

## DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFER SCHEME FOR TB PATIENTS MAKES SLOW PROGRESS

Relevant for: Health, Education & Human Resources | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

Last year, WHO sounded the alarm when it said tuberculosis had surpassed HIV/AIDS as the world's number one infectious killer. | Photo Credit: [AP](#)

The direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme for nutritional support to Tuberculosis (TB) patients — Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) — rolled out from April this year has recorded slow progress in the last eight months. Of the 18 lakh registered TB patients across the country, only 4.69 lakh, barely 26% of the beneficiary pool, have received cash transfer so far.

A total payment of over 50 crore, at the rate of 500 each patient monthly, has been made to these 4.69 lakh patients till December 7. Of the total registered patients, the bank account details of only 9 lakh patients are available with the Central TB division so far.

This is because many of the rural poor either do not have a bank account or are migrant patients, whose bank accounts are difficult to be captured.

Revealing these figures, Vikas Sheel, Joint Secretary (Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme- RNTCP) told *The Hindu* on Saturday that there is no dearth of funds for the DBT scheme under NPY.

“Although funds are not set aside for DBT, available funds can be used for all activities approved under the State plans. We have asked the States to expedite collecting bank account details of all registered patients under their jurisdiction,” he said.

Concerned over the slow progress, the Joint Secretary recently wrote to the Principal Secretaries (Health and Family Welfare) and National Health Mission (NHM) directors asking them to accelerate the uptake of DBT scheme.

“We have asked the State TB officers to use the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal if there are any technical glitches on the NIKSHAY portal to make DBT payments. We have also asked the State TB officers to submit weekly reports on the progress of DBT scheme to the Union Health Ministry,” the official said.

In the letter dated December 4, the Joint Secretary has asked the State TB officials to transfer the benefits of NPY to the patient's blood relative (spouse, parents, siblings) if he/she does not have an account in his/her own name.

“In case the beneficiary does not have an account in his/her own name, but a family member (spouse, parents, brother/sister /blood relatives) has a bank account, the health staff/treatment supporter can transfer the benefits of NPY to the account of a family member by obtaining an undertaking from the beneficiary,” stated his letter.

“Also for beneficiaries who do not have a bank account even in his family member's name, provision of opening zero balance bank account is available under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and Indian Postal Bank. The District Magistrates/Collectors should ensure that zero balance bank accounts for the TB patients are opened expeditiously. The District TB officers should coordinate with the Lead Bank manager, nodal officer for PMJDY and Postal

Bank in the district,” the letter said.

A single workout session consisting of three 20-minute treadmill runs could activate neurons that are important regulators of blood glucose levels and

Reduced govt. attention has made life difficult for 2 lakh people living there

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