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# NEWSLETTER

## MESSAGE FROM ILEP INDIA COORDINATOR



**Dr. Srilekha Penna**

**Dear readers,**

Welcome to the eighth edition of the ILEP India Newsletter! In this volume, we aim to provide you with a comprehensive overview of the captivating initiatives undertaken by ILEP India from July to September 2023. Aligning with the priorities of NLEP and ILEP India, our focus this quarter remained on enhancing capacities, facilitating knowledge exchange, and fostering robust leadership, commitment, and partnerships among all key stakeholders. This edition will offer insights into our active involvement in monitoring the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign, our contributions to crafting training modules to support the mental well-being of individuals affected by leprosy, and our collaborative efforts with ILEP CEOs, NLEP Consultants, and various state representatives to delineate roles and responsibilities in accordance with the National Strategic Plan 2023-2027. Additionally, this issue highlights compelling field activities undertaken by various ILEP members, encompassing the endeavors of our NLEP consultants, the establishment of an advanced disability rehabilitation centre in Maharashtra, comprehensive project planning in Durg district, Chhattisgarh, participation in the NNN conference, capacity-building initiatives in West Bengal, and the recent visit of the Deputy Director General – Leprosy to one of our member hospitals.

I hope you enjoy this insightful read!

### Key activities and participation by the ILEP India Secretariat

#### 1 “Building Capacities and Fostering Collaboration: A Comprehensive Leprosy Workshop for District Leprosy Officers” at Indore, Madhya Pradesh

- A meeting-cum-training workshop was organized by the State Leprosy Office, Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with Central Leprosy Division, Govt. of India on 6th and 7th July 2023. A meeting-cum-training workshop was organized by the State Leprosy Office, Madhya Pradesh in collaboration with Central Leprosy Division, Govt. of India on 6th and 7th July 2023.

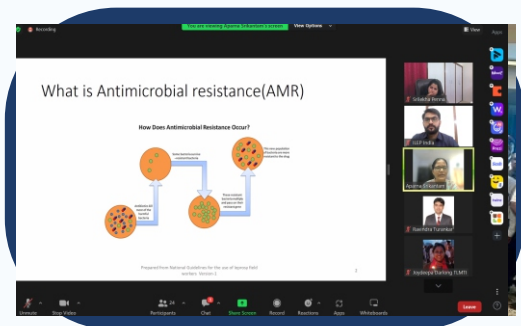


NLEP review meeting and training workshop conducted at Indore, Madhya Pradesh

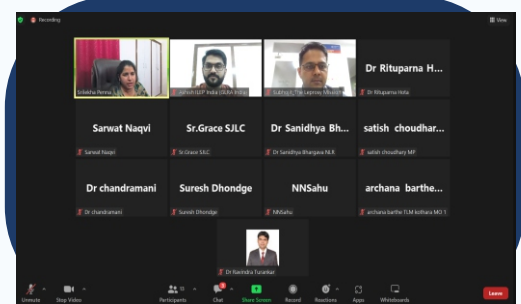
- CLD representatives along with the Deputy Director General – Leprosy, the State Leprosy Officer, State representatives, National Professional Officer – Leprosy (WHO India), ILEP India Coordinator, senior officials from ILEP member organizations, state NLEP Consultant, State Coordinator – LEPRA Society, WHO State Coordinator, and District Leprosy Officers participated in the meeting.
- Training sessions aimed at enhancing the capacities of District Leprosy Officers on various topics including an overview of NLEP, National Strategic Plan 2023-2027, early detection and prevention, reaction management, healthcare system strengthening, public-private partnerships, and data digitalization (Nikusth 2.0) etc.
- A field visit was also organized by the state to the Dhar district, where the teams interacted with healthcare professionals at PHCs, CHCs, and district hospitals. The outcomes of the field visit were discussed to highlight the best practices and scope for further improvement.

## 2 Exchanging Insights and Strengthening Collaborations: Insights into ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series

