

The 19th round of negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) took place at Hyderabad, India between 24th and 28th of July.

RCEP is a free trade agreement between 16 countries of Asia and Australia. The agreement is a secretive agreement with no official public release of the negotiating text or of the discussions. Discussions do not involve the voice of citizens of the countries. However, leaked documents from 2015 have been able to provide an overview of the proposed treaty.



The discussions and proposals in RCEP would be disastrous for citizens of the involved countries and would benefit transnational companies. In the context of health, amendments in RCEP will make medicines and healthcare unaffordable and inaccessible. If agreed upon, agreement would adversely impact manufacturing of generic medicines and jeopardize access to medicines not just in the region but also across the world.

The RCEP's mandate also supports the privatization of essential services like healthcare. Investor state Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanisms -- a part of the proposed treaty -- can be used by Transnational corporations to take countries to court for taking decisions that could be in interest of the public's health but would stand against corporate interests. Similarly provisions that would remove regulation of private sector and curtail the public sector are part of the proposals in RCEP..

The Peoples Health Movement along with many likeminded organisations took part in protests, workshops and a convention against the trade agreement and voiced its support to defend the right of people. PHM also believes that the larger issues of inequality and the failure of trade agreements, and neoliberal policies in addressing global issues needs to be dealt by peoples movements while addressing particular issues such as RCEP. Click [here](#) to watch video clips and read articles on the anti RCEP activities held in Hyderabad.



