

Flagship Project

# The Tribal Tuberculosis Initiative



Fighting the spread and impact of tuberculosis among tribal communities in India



# The Tribal Tuberculosis Initiative



**Journey towards TB-Mukt Bharat**

## Overview

In fulfilment of the cherished goal of a “TB Mukta Bharat” (TB free India), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs have joined hands to improve the cascade of TB care and support services among tribal populations in India.

Tribal TB Initiative brings together multiple stakeholders with diverse capabilities required to tackle multi-dimensional issues prevalent in Tribal areas. Anamaya, The Tribal Health Collaborative, is one of the key partners overseeing the deployment of this initiative across 177 tribal districts of India.



**Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) signed a Joint Action Plan for Elimination of TB in October 2020. Following this agreement, Tribal TB Initiative was launched in March 2021.**

**India is committed to eliminating tuberculosis by the year 2025, five years ahead of the timeline for reaching the Global Goals.**

## Goal

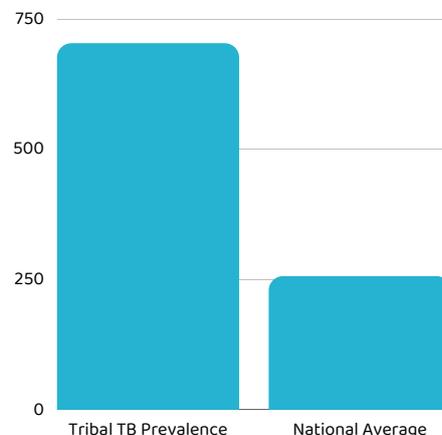
**This initiative aims to accelerate the reduction of mortality and morbidity from TB among tribal peoples in India**



## Why focus on combating TB among tribal communities?

### The burden

- **25%** of all tuberculosis cases across the globe. is from India, the highest TB burden contributor in the world. [1]
- **10.4%** of all TB notified patients in India belongs to tribal communities. [2]



TB Prevalence among tribal peoples is 703 per 100,000 as opposed to the national average of 256 per 100,000. [3]

While the National TB Elimination Programme's (NTEP) efforts over the past few decades has shown commendable progress in India's fight against TB, achieving elimination by 2025 needs a more intensive and focused approach. Fighting TB from among the vulnerable and marginalised sections of the citizens is a crucial aspect of that approach.

There are over 104 million tribal people in the country belonging to 705 different tribes. Considering the evidence, it is needless to say that TB Mukt Bharat is not achievable unless we fight the spread and impact of this infection among tribal communities.

TB is not just a medical disease but also a result of multi-faced socio-economic problems. A cross-cutting, comprehensive, and multi-sectoral approach is the must take path to fight this infection. Convergent actions by various Ministries, private and not profit organisations, and civil societies enhance the possibilities to realise India's vision for 'ending TB with priority focus on TB hotspots of tribal areas. [4]



### References

[1] Global Tuberculosis Report 2020. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

[2] India TB Report, 2020

[3] Thomas BE, Adinarayanan S, Manogaran C, Swaminathan S. Pulmonary tuberculosis among tribals in India: A systematic review & meta-analysis. Indian J Med Res. 2015; 141:614-23

[4] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi. (2020, May) National Strategic Plan to End Tuberculosis in India 2020-2025.



## Strategic Roadmap

### Approach

Anamaya team will work with the Central TB Division and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to design and refine strategic solutions to improve screening, identification, and notification, of TB among tribal communities. Targeted efforts will be there to ensure better access and adherence to necessary treatment. The team will facilitate and provide oversight to the deployment of activities and campaigns designed under this initiative.

The activities will be embedded within the NTEP and other existing Government structures to ensure convergence across the national, state, and district levels. 146 districts will be supported through district and state-level teams while the remaining 15 districts will be supported through the National Technical Support Unit for Tribal TB.



The Tribal TB initiative will be implemented in 161 high TB burden districts out of the 177 tribal districts, as recognized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, spread across 18 states.



## Proposed Strategies

1. Foster community engagement by building partnerships with various community-based organizations and representative groups to design, curate, and plan the scale-up of behaviour change models to reduce the burden of TB. Following activities will be undertaken to achieve this:

- Raise community awareness of TB and TB treatment through ACSM activities through statutory committees, NGOs/CBOs/CSOs, Community Organizations in tribal areas E.g the Ho Mahasabha
- Recruit TB champions in Tribal areas from among successfully treated TB patients to create and lead peer support groups.
- Mobilize key community influencers in Tribal areas to raise awareness and demand for TB services among the community and representing their needs.



## Proposed Strategies

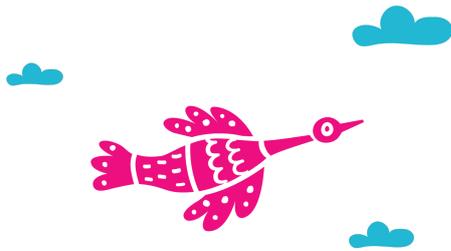
2. Strengthen health systems by facilitating interventions that increase diagnosis, notification, and the initiation of treatment and ensure treatment adherence and completion. The initiative will focus on building the capacity of the various functionaries across a range of skills that impact delivery of Health services. Building alignment within and amongst different ministries such as the MoHFW, MoTA and MoWCD is necessary as they all hold concurrent responsibility for delivering to different parts of public health. This will be done by:

- Facilitating development of Tribal specific District Action plans including private health facilities
- Enhancing inter-departmental and inter-sectoral convergence to address social determinants in the tribal population
- Increasing Active case finding and case notification in Tribal areas.
- Periodic vulnerability mapping with ACF during community gatherings like Haat bazaar, festivities will be facilitated through trained youth groups, TB Mitras and Volunteers in the community.
- Building Tribal population specific sensitivity of health personnel at all levels.



## Proposed Strategies

3. Support the development and deployment of technology-based interventions and then scale up through the PIP of the CTD and the States, to improve notification rates, diagnosis, data-sharing, and monitoring of the progress of the NTEP.



The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides technical assistance, strategic inputs, programmatic oversight, support in training and developing body of knowledge, specifically for Tribal TB initiative over and above the existing efforts to combat TB. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs guides with strategic inputs, monitors the progress, supports in building community-level linkages through the network of partner organisations, and helps in training and knowledge creation.





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