

Transcript of talk by Dr. Maya Valecha at the World Council for Health meeting

Covid episode is a big eye opener. And our group started studying, apart from truth about Covid and the measures taken, role of the healthcare system including the role of pharma companies from the beginning were suspect. And more importantly, we wanted to go beyond the exposure of omissions and commissions. The solution, never again, were the upper most things in our mind.

I will explain in brief how the present system is beyond repair and total overhaul is required.

There is no denying the fact that the mess we are in today which was very apparent during Covid, is because the private profit-oriented mainly pharma companies have captured almost all institutions directly or indirectly. Majority of private practicing doctors, along with corporate hospitals are part of this nexus. This has converted health sector into a money minting machine not only hurting the pockets but also the health of the people.

Because we did not learn lessons from the Swine Flu episode, we had to face this Covid catastrophe, with much more collateral harm. European Council report which was covered by mainstream media as well as prestigious Journal like British medical journal, had highlighted the roll of Pharma Industry manipulating decisions by WHO and governments of many countries in creating fear mongering for a fake pandemic.

We also know how research funding by pharma industry or the front organizations, philanthropic organizations connected with them are manipulating research to create the need for unnecessary investigations, medicines and surgical interventions.

Even in a Nationalised Healthcare System, Dr Aseem Malhotra writes before 9 years in The Guardian.

Towards the end of last year, the UK Academy of Medical Royal Colleges reported that at least £2bn was [being wasted on unnecessary tests and treatment.](#)

Doctors are advised on pharmaceuticals by Nice, but this advice is often based on studies funded by the companies selling the drugs.

There was ministerial encouragement on Nice committees [to be more favourable to the drug and device industries](#). 71 coalition MPs have been linked to health firms set to profit from opening up more of the market within the NHS

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/01/nhs-drugs-companies-wasting-money-trials-nice>

The field is more open when doctors are in private practice.

pharma Marketing Influences Prescriptions Of 98% Doctors' | Ahmedabad News - Times of India

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/pharma-marketing-influences-prescriptions-of-98-doctors/articleshow/89081783.cms>

Medical representatives have revealed widespread use of bribes, including foreign trips, microwave ovens, expensive smartphones, jewellery and even women, by pharmaceutical companies even as the government drags its feet on a 2016 proposal to bring in a Uniform Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) "with ...29 Nov 2019

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/pharma-companies-offer-even-women-to-bribe-doctors-study/articleshow/72285147.cms>

JAMA:

New Research Finds U.S. Physicians Received Billions of Dollars from the Pharmaceutical & Medical Device Industry Over the Past Decade

“From 2013 to 2022, US physicians received \$12.1 billion from industry. More than half of physicians received at least 1 payment...93.8% of these payments were associated with 1 or more marketed medical products.

It cannot be different for most countries.

Research funding to institutions is also known to everybody. The apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, in India inks deal with US body, Gates Foundation for healthcare research

collaboration.

The Gates Foundation has become one of the most important funders of medical research. It has donated more than \$12 billion to universities and helped underwrite more than [thirty thousand articles](#).

<https://www.counterview.net/2024/04/bill-gates-as-funder-author-editor.html>

Regulatory authorities are also influenced in more than one way. Political influence through donations to political parties is one way and getting high salaried post in the same company whose drugs you authorised is another way.

Recently in the exposure because of a SC ruling, The companies producing substandard drugs donated huge amounts to political parties after they were raided or faced complains.

Petr Doshi in British Medical Journal has exposed how FDA officials got job in Moderna and that article gives many such examples of past.

After holding oversight roles for covid vaccines, two regulators from the US Food and Drug Administration went to work for Moderna.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/383/bmj.p2486>

Last but not the least is Media manipulation. And we have seen how mainstream media hypnotised the whole world with horror shows of Covid.

While studying the healthcare delivery system of few countries, it was obvious that system was more accessible and equitable wherever the system was nationalised. The lack of nationalisation of pharma industry and complete centralised, government control made them less rational and were more prone to become authoritarian systems as it happened during Covid.

