Parliamentarians Pledge Support to Make India TB-Free

"Parliamentarians Meet towards a TB-Free India"

December 21, 2015, New Delhi

Parliamentarians across party lines came to demand and sustain high-level domestic commitment to end TB in India. The Members of Parliament from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha pledged to drive political, administrative, and technical solutions to address specific barriers affecting TB prevention and care in India. "Parliamentarians Meet towards a TB-Free India" was organized to sensitize them on the TB situation in India and the urgent need for action. The meet was jointly organized by Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD), The International Union against TB and Lung disease (CTB-The Union) and Central TB Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India (GoI) on December 21, 2015 in New Delhi.

The Meet was Chaired by Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Speaker, Rajya Sabha and Chairman, IAPPD and attended by honourable members of parliament (MPs) Shri Pradeep Bhattacharya, Shri Balwinder Singh Bhunder, Shri Anurag Thakur, Shri Majeed Memon, Shri Balishnab Parida, Shri Bhupinder Singh, Shri Shanta Ram Naik, Shri Narayan Lal Panchariya, Shri Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, Shri Shadi Lal Batra, Shri Avinash Rai Khanna, Smt. Viplove Thakur, Ms. Mabel Rebello and Shri Madan Lal. Also, Mr. Xerses Sidhwa, Deputy Director, Health Office, USAID India; Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD; Dr. Jamie Tonsing, Regional Director, The Union; and Ms. Kavita Ayyagari, Project Director, Challenge TB and The Union Challenge TB Team, attended the Meet.

Narrating successful experiences from advocacy efforts of HIV/AIDS programme, Prof. P.J. Kurien emphasized on the need to increase awareness on TB and related issues. He further added, "We can..." (Contd. on page 3)
TB Free India – Reach, Treat, Cure

“In India today, two deaths occur every three minutes from tuberculosis (TB). But these deaths can be prevented. With proper care and treatment, TB patients can be cured and the battle against TB can be won.”

India has a long and distinguished tradition of research on TB. Studies from the Tuberculosis Research Centre in Chennai and the National Tuberculosis Institute in Bangalore provided key knowledge to improve treatment of TB patients all around the world.

Modern anti-TB treatment can cure virtually all patients. It is, however, very important that treatment be taken for the prescribed duration, which in every case is a minimum of 6 months. Because treatment is of such a long duration and patients feel better after just 1-2 months, and because many TB patients face other problems such as poverty and unemployment, treatment is often interrupted.

Therefore, just providing anti-TB medication is not sufficient to ensure that patients are cured. The Directly Observed Treatment, Short-Course (DOTS) strategy ensures that infectious TB patients are diagnosed and treated effectively till cure, by ensuring availability of the full course of drugs and a system for monitoring patient compliance to the treatment.

In India, the “Revised National TB Control Program” is being implemented by the Central TB Division (CTD), Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. With the advent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the third of which is aimed towards the end of the tuberculosis epidemic by 2030, and the expiration of the Stop TB Strategy, a new era in control efforts is set to begin. WHO’s End TB Strategy envisages a world of “zero deaths, disease, and suffering due to tuberculosis”. The 2035 target is a 95% reduction in deaths and a 90% reduction in incidence compared to 2015 levels. India’s Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program entered 12th Five year Plan (2012-17) with a budget of Rs. 4500 crores, the theme of Universal Access for quality diagnosis and treatment for all TB patients in the community and a target of “reaching the unreached”. Our Vision 2020 is to significantly reduce TB burden in India by ensuring universal access to quality assured TB care as per Standards for TB Care in India (STCI).

As elected representatives, Members of Parliament (MPs) can use their leadership and influence to demand more effective action to beat the TB epidemic in the country. Keeping this in view, MPs from different political parties came together to demand and sustain high-level domestic commitment to end TB in India and pledged to drive political, administrative, and technical solutions to address specific barriers affecting TB prevention and care in India. The meet was jointly organized by Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD), The International Union against TB and Lung disease (CTB-The Union) and Central TB Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India (GoI).

