



MakkalNalavazhvuyakkam

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Association for India's Development
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Catholic Health Association Tamilnadu
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Democratic Youth Federation of India
DHVANI, Dharmapuri.
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Tamilnadu Health Development Forum
Tamilnadu Medical Sales Representatives
Association
Tamilnadu Science Forum
TNFORCES
TamilnaduState Social Service Society
Tamilnadu Voluntary Health Association
Voluntary Health Association-Kanyakumari
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TAMILNADU PEOPLES HEALTH MANIFESTO forLok-sabha Elections2014

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During the year 2004, 2009 general elections Jan SwasthyaAbhiyan – JSA (Peoples Health Movement – India chapter) released Peoples Health Manifesto. Subsequently JSA had also released the manifesto this year to demand the regional and national political parties to give serious attention to the health demands of the people. The MakkalNalavazhviyakkam – MNI (Tamilnadu chapter of JSA) had released Peoples Health Manifestos in 2009 general election and 2011state election with state specific demands, to improve the health ofTamilnadu People. The people's Health Manifesto is released this year also on behalf of JSA with both national level demands and state specific demands. The Manifesto urges the political parties to seriously consider these demands and request the people to urge these demands to their candidates before and after election. These demands were collected through multiple meetings with people, village level health committee members, elected representatives, health staff, civil society members and academicians.

SPECIFIC DEMANDS IN TAMIL NADU

There is no doubt that the health system in Tamil Nadu is one of the best functioning health systems in the country and innovations in the health system are recognized as best practicesacross the country. The health indices calculated every year definitely bear this out. However it is to be clearly understood that the overall achievements in the field of health are due to the overall socio-economic-political development and the contribution of the health system towards this is only partial.

During the last few years the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) had allotted more funds to the sector and the development is visible at the Primary Health Centre level. However these developments are broadly restricted to Mother and Child health care and left the other necessity services without due care. Hence a developed health system like Tamilnadu will need to address the health of the people in a comprehensive way.

Based on the opinion collected from people we would like to highlight the following points specific to TamilNadu including the points highlighted in the national manifesto.,

⌘ **Need of drastic improvement in health care services of the government hospitals – Ensure the availability of doctors round the clock in PHC:** Tamilnadu had declared all the Primary Health Centres (PHC) as 24 * 7 PHCs but practically it is not. Apart from Out-Patient service timing it merely caters service to the women accessing for normal delivery and they are inturn managed by fresh nursing graduates. Due to the non-feasible target fixed for institutional deliveries in Government hospitals, the un trained nurses in PHCs are forced to keep the mother till the last minute of the delivery and increases the chances of maternal death. The non-availability of doctors during deliveries adding complex to the issue which lead to late referral to the higher institutions by the staff nurses and put the mother and child's life at risk. Hence people have put forth their demand to post minimum of three doctors in PHC to service 24 * 7 and one of them should be a lady doctor, and there should not be cross deputation of these doctors for other duty. The government should provide all the amenities and facilities for the health staff to stay in and around PHCs in order to avail services from the doctor and take necessary steps to retain them in their villages.

⌘ **Emergency care should be available round the clock** in all the government hospitals (including treatment facility for snake bite in PHCs) and the patients should be attended by Doctors. Adequate measures to be built to ensure the doctors presence during emergency care. The government needs to regulate private practices by government doctors which affect the effective functioning of the government hospitals including doctor presence at the time of OPD, emergency care. The unregulated private practices by government doctors also leading to referring patients into their own clinic. Hence we demand strict action by the government to regulate the private practices by the government doctors.

Ensure the functioning of evening OPD in Primary Health Centres: Across the state evening outpatient services in PHC is almost not functional. The health department authorities are not taking strict measures to ensure the evening OPDs in Tamilnadu. This is one of the important demands of the people across the state.

Ensure the functioning of the sub centres: Most of the sub centers across the state are almost nonfunctional. Government measures to run the sub centres are not at all adequate hence the people are compelled to access PHCs or untrained local health care personals for their health care need which results in out of pocket expenses and put their life at risk. We demand the government to run the sub centers with adequate facilities and man power.

Improve post natal care: While most of the women are accessing the Government hospitals for ante natal care the community level studies shows that post natal care services are not given adequate importance by the health system. Since quality post natal care is important factor to reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate, We urge the government to give enough attention to improve the quality of the post natal care services in Tamilnadu.

