PROJECT AXSHYA

An overview of activities implemented by REACH in Tamil Nadu

Project Axshya (meaning "free of TB") funded by Global Fund Round 9, is a civil society initiative to strengthen TB care and Control in India. The principle recipients of the project are The Union and World Vision. Project Axshya aims to enhance access to quality assured TB services focusing on the vulnerable and marginalized (or 'at risk') populations and private healthcare providers in 285 districts including interventions in 40 urban sites.

REACH is a sub-recipient of The Union and the project has been implemented since 2010 in 14 districts of Tamil Nadu – namely Chennai, Thiruvallur, Kancheepuram, Vellore, Vilupuram, Cuddalore, Tiruvannamalai, Krishnagiri, Tanjore, Trichy, Madurai, Dindigul, Pudukottai, Thirunelveli – and is now in its Phase 4 in five TN districts.

REACH has worked with 38 NGOs and 75 Individual Volunteers to implement activities in the 14 districts of Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVES

- Enhancing access to quality TB care for vulnerable and marginalised populations through innovative and sustainable interventions, community participation and engagement of all healthcare providers.
- Expanding the reach, visibility and effectiveness of the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP), especially for marginalised & vulnerable populations

◆ Axshya SAMVAD

Axshya SAMVAD, which stands for **S**ensitization and **A**wareness in **M**arginalised and **V**ulnerable **A**reas of the **D**istrict is focussed on intensified outreach in vulnerable areas. This enhanced community-based case finding activity is carried out through house-to-house sensitization on TB

◆ Community Meetings

These meetings are held to address key populations like the village health committee, self-help groups (SHGs), youth groups and vulnerable and marginalized villages. Engaging means of sensitization include street theatre, wall paintings and other mass communication campaigns.

◆ Patient Charter sensitization

People with TB are sensitized about their rights and responsibilities during treatment by using a Patient Charter, making the relationship with health care providers a mutually beneficial one.

◆ TB forums

14 TB forums were constituted across Tamil Nadu. These forums acted as bridge between the community, person with TB, health system and civil society along with advocacy activities to influence policy changes for accessible, affordable, supportive TB care services. REACH also facilitated the formation of the **Tuberculosis Treatment and Care Network**, a registered society of more than 60 civil society organisations.

◆ Private Sector Engagement

The private sector (private practitioners, hospitals and labs) are sensitized on the Standards of TB Care in India (STCI) guidelines. Facilitation of TB case notification to the government was also done.

◆ Axshya KIOSK

For patient-centrerd care, these kiosks provide TB information, counselling and directly observed treatment services to patients and their families for their convenience in government and private hospitals and within spaces in the affected community

◆ Intervention in prisons

Sensitization programmes for prison inmates were conducted through prison intervention programs across districts
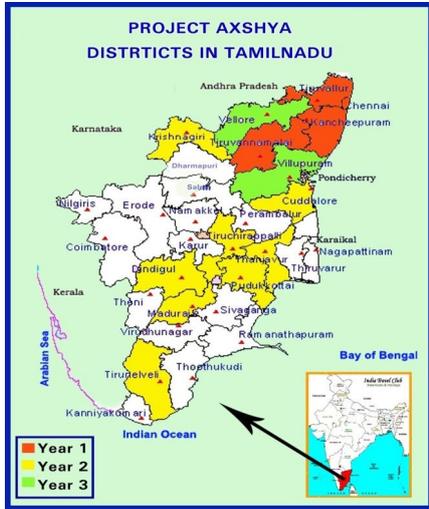

