

**YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN NATIONAL AWARD
FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION, DEMOCRATIC VALUES OR,
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

CITATION

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, a paediatrician, globally recognized for her research on tuberculosis and HIV, is a socio-medical luminary who has the distinction of being the first Chief Scientist of World Health Organisation. She has straddled national and international arenas in health research and management with effortless grace and professionalism of the highest order.

Born to Dr. M. S. Swaminathan and Mrs. Mina Swaminathan in erstwhile Madras, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan had the proverbial “Big Boots” to fill, for her illustrious father is none other than the legendary agronomist and agricultural scientist who has earned the sobriquet “Father of the Green Revolution in India”.

She made sure-footed strides in her quest for excellence earning her MBBS from the hallowed portals of the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune. She followed it up with a M.D. in paediatrics from The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. She is also a Diplomate of National Board from the National Board of Exams. She capped her already envious academic accomplishments with a post-doctoral medical fellowship in neonatology and paediatric pulmonology at the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles under the aegis of the Keck School of Medicine.

In her early days, she was a research fellow in the department of paediatric respiratory diseases at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. Thereafter she worked as a senior research officer, Cardiopulmonary Medicine Unit, as well as an adjunct associate clinical professor at the Department of Public Health and Family Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine in Massachusetts.

Dr. Swaminathan joined the National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis in 1992 as a coordinator for “Neglected Tropical Diseases”. She rose to be the director of the NIRT and remained with them till 2013. In the interim period of 2009 to 2011 she was appointed the coordinator of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Geneva. From 2015 to 2017, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan was Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Secretary of the Department of Health Research (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) for the Government of India.

From 2017 to 2019 Dr. Soumya Swaminathan was the Deputy Director General of the World Health Organisation. In 2019 she was elevated to the position of Chief Scientist of WHO and played a pivotal role during the Covid 19 pandemic. She was instrumental in urging nations to conduct whole genome sequencing of the SARS-CoV-2 virus more frequently and to upload sequences to the GISAID platform, the world's largest public-domain repository of COVID-19 sequences, thus facilitating genomic epidemiology and real-time surveillance to monitor the emergence of new COVID-19 viral strains across the planet.

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan’s areas of focus are paediatric and adult tuberculosis, epidemiology and pathogenesis, and the role of nutrition in HIV-associated Tuberculosis. She is one of the pioneers in the use of molecular diagnostics for TB surveillance and care. She was part of the TB Zero City Project which aimed to create “Islands of elimination” working with local governments, institutions and grassroots associations. In 2021 she was also appointed to the “Pandemic Preparedness Partnership” group to advise the G7 presidency.

In her journey from a research fellow to the exalted position of the Chief Scientist of The World Health Organisation, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan has won myriad accolades on the way. She has been conferred the “Lifetime Achievement Award” by the Indian Association of Applied Microbiologists, the “Kshanika Oration Award” by the Indian Council of Medical Research, the “Dr. Keya Lahiri Gold Medal” for best paper at the XIth National Paediatric Pulmonary Conference, the “AstraZeneca Research Endowment Award” by the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research and the “Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Award”. She is also a fellow of the prestigious Indian Academy of Paediatrics, the National Academy of Sciences India, the Indian National Science Academy and the Indian Academy of Sciences. She was also elected Foreign Fellow of the US National Academy of Medicine as well as the Academy of Medical Sciences of the UK . She has a vast body of research papers and publications to her credit.

In view of her sterling achievements, Yashwantrao Chavan Centre is proud to confer the much coveted Yashwantrao Chavan National Award for the year 2023 to Dr. Soumya Swaminathan for her yeoman service to medicine in particular and mankind in general.



Sharad Pawar
President

Mumbai
12th March 2024

Yashwantrao Chavan Centre, Mumbai