

# Research for Development of Equitable Health Systems

Why an Equitable Health System is Essential to Improve the Health of the Poor or Otherwise Marginalised

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# Key Messages

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- Need for further research on comprehensive primary health care to achieve Health for All (PHC)
- Analyse world wide experience of PHC (including grey literature and non English sources)
- Urgent need for further research especially in
  - a) Community Capacity for Health
  - b) Inter-sectoral Action for Health, addressing underlying health determinants at various levels
  - c) Strengthening Health Systems - relevance and response
- Invest greater resources in multidisciplinary and participatory research; action research; policy analysis with a political economy perspective.

# New Research Partners

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- Communities
- Health staff including front line Implementers
- Elected Representatives
- Special groups particularly those socially excluded.
- People's participation in health research as subjects and not objects will help bring positive changes in the health system and in addressing the social determinants of health.

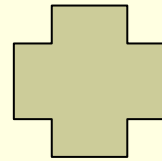
# People's Tribunals and Health Watches in India



## New partnerships for research

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- **Government**
- **Academics**
- **Industry**
- **International health agencies**



- **Civil societies and NGOs**
- **Consumer organisations**
- **Peoples organisations**
- **Communities**

**To strengthen evidence, advocacy and action**

## Promoting new types of research

### *Not only*

**Drug and vaccine trials**  
**Epidemiological studies**  
**Operations research**

### *But also*

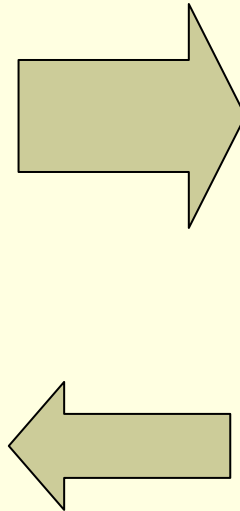
**Health policy studies**  
**Health systems research**  
**Research on social determinants**  
**and political economy of health**

# New Research Paradigm

Approach	Biomedical deterministic research	Participatory social/ community research
<b>Focus</b>	Individual	Community
<b>Dimensions</b>	Physical / pathological	Psycho- social, cultural, economic, political, ecological
<b>Technology</b>	Drugs / vaccines	Education and social processes
<b>Type of service</b>	Providing/ Dependence creating / Social marketing	Enabling / Empowering and Autonomy Building
<b>Link with people</b>	Patient as passive beneficiary	Community as active Participant
<b>Research</b>	Molecular biology Pharmaco – therapeutics Clinical Epidemiology	Socio – epidemiology Social determinants Health Systems Social Policy

