Social Support for TB Patients

Why in news?

\n\n

The Central TB Division has said the government would hand over a sum of Rs. 500/month to each of India's 35 lakh identified TB patients.

\n\n

What is TB?

\n\n

\n
- Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease usually caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
\n
- It generally affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body.
\n
- The World Health Organisation's TB Report, 2017 stated that India had the highest number of tuberculosis patients across the globe.
\n

\n\n

How can it be eliminated?

\n\n

\n
- Elimination of Tuberculosis is defined as restricting new infections to less than one case per 100,000 people.
\n
- This is certainly possible only if patients are diagnosed and cured without any break in treatment.
\n
- Interruptions can exponentially raise the patient's risk of developing multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), which is harder to treat.
\n
- The Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP) thus aims at offering regular and uninterrupted supply of high quality anti-tuberculosis drugs.
\n

- The drug regimen, called Directly Observed Treatment Short-Course (DOTS), is provided for free of cost under the Programme.
  \n

\n\n

How effective can the recent measure be?

\n\n

  \n
- The funds are intended to offset the loss of wages due to TB, and to help with travel and nutrition.
  \n
- Studies are showing that there is a considerable linkage between **low body mass index and nutritional deficiencies** and the **higher rates of disease**.
  \n
- Under-nutrition is also an established risk factor for progression of latent TB infection to active TB.
  \n
- Under-nutrition contributes to an estimated over one million new cases of annual TB incidence in India.
  \n
- Half of all adult Indian TB patients get the disease due to malnutrition.
  \n
- Given this, the proposed assistance of Rs. 500 may address only a part of the problem.
  \n
- The Central TB Division had proposed to double the rations under the public distribution system to families of TB patients.
  \n
- This is expected to decrease the possibility of contracting the disease.
  \n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

  \n
- Taking forward the TB-diet link, it is essential that proper research into the right kind of interventions be taken up.
  \n
- The right nutritional supplement for TB patients should be devised and incorporated into governmental interventions.
  \n

- Nutritional assessment, counselling and support are integral aspects and should be integrated into the overall care management of TB patients.
  \n
- Ultimately, reduction of TB burden in India and its elimination will require improving the nutritional status of the community as a whole.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

