

## KHPT receives Johnson & Johnson grant to support TB elimination in the private sector through medical graduate ‘Catalysts’

KHPT has received a grant from Johnson & Johnson for a project titled “Involvement of medical graduates to develop a sustainable system for standards of TB care & TB elimination in private health sector”. The project aims to establish Kshaya Muktha Karnataka Kendras for TB elimination in selected private health facilities in Bengaluru through the engagement of trained medical graduates who will serve as Catalysts for a TB Mukta Bharat. The project will identify potential facilities, work with the management to establish notification systems, and establish Cough corners/TB cells/Drug-Resistant TB (DR TB) centres, as well as conduct Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions in-house. The initiative will be implemented for a period of one year in BBMP and Bengaluru Urban districts.

## Breaking the Barriers

Breaking the Barriers (BTB) is a four-year project, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which aims to develop innovative and effective behaviour change operational models that improve coverage of specific populations vulnerable to TB, such as the urban poor, tribal communities, migrants, and mining and industrial workers, for increased case notification and successful TB treatment outcomes.

## Government Engagement

### BTB team organizes two-day state-level workshop for government functionaries in Assam

The BTB team in Assam conducted a two-day State-level Workshop on TB Elimination and Behaviour Change in Guwahati on December 21 and 22, in association with the State NTEP. The main objective of the workshop was to unpack the Central TB Division’s (CTD) Guidance Document on Community Engagement, orient the teams on KHPT’s community engagement models, including Community Structures and Patient Support Groups, and discuss an Assam-specific plan for Comprehensive TB Response as well as for Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization in the state. More than 100 state functionaries, WHO consultants, District TB Officers (DTOs), PPM Coordinators,

Senior Treatment Supervisors, and PMDT Coordinators from 26 districts participated in the event, chaired by Dr N J Das, the State Tuberculosis Officer (STO). Dr N J Das, Dr Basumatary, Joint Director, NTEP, Assam, Dr Dhrubojyoti Deka, Regional Team Lead, WHO, and TB champions released audio jingles on TB solutions and the TB calendar developed by KHPT. The State TB Cell also disseminated the state-specific plan on TB elimination. KHPT introduced the participants to the behaviour change solutions concept developed, and spoke of rolling them out in the BTB districts. KHPT also received appreciation from the delegates, WHO, and State NTEP, for bringing all the stakeholders together.

Going forward, KHPT, in collaboration with the State and district NTEP, will support state-level Training of Trainers sessions to operationalize the CTD’s community engagement guidance document in all districts.



Dr N J Das, STO, Assam addressed the participants of the two-day workshop; (right) dignitaries release material developed by KHPT



### BTB teams engage with Gram Panchayat leaders for TB elimination efforts



The meeting with the Miryala Penta Gram Panchayat in Mahabubabad

The BTB team in Telangana helped local leaders of the Miryala Penta Gram Panchayat in Mahabubabad district create a district plan of action against TB in the village, with the support of local health functionaries. The Gram Sarpanch of the village, Mr G Venkanna, chaired a meeting with Village Secretary Mr Sudheer, TB nodal person Mrs Kausalya, ANM Mrs Padma and representatives of the BTB team. The meeting, conducted on December 13, was attended by Anganwadi teachers, village organizer assistants, and members of community structures and the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee. The participants discussed spreading TB awareness through mass campaigns like rallies, Kalajatha folk art shows, audio announcements and Dandora folk performances in the village. Those attending decided to support the current TB patients to complete their treatment and understand their needs during the Care and Support Group meetings. Mrs Kausalya from Gandhampally Primary

Health Centre assured the group that a medical camp will be arranged in this vulnerable village after preliminary awareness and screening activities. The participants took an oath to advocate about proper nutrition, lifestyle changes and health seeking behaviour in the village.

In Bengaluru Urban, the Karpura Gram Panchayat President organised an orientation for **22** elected members from one Tuberculosis Unit, with the support of the BTB team, keeping with the state of Karnataka's vision of Kshaya Mukta Karnataka (TB-free Karnataka). At the end of the orientation the members present committed to spreading the message of TB prevention, care and treatment. Since then, the President, as well as elected representatives, have been steadily inviting community structure members to their monthly Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayat review meetings to speak to people about TB prevention and treatment, as well as about the need to address the stigma and discrimination associated with TB. The Gram Panchayat members have even advocated with the local religious leaders of local mosques and temples to use their public address systems to play TB awareness jingles shared with them by the BTB

team. At their request, some of the local mosques have started playing TB awareness jingles every Friday, at the start of the weekly prayer meet.

