

**MASS HEPATITIS B VACCINATION:
SUCCESS STORY OF HEPATITIS FOUNDATION OF TRIPURA**

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INTRODUCTION:

Tripura is a small state of North Eastern region of India, having an area of 10,492 km² out of which two third is difficult terrain.

Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura is a social organization working in the field of liver disease since 28th July 2002, with heterogeneous Voluntary membership of about 1500, consisting of Doctors, Nurses, Engineers, Social activists, Health care providers, Teachers, Administrators, Businessman and others. The foundation has got 33 branches in the state covering up to all sub districts and community health center level.

The basic aim of Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura since very beginning is "Hepatitis Free Tripura" by adopting the norm of "Awareness, Immunization and Diagnosis & Treatment".

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF HEPATITIS B IN TRIPURA: The total population of Tripura is 36.74 lac and out of this 31% are from aborigine group (Tribal community.)

The average prevalence of Hepatitis B in Tripura is 3.6%. It is much higher among the tribal groups(5.3 %) in comparison to non tribal community (1.97 %) . Chakma community is having highest Hepatitis B prevalence of 11.4 %, followed by Reang (7.69 %),Noatia (6.09 %), Jamatia (5.7 %), Murasing (5.15 %) Tripuri (4.9%) Halam (4.21%) & Lusai (2.74%)

The commonest cause of chronic liver disease in Tripura is Hepatitis B.

PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS B:

Prevention of Hepatitis B is of paramount public health importance in the state of Tripura. Hepatitis B is a vaccine preventable Disease hence mass Hepatitis B vaccination can definitely reduce the burden of Hepatitis B in Tripura.

There was no "Hepatitis B vaccination Program" at Government level and at private level Hepatitis B vaccine was highly expensive before 2002.

Hence, Hepatitis B vaccination was the prime objective of Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura since very beginning (2002), through community awareness development. The vaccination was started at a subsidized rate at Government hospitals on every Sunday (holiday) during 9 AM to 1 PM.

(2)

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION MOVEMENT: STEP WISE INCREMENT:

Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura though started Hepatitis B vaccination as early as 2003 but it was in a limited area and limited way. Gradually the vaccination program got momentum and with the help of Government and people it has become a public health movement and received acceptance at every level.

The vaccination program from 2003 – 2016 can be divided into four phases:

- 1. Inception Phase: 2003 to 2008.**
- 2. Hepatitis B Eradication Program: 2009 to 2011.**
- 3. At Birth Hepatitis B vaccination Program – 2011.**
- 4. Maintenance vaccination Program: From 2012**

INCEPTION PHASE: 2003 TO 2008: During this period the foundation continued to expand its activity from state capital Agartala to District and Sub district level. Accordingly awareness program and vaccination increased gradually.

HEPATITIS B ERADICATION PROGRAM: This is a historical program of Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura. For three consecutive years (2009, 2010 & 2011). Hepatitis B vaccination program was carried out through the state on a single day establishing almost 200 vaccination centers. The program was preceded by mass awareness program utilizing all possible modalities of dissemination of information education & communication. In 2009 on one single day (29th November 2009) about 1.21 lacs people were vaccinated in Tripura. The program was well accepted at urban and rural area alike.

AT BIRTH HEPATITIS B VACCINATION PROGRAM – 2011: On 1st January 2011, the foundation launched a new program "Free at Birth Hepatitis B vaccination Program". The vaccination was carried out in all Govt. Hospitals.

On 5th December, 2011, the Government has took over the program. Since then the at birth (0 – 1 year) Hepatitis B vaccination program being carried out at all Govt. Hospitals by the Govt.

MAINTENANCE VACCINATION PROGRAM: FROM 2012 (TARGETED VACCINATION): After the success of mass vaccination program the Foundation shifted the attention to targeted areas by taking the special program. "Targeted area vaccination" like Municipality area, Block area, Gram Panchayet and specific Tribal area (Autonomous District Council Area). The program is going on till date.

RESULT:

Till date Hepatitis Foundation of Tripura, a non government Social organization has vaccinated 10, 10,293 people in Tripura in its own initiative. The total population covered till now (March 2016) is 27.3% of total population of Tripura. Another 2 lacks children has been vaccinated at Govt. level in last four years. (At Birth Vaccination)

GOVERNMENTAL HELP:

The State Govt. has extended enormous Logistic supports. The Govt. allowed the Foundation to utilize Govt. Health Institution on all Sundays (Holiday). The Govt. Health care providers participated in the

(3)

vaccination program selflessly and regularly. The ministers of the state, legislators and elected body members has extended all possible support by participating in awareness program.

SUPPORT GROUPS:

Corporate philanthropy like Bristol Meyers Squibb Foundation extended helping hand in awareness generation program. Many other Non Government organizations of the country and state has extended direct and indirect support. Many people organizations of democratic movement has extended support.

MEDIA PARTICIPATION:

Print and electrical media of state extended help for propagation of the message to the people.

DRAW BACK:

- Post vaccination analysis and survey could not be done till date.
- There was about 10 – 20% defaulter of vaccination who could not be (2nd & 3rd dose) tracked back.
- Difficult tribal area could not be reached till date.

CONCLUSION:

The mass Hepatitis B vaccination with the initiation of social Non Govt. organization is a wonderful experience and success in this public health movements generates big enthusiasm among the participants. The support by Govt. and Non Govt. organization is a must for success of such movement. This many act as template for various health programs. This mass vaccination program has already started reducing the total burden of Chronic Hepatitis B in the state of Tripura.

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