

**Do not promote Charlatanism and ignore Precious Human Lives**  
**(Statement from Doctors engaged in Flood Relief Public Health Activities in Kerala)**

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This is an appeal to Medha Patkar, Aruna Roy and others who have come out in support of Mr Jacob Vadakkanchery who has been legally proceeded against by the Kerala Government after repeated requests from socially conscious public health activists..

Jacob Vadakkanchery is not a crusader against the commercialization and exploitation of the medical establishment. He is a charlatan who spreads canards about Public Health programs like immunization. And he does this to further his commercial interests as a leading dispenser of quackery. Jacob Vadakkanchery runs hospitals named "Nature Life Hospital" in various cities, without any professional training or qualification in any branch of medicine. He treats patients for diseases ranging from heart disease to cancer without any qualification whatsoever to do so; sometimes with disastrous results. He has been punished by the Consumer Redressal Forum, Kozhikode following the death of a patient treated in this centre.

More dangerously, he actively campaigns against the public health system with lies and half-truths as the main weapons. One of his early targets has been the immunization programme. He has propagated that vaccines are fatal poisons and that modern medicine doctors never vaccinate their children. Many young doctors had to come out with live videos of their children being vaccinated to counter this. He has held that blood transfusion is dangerous and should never be resorted to. He has alleged that polio, diphtheria and rubella vaccines are dangerous and constitute a conspiracy by the doctors and pharma companies against the people. The vaccination rates dropped in some of the northern districts where this type of campaign was at its height. Cases of diphtheria reappeared, and a few children died. When doctors and health workers were desperately trying to fight this re-emergence, he accused that vaccines are an international conspiracy to sterilize children and decrease population! It was at this time that many young doctors and public health activists raised the demand that he should be legally proceeded against. It was not the medical establishment but groups of young activist doctors like the Info-Clinic Facebook group and organisations like KSSP that raised this demand.

During the Nipah epidemic when doctors, nurses and health workers were risking their lives to contain the disease and public caution and quarantine were the chief means at their disposal, he declared that there is nothing such as the Nipah virus and the whole thing was a hoax.

After the floods, there has been a spate of epidemic leptospirosis cases with many deaths. The only feasible short term prophylactic measure has been Doxycycline therapy, to be used in conjunction with other measures like cleaning up, chlorination and such other measures, being done by thousands of young volunteers. Most of the deaths so far have been in people who were exposed to risk factors but did not take the prophylactic as advised. Jacob Vadakkanchery has campaigned against the drug saying that it is a poison, misinterpreting and quoting wrongly about the side effects given in pharmacology textbooks.

We request you to please judge for yourselves the serious consequences of his actions and whether creating scare and panic in desperate epidemic situations constitutes fight against Global Pharma. It is under these circumstances that he has been arrested and remanded to judicial custody. It is at best to be regarded as a judicial quarantine. The man has been restrained so that his unscientific tirade against lifesaving prophylaxis and treatment can be prevented till the crisis blows over. What is more important is that he be held accountable for his mala fide actions like any other citizen and not protected by anyone bringing in extraneous pressure.

By no logic can the arrest and detaining of Jacob Vadakkanchery be construed as a denial of the democratic right of citizens for dissent. After the heaviest rains and flooding of the century, there is every possibility of explosive epidemics killing people in large numbers. The government and health activists are working overtime educating people on the importance of precautionary measures like personal and social hygiene, waste disposal, sanitation, safe drinking water, vector control and other prophylactic measures accepted all over the world. Permitting a well-known charlatan who has already done immense damage to the health of people to campaign against prophylactic drug therapy may have disastrous results. No democratic government can permit risking people's lives in such manner.

We believe that the way to good health can only be achieved by good, humane and precise science, especially in a developing country. At the same time, we are in solidarity with all those fighting forces that exploit technologies of modern medicine for unreasonable profit. But this fight should in no way include the promotion of charlatanism.

Signed: Thiruvananthauram September, 12, 2018

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3. V. Ramankutty (Professor and Head, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies)
4. Babu K V (Health Activist)
5. P K Jameela (Consultant Aadram Mission, Former Director of Health Services)
6. Saiju Hameed (State Convenor, Alliance of Doctors for Ethics in Health, and Superintendent, District Hospital, Kollam)
7. AK Jayasree, (Professor, Community Medicine, ACME,
8. K Vijayakumar (Professor, Community Medicine, AIMS, Kochi)
9. S. Santhosh Kumar (Vice President, South Asia, Medicins Sans Frontiers, Deputy Super)
10. Mohammed Asheel (Director, Kerala Social Security Mission and former Nodal Officer, Endosulfan Rehabilitation Cell)
11. V.G. Pradeep Kumar (Consultant Neurologist, Baby Memorial Hospital)
12. K.R. Thankappan (Emeritus Professor, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies)
13. Sairu Philip (Professor of Community Medicine, Vice Principal Medical College, Alapuzha)
14. Biju Soman (Professor, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies)
15. T Jayakrishnan (Professor of Community Medicine, Medical College, Kozhikode)
16. Jimmy Mathew (Professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, AIMS, Kochi)

17. Midhun Siddharthan (Convenor, Health committee, KSSP)
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  26. Nelson Joseph (Info clinic)
  27. Shimna Aziz (Info clinic)
  28. Jithin T Joseph (Info clinic)
  29. Kiran Narayanan (Info clinic)
  30. Jamal T M (Info clinic)
  31. Shahul Ameen (Editor, Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine.)
  32. Jimmy Mathew (Prof. Dept of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, AIMS, Kochi)
  33. Mohamed Abdullatheef TK
  34. Javed Anees
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  39. Manu Muraleedharan
  40. Anand S Manjeri
  41. Arun Mangalath
  42. Sree Jitha
  43. Jithesh Krishnan K A
  44. Viswanathan K
  45. Divya Birenjith
  46. Sunil P K
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  48. Ladeeda Rayya (Medical Student)
  49. Bebeto Timothy
  50. Rani Jancy A R
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