In November and December, the Karpura Gram Panchayat organized **12** TB awareness activities involving the NTEP programme staff. These **22** elected members covered a population of **9920** through various awareness activities, of which **4475** were screened, **28** were referred for further testing, all **28** were tested and **2** of whom tested positive and were initiated on treatment.

### Belagavi BTB team trains NTEP frontline workers on Care and Support

The BTB team in Belagavi held two training sessions in November for NTEP frontline workers on the concept of care and support, the importance of the same for TB patients during their recovery and the critical role that frontline workers can play. Dr Anil Korabu, District TB Officer, Belagavi, was present at both sessions, which were attended by **58** frontline workers.

### Health Auto behaviour change solution flagged off in three Telangana districts



#### The Health Auto is inaugurated by the DTCO in Sangareddy

The Health Auto, a behaviour change solution involving designated autos to transport presumptive persons and TB patients for testing and follow-up, was launched in three districts of Telangana. District TB Control Officers Dr PSS. Mallikarjun in Warangal, Dr Vijay Kumar in Hyderabad and Dr Rajeshwari in Sangareddy, waved the health autos off with green flags, saying that the solution is the first of its kind in the state, and will be especially useful for vulnerable populations who find it difficult to afford the cost of transportation to facilities. They added that it is important for community structures and community stakeholders to make proper use of this service to refer individuals with TB symptoms to nearby government testing facilities.

The auto drivers were oriented on their role in addressing delays in testing and diagnosis. They were also given the health auto user guide and IEC. The DTCOs appreciated their contribution and advised the drivers to take proper preventive measures to avoid cross-infection during transportation. The contact details of the health autos were also given to the respective community structure members and NTEP staff for better coordination.

### BTB teams conduct awareness camps at workplaces with management support; Sandur Manganese and Iron Ore Ltd commits to a TB-free workplace

The BTB Bellary team in collaboration with Sandur Manganese and Iron Ore Ltd (SMIORE)

## Community Engagement

conducted a series of awareness camps on TB, HIV and Non-communicable Diseases? for their employees and the local population from December 20-23. A total of **3356** labourers participated in the screening camps, of whom **600** were screened, **44** were referred and tested, and one tested positive for TB.

Following the awareness and health camps, SMIORE is encouraging its employees with symptoms, especially the mining labourers, to undergo TB testing.

The company also held a training of its laboratory technicians on TB testing in collaboration with KHPT and NTEP. Five technicians of SMIORE participated in a one-day training facilitated by the NTEP. Following the training, **44** sputum samples were collected and tested by the lab technicians and a separate NIKSHAY password was created for them.



#### Awareness activities at a mining company in Bellary

Similar workplace interventions were undertaken at other mining and industries companies, including JSW Dharma Iron Ore Mines, where **585** workers participated in a health camp. At JSW Nandi Iron Ore Mines, **440** workers participated, of which **50** were screened, and at JSW Devadari Iron Ore Mines, **430** mining and industrial workers participated, of which **30** were screened. At Minerva Steel and Power Pvt. Ltd., **600** workers participated in the camps, of which **80** were screened, and at Karnataka State Mineral Corporation Ltd., **300** workers participated in health camps, of which **10** were referred for testing.



#### Screening workers at Star Cement factory in Assam

The BTB team in Assam conducted an awareness event at the Star Cement Factory at Sonapur on December 4, shortly after World AIDS Day. About **150** truckers and workers from the factory were sensitized on HIV and TB. The participants were encouraged to restrain from unsafe practices and adopt TB-appropriate behaviours. Screening of the participants were done for HIV and TB, followed by sputum testing of persons with symptoms.

