

To access previous publications, please visit our website by clicking here

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM ILEP INDIA COORDINATOR



Dr. Srilekha Penna

Dear readers,

Welcome to the ninth edition of the ILEP India Newsletter! In this volume, we are excited to share the inspiring initiatives and achievements that unfolded from October to December 2023. This edition offers an in-depth look into our active engagement in the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) review cum workshop, insightful sessions from the ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series, and the strategic planning discussions held during the ILEP India Annual Meeting.

You will further find captivating narratives on the impactful activities carried out by our member organizations. From the participation of NLR India in the COR-NTD annual meeting to GLRA India's hands-on training program for lab technicians, each insight reflects our collective commitment to achieving a leprosy-free India.

Additionally, the progress updates from Damien Foundation India Trust (DFIT) and the comprehensive care initiatives undertaken by Project Nirmaya II by GLRA India showcase the diverse and holistic approaches adopted by ILEP India and its partners. This edition further gives insights into the collaborative efforts of our ILEP NLEP consultants together with the state authorities in case detection as seen in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

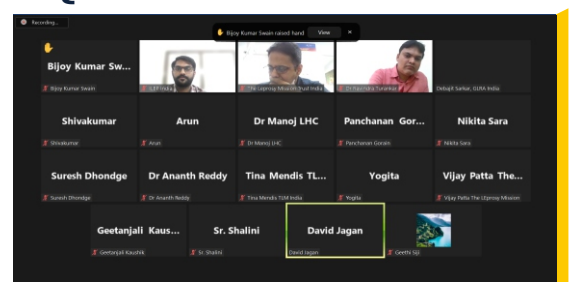
As we step into 2024, we invite you to look back at the key highlights for 2023 summarized at the end of this newsletter, offering a glimpse into the collective achievements, milestones, and impactful contributions made by ILEP India and its member organizations.

I hope you find this edition insightful and engaging!

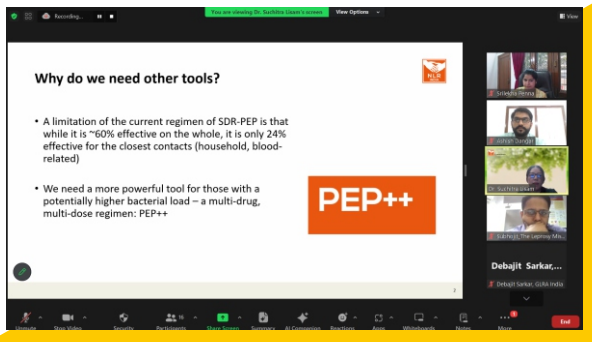
Key activities and participation by ILEP India and member organizations

1 Exchanging Insights and Strengthening Collaborations: Insights into ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series Q4

- Three sessions were hosted by ILEP India during Q4 2023 under ILEP India KSS, which have seen active participation by all the member organisations.



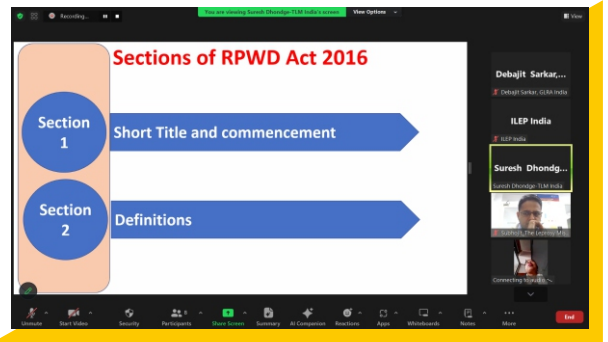
ILEP India KSS Session (October)



ILEP India KSS Session (November)

- The first session of this quarter was delivered by Mr. Jaganathan, Program Manager at The Leprosy Mission Trust India; the session focused on Producer Company (Sustainable Livelihood Approach) operated by people affected by leprosy and disabilities.
- The second session was delivered by Dr. Suchitra Lisam, Head – Research and Knowledge Management, NLR India Foundation; the session was titled as “Enhanced Post Exposure Prophylaxis – PEP++ to Stop transmission of Leprosy”.

- The final session of Q4 2023 was delivered on “Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act) 2016” by Mr. Suresh Dhondge, NLEP Consultant and Program Manager at The Leprosy Mission Trust India.



ILEP India KSS Session (December)

- During these sessions, in-depth discussions were held regarding the registration of companies owned by persons with disabilities and associated challenges, implementation of the PEP++ study

by NLRIF, and examining how the RPwD 2016 act could serve as a foundation to address discriminatory laws against leprosy in India.

2 NLEP review cum workshop of high priority states: joining hands for better results

- Central Leprosy Division (CLD) in collaboration with WHO India organized a two-day National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) review meeting cum workshop in New Delhi.



Participants from the review meeting



Deputy Director General - Leprosy presenting overview of NLEP in India

- The agenda was to have a review of 15 high-priority states along with discussions on important programmatic components i.e. Discriminatory laws, best practices from various states, interruption of leprosy transmission, Slit Skin Smear examination in Leprosy and Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis.