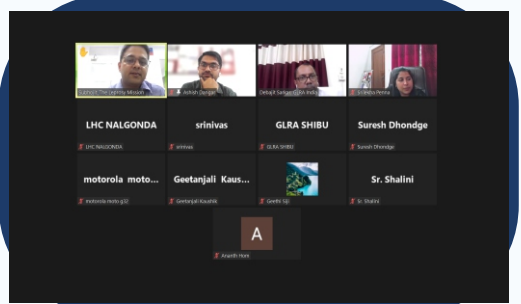
- ILEP India Secretariat launched the ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series (ILEP-I KSS) in July 2023.
- The series is anchored on sharing knowledge on various key topics, activities, and projects implemented within the ILEP India organizations. Speakers selected topics of their choice and presented them among the ILEP India audience followed by discussions and suggestions.
- The sessions are being carried out on the second Wednesday of every month where participants from all the ILEP India organizations are actively taking part and sharing their experiences and knowledge.
- Three sessions were carried out during Q3 2023; the first was delivered by Dr. Aparna Srikantam (Head-Research and Director-BPHRC Lab at LEPRA Society) during July on Anti-microbial Resistance.
- The following sessions were delivered by Dr. Srilekha Penna (ILEP India Coordinator and Regional Research Coordinator-GLRA India) on Participatory Story Telling involving persons affected by leprosy during August and Dr. Debajit Sarkar (Medical Advisor-GLRA India) on Public-Private Mix Initiative and collaboration with NLEP during September.



First Session of ILEP-I KSS



Second Session of ILEP-I KSS



Third Session of ILEP-I KSS

### 3 Strengthening Leprosy Case Detection Campaign: Central Monitoring in Tamil Nadu

- NLEP is committed to “Interrupt the transmission of leprosy by 2027” for which all states and UTs conduct a robust 2-week Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) in high endemic areas for early case detection and prevent further transmission and disabilities.
- To strengthen and monitor the LCDC activities in states and UTs, Central Monitors have been assigned by the Central Leprosy Division.
- The ILEP India Coordinator together with the Chief Medical Officer, CLD visited the state of Tamil Nadu to monitor the LCDC activities in the state.



Validation of survey sheets during LCDC monitoring in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu



Visit to one of the health facilities during LCDC monitoring in Tamil Nadu

- Various villages (door-to-door visits), primary and secondary healthcare centers, tertiary care hospitals, and medical colleges in a total of 5 districts (Madurai, Virudhunagar, Tenkasi, Thirunelveli, and Kanyakumari) were visited by the central monitoring team accompanied by state and district teams in Tamil Nadu between 31st July to 4th of August 2023.

- Meetings were conducted with key stakeholders including community members, non-medical supervisors, medical officers, professors, dermatologists, SLO and DLOs.
- A final review and feedback meeting was organized on the last day of the visit with DLOs from 21 districts to disseminate the findings from LCDC monitoring and to provide them with needed recommendations.

### 4 "Advancing Leprosy Care and Mental Health Integration: National Consultative Workshop for Finalization of Training Modules" at Pune, Maharashtra

- Following the launch of the “National Framework for Integrating Mental Health Services for Leprosy Patients” a consultative workshop was organized by The National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) and National Mental Health Program (NMHP) with the support of WHO India on the 10th and 11th August 2023 in Pune, Maharashtra.



Participants from consultative Workshop conducted at Pune, Maharashtra



- NLEP representatives along with DDG-L, NMHP officials and representatives, ILEP India representatives, the ILEP India Coordinator, the President of APAL, and many other experts actively participated in the workshop.



Visit to Leprosy Colony as part of the workshop activity

- A field visit to leprosy colonies and district hospitals was conducted to observe the community-based Leprosy Healthcare Services and to conduct field testing of the draft modules.
- The key highlights of the workshop included in-depth discussions on the “National Framework for Integration of Mental Health Services for Leprosy Patients” and the draft training modules for Medical Officers (PHC), Para Medical Staff & Community Health Workers.

## 5 “NLEP Consultants' Workshop: Enhancing Leprosy Initiatives and Aligning Strategies” at New Delhi

- Capacity building workshop-cum-training was organized by ILEP India for NLEP Consultants in New Delhi on 18th August 2023 at Hotel Southgate.
- Deputy Director General – Leprosy (CLD), Chief Medical Officer (CLD), National Professional Officer – Leprosy (WHO India), ILEP India Coordinator, ILEP India Deputy Coordinator, National Consultant – Nikusth 2.0 (CLD) and NLEP Consultants from various states joined the workshop.



- Dialogue between CLD (Dr. Mandal and Dr. Ranganath) and Consultants was facilitated where they discussed the best practices and the challenges in their respective states; the job description of NLEP consultants was also revisited and discussed to make amendments as per the need.

- Consultants were trained in the National Strategic Plan for Leprosy 2023-27, Nikusth 2.0 by CLD experts and NPO-L, WHO India.
- The role of consultants in the states in line with NSP was also discussed during the workshop.



