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SAARC

Report on Activities

July to December 1999

Six Monthly
Report on Activities Performed by
SAARC TB Centre

July to December 1999

SAARC TB Centre
(P. O. Box No. 9517, Kathmandu)
Thimi, Bhaktapur, Nepal
Tel: 631048, 630033
Fax: 630061
E-mail: saarctb@mos.com.np

SAARC Tuberculosis Centre

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the major public health problems in the South Asia Region. It is the most common cause of death due to infectious diseases among the people living in the member countries of the SAARC. The death due to TB in the global context is 2-3 million every year, whereas in the SAARC member countries it is about 0.6-1 million. We have very cost-effective interventions of tuberculosis control available with us, which have been brought by intensive research. However, we have to apply these systematic tuberculosis control measures effectively. SAARC has accorded a high priority to tuberculosis control in the member countries and established SAARC TB Centre (STC), which is coordinating with National TB Control Programmes (NTPs) in the region for TB control. DOTS – Directly Observed Treatment Short-course is the main weapon to control TB. DOTS strategy is being implemented in all the member countries. DOTS is providing excellent results in the region and our achievements have been appreciated all over the world.

- The Governing Board of STC recommended the following activities for the year 1999:
 1. SAARC-CIDA workshop for formulation of regional strategy of TB and HIV/AIDS control.
 2. SAARC seminar on gender and sociological issues related to tuberculosis.
 3. Operational research on identification of effective model of supervision and different models of treatment observation.
 4. SAARC training course for TB control managers.
 5. The SAARC meeting to formulate urban TB control programme.
 6. Multi-centric study on primary drug resistance.

Among the recommended activities, the STC performed SAARC-CIDA workshop in first half of this year. Another activity SAARC seminar on gender and sociological issues was organized in the month of July and SAARC meeting to formulate urban TB control programme in the month of October. In this year there was a training programme for TB control managers, which was planned to be organized in Bhutan but this programme has been postponed and now the training course is planned to be organized in the year 2000.

In the second half of the year 1999, STC organized activities on specific areas on gender and sociological issues and urban TB control programme in the member countries, in compliance to the decisions of eighth meeting of the Governing Board of STC.

Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB Centre



At the invitation of the Director of SAARC TB Centre (STC), the Governing Board of STC held its Ninth Meeting at Kathmandu on 27th and 28th October 1999. The Hon'ble Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Minister of Health, His Majesty's Government of Nepal inaugurated the Meeting. In the inaugural speech Hon'ble Minister extended a very warm welcome to the participants and appreciated the cooperation among Member States in the prevention and control of tuberculosis. He also appreciated the special efforts of STC to check the dual infection of TB and HIV.

The inaugural session of the meeting was presided over by the Secretary of Health Mr. Shree Kant Regmi.

His Excellency Mr. Nihal Rodrigo, the Secretary General, SAARC addressed the meeting and informed that SAARC Member States have provided priority to TB control in the region and expressed appreciation on the role of STC being played in order to control of TB and HIV in the region.

Members of the Governing Board, Dr. G. R. Khatri from India, Mr. Ibrahim Shaheem from Maldives, Dr. Pushpa Malla from Nepal, Dr. V. R. Weeraratne from Sri Lanka, Mr. Thinley Dorji from SAARC Secretariat and Mr. Ram Babu Dhakal from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Government of Nepal attended the meeting.

In the meeting Dr. D. S. Bam, Director, STC gave an overview of the progress made in the implementation of the calendar of activities for the year ending December 1999. The Board expressed satisfaction on the progress in the implementation of the decisions taken at its Eighth Meeting and the progress report given by the Director, STC.

The Board recommended the following programmes for the year 2000.

1. Trainers Training in TB Programme Management.
2. Public Awareness and Advocacy in Relation to TB and HIV
3. Workshop on Operational Research Related to TB Control in Member Countries
4. Expert Meeting for Standardizing Training Curriculum at the level of Directors of National TB Institutes.
5. Strengthening the Existing Networking with Training and Research Institutions in an Effective Manner.

