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HIGHLIGHTS

MESSAGE FROM ILEP INDIA COORDINATOR



Dr. Srilekha Penna

Welcome to the 16th edition of the ILEP India Highlights! This edition provides a comprehensive overview of our activities, progress, and strategic initiatives for the July to September 2025 quarter.

It highlights a range of impactful activities from ILEP India Secretariat and its members, including the ILEP India Coordination Workshop, the ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series, and the Skill Development Initiative for Leprosy-Affected Communities. It also features innovative solutions such as Baropodometric-Based Footwear, the launch of the Disability Resource Centre and Mobile Therapy Van, and inspiring stories like Durgesh's journey and other meaningful contributions. These efforts reinforce our strong commitment to improving lives and advancing the goal of achieving Zero Leprosy.

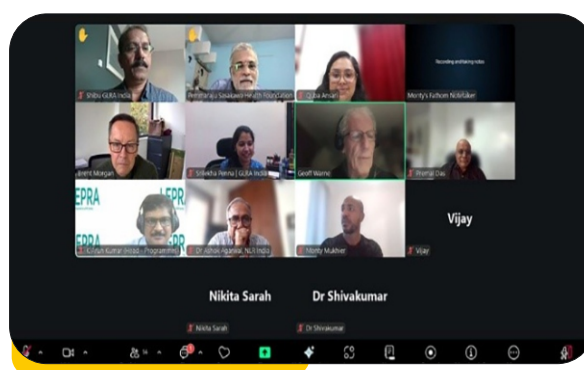
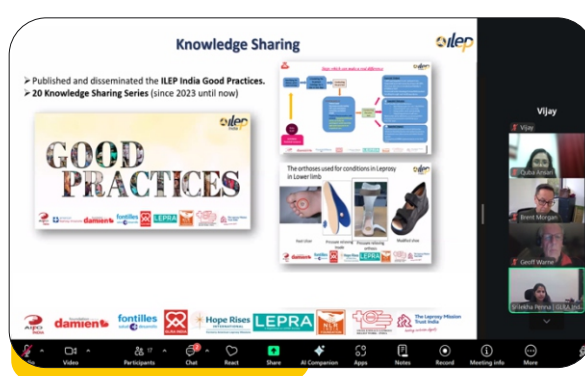
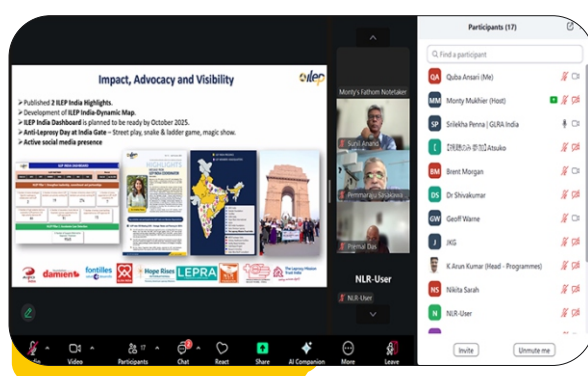
I extend my sincere thanks to all ILEP members, NLEP consultants, and our partners for their unwavering commitment.

Key activities and participation by ILEP India and Member Organizations:

1 ILEP India Coordination Workshop 2025: Collective Commitment to Strengthen the Efforts:

- The ILEP Coordination Workshop for India was held virtually on 15th September 2025 to share information on new developments and identify opportunities for collectively supporting the national programme in the journey towards zero leprosy.
- The workshop brought together an esteemed group of participants, including Dr. Sunil V. Gitte (DDG Leprosy, Central Leprosy Division), Dr. Rashmi Shukla (NPO, WHO), Ms. Maya Ranavare (President, APAL), Geoff Warne (CEO), Brent Morgan (ILEP President/ International Director, The Leprosy Mission International), representatives from Sasakawa, and the CEOs of all ILEP India member organizations, highlighting the importance of collective action.

- Discussions brought diverse perspectives, covering India's leprosy situation, key trends and actions, the WHO's outlook on disease distribution and recent NLEP developments, ILEP's proposed role in driving progress, as well as the major gaps hindering burden reduction, particularly the need to strengthen care, support, and community empowerment to ensure dignity and equality.
- The ILEP India Country Coordinator and member CEOs shared ongoing initiatives, challenges, and opportunities. The workshop reaffirmed shared commitment, strengthened partnerships, and marked progress towards the goal of Zero Leprosy in India.



