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News: India TB Report 2024

- Recently, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** released the **India TB Report 2024**, which highlights that the mortality rate due to Tuberculosis (TB) had declined from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022.

Key Highlights of the Report

Trends in TB Cases and Deaths

- The **majority of the TB cases** are still reported by the government health centres, even as there has been an uptick in notifications by the private sector.
- Nearly **33% or 8.4 lakh** of the 25.5 lakh cases reported in 2023 came from the private sector.
- To compare, **only 1.9 lakh cases** were reported by the private sector in 2015, the year considered to be the baseline by the programme that is geared towards the elimination of the disease.
- The **estimated incidence of TB in 2023** increased slightly to 27.8 lakh from the previous year's estimate of 27.4 lakh.
- The **mortality due to the infection** remained the same at 3.2 lakh.

- India's TB mortality dropped from 4.94 lakhs in 2021 to 3.31 lakhs in 2022.
- India reached its 2023 target of initiating treatment in 95% of patients diagnosed with the infection.

Challenges in Meeting Targets

- Despite setting ambitious goals to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025, India has faced challenges in meeting these targets.
- The number of cases and deaths recorded in 2023 fell short of the targets set by the country.
- There are various risk factors that contribute to the incidence and treatment outcomes of tuberculosis.
- These include Undernourishment, HIV, Diabetes, Alcohol Use, and smoking.

Undernourishment

- Nearly 7.44 lakh TB patients were undernourished in 2022. To improve nutrition, the government provides monthly support of Rs 500 to nearly one crore beneficiaries.
- Other than that, the Ni-kshay Mitra programme calls for the donation of food baskets.

HIV

- People living with HIV have a 20-times higher risk of developing symptoms of TB as compared to the normal population. Altogether 94,000 TB patients in 2022 had HIV.

Diabetes

- Of the 3.70 lakh TB patients with diabetes globally in 2022, 1.02 lakh were in India as per estimates.
- Diabetes escalates the likelihood of contracting TB two-to-threefold, which in turn is linked to increased risk of Multi-Drug Resistant TB.
- The TB treatment also does not work as well in diabetics. Nearly 92% of TB patients were screened for diabetes in 2023, with 7.7% being diagnosed with it. And, nearly 63% of those diagnosed initiated diabetes treatment as per the report.

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

- A daily intake of more than 50 ml of alcohol increases the risk of TB infection, active infection and recurrence of infection.
- Around 18.8 lakh or 74% of TB patients underwent alcohol use screening, out of which 7.1% were identified as alcohol users.

- In 2023, around 19.1 lakh or 75% of TB patients were screened for tobacco use, of whom 11% were identified as tobacco users.
- And 32% of these people were linked to tobacco cessation services.

Tuberculosis

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by **bacteria** (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) that most often **affect the lungs**.
- TB is spread from **person to person through the air**.
- When **people with TB cough, sneeze, or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air**.
- Symptoms are **cough with sputum and blood at times, chest pains, weakness, weight loss, fever, and night sweats**.
- TB is a **treatable and curable disease**.
- It is treated with a **standard 6-month course of 4 antimicrobial drugs** that are provided with information, supervision, and support to the patient by a health worker or trained volunteer.
- Anti-TB medicines have been used for decades and strains that are resistant to 1 or more of the medicines have been documented in every country surveyed.

- **Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB)** is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to isoniazid and rifampicin, the 2 most powerful, first-line anti-TB drugs. MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using second-line drugs.
- **Extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB)** is a more serious form of MDR-TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to the most effective second-line anti-TB drugs, often leaving patients without any further treatment options.
- **India is committed to eliminating tuberculosis from the country by 2025**, five years ahead of the global target by the World Health Organisation (WHO) i.e., 2030.
- To align with the ambitious goal, the programme has been renamed from the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) to **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)**.
- Recently, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has launched the annual **Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2021**.

Tuberculosis Cases in India

- India has the largest caseload, 2.8 million tuberculosis patients, across the world. It accounts for 27% of the world's TB cases.

- People living with **HIV are the most vulnerable among all those TB patient** groups which have other comorbidities (rate of death). Hence, the World Health Organization lays social emphasis (through awareness programs) on them.
- India accounts for **9% of all HIV-associated TB deaths in the world, the second-highest number globally.**
- India **reported a case fatality ratio of 12%, indicating that 12% of TB cases in the country resulted in death.**
- A total of **92,000 HIV-associated TB patients were recorded on an annual basis.**
- Awareness among TB patients about their HIV status has gone up to 81% from 67%.
- The other such group is patients suffering from diabetes. According to the report, **20% of all TB cases in India also suffer from diabetes.**

Government Initiatives

- **Nikshay Ecosystem:** It is a **National TB information system which acts as one-stop solution to manage the information of patients** and monitor program activity & performance across the country.
- **Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY):** NYP scheme was launched with the **aim of providing financial support to TB patients** for their nutrition.

- **TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign:** This campaign was launched in September 2019 with the highest level of commitment to eliminate TB.
- **Saksham Project:** This project was launched by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to provide psychosocial counselling to Drug resistant-TB patients.
- Based on the score in **State TB Index, Himachal Pradesh was the top performing state for tuberculosis control under the category of states with 50 lakh population.**
- **Lakshadweep and Budgam district in Jammu and Kashmir were declared Tuberculosis free.**
- Recently, BRICS Virtual Summit hosted by India, decided to conduct a study on the **epidemiological impact and intersection of the COVID-19 and Tuberculosis pandemics in these countries.**