Some countries, where pharma sector was nationalised in past, still more rational approach had come in practice that is before Covid. For example, whereas the other knowledge systems like Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Siddha, Naturopathy are neglected in India and banned in some countries, Traditional Chinese Medicine is taught to even MBBS students in China. 80% of even Covid patients were treated by TCM. These systems are less expensive, less invasive.

But privatization of pharma industry is affecting these erstwhile so-called socialist or communist countries and people's control on the system was never there.

Wherever there are two parallel systems of public and private healthcare delivery, public sector is neglected. Private sector plays major role in sabotaging the funding and functioning of the public sector. Most big corporate hospitals, even most middle level private hospitals, Pathology labs, other investigation units give commission to the referring doctor in India. That has created a nexus with all malpractice at the cost of patients. Corporate hospitals have target for number of investigations, surgeries and so on.

All this is beyond the ambit of law implementation agencies or any reform. In India political parties have a Doctors' cell to look after their benefits. That is why private ownership of pharma and health care system has to go.

The central theme of the draft proposal that I present and I am actively campaigning for this, and many people are getting convinced now, so, this draft has tried to correct these 3 major hurdles in the previously seen nationalised systems.

1. Pharma industry is the major villain in this downfall of healthcare system and that cannot remain in private hands, has to be nationalised. And a reverse role can be seen if the healthcare system remains in for profit private hands. (To produce particular products to enhance their unnecessary interventions)
2. Though the government will be funding the nationalised system, but that is public money and full control will be in the hands of people and health professionals' committees in a decentralised, transparent manner.
3. This will be achieved by people's movement and not from any executive order. Because that is the only way to get it at our own terms and conditions.

It has taken years to build up this chaos and will take few more years to achieve what we want. To start is important. Initially written with Indian situation in mind, with suitable changes the plan can be adopted by all the countries.

Because India has an existing chain of government health infrastructure from the Sub-Centers in villages, Primary Healthcare Centers, Community Healthcare Centers, then the the District Level Hospitals and Multi-specialty Hospitals. Similar infrastructure after takeover of all private facilities, with reasonable compensation at depreciated value of assets, can be created and existing ones can be strengthened.

Hospitals will be managed by a committee of doctors, paramedics and equal number of local area representatives elected solely for this purpose. The finances will be open for anybody to check and audit will be by people's committee.

There will be monthly public meetings at each hospital to resolve all the difficulties that the people face.

Feedback will be taken by feedback forms or online forms or suggestion boxes that will be opened during the meeting.

For India, services of all knowledge systems at all hospitals are demanded.

Even the pharmaceutical industry will be managed by public approval procedures. TV debates at allotted time and website information for introduction of drugs with all explanations, website for public opinion, opinion poll for selecting officials after showing their debates on TV. These things will evolve as we experience the results. Might seem like a utopia right now because we have never tried to implement participatory democracy, but once people realise the things do run as per their suggestions, people will take part and give meaningful suggestions.

Basically, once the profit motive is out, the incentive to rationalise will definitely come. I know, where from the corruption can arise even after this, but in a transparent, vocal system, this will lead to nationalisation of other allied industries under public scrutiny. It will be a continuous, dynamic, permanently evolving system.

Another argument is always about funding. Those who agree for the system proposed ask, where do we get the money for all this? For India, a calculation done by a very prominent economist suggests that only 1% wealth tax and inheritance tax on Super rich, is enough to fund not only healthcare but education, old age and disabled people welfare schemes, too.

How to go about? Start with small steps. Establish people's control on public hospitals, where they are. Ask for free and quality healthcare there. During the movement, it will be clear that without nationalisation it is not possible. Because the role of private sector in keeping the public sector behind is always

there in all the fields. Theoretical preparation for expenses everything for each country will have to be worked out by sympathetic experts in those countries.

So, this is in short, how we visualise a future healthcare system rationalised and under public control.