

# Swadeshi Jagaran Manch

“Dharamakshetra, Sector-8, R.K. Puram, New Delhi  
Ph. 011-26184595, Web: [www.swadeshionline.in](http://www.swadeshionline.in)

13-07-2018

## Press Release

### **Review working of International NGOs like BMGF and GHS for conflict of interest and pursuing commercial interests in India's health sector**

New Delhi. Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, demands that all state governments and central government must review the working of the international NGOs active in their respective jurisdictions.

Many of these NGOs, such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, or BMGF, Global Health Strategies, or GHS, Programme for Appropriate Technology for Health, or PATH are already facing the allegations of conflict of interests and promoting the interests of certain pharmaceutical companies manufacturing 'contentious' vaccines.

To note a few, the department of financial services is investigating the appointment of the BMGF's national head on the board of Reserve Bank of India, or RBI. The RBI is also a regulator to monitor foreign funds. Serious charges of conflict of interest of a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Health, appointment on a panel of GHS have been reported. The same Joint Secretary was responsible for the National Immunisation Programme and GHS has been lobbying for use of vaccines such as the HPV vaccine. Obviously, questions are raised about the influence of the Pharma giants on the National Immunisation Program. The track record of GHS is also not clean. The Parliament's Standing Committee on Health in 2013 observed serious lapses on part of PATH in taking informed consent of parents, the process of taking regulatory clearances as well as conflict of interest of the NGO with certain quarters of the Government. The Committee had also recommended strict action against the NGO. But nine years hence, far from getting penalised, these individuals continue to work freely with the Government of India influencing our policies and programs as they did a decade ago.

There are reports that these organisations, through direct and indirect representatives, consultants and public policy professionals are pushing their agendas in various states, to influence the health policy making. SJM has regularly been alerting the central government agencies of these outfits' ill-designs and in most of the cases the agencies started reviewing their role thereafter.

SJM also noted that these NGOs, along with their subsidiaries and affiliates are actively lobbying with the state governments to meet their end goal, that too circumventing the laws of the land. It will be appropriate, if the state, as well as, central agencies issue advisories and immediately stop interacting with them. There is a strong case for reviewing their functioning and programmes these outfits run.

In last few years, these outfits have spread their wings in the states, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand etc. The erstwhile Akhilesh Yadav government in Uttar Pradesh signed MOU with BMGF, which operates through foreign organisations like University of Manitoba, Clinton Foundation et al in the state. The MOU is up for renewal. We demand from the Yogi Adityanath government to come up with a whitepaper on the progress of the understanding. There is an urgent need to take a relook and ensure Indian organisations are given due weightage. The BMGF also uses serving and retired IAS officers on high salaries for influence peddling.

BMGF works with different Union ministries, states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and premier research institutions like the ICMR. However, they have Cabinet approved MOU with only the Ministry of Women and Child Development. They have separate MOUs with Ministry of Urban Development. But, with others there is no MOU forget about Cabinet approved. Even ICMR relations where new vaccine introduction is critical there is no MOU.

**Dr. Ashwani Mahajan**

All India Co-convenor, SJM