarak Nidhi was established with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its Chairman and they focused on 18 constructive programmes and created Institutions and Organizations for each such programmes. Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation is one such institutions. The political leaders of our freedom movement were also committed to the constructive programmes given by Gandhiji. One would well imagine how busy and pre-occupied would have been India's first Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and yet 8 days before he died in December 1950, he established Gandhi memorial Leprosy Foundation with Sushila Nayar as its first Secretary. Such was their commitment to their master.

Several Noble people and missionaries all over the world and in India have made supreme sacrifice to work for the cause of Leprosy patients. All of us are aware of the compassion and courage of the Mahatma when he decided to serve the Leprosy patient Shri Parchure Shastri in Sewagram Ashram and serve him against the objections of some of the Ashramites. At that time, the only method to deal with the disease was to isolate the leprosy patients in Leprosy Homes or Asylums. GMLF envisaged identification of leprosy patients in a fixed geographic area, followed by domiciliary treatment with dapsone. Rigorous health education was carried out to explain the true facts about leprosy. The programme known as SET (Survey, Education and

Treatment) was first started at Sewagram in 1952 by GMLF and subsequently replicated in 12 other centres of GMLF in different States. The same was adopted in National Leprosy Control programme & was recognized by WHO.

To commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's service and scientific approach towards leprosy, Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation instituted an award* for presentation to individuals/institutions making outstanding contribution in leprosy field resulting in the amelioration of the suffering of leprosy patients and enabling them to lead normal life. The name of the award is INTERNATIONAL GANDHI AWARD.

2 Year of Commencement

The first International Gandhi Award was presented in the year 1986 by the Hon'able President of India Shri Giani Zail Singh.

3 Frequency of the Award

Initially it was decided to present the Award once in 2 years.

4 Number of awards

At the inception of the award, the number of awardees has been two, selected either from individuals or institutions fulfilling the eligibility criteria for the Award.

5. Components of the award

The award consists of a medallion, a citation and a cash prize of Rs 2 lakhs to each Awardee.

6. Criteria of eligibility for the Award

The Award will be given to a leprosy worker/leprosy institution having worked for a period of not less than ten years and having made significant

contribution to improve the quality of life of leprosy affected persons and helping them to lead normal and useful life in the society.

The Award is open to medical, paramedical or non-medical and social workers in leprosy field. The candidate has to be nominated by a person of prominence in the field of leprosy. Post-humus nominations will not be accepted.

In-service staff & Committee members of GMLF as well as those who retired within a period of 5 years prior to the year of the Award are not eligible for nomination for this Award.

7. Selection procedure

The selection procedure has the following stages:

7.1 Sending circulars and inviting nominations

Circular letters are sent to National and International NGOs working in leprosy, Health Directorates of Central & State Governments, Embassies of different countries in India, and leprosy journals to invite nominations for International Gandhi Award.

7.2 Scrutiny of Nominations by Panel of Experts

The nominations received by Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation are referred to members of an International Panel of Experts nominated by GMLF Committee for each award. The members of the panel will not nominate any individual/institution/or any member of the panel, for this Award. Each member of the Panel assigns to each nominee a score in the scale of 1 to 30.

The members individually communicate their scoring to the Director/Secretary of GMLF. The Director, who is also the Convener/Secretary of the Sub-Committee, constituted by GMLF Committee (Managing Committee) convenes a meeting of the Sub-Committee. The members of the sub-committee peruse the recommendations of the members of the expert panel and propose a shortlist of 3 names in order of priority.

7.3 Selection of the Awardee by the Award Committee

The Award Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Hon'able Vice-President of India, meets to consider and finalise the names of the Awardees, in order of priority.

The Award Committee for IGA consists of the following members :

1. The Hon'able Vice-President of India : Chairman
2. Chairman, GMLF : Vice-Chairman
3. Minister of Finance : Member
4. Minister of External Affairs : Member
5. Minister for Information and Broadcasting : Member
6. Minister for Health & Family Welfare : Member
7. Minister for Social Welfare : Member
8. Dy. Dir. Gen. of Health Services (Lep.) : Member

- 9. Vice-Chairman, GMLF : Member
- 10. Director, GMLF : Convener/Member

8 Intimation to the Awardee

The GMLF informs the awardee of his/her selection. In case the awardee is unwilling to accept the award, the second person in order of merit will be contacted.

**LIST OF INTERNATIONAL GANDHI AWARD RECIPIENTS SINCE
INCEPTION**

Year	Name of Awardee]
1986	Dr.Dharmendra, India Dr (Mrs) Turkan Saylan, Turkey
1988	Dr Ma Hai De, China Prof. T.N.Jagadisan, India
1990	Dr R.V.Wardekar, India Dr M.F. Lechat, Belgium
1992	Dato E.J. Lawrence, Kuala Lumpur Mr.RogerGaudry Quebec (On behalf of Late Cardinal Paul)
1994	Dr Joon Lew, South Korea Dr V.Ekambaram, India
1996	Ms. Jean M. Watson, U.K. Dr S.K.Noordeen, India
1998	Mrs.Mathilde Gruner, Germany Dr S.D.Gokhale, India
2000	Mr.Mengestu, Ethiopia (on behalf of ALERT Ethiopia) Dr K.V.Des ikan , India
2003	Dr H.Srinivasan, India
2006	Mr.YoheiSasakawa, Japan
2009	Dr V. Pannikar, India Vidarbha MaharogiSewa Mandal, Tapovan, India
2011	DR Claire Vellut, Belgium DR J.D.Samant, India
2013	Dr.V.V.Dongre Professor Zhang Guocheng (China)

2015	Dr R K Mutatkar Dr Arturo C Cunanan (Philippines)
2017	Dr M D Gupte Dr Atul Shah
2019	Dr N S Dharamshaktu The Leprosy Mission Trust (India)
2021	Dr Bhushan Kumar Sahyog Kushtha Yagna Trust Sabarkantha, Gujarat