### Assam team joins District NTEP in conducting awareness event for transgender community

The KHPT team in **Kamrup Metro, Assam**, joined the District NTEP's efforts to conduct an awareness event on TB, tobacco use and co-morbidities for the transgender community on December 18. The BTB team held a discussion on the barriers faced by the transgender population and stigma mitigation with **30** members of the transgender community. This helped the team understand the needs of the community with regard to health-seeking, care and support. The event was led by the DTO - Kamrup(M) and WHO Consultant on TB-HIV, along with other functionaries from the District NTEP and KHPT.



#### The awareness camp conducted for the transgender community in Assam



## Awareness camps in November and December aim to create awareness and dispel stigma among vulnerable communities

In **Assam**, initiatives were taken across all the districts to connect with the students, youths, frontline workers and communities on topics including TB and nutrition, lung health, TB-appropriate behaviour and stigma prevention.

As part of Jan Andolan activities, **11** intensive Active Case Finding camps were conducted in three intervention districts to create awareness on TB, in collaboration with the NTEP, community structures and TB Champions. During these camps, around **750** persons were screened, **28** were referred and **2** tested positive for TB.



**Sensitization of Panchayat members at the Village Council Development Committee meeting in Baksa**

The **Baksa** team interacted with the Village Council Development Committee at Adalbari to disseminate information on TB and TB-related stigma to the officials leading local governance in several villages across the block. The team also made a special effort to reach out to the geriatric population in the villages.

The CTD videos on stigma dubbed in the local languages by KHPT were shown at the 'Bhagyadevi' Mobile Theatre at Mushalpur during the three days of its show in the area. The videos reached around **700** people per show.

Sensitization events were also conducted at various places, including police stations and market places, in close coordination with the District NTEP.



**TB Champion Mrs Kiranmayi addresses the hamalis at a screening camp in Warangal**

In **Warangal**, several community structures came forward to organize stigma mitigation sessions and TB camps at vulnerable sites such as high-risk slums, labour addas, and grain markets. At many sites, community structures either conducted screening for TB among vulnerable populations, supported the NTEP in conducting door-to-door surveys or held medical camps in coordination with local health facilities. The Shambavi Mahila Mandal, Pratapa Rudra Thapi Mesthri Association (construction worker's association) and 42nd divisional corporator Mrs. Gundu Chandana Purnachander organized a mass medical camp at the Shambunipeta construction worker's site. They provided awareness and screened the workers with the support from Dr. Nagaraj, Medical Officer of the Rangashaipet Urban Primary Health Centre. Another construction workers' association, the Hanamkonda Thapi Mesthri Association, came together with TB champion B Mahesh to screen around **700** daily labour in Sundaraiah Nagar labour adda. The Seva Welfare Society and TB

Champion Mrs Kiranmayi conducted an awareness session and screening camp in the Enumamula Food Corporation of India godown, screening Hamali (load-carrying) workers for TB symptoms.

In **Bhagalpur** and **West Champaran, Bihar**, the BTB team oriented school students and teachers on symptoms of TB and its treatment, and conducted oath-taking ceremonies. The team covered **17** schools and **2500** participants across West Champaran and **12** schools and **1858** children in Bhagalpur in November. The team also conducted awareness sessions at the river ghats where Chhath Puja is marked, reaching out about **1.5 lakh** persons across the three intervention districts with information on TB symptoms, testing and available government schemes for patients. In **West Champaran**, community structures involved the participation of **28** TB Champions, who spoke about their experiences with stigma at events in **17** villages in **8** intervention TUs.



**TB IEC on display at the ghats during Chhath puja in Bihar**

In **Bengaluru, Karnataka**, TB camps with children and youth were held across seven TUs, in which **3909** children and youth participated; **2851** underwent TB screening, **86** were referred, **70** were tested and **6** were found to be TB positive. These camps were led by community structures in collaboration with the NTEP, and supported by the Medical Officer, Senior Health Officer, STS, TB Health Visitor, ANM, school staff, and the BTB project team,

The team also conducted signature campaigns among the vulnerable population, covering nine TUs of **Bengaluru Urban** district. The signature campaign at Laggere was inaugurated by Mr S T Somashekhar, Minister of Co-operation, Government of Karnataka. Traffic police officers, auto drivers and school headmasters also actively participated in the event. The events reached a population of **31732**. A total of **11235** people were screened for TB, **166** referred, **126** tested and **10** were found to be TB positive.