Manmohan Sharma
Executive Secretary, IAPPD
achieve the goal of a TB-Free India only if coordinated and concerted efforts are made by all the stakeholders viz. Government, CSOs, Corporates and most importantly, the public at large.”

Shri Anurag Thakur said, “We must gear up to eradicate TB. Besides efforts for TB treatment and care, it is equally important to work against the stigma surrounding TB.” Shri Thakur also stressed that financial support be provided to TB patients and their families because the disease also affects their livelihood to a great extent.

Shri Shanta Ram Naik said that investment in TB is beneficial for the progress of the country and efforts should be made to fund/support research in faster and efficient TB diagnostics and treatment.

Shri Majid Memon said, “The data shared today is an eye-opener and TB needs to be prioritized. When Polio can be eliminated, why can’t TB?” Shri Baishnab Parida said, “Poverty makes people more vulnerable to TB infection. Should we wait to eradicate TB till poverty gets eradicated?” “Early detection is most important to eradicate TB,” said Shri Madan Lal.

Shri Avinash Rai Khanna urged the parliamentarians to adopt villages and organize free medical check-up camps to raise awareness on TB and proactively screen TB patients.

The parliamentarians pledged, “Let us not remain silent spectators to the loss of human life. We should come together and do all that is possible to make India TB-Free.” They committed to work towards ensuring better TB detection, treatment, patient care and support in their constituencies through civil society organizations. Advocacy efforts in Parliament and media will also form part of their commitment focused on seeking more resources for TB management, greater accountability from the government on matters such as new drugs, cost of treatment, improved diagnostics and patient support.

Dr. Sunil Khaparde, DDG TB, Central TB Division, MoHFW, Government of India, highlighted the government’s efforts in TB control and said, “Under the ‘End TB Strategy’ we are aiming to reduce deaths from TB by 95%; a 90% reduction in TB incidence rate; and to ensure that no family incurs catastrophic cost for TB treatment by 2035.” Dr. Khaparde also appealed for more resources to enable RNTCP to meet these ambitious goals.

At the event, Ms. Deepti Chavan, a MDR-TB survivor, shared the challenges of undergoing Multi-drug resistant (MDR)-TB treatment for six long years. She urged the parliamentarians to advocate for more fund allocation/support for research in new diagnostics (which are faster and can test drug sensitivity upfront) and new drugs. She also shared that she was lucky to have a supportive family and resources to undergo prolonged and expensive treatment but not all patients may have this. Social and nutrition support for MDR-TB patients, besides counseling to help them complete the treatment is the need of the hour.

Quick facts about Tuberculosis in India
- India continues to be the highest tuberculosis (TB) burdened country in the world with an estimated incidence of 2.1 million TB cases annually in 2013 (WHO Global TB Report 2014).
- 2.2% new cases of TB with MDR-TB and 15% cases were for re-treatment in 2014. (WHO Global TB Report 2014).
- India has a 74/1000 case detection rate/score of all forms of TB. (WHO Global TB Report 2014).
- There were an estimated 61,000 multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB patients amongst the 1.41 million notified cases (WHO/SEARO Annual Report 2015).
Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Inter-linkages between Population Issues and the Post-2015 Development Agenda
October 1-3, 2015, Nairobi (Kenya)

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) in cooperation with the Kenyan Parliament organized a Conference and a study visit programme centered on the theme “Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Inter-linkages between Population Issues and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” in Nairobi, Kenya, during October 1-3, 2015. Following on from the United Nations’ adoption on September 27 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), the international development agenda from 2015 onwards, this initiative provided a pivotal opportunity for parliamentarians to propose recommendations on the role they should play in the achievement of Agenda 2030 internationally.

The Conference provided a venue for parliamentarians to examine a range of issues, adopt a recommendation stating the role of parliamentarians for the G7 and TICAD, and to establish a foundation for putting a development agenda into action in light of the principles of the 2030 Agenda.

