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Centre Plans National Programme To Tackle Sickle Cell Disease Menace

The Government is all set to roll out a comprehensive national programme for dealing with Sickle Cell Disease, which is becoming a major health problem in India with every passing year

March 4, 2022

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Sickle Cells (Representational)

Indian Tribal News Service

New Delhi

The Government has planned a comprehensive national programme for dealing with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). The programme envisages ante-natal screening, setting up of care centres, and management and rehabilitation of the afflicted patients.

Finally “So far disease being tackled in a piecemeal manner with just a few states like Maharashtra and Gujarat having a full-fledged comprehensive programme to prevent the SCD,” sources said.

In fact, the new approach spearheaded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) involves care right from birth; as long as reaching out to carrier parents; once set up a registry: adequate medicines and right nutrition; and management and rehabilitation of patients across States.

In Numbers

49.4%

Female Literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes

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Update

Karnataka tribals register protest against broken footbridge in unique way

This Independence Day, inhabitants of an Yerava tribal settlement in South Kodagu in Karnataka adopted a unique way to register their protest against the lack of a proper approach road. Members of the 15 tribal families have to struggle daily to reach their settlement as the footbridge connecting the main road to their habitations got washed off for the third time during last year's monsoons and has since been thus till now. They said the panchayat constructed a 20-feet footbridge to the settlement nearly three times, but it gets washed off every year during incessant rainfall. However, the Government has not taken any steps to resolve the issue. It has been over a year now that the tribals have laid a broken electric pole

Hence the **Government** will rope in ASHA workers to implement the programme on a mass scale.

- Sickle Cell Disease is a genetic blood disorder. Red Blood Cells become sickle shaped and block blood vessels leading to a painful crisis
- More prevalent among tribes and in villages, but now also being detected in urban areas of India
- At the present time highest frequency of SCD in tribal belts of Central, Western and Southern India covering Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha
- After all as per ICMR surveys, prevalence of Sickle Cell gene is 5-34% in Scheduled Tribes, who are majorly at a socio-economic disadvantage and are frequently medically underserved
- At least 10% of SCD patients die by the age of 1 year and in many sub-Saharan countries mortality is much higher than that, as per the WHO
- According to ICMR survey, out of 1,13,83,664 persons screened in various States in India, around 9,49,057 carried sickle cell traits, meaning they were carriers while 47,311 had disease
- More than 3 lakh babies worldwide are born with SCD

SCD does not have any cure at present, therefore, any strategy to deal with the disease should focus on prevention and early diagnosis to ensure effective management of the disease and put off a crisis situation, Health experts suggest.

However, **the Indian Tribal News** talk with the doctor as they suggest focus should be on early diagnosis of the disease, treatment and counselling of patients, they point out.

“SCD is not only prevalent among tribal population and in rural areas but is also being reported from non-endemic States like Uttarakhand besides urban families. In fact, both parents have the Sickle Cell gene, there’s a 1 in 4 chance of each child they have being born with sickle cell disease. Hence, it is important that the carrier parents are counseled properly so that they have a healthy baby,” said Dr. Tulika Seth, Founding Trustee, and **Professor of Hematology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi**



However, there no database maintained centrally on the State-wise prevalence rate of SCD among the **tribal** population. Hence, its prevalence not known in a definite manner.



“The public health implications of SCD are significant: poor quality of life, lower life expectancy and higher rates of infant mortality. SCD can be cured for some people with bone marrow transplants (BMT). Usually, this process involves replacing bone marrow, which makes red blood cells in an SCD patient, with healthy bone marrow from a donor,” said Dr. Rahul Bhargava, country’s leading hematologist at **Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, Haryana**

Obviously, Under the new proposed program, the Government also plans to push for setting up BMT

as a makeshift footbridge which they use risk their lives. Hence, on August 15, they stood on the broken footbridge and waved the tricolour to highlight their problems.

PM pays tribute to Birsa Munda on Independence Day

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “The country remains forever indebted to Birsa Munda for the selfless sacrifice and service to the nation.” He emphasized Munda's significant role in the fight for freedom, who at a young age of 22, shook the foundations of the British Raj. “The period of freedom movement has been one of struggle. Youngsters, farmers, women, and tribals, everyone fought continuously against slavery.”



चम्पाई ने जेएमएम से अलग होने का निर्णय सार्वजनिक किया, हेमंत द्वारा अपमानित होना वजह बताई

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खुली चिट्ठी में चम्पाई ने गिनाये अपमानित होने वाले वाक्ये। पूछा कि क्या लोकतंत्र में इससे अपमानजनक कुछ हो सकता है कि एक मुख्यमंत्री के कार्यक्रमों को कोई अन्य व्यक्ति (हेमंत) रद्द करवा दे? पार्टी की कार्यशैली पर भी बातों ही बातों में सवाल खड़े किये। सभी [...]



जनता से किये हर वादे को पूरी सजीदगी से निभाने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं: हेमंत सोरेन

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centers in each district hospital in the States having high SCD population, sources added.

Outcome of Screening of Sickle Cell Cases in Some Major Endemic States

State	Total Screened	Traits	Disease
Chhattisgarh	172893	21267	590
Gujarat	8644928	729561	29266
Jharkhand	300	09	03
Kerala	148180	2042	—
MP	386288	611	312
Odisha	130561	25461	2999
Telangana	23392	617	—
West Bengal	288	62	—

After all, those with the disease usually struggle with it throughout their life. As long as they usually rely on painkillers, blood transfusions, vaccinations and antibiotics, among other drugs, to prevent or manage complications related to the disease.

eventually, People living with SCD have to make frequent visits to hospitals, and inaccessibility or absence of medical facilities can lead to their early death. Check out more blogs on our website [The Indian Tribal News](#).

What Experts Advise

Get regular checkups with the doctor

Take routine medications like folic acid, hydroxyurea and prevent infections by simple steps like washing hands to get some relief from excruciating pain



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