



BOUNCING BACK WITH GRITS,
GUTS AND GUMPTION

B CHINMAYEE
TB CHAMPION
GANJAM, ODISHA



B CHINMAYEE



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B Chinmayee is a classical Indian dancer from Odisha. After she was diagnosed with TB in 2017, about of TB meningitis left her paralyzed in a hospital, and she subsequently suffered a miscarriage.

For Chinmayee, discovering that TB was a serious but treatable disease was only the beginning of her challenges. She also faced a lot of stigmas. Her husband and family were unsupportive, and she returned to live with her parents. “Delayed [TB] diagnosis made me paralyzed and shattered my dream to dance on a stage,” Chinmayee said. However, with support from her father, she completed her treatment and was determined to lead a normal life.

In February 2019, she attended a capacity-building workshop for TB survivors organised by REACH. Since then, Chinmayee has been working as a TB Champion, supporting people with TB, including those seeking care in the private sector. Chinmayee centres her advocacy efforts on ending the stigma associated with TB. She has organised several awareness meetings and anti-stigma campaigns during local festivals and in her neighbourhood.

“I often glance through my old photographs in my bright and traditional costume, and that gives me a determination to dance again,” she said. “I do try a few simple steps and have shared it with my TB Champion friends. Their encouragement motivates me to perform one day, especially on Mahisasurmardini, which depicts the powerful Goddess Kali killing the demon king Mahisasur.”

In September 2020, addressing senior health officials at the launch of the TB Harega Desh Jeetega campaign in New Delhi, she spoke of her determination to end TB stigma and to dance once again., Chinmayee is today considered a role model for young women affected by TB, with her openness and courage.

Watch Chinmayee's story here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tl79p1sENqU>



**TB CHAMPION B CHINMAYEE FROM GANJAM
DISTRICT OF ODISHA HAS BRAVED ALL ODDS.**



**B CHINMAYEE DISPLAYING AN IEC
MATERIAL IN GANJAM, ODISHA.**

Outcast to TB champion — 22-yr-old rebuilt her life

Odisha woman who lost nearly everything to disease is now powering anti-TB campaign

ADITI TANDON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 8

Fresh from her excruciating struggle against brain tuberculosis, 22-year-old Chinmayi cannot stop smiling.

“I am not afraid of tuberculosis now. TB is afraid of me,” says the young woman after the government recently named her a TB champion who will power India’s anti-TB campaign starting this year.

Chinmayi’s mission is cut out before her. She has to inspire lakhs of TB-infected persons like herself to report the disease and fight the stigma associated with it.

“Chinmayi’s resilience against TB is already inspiring patients across Odisha,” says Dr Sangeeta Sharma of the National Institute of Tuberculosis, who has been involved with the girl’s treatment since initial years of detection of her disease.

It was 2016 when Chinmayi, a bright college student in Odisha’s Berhampur, was detected with brain TB, a rare and extremely painful form of



TB champion Chinmayi with her father in New Delhi. TRIBUNE PHOTO

“Had it not been for my father, I would be dead by now. In past six months, I have encouraged over 100 TB patients to strive against the disease

Chinmayi, TUBERCULOSIS CHAMPION

the disease caused by bacterial infection.

“The first casualty was my unborn child as I had a painful abortion. The second casualty was my marriage. My husband didn’t think twice before abandoning me after he learnt that I had been detected with brain TB. The disease caused severe paralysis.

Within days of detection, my life as I knew it had ended. The stigma was more painful than TB,” Chinmayi told *The Tribune* in an interview after the Ministry of Health celebrated her victory over TB at a recent event in the capital.

Three years down the line, Chinmayi is back to her feet and is learning to dance

PAINFUL STRUGGLE

■ In 2016, Chinmayi, a bright college student in Odisha’s Berhampur, was detected with brain TB, a rare and extremely painful form of the disease caused by bacterial infection

■ Her first casualty was her unborn child as she had a painful abortion. The second casualty was her marriage as her husband abandoned her after he learnt that she has been detected with brain TB

■ Three years down the line, Chinmayi is back to her feet and is learning to dance classical forms again

and abandonment that comes with it. Wherever I go as a government-appointed TB champion, I urge to people not to isolate patients and to be supportive. Care is the key in TB treatment,” said Chinmayi.

Brain TB, experts say, is so painful that patients often speak of cutting their head off and keeping it aside.

Chinmayi endured that pain as she battled a drug resistant form of TB for which the only treatment available until a month ago was a series of painful injections.

India this month launched oral treatment regimen for drug-resistant TB which will not be painful and will raise the treatment success rate from 40 per cent at present to around 70 per cent.

India has the highest burden of TB, the most fatal communicable disease in the world with 27 per cent global new cases coming from India alone.

The government has committed itself to eliminating TB by 2025, five years ahead of the UN Sustainable Development Goal Target of 2030.

