

INTRODUCTION

The idea of bringing out this publication “Sociological aspects of Tuberculosis – Summaries of published literature” was mooted in 1993. It was just incidental that a team from Mumbai based Foundation for Research in Community Health (FRCH) visited the National Tuberculosis Institute (NTI), Bangalore to conduct a literature search for a study on social and operational constraints in tuberculosis (TB) control in a district of Maharashtra, a large state in the Western part of India. All the traditional methods of literature survey like a MEDLINE, key-journal search, etc., although did reveal a vast literature, were not focussed and authenticated on the subject. A very pleasant surprise awaited them at the NTI library. They found that this library was a gold mine of information on TB, with a large number of monographs, conference proceedings, minutes of important meetings and unpublished literature, besides having all the important journals on the subject. A discussion of the team with Dr B.T. Uke, the then Director of NTI, Bangalore, resulted in this collaborative project. Since it would have been a huge task to annotate all the available literature on TB, it was finally decided by the teams of the two Institutions to initiate preparation of a database on the sociological aspects of TB from 1939 onwards. The Librarians of both the Institutions chalked out a detailed action plan. The sustained effort put in by Mrs Sudha Murthy, Sr. Librarian at NTI, Bangalore, brought the annotated bibliography to its completion in 1995. Meantime, certain developments at FRCH, Mumbai, brought this publication to a standstill for quite sometime. As it happens many a time with publications, this also went into the cold storage. When I took over as the Director, NTI in 1997, the efforts were revived by holding meetings with Dr Uplekar, the brain behind this project, who came from Geneva to attend a workshop at NTI, and Dr Sheela Rangan. The annotated bibliography was found to be inadequate for dissemination of information after putting in such concerted effort. Hence, two major changes were done; firstly, the sub-title was modified to “Summaries of published literature”; and secondly the period of coverage was extended to 2000. The NTI took over the task of publishing the book independently, as Dr Uplekar and Dr Sheela Rangan who initiated this project were not with the FRCH.

The literature compiled spans over a period of 6 decades. The summaries are grouped into 5 chapters, starting from the historical aspects of the sociological characteristics which have influenced the health care provided by government and private sector. Emphasis is given on awareness of TB and health seeking behaviour of the community highlighting the treatment dynamics. The often neglected aspect of physical and social rehabilitation of TB patient in his environment after treatment has been given due importance in this document.

Readers may find the earlier summaries brief and the later ones quite exhaustive. However, the developers of this publication are sure that it would be very useful to those who find literature review an important component for developing any research proposal or designing studies.

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