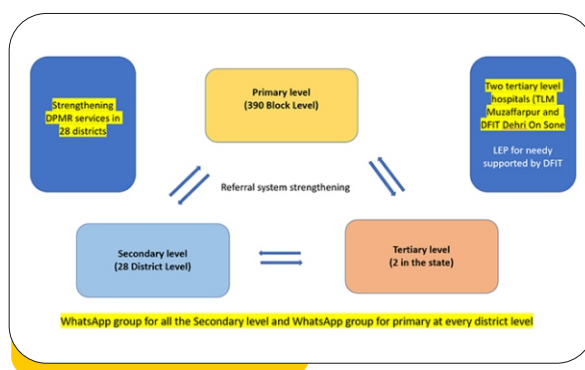
2 Strengthening efforts through shared learning: ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series :

- ILEP India conducted two Knowledge Sharing Sessions on 22nd August and 29th September 2025, focused on advancing the goal of zero leprosy by strengthening referral systems and promoting reconstructive surgeries to restore dignity and improve the quality of life for people affected by leprosy.
- A session on “**Strengthening the Referral System to Provide Seamless Disability Prevention & Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR), and Social Rehabilitation Services Across 28 Districts of Bihar**” led by Dr. Sarbartha Roy, ILEP-NLEP Consultant, Bihar, highlighted the importance of strengthening referral systems and services across primary, secondary, and tertiary care levels, capacity building of the healthcare workers for early diagnosis and complication management, improve patient counselling, facilitate medical rehabilitation (self-care, RCS, MCR), and promote social benefits such as pensions and livelihood support.

- Another session on **“Comprehensive Perspectives on Reconstructive Surgery in Leprosy: From Clinical to Patient-Centered Dimensions,”** led by Dr. Aashish Wagh, National Medical Advisor, highlighted that deformities like claw hand, foot drop, lagophthalmos, and facial disfigurements in leprosy affect not just physical appearance but also confidence, livelihood, and social acceptance. RCS plays a crucial role in restoring function, appearance, and dignity, enabling social and economic reintegration. Moreover, the discussion also emphasized that physiotherapy, counselling, and patient motivation are essential for successful and lasting outcomes of reconstructive surgery.

"Strengthening the Referral System to Provide Seamless Disability Prevention & Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR), and Social Rehabilitation Services Across 28 Districts of Bihar"

By
Dr. Sarbartha Roy,
NLEP Consultant for Bihar
Damien Foundation India Trust



Comprehensive Perspectives on Reconstructive Surgery in Leprosy: From Clinician & Patient centered Dimensions

re-con-struc-tion = the act or process of rebuilding, repairing, or restoring something

Dr. Aashish Wagh,
National Medical Advisor
German Leprosy & TB Relief Association (GLRA India)

When to do Surgery

- **Urgent:** Nerve De-compression, Neuropathy, Abscess, Necrosis
- **Planned:** Reconstructive surgery
- **Precautions:** Successful outcome depends on-
 - ✓ Pre- and Post-operative physiotherapy
 - ✓ Ability of patient to forget and learn to use new abilities/movements
- **Physiotherapy:** - Fundamental necessity
 - ✓ Good Surgery + Poor Physio → Poor Results
 - ✓ Not a good Surgery + Good Physio → Good Results

3 Skill Development Initiative for Leprosy-Affected Communities :

- The Leprosy Mission in Dayapuram, in collaboration with the **Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC)**, launched a six-month short-term medical education initiative aimed at uplifting young adults affected by leprosy, dependents of people affected by leprosy, and women from marginalised backgrounds.
- This initiative aims to equip participants with vital healthcare skills, empowering them to serve their communities with dignity and purpose. Through three specialised courses, General Duty Assistant (GDA), Geriatric Care Assistant, and Pharmacy Assistant, participants will be trained to deliver primary healthcare support, particularly in underserved and marginalised areas.
- Upon successful completion, they will receive government-recognised certification and be eligible for placement in nearby clinics and healthcare facilities, with a starting monthly wage ranging from Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000.



4 Urban Leprosy Initiatives, Kolkata :

- Urban Leprosy control programs are often met with challenges due to dense populations, frequent migration, and overcrowded healthcare services.
- As part of the project NIRAMAYA III, strengthening Leprosy services, **GLRA India's** urban leprosy initiatives in Kolkata support 6 medical colleges/hospitals in early case detection and treatment follow-up.



- In a recent meeting on August 21st with the State Leprosy Officer, GLRA India has extended its commitment to engage in the upcoming LCDC campaign in the state, especially in Kolkata Urban.

5 Baropodometry-Based Footwear Improves Quality of Life in Leprosy Care :

- Plantar ulcers are a major complication of leprosy, often causing Grade-2 Disabilities that affect mobility and quality of life. In India, while routine care includes wound management, self-care, and use of MCR footwear, the role of foot pressure in ulcer prevention has not received much attention.
- To address this gap, **LEPRA Society**, with support from the Leprosy Research Initiative (LRI), conducted a multicentric trial with 288 adults across Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar. Participants were divided into groups receiving either standard MCR footwear or customised footwear designed using foot pressure analysis tools like the Harris Mat and Podoscan. Both groups also received self-care training, kits, and monthly follow-ups for one year.
- Participants were mostly older adults with limited education and dependence on government support. Even so, the trial showed promising results with training, education, and footwear together significantly reducing foot ulcers for longer, highlighting the value of personalised care.

