



Healing India:

Women of the
public health system

Anamaya

The Tribal Health Collaborative

Anamaya, the Tribal Health Collaborative is a multi-stakeholder collaborative committed to end preventable deaths among tribal and marginalised communities of India.

About 104 million tribal peoples (approx. 8.6% of India's population) live across the nation. Tribal and indigenous peoples across the globe choose to live close to and in solidarity with nature. They play a significant role in biodiversity conservation. A significant proportion of tribal communities in India also live in hilly, forested, and remote rural areas. Unfortunately, public health facilities in remote areas constantly struggle with lack of quality human resources, availability of drugs and equipment, inefficient process management, etc. Socio-cultural discriminations alienate tribal communities even further. High rates of morbidity, mortality, and malnutrition prevails in most tribal areas, especially in central India.

Improving the overall health and wellbeing of tribal communities is crucial to achieve India's commitment towards the Global Goals. The urgency, complexity, and the scale of the problem necessitates a consolidated and collaborative effort.

Anamaya is a unique multi-stakeholder entity committed to facilitate this effort consolidation.





Rekha Dagdu More

Gogapur

Nandurbar district, Maharashtra

ANM worker

Trust Triumphs in the Community

Across India, significant number of families from tribal communities reside in villages like Gogapur (Nandurbar dist.) in clusters on nearby hills. The remoteness of such communities offers protection to their economic and cultural life. At the same time, it also creates service delivery challenges. During the earlier waves of the pandemic, Gogapur did witness its community members contract the virus, with many people even requiring hospitalisation. A couple of older people also succumbed to the virus. It is believed that they suffered from comorbidities.

Despite the prevalence of COVID-19 within the community, most people were afraid of the idea of getting vaccinated. When ASHA and ANM workers tried to convince the community, they experienced frequent verbal abuse. The community was worried that the vaccine may kill them, cause impotence, or make their bodies weaker.

ASHA and ANM workers divided the responsibility of getting clusters vaccinated amongst themselves. When Rekha approached her designated cluster, she found that people were hiding in their homes. She spent time with each family to address their concerns, often citing the example of her own vaccination experience. She explained that it was normal for the body to experience symptoms after getting vaccinated for three days or so. She agreed that she would bear the responsibility should any person experience any negative side effects after taking the vaccine. Still unsure, community members started insisting that she sit by them while they got the vaccine shot.

Rekha obliged. Thus, Gogapur began its vaccination journey against COVID-19.





Yanung Jamoh Lego

Pasighat

East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh

Traditional healer

Herbal Queen of Pasighat

Yanung Jamoh Lego is a renowned traditional healer from Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh who has been providing care for free of cost for over 25 years. She is famously known as the 'Herbal Queen' of Pasighat.

Her knowledge of local herbs, flora, and fauna have attracted thousands of people from across India to seek treatment for varied ailments like diabetes, liver cirrhosis, lung disorders, skin diseases, snake and dog bites, gynecological disorders visit her to seek treatment.

The journey of becoming a healer has not been a cake walk for her. She was vehemently discouraged by her husband and even faced domestic abuse when she started providing healing services to people. Many doubted her abilities and often created hurdles out of fear or suspicion. But as people benefited from her remedies and consult, words started spreading.

To help preserve her knowledge, she partners with various organisations, conducts workshops on diversity and usage of Arunachali plants and herbs, provides training to caregivers from local tribal communities.



Herbal Queen of Pasighat

Recognising the need for economic empowerment, she has also encouraged and guided development of a few herbal villages around her centre. She is promoting small scale herbal farming through women SHGs, and there are three neighboring villages that have started herbal gardens and farms. She also works with local youth for sourcing and processing of herbal medicines.

Yanung aspires to make healthcare affordable and believes that it is attainable if knowledge about herbs are preserved and scientifically developed further.

