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INDIA'S PROGRESS IN TUBERCULOSIS (TB) ELIMINATION

WHO Global TB Report 2026: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward

TB: Latest News

According to the WHO Global Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2026, India has recorded a 38% reduction in TB-related mortality between 2015 and 2025, compared with a global reduction of 35%. Despite this progress, India remains the country with the highest TB burden, accounting for 25% of global TB cases in 2025.

The report acknowledges India's progress in reducing mortality, improving treatment outcomes and strengthening domestic financing, while highlighting the continuing challenge of high disease incidence.

1. Global and India's TB Burden

- An estimated 10.6 million people developed TB globally in 2025, around 75,000 fewer than in 2024.
- The global TB incidence rate declined from 131 cases per lakh population in 2024 to 129 in 2025.
- The global incidence reduction since 2015 was 14%, significantly below the End TB Strategy milestone of 50% by 2025 and the target of 80% by 2030.
- TB remains the leading cause of death from a single infectious agent and ranks 13th among all causes of death globally.

Top Eight Countries Contributing to Global TB Cases (2025)

- India: 25% share of global cases.
- Indonesia: 10%; Philippines: 6.8%; China: 6.5%; Pakistan: 6.4%.
- Nigeria: 4.9%; DR Congo: 3.9%; Bangladesh: 3.7%.
- These eight countries account for approximately 67% of global TB cases, while 30 high-burden countries together account for 88%.

Demographic distribution: Globally, 54% of people developing TB in 2025 were men, 35% women and 11% children.

2. India's Progress in TB Control

Declining Mortality

Estimated TB deaths declined from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 18 per lakh in 2025, representing a 38% reduction.

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Treatment Success

India achieved a treatment success rate of 94%, reflecting improvements in treatment delivery and patient support.

Domestic Financing

Around 96% of TB programme funding requirements are met through domestic resources, demonstrating sustained national investment.

Declining MDR-TB

India remains among four countries accounting for more than 50% of global multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB cases, although MDR-TB incidence has been gradually declining.

Data Revision Under Consideration

The WHO, India's Central TB Division and ICMR are analysing district-level sentinel surveillance data and findings from the nationally representative TB prevalence survey conducted by ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT) in 2025.

3. Government Initiatives for TB Elimination

The progress reflects interventions under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), supported by technology, early diagnosis, treatment and community participation.

TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan

Launched as an intensified campaign on December 7, 2024, covering 347 high-priority districts across 33 States and UTs, and subsequently expanding nationwide.

Achievements (2024 – November 2026):

- More than 11 crore chest X-rays conducted.
- Over 3 crore nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) conducted.
- Approximately 48.64 lakh TB cases detected, including 14.97 lakh asymptomatic cases.

Significance: Detection of asymptomatic cases enables early treatment, reduces transmission and prevents progression to severe disease.

Technology-Enabled TB Management

- AI-enabled chest X-rays: Improve screening and early identification.
- AI-based hotspot identification: Helps identify geographical areas with high TB vulnerability.
- Predictive AI tools: Identify high-risk patients prone to adverse treatment outcomes.
- Digital interventions: Khushi AI Chatbot and Avatar Videobot support awareness and patient engagement.
- Rapid molecular diagnostics: Enable faster and more accurate detection.

Nutritional and Community Support

- Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana: Provides nutritional assistance to TB patients.

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- Ni-kshay Mitra initiative: Encourages community participation and nutritional support through individual and institutional donors.
- Integration of TB screening with diabetes, undernutrition and other comorbidities facilitates comprehensive and differentiated patient care.

4. Challenges in Achieving TB Elimination

- High disease burden: India continues to account for one-fourth of global TB cases.
- Detection gaps: Asymptomatic and undiagnosed cases contribute to continued transmission.
- Drug resistance: MDR-TB remains a significant public health challenge.
- Socio-economic determinants: Undernutrition, poverty, overcrowding and poor living conditions increase vulnerability.
- Global progress deficit: The worldwide decline in TB incidence remains far below the End TB Strategy targets.
- Data uncertainties: Revision of India's incidence estimates highlights the need for stronger surveillance and reliable disease-burden assessment.

5. Way Forward

- Strengthen proactive screening, particularly among vulnerable and high-risk populations.
- Expand access to rapid molecular diagnostics and AI-enabled screening.
- Ensure early treatment initiation, adherence and patient-centred care.
- Strengthen TB preventive treatment and management of drug-resistant TB.
- Integrate TB control with nutrition, diabetes management and poverty alleviation programmes.
- Increase community participation and awareness to reduce stigma and encourage early diagnosis.
- Sustain domestic financing, research and evidence-based policymaking.

6. Conclusion

India's substantial share of global TB cases underscores the need to move beyond mortality reduction towards accelerated prevention, early detection and interruption of transmission.

A technology-driven, adequately financed and community-centred approach remains essential to achieving the goal of a TB-Mukt Bharat.

Source: WHO Global TB Report 2026