Issues the parliamentarians focused on in discussions during the Conference were: (1) confirming that dealing with the population issue in Africa, which can be described as a “hot spot” in the development agenda, underpins the achievement of sustainable development; (2) building equal partnerships to promote global partnership; (3) applying diverse population structures in promoting sustainable development; and (4) identifying what role parliamentarians should play in establishing good governance, transparency, and accountability for the citizens of their countries, which are the cornerstone for global partnership.

In attendance at the conference were 56 parliamentarians and representatives from 18 countries including members of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the African Parliamentary Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), and representatives from the Arab region. Representing the IPFP from Japan was Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama, Vice-Chair of IPFP.

Mr. Jesudasu Seelam, M.P and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, attended the Conference.

Group photo of the participants.
On the first day, as a master of ceremony, Hon. Fredrick Outa, MP from the host country Kenya, opened the conference and introduced distinguished speakers. With the reading of the opening declaration by Hon. Wilfred Machage, Senator, on behalf of H.E. Ekwee David Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate, Kenya, the Conference was officially opened. Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama, MP, Vice-Chair of JPFP then delivered the first keynote speech, “Parliamentarians’ Role in Addressing Population and Sustainable Development: Reflections on Progress and a Vision for the Future.” The Conference then moved on to the presentations and discussions of the sessions, which were organized according to the following themes:

- Session 1: Population and Sustainable Development Issues We Face in Today’s Independent World.
- Session 2: A New Perspective on Building a Sustainable Society through Co-development: from Aid Mechanism to Development Partnership.
- Session 6: Syntheses of Discussion for the Parliamentarians’ Recommendations to the TICAD and G7.
- Session 7: Discussion for Adoption of Recommendations.

Mr. Jesudasu Seelam, MP, India, made a presentation on Parliamentarians’ Roles in Addressing Population Issues: Legislation, Budgeting and Mainstreaming into the National Development Agenda. In his presentation Mr. Seelam discussed about the population issues in India, SDG goals and role of parliamentarians. The presentation was very well received by the participants.

On the second day, study visits took place, with participants paying visits to the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Mbagathi Hospital, the National Assembly of Kenya, and a youth center in the downtown area operated by an IPPF Member Association. These visits gave members a first-hand view of Kenya’s current initiatives in population, health, and youth issues, and the opportunity to listen to people involved in these areas.

With the closing address of Hon. Dr. Robert Pukose, MP, Vice-Chair of Health Committee of the National Assembly, Kenya, the three-day Conference and study visits were officially brought to a close.
With the objectives to strengthen the capacity of national committee staff and parliamentarians on policy advocacy and on advocating for unfinished and emerging ICPD issues in their national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) plans, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) in collaboration with Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) organized the 2nd Training Workshop for Parliamentarians and Parliamentary staff on Prioritizing ICPD Agenda in the SDGs, on November 30 - December 1, 2015, in New Delhi.

Eighteen Members of Parliament from India, Afghanistan, Bhutan and Indonesia attended this workshop. Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP, Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP, Mr. Shanta Ram, Naik, MP, Mr. V.P. Singh, MP, Mr. Baishnav Parida, MP, Mr. Pradip Bhattacharya, MP, Mr. Rajesh Dharmani, MLA, and Mr. Ramesh Arora, MLA, represented the country in the workshop. Also officials from IPPF SRO, AFPPD and IAPPD attended the workshop.

In her welcome remarks, Mrs. Viplove Thakur, MP; Vice-Chairperson of IAPPD (on behalf of Hon. Prof. P.J. Kurien, Vice-Chair of AFPPD), thanked all the Members of Parliament for giving their time to attend this important workshop. The opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Mika Marumoto, Executive Director, AFPPD.