Activities performed by STC during the period of July to December 1999

1. SAARC Seminar on Gender and Sociological Issues related to TB:



Gender and sociological aspect plays very important role in the field of TB control in the community. The sociological, cultural and biological factors plays vital role in TB control. The gender differences also have significant role on TB control programme. Gender related inequities in infectious disease have been a neglected research area but are now being recognized as factors of importance for the understanding of disease epidemiology and successful treatment outcome. SAARC TB Centre organized a two-day seminar on Gender and Sociological Issues related to TB from 27th to 28th July 1999. In the seminar the experts of the concerned field Dr. Kazi Mustafa Sarwar and Dr. Vikarunnessa Begum from Bangladesh, Dr. P. Jagota from India, Dr. Kedar Nursing KC and Mr. Rana Bahadur Thapa, from Nepal and Dr. Mohammad Hussain Khan from Pakistan participated. Additional 31 observers from different institutions of the SAARC Member Countries and out of Region also participated in the seminar.

The seminar was inaugurated by Hon'ble Dr. R. B. Yadav, Minister of Health, His Majesty's Government of Nepal. Dr. Yadav emphasised that gender related inequities in infectious disease like tuberculosis have been a neglected research area which needs due priority in the era of revised strategy of TB control to achieve and sustain overall cure rate of TB patients. The function was chaired by the Secretary of Health Mr. Shree Kant Regmi.

His Excellency Mr. Nihar Rodrigo, the Secretary General, SAARC addressed the seminar and informed that an exchange of experience and expertise would be helpful in strengthening the efforts of Member Countries to control this disease. He also emphasized the need of initiating gender specific efforts to deal with this problem effectively.

Dr. D. S. Bam extended a very warm welcome to the participants and Dr. P. Jagota addressed on behalf of the participants.

Objectives of the Seminar:

- The objectives of the seminar were divided into four categories to cover the totality of the subject, such as:
 - To review social, cultural and biological differences in the occurrence of TB between men and women.
 - To propose an improvement in TB control by addressing the different needs of women and men as well as social cultural variation.
 - To analyze effect of these issues on achievement of DOTS.
 - To recommend future areas of research on gender and sociological issues related to TB.

Outcome of the Seminar:

The seminar began with presentations of the current situation and policy of the TB control in the Member Countries followed by a detailed discussion on various issues. The outcomes of the discussions were listed in the recommendations of the seminar which are as follows:

Recommendations:

The recommendations were made into two parts, the main recommendations and specific recommendations.

Main Recommendations:

SAARC Member States should respond to the epidemic of TB in women in three ways:

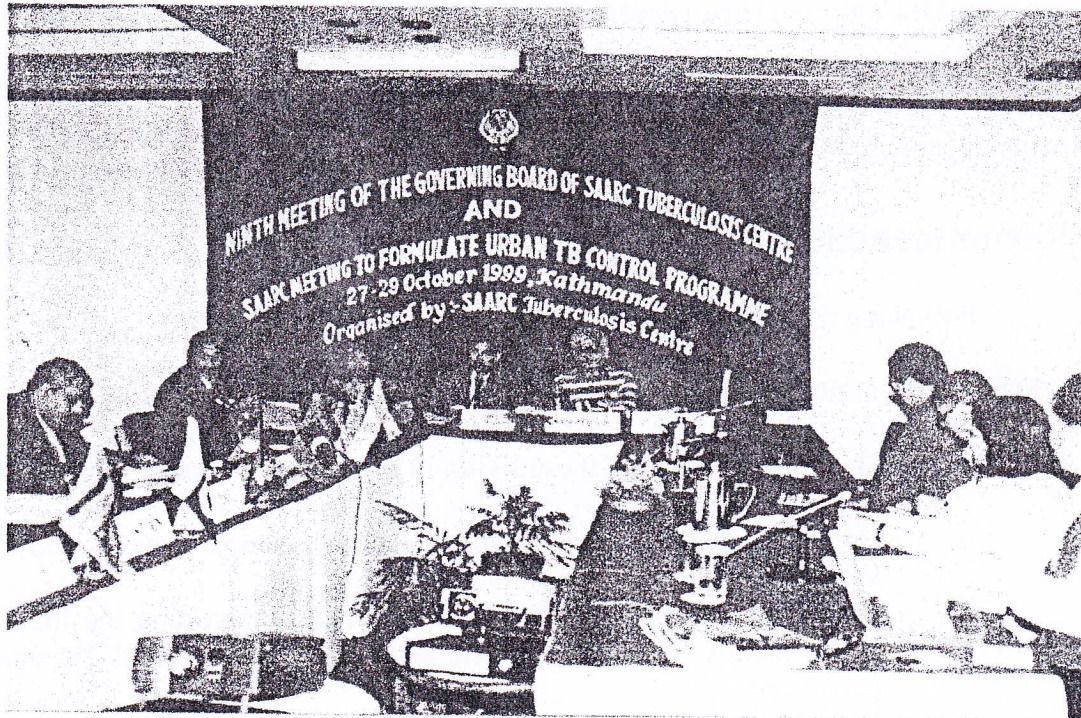
- i. Promote awareness about the impact of TB in women through advocacy activities at the regional and national level.
- ii. Determine the main factors contributing to the observed differences between women and men, through a planned and coordinated programme of research.
- iii. Ensure that operational aspects of NTP activities are gender sensitive