- The event was inaugurated by the Honourable Minister of State along with various dignitaries from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and WHO India.
- ILEP India actively participated in organizing and chairing the sessions, and initiating key discussions along with CLD and WHO India.
- The event was attended by representatives from the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), Central Leprosy Training and Research Institute (CLTRI), Regional Leprosy Training and Research Institute (RLTRI), State Leprosy Officers of high-priority states, some District Leprosy Officers, Rotary National, Bombay Leprosy Project, Novartis, ILEP India members, ILEP NLEP Consultants, Medical Colleges, Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), APAL India, WHO NTD state coordinators, etc.



Govt. and Non-Govt. partners of NLEP at the review meeting

3 ILEP India Annual Meeting: deciding priorities and setting goals for 2024

- The ILEP India Annual Meeting on December 6, 2023, brought together CEOs from member organizations, the ILEP India coordinator, and the Deputy ILEP India Coordinator to discuss progress and future strategies.
- The ILEP India coordinator presented the achievements of 2023, acknowledging significant strides made in leprosy work in India. The discussion delved into potential challenges and opportunities, setting the tone for collaborative planning.
- A key agenda point of the meeting was the draft activity plan for 2024, focusing on interrupting leprosy transmission in line with ILEP's mandate, the national strategic plan, and global strategy. CEOs actively participated in crafting a forward-looking approach, reflecting ILEP India's commitment to a leprosy-free world.
- The outcomes of this meeting will guide ILEP India's contributions in 2024, reinforcing collective dedication to interrupting the transmission of leprosy in India.



ILEP India members deciding on priorities and aligning strategies

4 NLR India's Participation in the COR-NTD annual meeting

- The annual meeting of the Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases (COR-NTD), under the theme "Observance of 10 years - Remembering our beginnings, building towards the future" was held on 16th and 17th Oct 2023 in Chicago, United States of America (USA).
- The meeting was hosted by COR-NTD in partnership with WHO, GHIT fund, National Institute of Health, funding by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



- Dr. Suchitra Lisam, Head of Research & Knowledge Management from NLR India attended the Annual Meeting of COR-NTD.
- Under the session theme of "Developments in implementing and improving preventive chemotherapy against leprosy", she delivered a presentation on "Enhanced preventive chemoprophylaxis - PEP++ to stop transmission of leprosy" and represented the International PEP++ research programme team at the meeting.

5 Leprosy Slit Skin Smear (SSS) Training for Lab Technicians by GLRA India

- A hands-on training program for 25 government lab technicians was organized in Barwani district, Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with the District Health Department (Leprosy) under the GLRA India's Public-Private Mix Leprosy project.
- The project titled 'Promoting Leprosy Early Case Detection by Enhancing Public-Private Partnership' was initiated in August 2022 and has trained over 1200 healthcare staff across 4 districts (Barwani, Bhopal, Khargone & Sehore) in Madhya Pradesh.
- GLRA India is planning for similar training sessions in partnership with state, district, and partner NGO hospitals in the upcoming project cycle.



Slit Skin Smear Trainings

6 Collaborations with district authorities to detect hidden cases and spread awareness at Schools

- A special leprosy screening (door-to-door) survey in Kusumkot village was conducted by the office of Asst. Director of Health Services (ADHS-Leprosy), Amravati district of Maharashtra state as there are many more hidden leprosy cases.
- The survey was initiated upon the request from ILEP's NLEP consultant (TLMTI); Kusumkot village is 150 km from the Amravati headquarter and its Melghat tribal belt situated on Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh state border.



Door-to-door survey in Kusumkot village



The survey team along with ILEP's NLEP Consultant and ADHS team (Amravati)

- ADHS (Leprosy), Amravati sent all ADHS staff to Kusumkot village during October 2023. The team reached out to all the houses and confirmed nine new cases and started the treatment.
- During November, a leprosy awareness program was conducted in Adivashi Ashram School, Bhuvan (Tal. Peth, District. Nashik, State. Maharashtra). ILEP's NLEP Consultant, Maharashtra (TLMTI) took a session on the basic signs and symptoms of leprosy.

- A total of 650 children attended the program along with school staff. Focus was given to spreading positive awareness of leprosy and keeping an eye on family members and neighbours about signs of leprosy.
- Post-session, many children came forward to show their skin patches (confirmed as non-leprosy) and knew the basic signs of leprosy.



Awareness session being provided by ILEP's NLEP Consultant in one of the schools

7 Project Nirmaya II: Comprehensive Leprosy Care through Strengthening and Streamlining Referral Services by GLRA India

- Project Nirmaya Phase II is one of GLRA India's flagship projects to combat Leprosy.
- The project is being implemented by 7 partner NGOs across 4 states and has arranged several outreach camps for early leprosy case detection and disability assessment.



Camps under Project Nirmaya Phase II

- In Q4-2023, the project organized 12 such camps, a total of 1186 people attended, and 10 new leprosy cases (5 Multi bacillary and 5 Paucibacillary) were detected.