Ms. Lucy Jones, the facilitator of the workshop, presented the Overview of ICPD Beyond 2014 and Outline of the new SDG Framework and linkages with ICPD. She presented the background to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) including the Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and the new ICPD Beyond 2014 Framework of Actions. The presentation also made participants aware of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development and the importance of this to their ongoing advocacy and accountability work. She also gave a short introduction to the new SDG Framework.
Goals

Prioritizing Workshop

...were present, against for their purposes also sexual used by national access Exercise participants number of provinces (CSOS) case advocacy Five case studies of would importance unmarried on how these messages prioritize it. It wasn’t permit on a handout) before feeding back and having a general discussion amongst the group.

A number of countries present reported that SRH services and CSE wasn’t available to unmarried adolescents in their countries because societal, religious and cultural norms would not permit it. There was acknowledgement, however, among participants of the importance of adolescent’s health, education and well-being to the overall development of a country.

Five case studies (from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, Pakistan and Nepal) of collaborative advocacy between IPPF South Asia and parliamentarians were discussed. One of the case studies outlined how collaborative work between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and parliamentarians had resulted in the Child Marriage Act being passed in a number of provinces in India in 2014 and 2015. The presentation successfully outlined to participants how working with CSOs could increase their knowledge of issues, help them access evidence and data and increase their ability to influence and champion issues.

Exercise to review ICPD and MDG progress at national level and identify priorities for national advocacy work: The aim of the exercise was to discuss information sources used by parliamentarians to access data and details on national level progress relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights and population and development. The session also included an analysis aspect where participants identified areas of poor progress in their countries through data which they had brought to the workshop as well as data for each country showing ICPD progress. Participants worked in country groups for the purposes of the exercise, each group reviewing progress within their national context against ICPD goals and targets. Where only one or two participants from a given country were present, an AFPPD staff member joined the group for the purposes of the exercise.

(Cont. on page 8)
Championing the ICPD agenda in national SDG plans and monitoring frameworks: The session started with a presentation to outline what is known about the process at the national level for the development of SDG plans and monitoring frameworks. Participants were informed that although the SDG Framework has been adopted, a global indicator framework was still in the process of being developed as it is due to be presented to the UN in March 2016 and adopted in September 2016. Until this is complete the country level indicators will not be developed.

The presentation also outlined that countries are being encouraged not to develop parallel or duplicate systems when developing their SDG plans. Many of the SDG goals and targets will already be included under countries existing national plans and it is therefore likely that countries will review their plans, policies and legislation to assess whether they are comprehensive enough to cover the SDG requirements or whether some new additions (such as new policies or additions to plans) need to be developed.

Tools and strategies to champion the ICPD agenda in national SDG plans and monitoring frameworks: The session looked at the importance of understanding the issue(s) participants have identified for their advocacy efforts. A brief presentation was given to stress that in order to carry out effective advocacy on key selected issues, it is important to understand the key factors behind the issue (both in terms of social, cultural, religious and geographic barriers to solving the problem and in terms of areas where government commitment or implementation is lacking or slow).

Accountability in the SDG process: The session looked at the principles of accountability in the implementation of the SDGs and the role of parliamentarians. This involved the group reviewing the accountability processes outlined in the post-2015 framework document and considering

A visit to the Indian Parliament for workshop participants was also organized by the IAPPD. Participants were made aware of the additional material and guidance and encouraged to continue developing their advocacy plans on returning to their countries.
Unsatisfactory Performance of Population Stabilization Measures in India

Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP, raised questions regarding unsatisfactory performance of population stabilization measures in India in Rajya Sabha on December 1, 2015. He asked that despite the fact that the United Nations Population Fund has spent several million dollars in India for the population stabilization, the outcome is not satisfactory. He also sought details of spending of so much funds on this issue. He enquired about the steps taken/or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard.

While replying to his questions, Mr. Jagat Prakash Nadda, Hon’ble Minister of Health and Family Welfare presented the details of funds released by UNFPA for the purpose of reproductive health care including its various components such as family planning and maternal health in India during last three years and current year.

