



Jagdish Patel is the main force behind the Peoples Training and Research Centre (PTRC), an innovative grassroots OHS advocacy group in the state of Gujarat in India. Without his tireless work, creative strategies, and dedication, the workers of Gujarat would have almost no access to health and safety information and services. Gujarat, in western India, is heavily industrialized, with millions employed in desperately unsafe and unhealthy conditions. A fifth of India's "major accident hazard" facilities are in the state. In the face of non-existent health and safety services, information, and compensation for workers, 20 years ago a group of workplace safety activists formed Vyavsayik Swasthya Suraksha Mandal (VSSM) - the Gujarat equivalent of the US COSH movement. And in 1992, they opened PTRC, a mixture of OHS advice center, training and advocacy organization, and roving clinic.

PTRC recognized from the outset the need to support struggles taken up by workers. It works with local communities and union activists to identify problems, provide help for those afflicted with work-related ill-health, and to press for workplace improvements and access to occupational health services. A major role of PTRC is to train shop floor union activists in their legal rights and in identifying H&S problems and solutions. PTRC's exhibit, 'Our body, our work', has toured the region raising awareness of OHS issues. It runs "diagnosis camps" and clinics in the community where workers get medical check-ups and advice on compensation, state benefits, workplace safety law, hazards, and safer work methods. They have uncovered problems including chrome ulcers among chemical factory workers and an epidemic of silicosis among gem workers. It also publishes a newsletter, and does HIV/AIDS prevention education for workers and in schools.

PTRC currently is the Secretariat for the 'Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims' (ANROAV).