◆ Engaging Rural HealthCare Providers

Sensitizing and engaging Rural (alternate) Healthcare Providers (RHCPs) helped in facilitation of diagnosis and treatment of people with TB
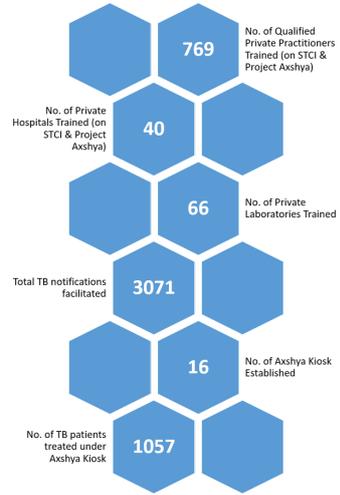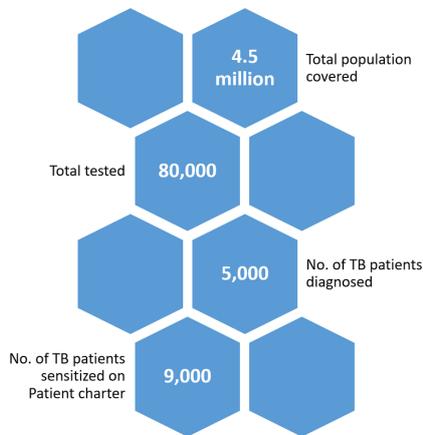
14 Districts of Tamil Nadu where Project Axshya was implemented

PROJECT AXSHYA
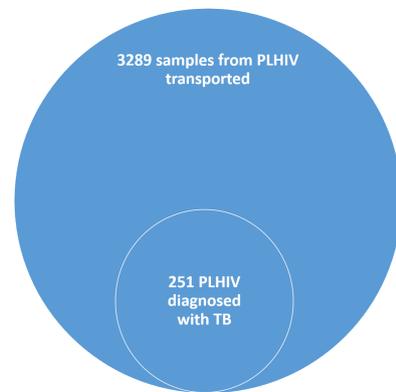DISTRTICTS IN TAMILNADU

Andhra Pradesh
Tiruvallur
Chennai
Vellore
Kancheepuram
Karnataka
Krishnagiri
Tiruvannamalai
Villupuram
Dharmapuri
Pondicherry
Salem
Cuddalore
Nilgiris
Erode
Namakkal
Perambalur
Karaikal
Coimbatore
Tiruchirapalli
Nagapattinam
Karur
Thiruvarur
Dindigul
Thanjavur
Kerala
Pudukottai
Theni
Sivaganga
Madurai
Virudhunagar
Ramanathapuram
Tirunelveli
Thoothukudi
Kanniyakumari
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Indian Ocean

Year 1
Year 2
Year 3

People reached through Urban Intervention (Oct 2015-Dec 2017)

769 — No. of Qualified Private Practitioners Trained (on STCI & Project Axshya)

No. of Private Hospitals Trained (on STCI & Project Axshya) — 40

66 — No. of Private Laboratories Trained

Total TB notifications facilitated — 3071

16 — No. of Axshya Kiosk Established

No. of TB patients treated under Axshya Kiosk — 1057

People reached through Rural intervention (Apr 2013 to Mar 2019)

4.5 million — Total population covered

Total tested — 80,000

5,000 — No. of TB patients diagnosed

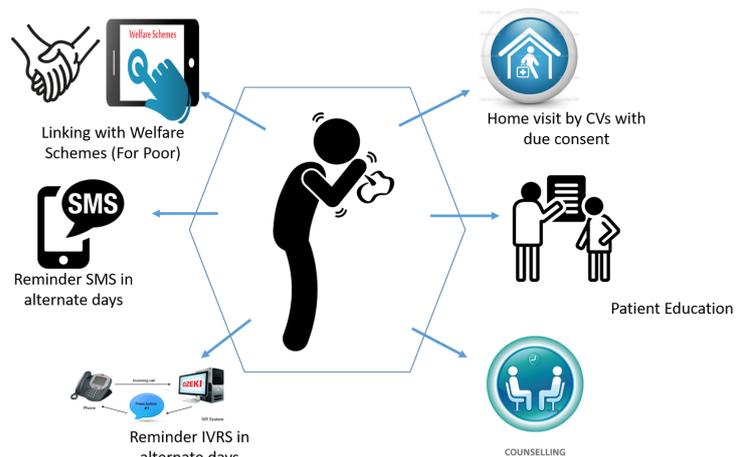No. of TB patients sensitized on Patient charter — 9,000

ART-CBNAAT linkage in Chennai, Villupuram, Trichy, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Pudukottai districts (Oct 15 – Sep 17)

3289 samples from PLHIV transported

251 PLHIV diagnosed with TB

Support to Practitioners

Facilitating public health responsibility — Notification

CME Programs

Link with local TB Dept. — STOP TB. TB is curable. Testing is simple. Treatment is free.