He further said that the outcome of the efforts of the Government of India and UNFPA are satisfactory which reflects from the percentage decadal growth rate of the country that has declined significantly from 21.5% for the period 1991-2001 to 17.7% during 2001-2011. In addition to this, Total Fertility Rate (TFR) was 3.2 at the time when National Population Policy, 2000 was adopted and has declined to 2.3 as per Sample Registration Survey (SRS) 2013 conducted by the Registrar General of India. He also provided information on the measures taken by the Government to control the population growth of country.

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The Government should identify the cases of resistant tuberculosis and initiate research to develop affordable cure for it - Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP

In a ‘Special Mention’ in the Rajya Sabha on December 21, 2015, Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP, said that as per Annual Status Report of Revised National TB Control Programme, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India, has nearly one fourth of total TB patients in the World. The TB alone kills around two and a half lakh people every year in our country, i.e. one person every two minutes.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals have set the target of ending epidemic of TB by 2030 in Goal No. 3. The major burden of achieving this goal falls on India since we have a large number of TB patients. In the recent years, cases of multi drug resistant (MDR), extensively drug-resistant (XDR) and totally drug-resistant (TDR) TB cases have also emerged. Many of these patients are in India and need timely, effective and affordable treatment.

In the light of rising drug resistant TB cases, all the cases of TB should be managed properly so that drug resistance can be minimized. All the TB patients should be screened for drug resistant disease at diagnosis centres. The government should provide free treatment to all the patients of MDR, XDR, and TDR TB. The free treatment facility should also be extended to patients seeking treatment from private hospitals due to lack of a government one. Awareness campaigns should be launched to prevent TB and to enhance treatment compliance. Also, an epidemiological study should be conducted to identify true scale of drug resistant TB cases and research projects should be initiated to develop an affordable cure and new drugs for drug resistant TB.
The 11th General Assembly of AFPPD – Informal Consultation of the 2016 Parliamentary Activities and 78th and 79th Executive Committee Meetings and 3rd Task Force Meeting

October 9-11, 2015, Bangkok (Thailand)

On October 10-11, 2015, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) held its General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand. 104 delegates attended in all from 25 different countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan and other parliamentarians, officers of National Committees on Population and Development, and representatives from international organizations. The General Assembly is the AFPPD's highest decision-making body. AFPPD has held regular General Assemblies since holding the first in 1984 in the Indian capital of New Delhi.

The Indian delegation, comprising Prof. P.J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha and Vice Chairman, AFPPD; Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP; Mr. Shantaram Naik, MP; Mr. V.P. Singh Badnore, MP; Mrs. Gundu Sudharani, MP; and Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Secretary, IAPPD, represented the country in the meeting.

The theme of this General Assembly was “Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians Advancing ICPD, Achieving Sustainable Development Goals”. In the wake of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on September 27 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Assembly confirmed its own Strategic Plan for parliamentarians in the Asia-Pacific Region and debated other matters including revisions to AFPPD's Constitution and the election of its Office Bearers. In a resolution submitted by AFPPD's Executive Committee, a report was given on its adoption of various manuals, such as financial and operational manuals, that will provide a formal framework for AFPPD's Secretariat, in which to conduct its work.

The General Assembly voted to re-elect JFPF Executive Director Hon. Keizo Takemi as Chair of AFPPD, and in other resolutions parliamentarians from China, India, Kazakhstan, Australia, and the Philippines were elected as Vice-Chairs.
AFPPD's Standing Committees were also re-organized at this General Assembly. AFPPD now has three Standing Committees: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Investing in Youth, and Active Aging.

Proceedings at the General Assembly

At the Opening Session, H.E. Prof. Pornpetch Wichitcholch, President of the Thai National Legislative Assembly, gave a welcome speech in which he stated “following the adoption of SDGs by the U.N. General Assembly on September 27, 2016 measures to deal with population issues are going to be important if societies are to advance their long-term growth and development further, and Thailand will also be engaging with these issues. In that regard also this meeting is significant, being held as it is almost immediately following the adoption of the SDGs.”