Capacity building workshop conducted at New Delhi

## 6 "Collaborative Engagement and Strategic Planning: ILEP India CEOs and Stakeholders Meeting " at New Delhi

- The second meeting of ILEP India CEOs for the year 2023 was organized by the ILEP India secretariat on 5th September 2023 in Hotel Metropolitan, New Delhi.
- The meeting was attended by CEOs from all member organizations, a few representatives, ILEP India Coordinator; Dy. Coordinator and Communications and PR team (GLRA India).
- The primary focus of the meeting was to assess the advancement of ILEP India's planned initiatives for 2023, provide an update on the budget and contributions from ILEP member organizations, and deliberate on the topics of ILEP India associate membership and Inter-agency MoU.
- The ILEP India stakeholders meet was organized at the same venue post-lunch.



ILEP India CEOs Meet



ILEP India Stakeholders Meet

- Deputy Director General – Leprosy (DDG-L), ILEP India CEOs and representatives, National Professional Officer – Leprosy (WHO India), APAL (Association of People Affected by Leprosy) India representative, ILEP India Coordinator; Dy. Coordinator; Communications and PR team (GLRA India) attended the meeting.

- The main agenda of the meeting was to update on ILEP India activity progress and challenges, orientation on each of the ILEP member's good practices, defining the role of ILEP India as per NSP considering the expertise and limitations, and strengthening partnerships with external stakeholders.

## 7 "Strengthening ILEP and NGOs Involvement in NLEP: State Review Meeting" at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

- Under the guidance of the State Leprosy Officer, Andhra Pradesh, a comprehensive one-day state review meeting was orchestrated on 9th September 2023 in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, to fortify the role of NGOs in state NLEP.



One-day state review meeting at Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

- The event saw active participation from the state leprosy program team, expert representatives of ILEP India organizations operating within Andhra Pradesh, the ILEP India Coordinator, and experts from various other NGOs dedicated to addressing leprosy in the region.
- During the meeting, the State Leprosy Officer provided a comprehensive overview of the current national strategic plan and the state's performance thus far. Subsequently, a detailed presentation of the work carried out by ILEP members and NGO partners across different districts of Andhra Pradesh was delivered.



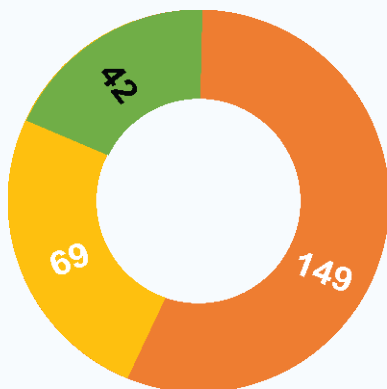
Visit to LEPRA Society's leprosy healthcare unit in the government hospital

- The ILEP India Coordinator made a significant contribution to the discussions, sharing invaluable insights and experiences, and reaffirming our unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of individuals affected by leprosy throughout India.
- The gathering also facilitated an extensive dialogue to identify and highlight existing gaps within the state program, emphasizing the necessity of collaborative approaches between the state-NLEP, ILEP, and NGO partners to effectively attain the targets established by the National Strategic Plan in Andhra Pradesh.

- A field visit was also made to LEPRA Society's leprosy care unit in the government hospital of Vijayawada to understand and learn the ways of coordination with state facilities in providing the needed care and support to the persons affected by leprosy.

## Key activities in the field

■ Visits    
 ■ Trainings    
 ■ Meetings



The ILEP agencies continued to support field and policy-level assistance to the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) through their 15 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. From July to September 2023, the state and district-level program was supported through 42 advocacy and program implementation meetings; 69 trainings; and 149 visits to the districts, different health facilities, and leprosy colonies.



## 1 The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) sets up an Advanced Disability Rehabilitation Centre in Maharashtra

- The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Miraj (Maharashtra) inaugurated Saksham, an advanced disability rehabilitation centre, in collaboration with the Sandhata Medical Research Society.
- The centre offers a comprehensive range of orthotics and prosthetics services, including customized diabetic footwear, client-specific insoles, orthotic aids, and artificial limbs.
- The contribution of the centre goes beyond just physical rehabilitation as it also provides psychosocial counselling, mobility assessment, gait training, early intervention therapy, and vocation identification and support.
- Saksham stands as a beacon of hope as it is the only unit in the Sangli district that develops synthetic prosthetics and orthotics in the area. In the coming days, the centre will continue to leverage the best technology to prevent and manage Leprosy-related disabilities and other disabilities.