Expert Opinion for TB treatment — expert link

Patient Information & Treatment Adherence

Support to Diagnostic Facility
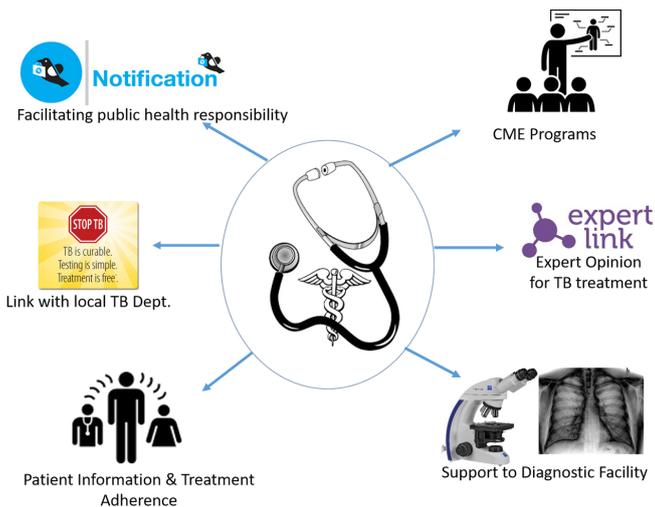
Support to people with TB

Linking with Welfare Schemes (For Poor) — Welfare Schemes

Home visit by CVs with due consent

Reminder SMS in alternate days

Patient Education

Reminder IVRS in alternate days

COUNSELLING

- Facilitating diagnosis through sputum collection and transportation
- Training of Community Volunteers & NGOs
- Strengthening TB-HIV collaborative activities by sensitizing and engaging Targeted Intervention, District level network, Care and support centre and Anti-Retroviral Therapy centers
- Treatment adherence package
- TB case notification
- Training & review of community volunteers and stakeholders
- Involving community radio stations to

  - Improve understanding of TB among communities and strengthen civil society engagement
  - Build knowledge about locally available TB services among communities
  - Encourage public health officials to use community radio to disseminate key health messages to the communities.

PHASE IV (ONGOING)

Project Axshya Phase IV is currently underway (January 2018 to March 2021) in five Tamil Nadu districts - Cuddalore, Krishnagiri, Madurai, Thanjavur and Trichy. The main activities are:

- Active case finding among key affected populations (KAP)
- Active Community Surveillance through village-level volunteers in identified villages
- Fast-tracking of presumptive TB patients in high case load hospitals
- Organizing health camps in congregate setting

GLIMPSES FROM THE FIELD

In order to improve the quality of life of people with TB, the project catered to various other needs from the community through the following interventions:

- **REACH organized a tailoring training programme for the women (pictured), who were cured of TB in 2017. They now run a home-based tailoring unit, which supplements their income by more than Rs. 5,000 per month. We have supported vocational trainings for several others**
- **TB forums have provided nutritional support for people with TB**
- **These forums have also carried out advocacy and awareness activities**
- **They have also supported availability of clean drinking water at government healthcare facilities**
- **The project has organised health camps for vulnerable and marginalized populations such as industrial workers, tribals and people living in old age homes**

REACH
leading the fight against TB

Contact Us: Phone: 044-28132099 / 45565445 | Email: reach4tb@gmail.com
Website: www.reachtbnetwork.org | Twitter: @SpeakTB | Facebook: www.facebook.com/SpeakTB
TB Helpline: 9962063000 | PP Helpline: 9790977331