

DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFER- A PRIVILEGE TO UNDERPRIVILEGED

- *Glimpses of field work from Chandauli, UP by Dr.Priyanka Bhat, APM, VHAI*

We all seek a world in which man will be freed from burden of disease and its associated out of pocket expenditure.

Axshya Project, a boon for TB patients is putting best efforts to ensure that every TB patient should get complete treatment. As we know majority of TB patients come from the vulnerable and marginalized section. Along treatment there was a dire need of nutrition support to these patients and VHAI has been advocating this nutritional support from the sources such as individuals, social activists and the political leaders. The strategy and the dream of supporting these underprivileged section came to reality by the announcement through our Honorable Prime Minister of India and it was a great relief.

The Government of India has taken an initiative to provide nutritional support to all the TB patients following the address of the Prime Minister of India on 1st January 2018. The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) has approved an incentive of Rs 500 a month for all tuberculosis patients for the duration of the treatment, irrespective of their income level. The money is for nutrition support, as TB is known to be a disease of under nutrition. The incentive amount, though, is a fourth of what was envisaged in the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination released earlier this year with the aim of eliminating the disease by 2030.

- Source: Government of India – Announcement by the Prime Minister at Vigyan Bhawan
1st January 2018

In Uttar Pradesh, District Chandauli was selected for implementation of this scheme and we were asked to support existing RNTCP program by enrolling the TB patients through Axshya project.

I had an opportunity to visit Chandauli very recently in the month of September 2018 and met some of the TB patients who got benefited and had an immense satisfaction from the efforts our field team made initially. *Among the TB patients identified by the project in initial two quarters (January-June 2018), more than 85 per cent of the TB patients were benefited through this scheme.* What can be done to provide relief to such TB patients who are the only bread earner in their family and have lost their livelihood and are hankering for their well-being in addition to the food and basic needs of their own and their families? The answer is left with the one TB patient I directly interviewed.



Mirza Yadav, Male 55 years belongs to Pratappur village, Post Majhwar, District Chandauli. He has a family of 11 members (self, wife, seven children and parents). He was having cough symptoms for the last one year and he could not get regular treatment. Burden of disease was flaming his struggles, He was weak and was not able to work in his field (farmer by profession). Our Community Volunteer, Israr Khan, visited this presumptive TB patient on 3.4.2018 and after his check-up he was found TB positive. His treatment was started on 12.04.2018. He is regular on his medicine and the RNTCP has also provided the DBT.

He is feeling better now and his weight has also increased up to 6 kg. after the treatment. He resumed to his work after getting medical relief. He is regularly getting Rs.500 per month after linkages of his bank account and Aadhar card from our team.

Likewise many other TB patients are linked to the DBT and it will be continued in the project and getting regular benefit.