- The study shows that simple, low-cost tools like baropodometry can be used at community and primary care levels to prevent disabilities. Customised footwear based on foot pressure patterns not only reduces the risk of new ulcers but also aids healing of existing ones, offering a practical way to strengthen leprosy care and improve long-term outcomes.



6 Strengthening Hospital Partnership, Andhra Pradesh :

- On 20th August 2025, a new project, “Strengthening Inclusive Leprosy Referral Services Hospital ,” was launched at Tenali, Andhra Pradesh, in the presence of state and district leprosy officials, and representatives from APAL and GLRA India.
- Project titled “Strengthening Inclusive Leprosy Referral Services”, will be implemented by GRETNALTES Hospital, Morampudi, funded by GIZ Germany, and in collaboration with DAHW & GLRA India.
- The project aims to enhance early case detection, quality inpatient and outpatient hospital services with a focus on training frontline healthcare staff, community mobilization by organizing skin/ disability camps, and promoting contact screening.



7 The Leprosy Mission Hospital Launches Disability Resource Centre and Mobile Therapy Van in Vadathorasalur :

- With an aim to support people affected by leprosy and other disabilities, and vulnerable communities from surrounding areas, The Leprosy Mission hospital in Vadathorasalur inaugurated the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) and a Mobile Therapy van.
- The Disability Resource Centre (DRC) is designed to offer comprehensive care for a wide range of disabilities, featuring an early intervention unit alongside advanced physical therapy and rehabilitation facilities. It also provides specialised and unique services, including inner well-being support and low vision care.
- The Mobile Therapy Unit will bring essential healthcare directly to nearby villages, offering physiotherapy, eye care, general medical tests, and teleconsultations. This initiative will ensure comprehensive preventive and promotive health services are accessible to underserved communities.



8 Community Health Screening :

- Under Project NIRAMAYA of **GLRA India**, supported by DAHW Germany, nine skin and disability health camps were conducted across five locations—Kolkata, Palghar, Mumbai, Barwani, and Salem, to strengthen and improve the quality of leprosy care
- A total of 456 individuals attended with various skin conditions and general health concerns. Notably, 15 new leprosy cases were identified, and treatment was



promptly initiated. These outreach skin camps and community mobilization drives are instrumental in promoting early case detection, encouraging positive health-seeking behaviour, and contributing towards the interruption of transmission.

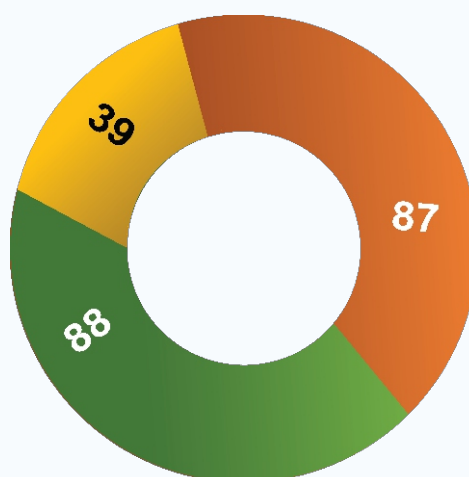
9 Durgesh's Journey from Illness to Independence :

- Durgesh Verma, a 24-year-old from Deori village in Baloda Bazaar District, lives with his widowed mother. After completing school, financial struggles forced him to give up higher studies and to work in a carpenter's shop.
- Durgesh's life took a difficult turn when he underwent gall bladder surgery and was later diagnosed with leprosy. With treatment support and guidance from the **Damien Foundation India Trust** team, he completed his medication and learned self-care practices that improved his health. However, the family's financial condition remained fragile. His mother worked as a maid, while Durgesh was unable to do heavy work after surgery. Seeing their struggle, Damien Foundation India Trust provided socioeconomic support of Rs. 45,000, enabling him to start a stationery and book stall with a mini Xerox machine and a cool drinks counter.
- Within months, his small shop flourished, doubling in value. Today, Durgesh and his mother are financially stable and deeply thankful to Damien Foundation India Trust for transforming their lives.



From July to September 2025

Visits Trainings Meetings



14 ILEP NLEP consultants supported the strengthening of the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) across 14 endemic states. During this quarter, they conducted 87 field visits to health facilities and leprosy colonies, ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of NLEP activities. In addition, 88 meetings were held to support advocacy and coordination at state and district levels, and 39 training were conducted to build the capacity of health staff and frontline workers. These efforts contributed significantly to improving case detection, service delivery, and program outcomes.

87

Field visit

39

Training

88

Meeting