The Honorable Health Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Alo Libang, once visited her clinic and commented in an interview for Echo of Arunachal that, “We are looking to making this traditional herbal treatment center more outreached so that all the ailments from various patients from the state and country are treated and cured”

She is happy to learn about Anamaya, the Tribal Health Collaborative and is keen on collaborating with us to work towards a healthier and happier Arunachal Pradesh.





Reshma Singh

Pati

Barwani district, Madhya Pradesh

TB Champion

Leading by Example: TB Survivor

Reshma, a resident of Pati block of Barwani district Madhya Pradesh, was diagnosed with Pulmonary Tuberculosis (TB) around a year ago after suffering from prolonged cough, fever, and significant loss of weight. She initiated her treatment following the advice she received at the government health facility where she was diagnosed.

She worked as a sanitation worker in the Panchayat bhavan in her village and her family significantly depended on her earnings. But the weakness caused by TB eventually made it impossible for her to continue working. Reshma, a mother of three children, felt devastated with the manifold challenges the disease brought with it. But she swam through the crisis and adhered to the treatment regime. She is now recuperated at present.

She has recently become a TB champion after her conversation with member of Anamaya, the Tribal Health Collaborative. She is helping others learn about the disease, alley the myths and fears associated with the same. She is encouraging people to be aware of the basic symptoms and opt for early screening. Recently, she referred a man with suggestive symptoms to Anamaya team. The team collected his sputum and the test confirmed his infection.

Reshma saved herself and her family by accessing and adhering to the treatment. Now, team Anamaya and Reshma are working together to save more lives from the impact of TB.





Yapi Molo

Dambuk

**Lower Dibang Valley district,
Arunachal Pradesh**

Paramedical Staff, Anamaya

Hurdles Never Stop Her

Yapi is a paramedical staff working with Anamaya as part of the team deploying the Aashwasan campaign. At the community level she creates awareness, along with TB screening, sputum collection from presumptive TB patients.

Arunachal Pradesh poses one of the hardest terrains of the Indian subcontinent. As a paramedic reaching out to the community means going to remote, far-flung areas in most areas of the Dambuk block at which at times even takes crossing two or more tributaries of rivers, and vast hilly terrain to reach small, scattered villages to conduct awareness on Covid-19, screening for TB, sputum collections along with mobilizers to the field level rigorously.

In many of these areas it is even difficult for vehicles to reach, so the only option is to take small boats or rafts whatever is available followed by a long way on foot. The additional challenge is that she is needed to reach these villages early in the morning for sputum collection else the villagers may leave their homes for agricultural work. It is an exemplary work she has undertaken and continued with zeal and resilience in this challenging situation.



Hurdles Never Stop Her

In one of the notable incidents, Yapi was on field duty along with the community mobilizer to sensitize the ASHA and villagers towards Tb and collect sputum. She had reached the remote Paglam village after crossing three ghats of the Sisiri river through boats.

After conducting the activities in the village, as per schedule, they returned to the vehicle after crossing the rivers. The rivers banks or the dry parts of the river in the non-rainy months are not plain and have heavy boulders. As soon as they boarded the vehicle, the vehicle got stuck in one of these boulders. Although she was tired from a long trip to the village, she released she had to act quickly else once the sun goes down finding help will be almost impossible. As Arunachal has an early sunset, something had to be done instead of waiting for help to come by.

Yapi did not let her hope dampen and started walking towards the main road to find help and after walking for over three kilometers or so she found a truck that was willing to tow their vehicle and was at last happy to find help. That day somehow, she managed to reach home by 8pm at night.

This is not only a story of grit and determination but also how Yapi is also breaking the stereotype around her that women are delicate.



Piramal Foundation

Piramal Foundation's vision is to transform Health, Education, Water and social sector ecosystems through partnerships, high impact solutions and thought leadership.

Aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, it partners with Central Government and State Governments, international and national organisations and academia to help improve the delivery of government services in line with its values of "Doing well and Doing good".

By focusing on the most marginalized groups within India, strengthening State's ability to deploy impactful initiatives, and engaging youth in nation building efforts, it has touched the lives of 100+ million Indians in the last 15 years.



