

Tuberculosis a huge concern globally says Azad

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In his inaugural address at the LRS Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases, the health minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad said despite socio-economic development and advances in medical science, Tuberculosis still remains a major public health concern globally. "Millions of people suffer and die from this disease every year. TB problem was very acute a decade ago in our country. However, since the Millennium Development Declaration by United Nations in 2000, the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme has been successful in achieving the desired goals, both for detection and cure in our country," said Mr Azad. On the occasion, Azad also released "Research Abstracts (1990-2012) - From research to clinical practice, the way ahead."

Speaking further, health minister said, "Since 2007, RNTCP has achieved the case detection rate of more than 70% in line with the global targets for TB control while maintaining the treatment success rate of more than 85%. The treatment success rates have tripled from 25% in pre-RNTCP era to 87% at present. TB death rates have been reduced from 29% to 4% during the same period. Another challenge of great concern is the development of resistance to anti TB Drugs due to irregular & incomplete treatment with irrational regimens. This is being dealt with appropriate expansion of diagnostic and treatment services for managing Drug Resistant TB; i.e. MDR and XDR TB, across the country. It is a matter of great satisfaction that with the advent of effective drugs, modern technology and programme management techniques under the "Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme", recent decline of the disease prevalence and mortality is evident."

Talking about the LRS Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases, Azad said Lala Ram Sarup Khanna donated 5 acres of land in 1952. The Government added another 20 acres and gave this land to TB Association of India for TB hospital. With a view to give renewed priority to TB, Government of India upgraded this hospital into an Institute in 1991 and handed over to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Since then the Institute has been playing a significant role as an apex Institute in the country for prevention, control and treatment of Tuberculosis and respiratory diseases."

He congratulated the director, staff and the concerned officers in the health ministry for timely and successful completion of the project. "The Union Government is firmly committed to accomplish the ambitious plans for the 12th Five Year Plan Period and the vision of a "TB-free India", he added.