

## Editorial

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National Tuberculosis Institute (NTI), Bangalore was established in 1959 to formulate and evolve a practical, economically feasible and widely acceptable TB programme for the entire country. The dream of several concerned and thinking individuals became a reality on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1960 when the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru along with His Highness Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar, then Governor of Mysore and a host of other distinguished dignitaries inaugurated NTI. Fifty years since that period, the Indian National Flag continues to flutter on top of the NTI's Avalon building, symbolizing the achievements and challenges of TB control in India. During these five decades, the related evolution and contributions from various sections of this Institute have been highlighted in this issue of NTI Bulletin.

Once the Institute was established, the very first task was to devise and implement a work plan. The NTI developed the tradition of putting together research protocols for a variety of studies dealing with different aspects of TB control. The variety of hypothesis and ideas that passed through different phases of formulation, scrutiny for feasibility, field testing for practicality and acceptance were made possible with the constitution of Technical Coordination Committee (TCC). In early 60's the idea of conducting operation research applicable to public health aspects was fairly new. Through fearless discussions during TCC meetings, where the original ideas got enriched by the contribution of others, was referred as research project and allotted a RP number. Thereafter, any new research study was started on pilot basis after issuing the work instruction/action plan. Similarly collaborative research projects with other eminent research Institutions were also discussed in TCC before submitting for the ethical clearance. Thus the TCC remained a hard testing ground for all new ideas including reviewing the work done and conducting a peer review on the study analysis before the papers were sent for publication. A glimpse of research studies carried out by various sections has been covered in this issue.

A prime objective for the genesis of NTI was to impart training to the medical and paramedical personnel to execute the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP). On the basis of the experience gained in implementation of NTP, it got further evolved as Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP). Emphasis on Directly Observed Treatment Short course (DOTS) became necessary to suit the changing scenario with emerging threats of Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and TB-HIV. Being a WHO collaborative centre since 1985, NTI also conducted trainings for international participants in TB control, Epidemiology, Bacteriology, Data management etc., besides regular RNTCP Modular Training for participants from different states of India. Lately, there has been a vast increase in the number of training programmes conducted each year, including Laboratory related training programmes, although the duration of trainings had to be reduced according to the specific requirements.

Apart from the trainings and research, some additional infrastructure like Robert Koch Memorial Block which houses the main laboratory for solid & liquid culture, molecular biology, HPLC, Line Probe Assay (LPA) besides Silver Jubilee Hall and Board room were commissioned. During these years, P.V. Benjamin Block was also added to NTI's Infrastructure that houses Training, Statistical, Monitoring sections besides a well equipped conference hall and the Computer section. Furthermore, NTI campus got further beautified with well maintained

greenery all around the campus that includes renovated Hostels (Krishna & Cauvery Nivas) with appropriate mess facility for national and international participants attending various training programmes and renovated Animal Model Research Unit with open shelter for retired breeders besides a Bio-Safety Negative Pressure Laboratory which also houses a more recently added International Centre of excellence in Laboratory Trainings (ICELT).

More than the contribution of individual sections, it is the collective efforts of every staff member of National Tuberculosis Institute that is to be lauded for the glorious past, eventful present and a challenging future.

**Editor**