Interaction during the inauguration of advanced disability and rehabilitation centre

## 2 Project Planning Workshop for Durg District, Raipur conducted by Swiss Emmaus India

- Swiss Emmaus India in collaboration with Chhattisgarh state leprosy society organised a three-day planning workshop for the proposed project in Durg district.
- 22 participants from the State Leprosy Office, WHO NTD focal officers, Regional Leprosy Training and Research Institute (RLTRI)



representatives, ILEP agencies, District Leprosy Office-Durg, office bearer from APAL and Chhattisgarh Viklang Manch, Mitandin, People's representative (Sarpanch), and members of Swiss Emmaus India and FAIRMED Bern attended the project planning workshop.



Outcomes of need assessment presented by Country Coordinator, FAIRMED India

- A need assessment to understand the current situation was conducted and shared at the beginning of the planning workshop, the outcome of the need assessment was presented and validated by the participants. In the 2nd phase, the facilitators with active participation from each of the participants were able to draft the project impact, outcome, and outputs along with some of the key activities of the project. Finally, the project is titled "AAGHAAZ" (आगाज़).



Project Planning workshop at Durg

- The project is targeted to improve leprosy health outcomes and the well-being of communities through health system strengthening and community development.
- The outcomes are targeted to improve the quality of comprehensive health services for leprosy through general healthcare services; improve awareness of the community about leprosy, with a special focus on stigma reduction and inclusion; improve access to social security schemes for persons affected by leprosy, their households and other persons with disability and improve NLEP program monitoring and reporting systems for improved program implementation.
- The project will be implemented in Durg district from October 2023.

### 3 The Leprosy Mission Shares Thought Leadership at The NNN NTD Conference 2023

- The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) made its presence felt at the 14th Annual NNN Conference from Sep 19-21 in Dar es Salaam.
- Nikita Sarah, Head of Advocacy & Communications, demonstrated how TLMTI is advancing health equity and improving social determinants of health through several interventions.



Nikita Sarah (Head-Advocacy and Communication, TLMTI) at the NNN Conference



- She also chaired the discussions of the working group on Advocacy and Communication during the WHO Skin NTD Mini-Summit at the NNN Conference and moderated the Closing Plenary.
- Dr. Helen Roberts, Medical Superintendent at a TLM hospital in Tamil Nadu, facilitated discussions around integrated capacity building during the Leprosy Working Group Session on Day 2 at the conference.



## 4 Capacity building of Medical Officers (Howrah and Hooghly – West Bengal)

- The Capacity building training in two batches was conducted for Medical Officers (MOs) in the Howrah and Hooghly districts of West Bengal state. The training was conducted by NLEP Consultant (ILEP India) and State Program Lead (NLR India Foundation).
- The consultant facilitated training on diagnosis, nerve function assessment and reaction management; the Chief Medical Officer-Health (CMOH) was present from both districts and made effective contributions.
- 25 newly joined MOs from Howrah and 26 MOs from Hooghly were provided training with a practical demonstration with patients followed up by examination by MOs; MOs then filled up the treatment card with nerve function test and EHF (Eye, Hand, and Feet) scores.
- The ILEP NLEP consultant participated in the training of urban MOs where the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC) is to be conducted. The physical examination of patients was requested by participants and district authority; the consultant facilitated training on the same examination of patients; 46 participants attended.



Sessions conducted during the training by State Program Lead (NLRIF)

## 5 Deputy Director General (Leprosy) visits The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Delhi

- Deputy Director General (Leprosy) from Director General Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, visited The Leprosy Mission hospital in Shahdara (Delhi, IN) on September 27th and was accompanied by a national consultant from Central Leprosy Division and State Leprosy Officer (Delhi).
- Besides understanding every touchpoint of the patient journey in the hospital and the work in terms of managing Leprosy complications, and disability and doing research, the team interacted with Leprosy patients and encouraged them to shed any kind of stigma they may have.



Deputy Director General (Leprosy) interacting with TLM hospital staff

- Discussions happened on priority areas under the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, including early diagnosis and treatment and prevention of community transmission. Dr. Mandal also spoke about the importance of the Focused Leprosy Campaign (FLC) and persistent and consistent follow-up of patients who are released from treatment.
- The visit concluded with a reaffirmation that the government-NGO partnership should grow from strength to strength so that we can together achieve Zero Leprosy.



Deputy Director General (Leprosy) interacting with patients at TLM hospital

## UPCOMING PRIORITIES

- 1 Supporting the implementation of Nikusth 2.0 at the state level
- 2 Gearing up the knowledge sharing through more sessions under ILEP-I KSS
- 3 Support the developmental process of the state-level strategic plans.
- 4 Support in repealing discriminatory laws