

GHAR BACHAO GHAR BANAO ANDOLAN

Affiliated- NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

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Mumbai Update

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- ❖ **Protest by slum dwellers forces Bombay Municipal Corporation to roll back its decision of asking identity proofs like ration cards, electricity bills from the patients before availing health services at Municipal Hospital.**
- ❖ **Slum dwellers resolve to fight back every such discriminatory policy of State to protect their rights, not let Mumbai be transformed into a den of capitalists.**

Opposing the recent move of Bombay Municipal Corporation of asking identity proofs like ration cards, electricity bills from the patients before availing health services at Municipal Hospitals, more than 200 members of Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan assembled at Azad Maidain today. Thereafter a delegation of the Andolan met Sh. Kishore Gazbiye, Asst. Municipal Commissioner (Health) and expressed its opposition to the proposal. Hearing the opinion of the delegation members, Asst. Municipal Comm. declared that the BMC will be shelving off the idea of insisting documentary proofs in order to avail health services at Municipal Hospitals.

Andolan has been of the view that insisting upon documentary proofs would have been discriminatory and ultra-vires of the provisions of our Constitution. While Article 15 of our Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste sex or place of birth, BMC proposed to discriminate on the basis of one's place of birth. Further, the Constitution guarantees its citizens Right to Life under Article 21. Right to Life means the right to lead meaningful, complete and dignified life. It does not have restricted meaning. It is something more than surviving or animal existence. Right to life guaranteed by the constitution has been interpreted by the Indian Supreme Court to include the right to health. This implies that citizens of India have the right to health regardless of sex, creed, caste, religion or region.

The proposal was also in tune with the discrimination that the working class of Mumbai has to face today in the context of transforming Mumbai as a 'World Class City' and a Global Financial Centre. As per the available information city has only 37,369 beds for its population of 1 crore plus and out of this only 11,000 belong to the BMC. this means that the bed availability per person is a meagre .003. The last hospital that was built by BMC was in 1998 inspite of the fact that the budgetary allocation for health for 2008-09 was Rs 1,500 crores. The delegation also demanded that the existing services should be augmented and improved. A city cannot claim to be a world class city if it is not even able to provide health services to its residents.

At the Dharna site slum dwellers condemned the fact that how State, in nexus with Builders/Corporates was snatching away every inch from land, every drop of water & every single food grain from them, which they would fight tooth and nail. The dharna ended with a self-congratulatory note and a resolve to take the struggle for transforming Mumbai, not into a global city, but an inclusive one.

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