

Universal Health Care Campaign

Health care is both a right and a necessity if informal workers are to emerge from poverty and move towards self-reliance. Health expenditure is a major reason for indebtedness and continuing poverty. India has one of the highest out-of-pocket expenditures in the world. At the same time the investments in public health have been insufficient. SEWA's experience of organising for health shows that informal women workers, if trained, are committed and competent front-line health workers. They can reach care to people's doorsteps, saving valuable time and money. They also ensure inclusion of all, especially the most vulnerable. Primary health care is most needed with the back-up of secondary and tertiary care. These experiences on the ground led SEWA to contribute actively to policy-making on public health, and especially on universal health care.

SEWA is now leading a national campaign on universal health care with a worker's lens. We have found that while universal health care is essential for workers, some aspects of it like occupational health are left out. SEWA is both building up a grassroots campaign and also working for policy action for universal health care at the state, national and global levels.