Multi-disciplinary team at PHC: The developed health system like Tamilnadu should address the health of the people in comprehensive way hence a Multidisciplinary team at PHC level to address the physical and psychological health of the community especially the most vulnerable section like women and adolescent should be established. Adequate attention need to be given to the issues of mental health, Geriatric care, person with disability, migrants, occupational related health care services and Non communicable diseases in comprehensive way.

Corruption and bribe is a persistent and pervasive issue. The people of Tamilnadu are hesitating to access to Government health care services especially in secondary and tertiary health care institutions because of rampant existence of culture of bribe. The demand of bribe ranges from services provided by frontline medical personnel, asking patient to buy syringes and medicines from outside of the hospital, a percentage from monetary benefit schemes, money to tell sex of the new born baby etc. but also corruption in forms such as doctors referring patients to their own private practice etc., need to be curbed with stringent action.

Stop all forms of Privatization: While the public health sector is being strengthened and improved over the years, much more need to be done to reach the services to really need people. Privatisation policy of the government has reflected in many of its services including,

- ✓ Rerouting public money to private hospitals in the name of insurance schemes,
- ✓ Outsourcing important services such as ambulances, x ray facilities and health data management
- ✓ Running of separate private wards in the Government General Hospitals
- ✓ Recruiting health staff without holding the reservation policy, contractual posting etc.,

Hence we demand, All types of privatisation in Tamilnadu should be stopped immediately, instead the funds should be routed to Government hospitals to strengthen it and to cater services to all section of the population, for all services at free of cost. The contractual posts in all the categories of the health sector should be stopped and permanent posts should be created. *Social justice should be protected in all possible ways* and should not be compromised in the name of efficiency hence we demand the Government to follow the reservation policy in all the appointments of the health care.

Regulate Private Health Care providers and **enactstate specific Clinical establishment act with patient's rights:** While we demand strengthening of public health sector, we do not see private health sector as an alternative. We demand strict regulation of private health sector, with great amount of transparency in regulation of charges collected for services, public display of charges and procedures followed in each hospital. We also demand enacting Tamilnadu specific clinical establishment acts with great focus on protecting patient's rights in all private hospitals.

Ensure adequate Community Participation at all levels of health system functions:From the point of health rights of the people, the community has every right to monitor the health system, planning for themselves and take corrective action in order to avail quality health care. The NRHM has provided space for community to take part in health activities in their own villages / territory. However in Tamilnadu, people are not allowed to question and take part in the health system activities, Hence, we demand

Commitment of the system to create institutional arrangements to involve the people in all levels of decision making, implementing and monitoring as well as putting in place adequate redressal mechanisms in Tamilnadu.

Expansion of the Village Health and Sanitation Committee to include a majority of community representatives within the group, with 50% being women and representatives from each hamlet and caste as per the national guidelines. Recognition of the Revenue village as the level of formation of village health committees as well as the granting of untied funds at revenue village level rather than the present panchayat level model. People's need have to be collected to do village level health plans and the state health plan should be formed based on this.

The Patient Welfare Society functions should be made transparent with adequate participation of elected representatives and ensure it address the need of the people effectively.

- ⌘ All over Tamilnadu the people opined that in the government hospital the Patients should be treated as an equal stake holder of the system and they should be treated with dignity and human touch. While we understand the lack of human resources is one of the reasons of burnout of the health staff in government hospitals, Government need to increase the doctors; patients and paramedics; patients ratio to maintain the quality of health care services.

Health determinants:As health movement we are equally concerned about the factors determining the health of the people. The issues such as providing rations in PDS throughout the month, public toilets in all villages with proper facilities and maintenance, adequate transport to rural hamlets to reach hospitals, exclusive ambulances to tribal areas and requirement of huge improvement in ICDS centers in order to provide holistic development to the children enrolled in the centre should be adequately addressed.

Alcohol free TamilNadu: One of the most important demands from all section of the community is to abolish alcohol from Tamilnadu. The alcohol consumption by men has disrupted many families in the state and it causes irreparable damage to women and girl children of the family which lead to drop out from education and affected their mental health. The people demand that the Government providing and promoting TASMAL should be banned immediately. *Alcoholism should be considered as Public health emergency*, and immediate attention should be given to address the need of the people.