In **Bellary**, two TB and NCD screening and vaccination camps were organized across four TUs by community structures in December, in collaboration with Gram Panchayats and the Azim Premji Foundation. At these events, the Medical Officer, Senior Health Officer, STS, TBHV, ANM, and the BTB team spoke about the need to provide support to TB patients and the importance of not stigmatizing persons with TB. The events reached a population of **30502** people, of whom **9554** were screened for TB, **298** were referred, **155** tested and **12** tested positive for TB.

In **Koppal**, **17** awareness programs were led by community structures and TB champions in seven TUs in December, during which they spoke to people about the non-medical needs of a TB patient, how stigma and discrimination can adversely affect their recovery, and the important role that community can play in creating a supportive environment for TB patients. **3723** people were screened, of which **38** were referred for testing, **21** underwent testing and **2** tested positive for TB.

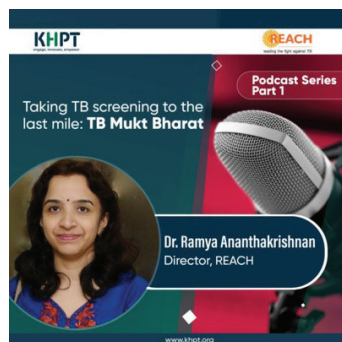
In **Belagavi**, **13** community structures and TB champions across six TUs conducted awareness camps covering a population of **18,854**, of which **35** persons were referred, **15** were tested and one was found to be TB positive. In **Bagalkot**, eight Non-Communicable Disease camps were held by community structures and TB Champions, during which **1418** people were reached with messages on TB.



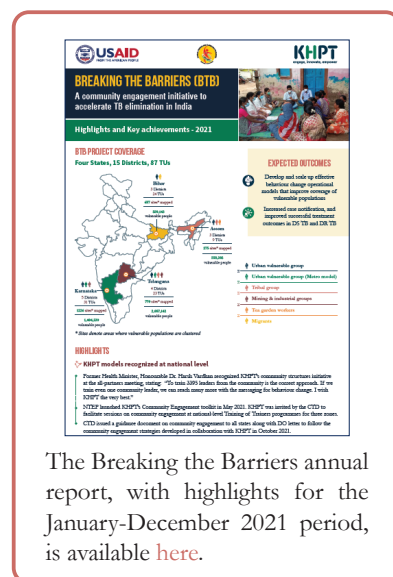
## KHPT collaborates with The Pioneer to highlight BTB initiatives in the media

KHPT is collaborating with The Pioneer, a leading national media house, to present a five-part series of impactful articles covering the critical work undertaken by KHPT in TB through the Breaking the Barriers project. These articles include stories of impact from the ground. The articles, published in November and December, highlighted the importance of working with community structures ([here](#)), the role of gender and stigma ([here](#)), the need for Care and Support Groups ([here](#)), and the importance of Direct Benefit Transfer payments for patients ([here](#)).

## BTB hosts two-part podcast series with REACH



KHPT hosted two podcasts with REACH, covering the topics of timely screening and stigma mitigation. In November, the team had a conversation with Dr. Ramya Ananthakrishnan, Director, REACH on the topic 'Taking TB screening to the last mile: TB Mukh Bharat' which may be accessed [here](#). In December, Ms Anupama Srinivasan, Assistant Director, REACH, spoke about 'Addressing the challenges of stigma for a TB-Mukh Bharat'. The podcast may be accessed [here](#).



## Joint Effort for Elimination of Tuberculosis (JEET)

KHPT has initiated a new project on Latent TB Infection (LTBI) from July 2021 for the next three years under JEET, supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). FIND is the Primary Recipient of the GFATM grant. This project will be implemented in six districts in Karnataka, namely BBMP, Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Belagavi, Bagalkot and Vijayapura. The main objective of the project is to provide TB Preventive Therapy (IPT) to the contacts of pulmonary TB patients. The Patient Provider Support Agency (PPSA) component of the JEET project has been transitioned to the NTEP.

