

'Poor govt-private sector link hits fight against TB in India'

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Chennai: The biggest hurdle in bringing tuberculosis under control in India today is the lack of communication between the private sector and the government, believes Niels Brimnes, associate professor in history and South Asian studies, department of culture and society, Aarhus University, Denmark.

He was speaking in the context of the failure of private practitioners to direct their patients towards the government's comprehensive TB programme.

Here to release his new book, "Languished Hopes – Tuberculosis, the State and International Assistance in Twentieth Century India," Brimnes said, "The narrative is largely about why we have not been able to control TB in India." Brimnes' book comes weeks after a WHO report that estimated the country to have 2.8 million new cases of the disease in 2015.

The report also threw light on a worrying increase in the number of multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB cases in the country, which it says constitutes almost 45% of the 480,000 new cases of MDR TB globally.

"The 1980s was the bleakest decade in the history of TB control in India, because the National Tuberculosis Pro-



Niels Brimnes during the launch of his book at IIT-M on Wednesday

gramme was in a severe crisis and the BCG vaccine had proven to have no impact on pulmonary TB in adults," he said, adding that the book attempts to explore TB in the era of vaccines and antibiotic drugs and contribute to the history of international health interventions post World War 2.

Evaluating the book, John Bosco Lourdasamy, associate professor, department of humanities and social sciences, IIT Madras, said, "The work reminds us that science is too important to be left to scientists alone. Its strength lies in the fact that rather than narrating the sequence of measures taken to control TB, it has sought to study the process through the prism of the changing role of the state from the colonial to the post-colonial."