- Member States should conduct operational research to find ways of expanding DOTS within hard to access areas, addressing issues of strengthening health care infrastructure, microscopy services, directly observed treatment, logistics and monitoring.

Private Sector Involvement in TB Control:

- National TB Programmes should develop locally appropriate models of public private sector linkage for TB control, particularly in urban areas.
- SAARC Member States should require national medical councils to include NTP technical and operational policies in the medical student curriculum.

2. SAARC Meeting to Formulate Urban TB Control Programme:



Urbanization rate is growing very fast in the Member States and increasing difficulties to TB control programmes specifically in urban areas. Considering the situation the Eighth Meeting of the Governing Board of SAARC TB Centre (STC) decided to organize a SAARC meeting of the experts to formulate an effective strategy for urban TB control. Accordingly the SAARC Meeting to formulate urban TB control programme was held in Kathmandu on 29th October 1999 followed by the Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of STC. Experts of National TB Control Programme (NTP) from India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka along with the other experts working in NTP Nepal participated in the meeting.

The objective of the meeting was to recommend the strategy for urban TB control programme for member countries.

The meeting was inaugurated by Hon'ble Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Minister of Health, His Majesty's Government of Nepal along with the Ninth Meeting of the Governing Board of STC. Dr. Yadav expressed his inaugural address that rapid growth of urbanization, increasing possibility of HIV/AIDS and the high concentration of private practitioners in these areas led to think for modification in strategy for TB control, which currently suited for rural areas. The Hon'ble Minister lauded the timely decision of STC of organizing this meeting to formulate urban TB control programme for Member Countries. The inaugural function was chaired by Secretary of Health, His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

His Excellency Mr. Nihal Rodrigo, the Secretary General, SAARC addressed the meeting and emphasized the priority provided by SAARC Member States to TB control in the region and expressed appreciation on the role of STC being played in order to control TB and HIV in the region.

The participants of the meeting presented their papers related to urban TB control programme. From Nepal, Dr. Pushpa Malla presented a paper on Urban DOTS Programme of Nepal, from Sri Lanka, Dr. V.R. Weeraratna presented a paper on the subject. Mr. Ibrahim Shaheem presented urban TB situation in Maldives, similarly, Dr. G. R. Khatri presented his paper on TB Control in Urban Areas: New Frontiers and Challenges for DOTS in India.

From the bench of the observers Dr. Naresh Pratap KC from Nuffield Institute for Health, National TB Centre, Nepal presented his paper on Service Linkage Pilot Project between the Public and Private Sector for TB Control.

