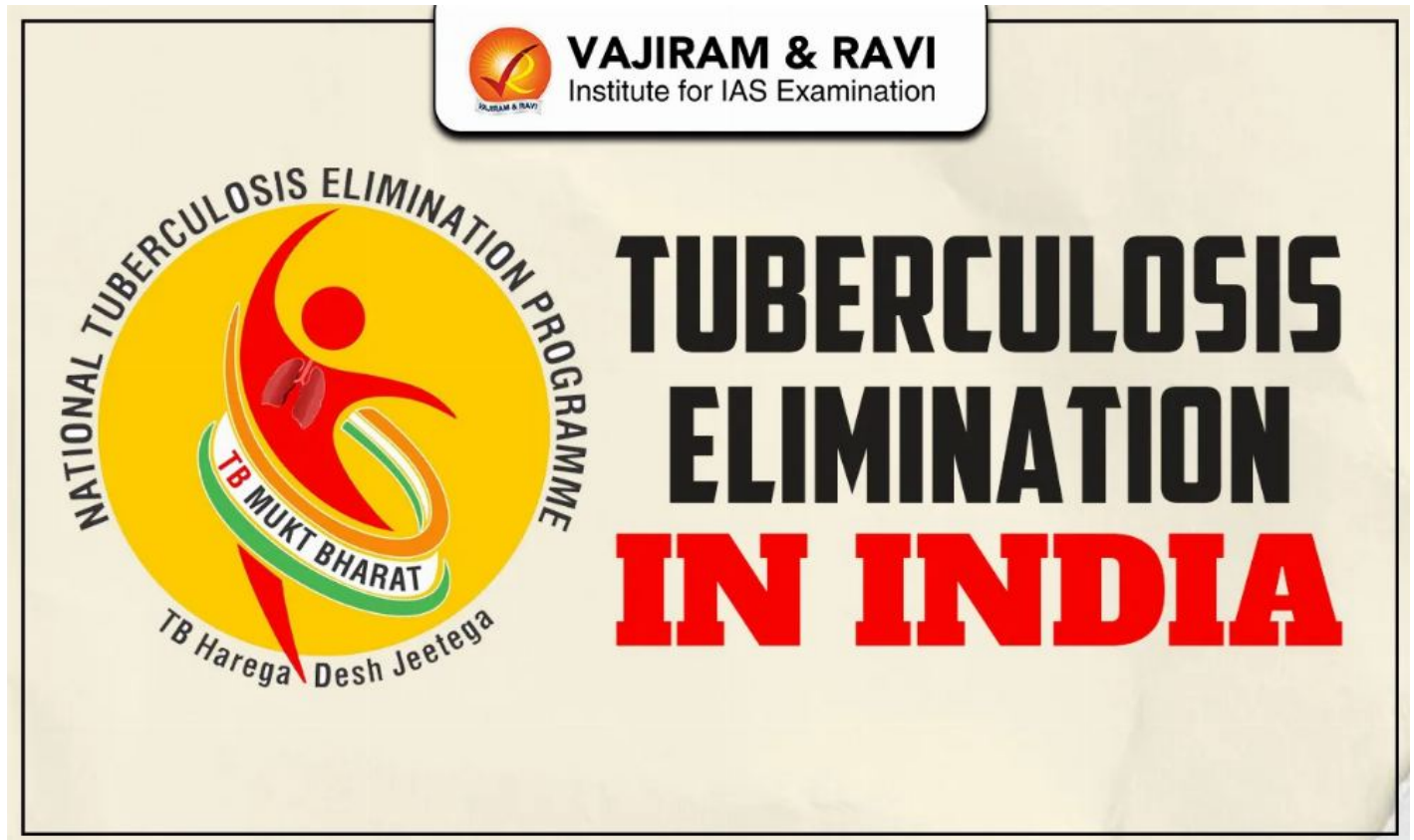


Tuberculosis Elimination in India, Causes, Transmission, Govt. Initiatives

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Tuberculosis (TB) is a major health challenge in India, affecting millions every year. The government is working to eliminate TB through programs like the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) and Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY), which provide free treatment, nutrition, and support to patients.

The **World Health Organization** (WHO) Global Tuberculosis Report 2025, released in November 2025, shows that global TB cases have decreased by 12% between 2015 and 2024, with India achieving an even **larger reduction of 21%** during the same period.

Causes and Transmission of Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called **Mycobacterium tuberculosis**. It mainly affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. The causes and transmission of Tuberculosis (TB) have been discussed below in detail.

