



# Building social sector alliance to realise health - Advocacy



## Building social sector alliance to realise health for all through Networking, campaigns, support to movements and coalition building

SOCHARA believes in networking, creating critical mass, solidarity, coalition building, supporting like-minded networks and movements since coming together across sectors is necessary for achieving health for all. SOCHARA played an important role in building People's Health Movement (PHM) at global level, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA) at national level and Makkal Nalavazhvu Iyakkam (MNI) at the state level. SOCHARA - CEU provides support to MNI constituents and activities taken up by the movement. MNI has given responsibility to SOCHARA to host the secretariat and to coordinate its activities. SOCHARA-CEU also plays an important role in MNI's national body, JSA, through National Coordination Committee of JSA.

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## Advocacy for People Centred Policy

**Southern Regional Public Hearing on Right to Health - 2004:** SOCHARA was organised the public hearing on Denial of Right to Health Care in all the five southern states as a part of nation-wide advocacy done by JSA along with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). In Tamil Nadu SOCHARA worked with MNI constituents to mobilise testimonies across Tamil Nadu and to organise the southern regional hearing at St. Thomas Mount.

**Tamil Nadu State Health Assembly – 2007:** The team played a key role in mobilising communities and organising the Second State level People's Health assembly in Chennai with 250 participants from all over Tamil Nadu. The thematic sessions helped to discuss problems experienced by marginalized communities with the existing system, policy and governance.

**Campaign for people centric National Health Bill – 2010:** Following the launch of national level campaign in 2010 for implementing the National Health Bill, SOCHARA team and MNI were involved in analysing the draft bill and raising awareness among various groups and communities. A workshop was also organized in Trichy to sensitize civil society groups on the issues of the National Health Bill.

**Campaign on people centred policy for Universal Health (UHC) – 2012 to till date:** JSA took multiple initiatives to make a people centered Universal Health Care scheme promised

in 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. SOCHARA team had taken various initiatives in Tamil Nadu and at the national level to strengthen JSA's position on this issue.

In 2013, MNI organised a meeting for civil society groups in Trichy to get their opinion on the draft UHC plan prepared by Planning Commission of India. Based on those discussions, the team along with MNI members met parliamentarians, Mr.T.K. Rangarajan and Mr.Mythreyan and briefed them about the need for a people centred UHC and not a market based one.

A SOCHARA team member wrote an Op-Ed in "THE HINDU" newspaper on this issue along with Dr. Abhay Shukla, National Coordination Committee Member of JSA. SOCHARA also hosted the secretariat of Medico Friends Circle (MFC), which took UHC as theme for the Annual meet in 2012 and the team contributed to an article in the MFC bulletin.

The team supported a national level seminar on UHC organised by Tamil Nadu Health Development Association (TNHDA) in which one of the team members is a part of the Executive Committee. SOCHARA developed a concept note on UHC for the conference and mobilised delegates.

**Peoples Health Manifesto – 2014:** MNI with the support of SOCHARA team facilitated village community and civil society meetings to collect opinions and demands regarding health and health care services. The team travelled to 17 districts of the state to facilitate discussion among people, elected representatives, civil society organisations and Village Health Water Sanitation and Nutrition Committees members to elicit the demands of the people. Nearly 1300 people were consulted who aired their needs and demands.



Few of the demands included 24 X 7 availability of doctor with at least one lady doctor, emergency care and adequate infrastructure to stay near PHC; ensuring functioning of sub centre; evening OPD in PHC; quality post natal care; free medical service without bribe and proper treatment with dignity. Since people demanded a ban on alcohol shops MNI demanded to declare alcohol as a public health emergency. It also stressed for adequate scope for community participation and strengthening of people's health committees and regulating private sector. The report was released through media for wider dissemination to people of Tamil Nadu. At the same time SOCHARA team members also participated in the national level people's health manifesto discussion held in Delhi in March 2014. SOCHARA-CEU also submitted the national and state level demands to the higher officials of the state public health system.

### **Fact finding visit to Dharmapuri**

MNI did a fact finding of the recent neo-natal deaths in Dharmapuri Government Medical College Hospital. A team of MNI members visited mothers of the victims, the hospital, and also interviewed people and health system personnel. SOCHARA team supported the fact finding along with other MNI members. The report will be made public shortly.