Recommendations:

Following recommendations have been made:

1. Member Countries should formulate their urban TB programme by taking in to consideration:
 - i. Under privileged and those living in urban slums should form the focused group of attention.
 - ii. Depending upon the size of the slum, Microscopic Centres and DOTS Centres should be localized in the slum itself.
 - iii. For urban slums of smaller size information regarding the location of nearest health facility offering diagnostic and curative facilities of TB should be widely publicized.
 - iv. Working hours of the service outlets specially drug distribution centre should be staggered to the convenience of users, which in most of the cases may be early morning/late evening.
2. Medical colleges should be fully involved in all facets of TB programme. Regular CMEs should be undertaken. Methodology to get referrals of chest symptomatic to microscopy centres should be formulated. Standard treatment regimen should be advocated.
3. TB programme and particularly DOTS should be prominently included in under graduate/postgraduate teaching/training programmes.
4. Coordination should be established with all government/private health agencies so as to ensure referral of chest symptomatic to microscopy centres, propagating sputum

microscopy as a primary tool of diagnosis and following prescribed treatment regimens. They should also be requested to report in the prescribed country reporting performa and these reports should be included in the country report.

5. Floating population should be prescribed only non-refampicin based regimens.
6. Involvement of industries, private practitioners and NGOs in specific areas of TB control programme should be attempted without compromising the quality component.
7. Joint IEC campaign should be formulated in collaboration with the AIDS programme.

After the deliberation on the recommendations the final points have been taken onto considerations and recommended to implement in the urban TB control programme in the Member Countries.

Collection and Dissemination of Information

Collection and dissemination of the information is one of the major functions of the SAARC TB Centre. Member countries are the main sources of the information of the centre. Besides the member countries, the centre receives the information from different UN agencies working for the tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, specially World Health Organisation (WHO), National and International Non Governmental Organizations working for the tuberculosis control. Individual private medical practitioners and their published reports are also considered as a source for the information.

Director and Deputy Director collected and disseminated information about TB disease and its control in the Region by attending the National and International conferences. In this reporting period the Director and Deputy Director attended the training organized by WHO, held at Jaipur in India on 6 to 11 December 1999. The title of the training was Inter-country Training on Leadership and Strategic Management for TB Control.

Collection of Books and Journals on TB and Related Diseases

STC Library is a regional library on tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Medical students, Doctors, Researchers, Students of Sociology, Health Workers etc. consult this library for their benefit. The users of this library are increasing day by day. In this reporting period our library collected different types of books and journals for its readers.

Books on TB and HIV/AIDS:

1. AIDS and HIV Infection – Information for United Nations Employees and their Families – WHO
2. Laboratory Services in TB Control - Part I – WHO
3. Laboratory Services in TB Control Microscopy – Part II – WHO
4. Laboratory Services in TB Control Culture – Part III – WHO
5. Questions Answers about DOTS Strategy – WHO

6. Nursing Diagnosis & Interventions in Tuberculosis Control (Standards of Care) – WHO
7. TB do or die – Panos
8. Treatment Tuberculosis Guidelines for National Programme – WHO
9. Treatment of Tuberculosis Guidelines – WHO
10. Tuberculosis Guide for low income countries – IUATLD
11. Tenth Anniversary of SAARC Public Health – SAARC
12. Guide Lines for Conducting a Review of a National Tuberculosis Programme –WHO
13. Clinical Tuberculosis 2nd edition – Crofton – IUATLD
14. Tuberculosis Hand-book – WHO
15. Combating Tuberculosis Principles for Accelerating DOTS Coverage – WHO
16. Guidelines for Control of Tuberculosis in Prisons – WHO
17. The Microscope – A practical guide – WHO
18. Laboratory Services in Tuberculosis Control – WHO
19. AIDS to Microbiology and Infectious Disease – Benn RAV –
20. Understanding AIDS – Dr. G. Iqbal

Besides above books some of computer related and TB programme related books as well as books for general health have also been received from different sources. STC has acknowledged thanks to them who send the books, documents and journals to STC.

Distribution of STC Newsletters

Since establishment of SAARC TB Centre, STC Newsletter is being published biannually. It includes report of the meeting, seminar, workshop and training organised by STC. It gives the information on forthcoming activities of the Centre. The recent news and important technical information on TB control is also published in this newsletter. This newsletters is circulated to the libraries of medical colleges, TB and Chest specialists, Health Workers, Social Organizations and interested persons of SAARC Member Countries and abroad. In this reporting period Vol. IX No. 2 July 1999 issue has been published.