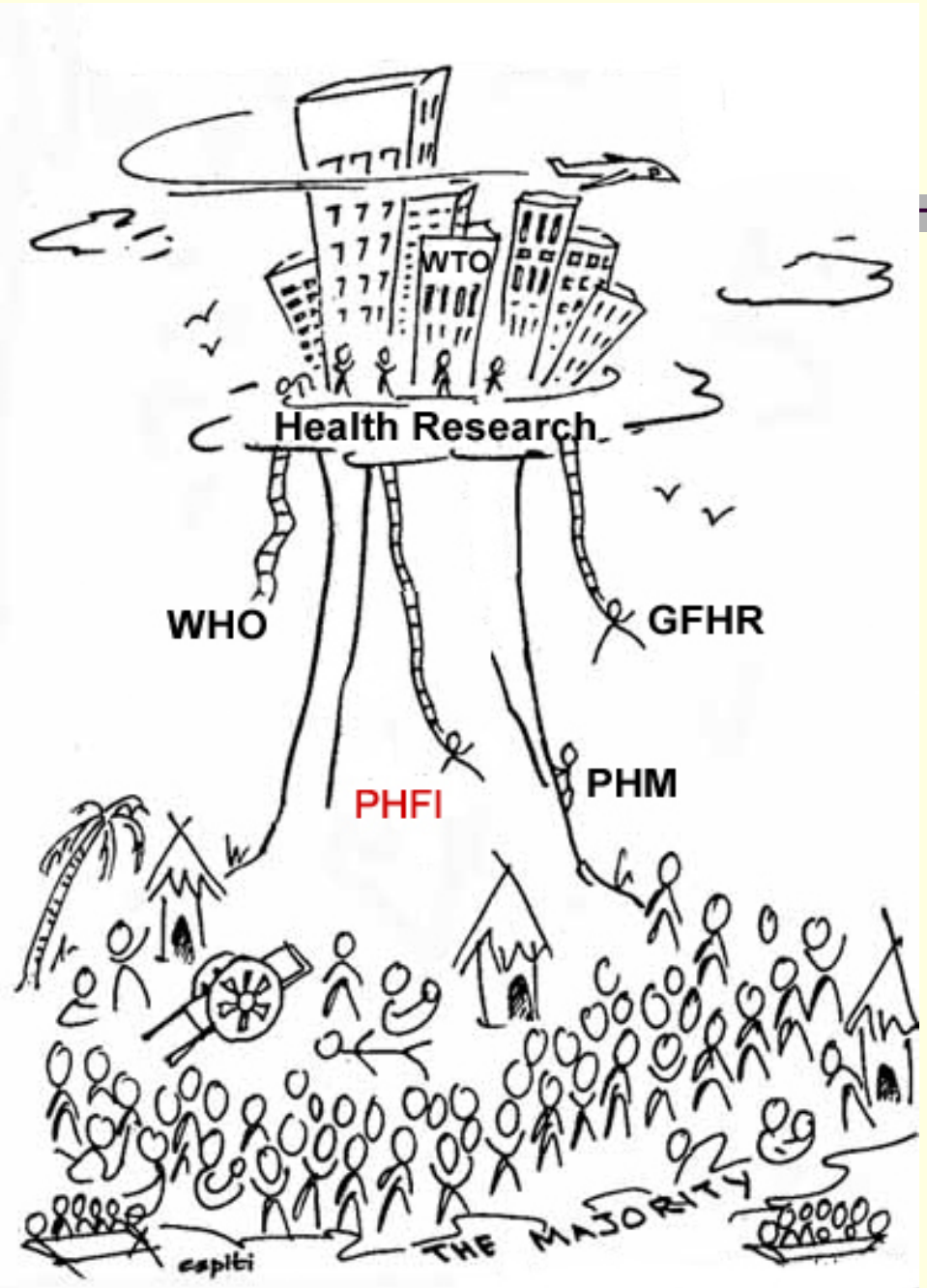
## A Plea for Balance

- **Molecular Biology**
- **Clinical Trials**
- **Vaccine Trials**
- **Immunology**
- **Biotechnology**
- **Genomic Imprinting**
- **Stem Cell Research**



- **Socio Epidemiology**
- **KAP Studies**
- **Policy Studies**
- **Behavioral Sciences Research**
- **Political Economy Studies**
- **Participatory Research**

**Translating research into policy, advocacy and action to strengthen health systems & accountability**



# Understanding the social determinants of health

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- **Surface level issues**
- Only clinical manifestation & treatment ?
- Only epidemiological risk factors ?
- Only techno-managerial approaches ?
- **Deeper determinants and dynamics**
- Social?
- Economic?
- Cultural?
- Political?
- Structural?
- Non linear, either or approach

# *Understanding new PHC Action focus in the context of the social determinants of health*

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What is the focus of health action  
and of research? Should there be more balance?

**Disease and its treatment ?  
Ill health?**

Or tackling health determinants like

**Poverty? Globalization and its health impacts?  
Gender bias?  
Conflict?  
Stigma?  
Social exclusion?  
Health Systems?  
Indigenous systems of health and healing?**

# The Way Ahead

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- Greater Community Control and Ownership of Research could help in bringing about a Paradigm shift in research so that it serves the need of the social majority, and not predominant class and corporate interests.
- Participation in research agenda setting.
- Participation in research governance.
- Participation in research ethics.
- Participation in analysis and interpretation.
- Developing research methods measuring health equity.

# The Social Relevance & Community Orientation of Research – a key question.



Source: Community Health Cell