## IGRA Tests initiated in Bagalkot's 'Test & Treat' model

Bagalkot district differs from the other implementation districts in its 'Test & Treat' model, whereas all other districts are 'Screen & Treat' only. The administration of IGRA tests for Latent TB Infection (LTBI) was started in November. Laboratory staff collect blood samples for the IGRA test at a scheduled time, and results take about four days. TB is ruled out for IGRA positive cases by X-Ray. If the X-Ray is normal, the person will be initiated on TB-Preventive Therapy (IPT) and if the X-Ray is abnormal, the person is referred for further diagnosis.

Between November 15-December 31, there were **147** household contacts of pulmonary TB patients who underwent IGRA testing, of which **56 (38%)** were found to be positive for Latent TB Infection. Going forward, the number of samples per day will be increased from 20 to 40.

## JEET LTBI program launched in Bagalkot and Bijapur with training for NTEP staff

The JEET team conducted two-day trainings in November for NTEP staff in Bagalkot and Bijapur, as part of the launch of the LTBI program. NTEP staff and Medical Officers of the districts were trained on Programmatic Management of Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (PMTPT). A total of **209** participants - **92** from Bagalkot and **117** from Bijapur- including Senior Treatment Supervisors, TB Health Visitors and Medical Officers were part of these trainings.



Mr Anil Koya, Project Lead, JEET at a training

The LTBI intervention was fully functional in the three northern Karnataka districts in November-December, and partially operational in the three districts of the Bengaluru region. The team visited **1957** index patients and enrolled **6438** contacts for screening. Out of **6438** contacts, **5452** were screened to rule out TB and **2135** were initiated on TPT.

Under the PPSA Initiative, The JEET team was able to identify **1694** persons with symptoms in the November-December period, and notified an additional **738** patients. JEET staff facilitated the testing of **302** samples for TB. They followed up **395** patients on treatment in the private sector in person and telephonically; a total of **6922** follow ups were done for **2590** patients.

## JEET transitions PPSA activities to NTEP



Mr Mohan HL, CEO, KHPT presenting a certificate of appreciation to Dr Nagesh, DTO, Bengaluru Rural at the transition workshop

As the JEET-PPSA program came to an end in December 2021, the JEET team planned a state-level meeting with the State TB Office on November 23 to take measures to continue private sector notifications. Dr Ramesh Chandra Reddy, State TB Officer chaired the meeting, which was attended by representatives of the State TB Office, District TB office and NGO partners. It was decided that PPSA activities would be transitioned from JEET to the NTEP.

A workshop was organised for all TU staff of the three districts on December 14-15. The JEET team shared experiences and strategies in a Standard Operating Procedures document for continuing private sector engagement through different approaches for facilities, laboratories and pharmacies separately. **82** NTEP staff attended the meeting on December 14, and **78** attended on December 15.

## TB Careline

The TB Careline is a free outbound counselling service for TB patients, supported by Indegene Lifesystems Private Ltd.

- Careline registered **961** new patients in the November-December period
- **505** patients were reported to have completed treatment successfully
- **2411** patients are currently on active care
- **9561** calls were made by the team for follow up, registration of patients and for post-treatment follow up
- **40** conference calls were made by the team, involving **146** patients on treatment
- **19** TB Champions who had completed treatment also attended to provide motivation and peer support

### Careline counsellors trained to use mental health tools

The counsellors were trained on basics of mental health issues, especially on coexistent depression and anxiety amongst TB patients. The objective of the exercise was to identify the proportion of patients who need referral for specialist support when patients are on active care. The tools used were Patient Health questionnaire 9 (PHQ9) to identify depression and also Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD7) to screen for anxiety.

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## Voices from the field

We have gathered here to draw up an operational plan towards achieving the mission of TB elimination. It is a milestone gathering of State, district NTEP representatives and partners like KHPT.

**Dr N J Das**, State TB Officer,  
Assam at the state-level workshop

We never thought about TB as much earlier. Once the BTB team and the community structure members spoke to us about TB, we realized how critical the disease is. We realized the important role that we can play in achieving the goal of a TB-free Gram Panchayat and a TB-free Karnataka. This motivates us to work for the betterment of our panchayats.

**Mr P Raju**, Karpur Gram  
Panchayat President

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Thank you for believing and supporting our vision to build  
empowered and healthy communities.

*Wish you and your family a safe,  
healthy and prosperous 2022!*

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