Following the opening ceremony, thematic sessions were held, which dealt with the following topics.

- **Plenary Session**: Moving from ICPD/MDGs to ICPD beyond 2014/SDGs: How can we carry forward the momentum of the ICPD beyond 2014 commitment in the SDG landscape?
- **Thematic Session I**: Investing in Young People: How can we realize the demographic dividend and promote youth participation as an engine of growth and sustainability?
- **Thematic Session II**: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: What can parliamentarians do to reduce gender gaps and advance gender equality and women’s empowerment?
- **Thematic Session III**: How can we enable healthy, productive, and dignified lives for older persons and realize the second demographic dividend for economic and social development?

Mr. Avinash Rai Khanna, MP, presented the report of the National Committee (IAPPD) for the year 2013-2015. The presentation was appreciated by the delegates. While congratulating Mr. Khanna for his presentation, Ms. Yoriko Yasukawa, Director, UNFPA Asia and Pacific Regional Office said that we should share our experiences more often, as I find some of the activities interesting and useful for India as well. We have a lot to offer, and let us keep exchanging our experiences and collectively we can learn more and get inspirations for future work.

Mrs. Gundu Sudharani, MP, presented the country paper on “how can we enable healthy, productive, dignified life for elder persons and realize the second demographic dividend for economic and social development”. In her presentation she talked about providing income security to old age persons, providing food through public distribution system, taxation policies for senior citizens, safety and security of elderly and housing. She also briefed the group about the National Policy for Older Persons in India. The presentation was praised by the house.

Mr. V.P. Singh Badnore, MP made certain interventions and suggestions during old age session, apart from his views on the issue. He gave *yoga aasans*/Tips on the demand of participants, he physically demonstrated *yoga aasans*. As a result, he became special attraction of the meeting.

Sh. Shanta Ram Naik, MP from India Chaired the Thematic Session I – Investing in young people: How can we realize demographic dividend and promote youth participation as engine of growth and sustainability. This session examined the issues related to young people and identified policy options and recommendation to harness the demographic dividend.
UN warns India over its high infant mortality rate

The United Nations has issued a dire warning to India over its abysmally high infant and maternal mortality rate.

UNICEF has projected that if current trends of under-five mortality rate continue, by 2030 just five countries will account for more than half of all under-five deaths - India (17%), Nigeria (15%), Pakistan (8%) Democratic Republic of the Congo (7%) and Angola (5%).

According to UNICEF, if mortality rates stay at the present day levels, 69 million children will die before the age of 5 during the next 15 years; about half of those children will die within their first month of life.

According to their latest estimates, released on the sidelines of the Global Maternal Health Conference in Mexico, 5.9 million children will die before the age of 5 globally in 2015. Based on current population projections, 6.6 million children will die worldwide in 2030 if rates remain at 2015 levels. Of these under-five deaths, nearly a third will be in South Asia.

The warning comes weeks after UNICEF revealed that one in every 21 children being born in India is dying before reaching their fifth birthday as the country recorded the highest number of under-five deaths in 2015 globally.

The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) in India is about seven times higher than in high-income countries where 1 in 147 is dying. A study published in the Lancet showed that 1 in 5 under-five deaths took place in India in 2015 (20% of the global deaths) numbering to 1.2 million children.

There was also a silver lining to it - U5MR in India dropped from 126 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 48 in 2015 - a 62% reduction. This is higher than the average global reduction of 53%.

Infectious diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhoea are still main killers of children under age five in India. In 2015, pneumonia is estimated to account for about 15% of the 1.2 million under-five deaths in India. Diarrhoea accounts for about 9%.

UNICEF says that 70% of the global decline in under-five deaths since 2000 is attributable to tackling key infectious diseases. Between 2000 and 2015, the annual number of under-five deaths fell from almost 10 million to 5.9 million.

Source: Kounteya Sinha, TNN, Times of India, 20.10.2015