



St. Jude Global Scholars Projects: Venkatraman Radhakrishnan



Establishing the First Dedicated Population-Based Childhood Cancer Registry and Network of Hospital-Based Childhood Cancer Registries in India

This project aimed to establish the first dedicated population-based childhood cancer registry (PBCCR) in India and to demonstrate how it could serve as a scalable model for other low- and middle-income countries. The Chennai PBCCR collected high-resolution data on children and adolescents diagnosed with cancer in the Greater Chennai Corporation area from 18 hospitals across public and private sectors. A major component of the project included a mixed-methods implementation science study to assess barriers and enablers of registry implementation.

The Chennai PBCCR project has had a measurable and multi-dimensional impact on child health. At the systems level, the PBCCR has catalyzed a significant shift in how childhood cancer surveillance is conceptualized and implemented in India.

Following completion of the Global Scholars Project, the Chennai PBCCR was expanded statewide as the Tamil Nadu PBCCR, and a hospital-based childhood cancer registry network covering hospitals across India were also launched. The Tamil Nadu PBCCR is now funded for three years through philanthropic support from the Bagchi Foundation.

Project Details



Location
India



Setting
Country level



Health Condition
Childhood Cancer



Focus Areas
Access, Equity, Quality
Timeliness



Target Age Group
All Pediatric Patients

Systems-Level Change

Participants

200 Health Care Workers

UN Sustainable Development Goal

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and
Strong Institutions

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

WHO Health System Building Blocks

Health information systems

Health service delivery

Health workforce



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Strategies for sustainability include training a new cadre of registry personnel, integration with existing cancer control programs, and continued international dissemination. Lessons learned from this project are already being applied in advising new registry setups globally.

Key Findings

The following are key findings from this Global Scholars Project, establishing the first population-based childhood cancer registry in Chennai, India.

- Established India's first dedicated PBCCR with active participation from 18 hospitals.
- Captured high-resolution data for 756 pediatric cancer patients between 2018–2024.
- Identified key implementation barriers (e.g., staff attrition, data-sharing hesitancy) and enablers (e.g., government endorsement, stakeholder buy-in) through CFIR-informed analysis.
- Released the first PBCCR report publicly in 2025, receiving national recognition and media coverage.
- Launched the Tamil Nadu PBCCR and the Indian Pediatric Hematology Oncology Group network, extending registry coverage across the state and ten national hospitals.
- Demonstrated feasibility of using a common data collection form (SJCARES) for both PBCCR and Hospital-Based Childhood Cancer Registry settings ($p=0.038$).

Systems-Level Change

GICC CureAll Projects

1. Analysis of cancer health system
2. National Cancer Control strategy development/implementation
3. Implementation of cancer workforce training packages
4. National network and referral pathway strengthening.
5. Defining national standards and guidelines for index cancers
8. Strengthening & linking cancer registries (population- & hospital-based)
9. Country dashboard for childhood cancer monitoring
10. Local/regional advocacy portfolios: case studies, awareness campaigns



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