

**National Convention
on
“Medical Education and Strengthening of Public Health Care Services”**

Concept Note:

Background:

The developments in health policy over the last few years have been a major concern to all those working for health rights and health equity. As in many other areas of the economy and as also with most public services, the current neo-liberal policies of the government are based on the assumption that the best way forward is to allow market forces to take over, and re-define the role of the government as enabling private corporate sector in all segments of the economy.

Even though the post- independence Indian state has always favored the development of the private sector, it also understood the importance of the public sector. Within areas like health and education it was understood that the commanding role is to be played by public services. The policy shifts of the last decade have more or less completely undermined this understanding. However the last decade also shows the tremendous limitations of this approach as the quality of education and healthcare plummets, and more and more of the population are pushed into financial distress due to the high costs associated with access to both education and healthcare.

Three recent policy initiatives under the current government are a) the Ayushman Bharat program, (b) the National Medical Commission Bill and (c) the push for PPPs where entire district hospitals or specific services within hospitals, medical colleges and even networks of primary level healthcare are outsourced. What is the experience with these programs? How are these initiatives being promoted and perceived within the profession and amongst the public? Part of the approach to manufacturing consent for these programs is to point to the declining proportion of care provided by public services, and serious issues of quality of care. But then neither is more investment forthcoming, nor are there any serious efforts at innovations to improve the barriers that limit the performance of public services. There is also little evidence that the barriers to access and quality of care faced by public health services are overcome by its privatization. Rather they worsen. What are the alternatives that peoples science movements and peoples health movements should call for? What can be done to shape the public understanding of these issues?

Another major issue that the convention would address is the lack of progress that the country is making towards fulfilling its international and national obligations to achieve health as a fundamental human right. This question is closely related to the larger political economy and prevailing ideology of the day. Given today's context how can peoples science movements and peoples health movements keep this agenda alive and push forward on it?

The AIPSN Sub-committee on Health, a constituent of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, is organizing this National Convention at Sundarayya Vignana Kendra, Hyderabad on December 21- 22 of this year to discuss these issues and chart the way forward for the science movement to respond to these challenges- and to do so in partnership with Jan Swasthya Abhiyan. This convention is a part of a series of National Conventions proposed by the All India Peoples Science Network, to build public understanding on a wide range of recent developments in policy that threaten India's public services, federal structure and secular ethos.

Objectives:

1. To understand the current context and recent policy developments in Medical Education, including National Medical Commission; the Allied Healthcare Professionals Regulation Bill, and the implementation of a single national NEET and NEXT examination for health equity and health rights.
2. To understand the barriers to effective performance by public health systems across the country, and the urgent measures needed to save and strengthen public health services.
3. To understand the extent to which the governments Ayushman Bharat and PPP initiatives have addressed, or failed to address the main barriers to access and financial protection that have characterized healthcare in India, and frame the peoples response to these schemes.
4. To note recent trends towards Right to Health and Healthcare, and discuss how peoples science movements and peoples health movements can contribute towards taking forward the achievement of right to healthcare services that is built around a core of effective high quality public health services.

Each of the technical sessions shall begin with the brief presentation of one background paper, followed by a panel discussion; and then either small group discussions or an interactive discussion in the plenary itself.

The panel discussions will have a number of eminent leaders in the health sector as well as activists responding to the background paper.

Organizing Secretary: Mr. A. Suresh, Convenor, Health Sub-committee, JVV
Telangana, Hyderabad. M-9959966211

AIPSN Health Desk

T. Gargeya - gargayatelakapalli@gmail.com; 9948971353

T. Sundararaman- sundar2016@gmail.com

Indranil Mukhopadhyay- indranil.jnu@gmail.com