Causes of Tuberculosis

- **Bacterium:** TB is caused by infection with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.
- **Weakened Immune System:** People with weak immunity, such as those with HIV, diabetes, cancer, malnutrition, or taking certain medications, are at higher risk for TB becoming active.
- **Environmental Factors:** Living or working in crowded places, like prisons, shelters, or healthcare facilities, increases exposure to TB bacteria.
- **Geographic Location:** TB is more common in some countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Travelers or immigrants from these regions have a higher risk of infection.

Transmission of Tuberculosis (TB)

- **Airborne Droplets:** The main way TB spreads is by breathing in droplets from an infected person's cough, sneeze, talk, or singing.
- **Active vs. Latent TB:** Only people with **active TB** in their lungs or throat can spread the bacteria. People with **latent TB** carry the bacteria but do not spread it.
- **Close Contact:** TB is more likely to spread to people you spend a lot of time with, such as family members or coworkers.
- **Not Spread By:** TB is **not** transmitted through handshakes, sharing food or drinks, or touching surfaces.

Government Initiatives for TB Elimination

The Indian government has launched several initiatives to fight tuberculosis, focusing on early detection, free treatment, nutrition support, and awareness.

- **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP):** Provides free diagnosis and treatment for all TB patients.
- **Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY):** Offers monthly financial and nutritional support to TB patients.
- **Ni-Kshay Mitra Initiative:** Encourages community and organizational support for TB patients.
- **Mass Screening Campaigns:** Detect TB cases early, especially in high-risk populations.
- **Focus on MDR-TB:** Special treatment and monitoring for drug-resistant TB cases.

National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)

The National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) is India's flagship program to eliminate TB by 2025. It focuses on early detection, free treatment, and monitoring of TB patients across the country.

- **Free Diagnosis and Treatment:** All TB patients receive medicines and tests at no cost.
- **Case Notification:** Both public and private health facilities report TB cases to track and monitor patients.
- **Advanced Diagnostics:** Uses molecular tests like CBNAAT and TrueNat for quick and accurate TB detection.
- **MDR-TB Treatment:** Special regimens are provided for multidrug-resistant TB; in 2023, **over 63,000 MDR-TB cases** were diagnosed.
- **Progress:** India has improved TB detection and treatment success, with **treatment coverage rising to around 85%** and TB incidence reducing by **21%** between 2015 and 2024.

Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY)

The Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) is a government scheme that provides financial and nutritional support to TB patients to help them recover faster. It ensures that patients have access to healthy food and the resources needed to complete their treatment successfully.

- **Monthly Support:** Each TB patient receives **₹1,000 per month** to buy nutritious food.
- **Direct Benefit:** Funds are transferred directly to the patient's bank account.
- **Community Support:** Through the **Ni-Kshay Mitra initiative**, individuals and organizations can provide additional help, such as food, counseling, or other support.
- **Focus on Recovery:** The scheme helps improve patients' health and treatment outcomes by addressing undernutrition, a major risk factor for TB.
- **Coverage:** Applies to all TB patients registered under the **National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)**.

Challenges in Tuberculosis Elimination in India

- **Undiagnosed Cases:** Many TB cases remain **undiagnosed or unreported**, especially in rural areas, slums, and among migrant populations.
- **Limited Healthcare Access:** Remote and underserved areas often **lack proper labs, diagnostic tools, and trained health workers**, causing delays in detection and treatment.
- **Drug-Resistant TB (MDR-TB):** Treating multidrug-resistant TB is **longer, costlier, and more complex**, with lower success rates.
- **Social and Economic Factors:** Poverty, malnutrition, lack of awareness, and stigma prevent people from seeking timely treatment.
- **Continuity of Care for Migrants:** Migrant workers and mobile populations may **not complete the full treatment**, increasing risk of relapse or drug resistance.
- **Private Sector Gaps:** Some private clinics **do not report TB cases**, creating gaps in monitoring and treatment follow-up.

Way Forward

- Expand healthcare access by increasing **labs and diagnostic facilities** like CBNAAT and TrueNat; currently, India has over **2,500 molecular testing sites**, but more are needed in rural and remote areas.
- Strengthen collaboration with the private sector, as around **40% of TB patients first visit private clinics**, ensuring proper reporting and treatment follow-up.
- Focus on **drug-resistant TB**, as over **63,000 MDR-TB cases** were diagnosed in 2023; rapid detection and adherence to treatment are essential.
- Raise awareness and reduce stigma, encouraging early diagnosis and complete treatment, with community campaigns already reaching **millions of people**.
- Target high-risk populations such as slum dwellers, migrants, tribal communities, and people with HIV or diabetes, ensuring active case-finding and continuous care to reduce transmission.