

## **Breaking TB Myths: Reducing Stigma Through Social Media Influence**

### **Background:-**

Himachal Pradesh, like many regions in India, faces persistent challenges in TB awareness, stigma reduction, and early detection. Despite ongoing efforts, misconceptions about TB continue to hinder community participation in screening and treatment programs leading to a gap between TB prevalence and notification.

### **Intervention:-**

To amplify the impact of the 100-day TB campaign, the State TB Cell partnered with influencers from diverse fields—sports, politics, music, and media—to deliver targeted TB awareness messages via social media. This approach aimed to normalize TB discussions, debunk myths, and encourage public participation for a TB-free Himachal Pradesh.

Key influencers with a strong following were identified and sensitized to participate in the TB awareness campaign. Total 178 Influencers were identified and engaged. Personalized scripts were developed based on each influencer's background to enhance relevance and audience connection. The recorded videos were then reviewed, refined, and aligned with the TB Mukht Bharat campaign's communication strategy before being disseminated through influencers' social media handles and integrated with National Health Mission and TB Cell platforms for maximum outreach.

### **Results:-**

The influencer-driven campaign reached over 10 million people improving care seeking with influencers playing a big role in spreading the message. For example, through Meri TB Ki Kahani Intervention, a video by one influencer got 1.4 million views. Another video reached 2.1 million views. In total, 178 videos were made by influencers and community members, with influencers alone reaching 10 million people. This effort helped many people understand TB better.

This is reflected through increased number of sputum examination indicating improved care seeking. During the year 2023, 3,69,686 sputum samples were tested which after the campaign reached 3,98,231

### **Conclusion:-**

Leveraging social influencers for public health awareness proved to be an effective, scalable, and high-impact strategy for TB awareness and stigma reduction which is pivotal to TB elimination in India.

### **Summary:-**

The Himachal Pradesh Influencer Engagement Model successfully integrated digital advocacy, social media outreach, and community mobilization to bridge awareness gaps and accelerate TB elimination efforts. This initiative underscores the power of strategic

partnerships and digital platforms in public health, offering a sustainable approach to community-driven disease prevention programs.