- The team consists of a Medical Doctor, Physiotherapist, Lab-technician, and Paramedical staff who lead the camps with the support of the staff from Primary Health Centres.
- The Skin and Disability camps arranged a demonstrative session for the frontline health workers in leprosy management. The camp facilitated disability assessment among 172 leprosy-affected persons and provided tailored medical care for patients with complications, including ulcer care and physiotherapy.
- One of the primary objectives of the camps was not only to extend medical examinations; it aimed to raise awareness about leprosy among the communities.

8 Towards medical and social services: DFIT's progress Q4 2023

- During Q4-2023, Damien Foundation India Trust (DFIT) through its operations in seven states, three hospitals along with seven partnership project hospitals supported 13 Disability Preventions and Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR) field teams and construction of one house for the persons affected by leprosy.
- During the period, DFIT provided services to 26,958 OPD patients out of which, 200 new



RCS being carried out at one of the DFIT hospital



MCR footwear being manufactured at MCR unit

leprosy cases were detected; 101 patients were female while 23 persons were detected with grade 2 disability.

- Services to 342 inpatients covering 8727 bed days were provided by hospitals supported by DFIT; 66 patients were treated for lepra reaction. Deformity corrective surgeries were conducted for 52 patients while MCR footwear was provided to 251 persons.

- DFIT reached out to 3,014 patients through its field activities during the period and counselled them for the self-care practice among them 2165 are practicing self-care.
- DFIT as part of social rehabilitation services for persons affected by leprosy has provided 12 small business support, two housing support, and provided educational support for five children.



Physiotherapy being provided to patient

9 Leprosy Case Detection Campaign Monitoring in Uttar Pradesh

- The Leprosy Case Detection Campaign was organized by the state for early detection of cases; the Sr. Regional Director (SRD) Kolkata, West Bengal was appointed as an external evaluator and monitor for LCDC. He along with the state team and ILEP NLEP Consultant conducted a thorough assessment of the LCDC across four districts. Beginning in Barabanki, discussions with the State Leprosy Officer (SLO) and District Leprosy Officer (DLO) covered team progress, case detection, and training. Field visits to the Mausauli block involved monitoring 23 households and providing on-the-job training.



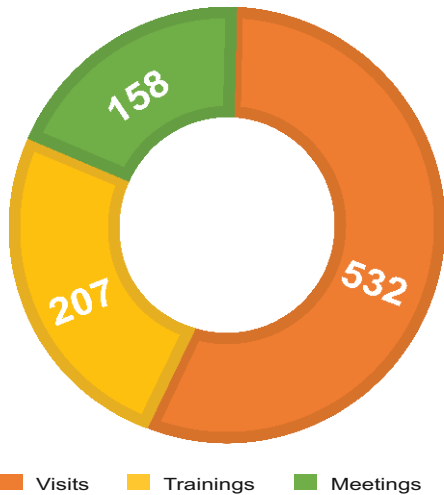
Discussion with CMO & DLO Regarding LCDC Activities (District: Deoria, Uttar Pradesh)



Suspected case validation during the field visit

- Ayodhya District saw engagements with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and DLO, focusing on program planning, healthcare staff involvement, and team monitoring. Field visits included Kanak village and Chanpur urban areas, where 16 households were monitored, and on-the-job training and ASHA sensitization were conducted.
- Gorakhpur District discussions covered the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP), team activities, and supervisor roles. Monitoring in Vantangia village involved 23 households and on-the-job training.
- Deoria District meetings with the CMO, District Magistrate, and DLO addressed program updates, health staff involvement, and awareness activities. The visit concluded with monitoring in Urban Block Somnath area and Rampur Karkhana village Dumari.
- The focus on collaboration, adherence to guidelines, and grassroots strengthening underscored the commitment to effective leprosy control. SRD's recommendations, including MOICs' direct involvement in daily reporting, aimed at enhancing program efficacy.

Key activities by NLEP consultants



In 2023, ILEP agencies continued to support field and policy-level assistance to the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) through their 14 NLEP consultants across 18 endemic states. These consultants routinely visit the health care facilities, organize self-care camps, assist district and state leprosy officers, train the self-help groups, monitor the drug availability in the districts, and assist in active case detection activities. During 2023, the state and district-level program was supported through 158 advocacy and program implementation meetings; 207 trainings; and 532 visits to the districts, different health facilities, and leprosy colonies.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023



Launch of ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series (ILEP-I KSS)

Supported Leprosy Case Detection Campaign as central monitors under NLEP

August

Participated in developing training modules for integrating mental health services for leprosy

Organized NLEP consultant review meeting to strengthen collaborative efforts

September

Participated in state review and NGO partners meet organized by State Leprosy Office, NLEP-Andhra Pradesh

Organized ILEP India mid-term progress meeting with CLD, ILEP India members and WHO India

Recognition letter issued by Central Leprosy Division highlighting ILEP's NLEP consultants as an integral part of NLEP

Participated in NLEP review meeting of 15 high priority states and discussed way forward

November

December

Organized ILEP India's annual meeting for strategizing activity plan for 2024