



# HIGHLIGHTS

## ILEP India CEO meeting: annual review and way forward

The ILEP India CEO four-monthly meeting was organised in a hybrid mode on 8 December 2025 at The Leprosy Mission Trust India, New Delhi, bringing together the CEOs of ILEP India member organisations.

The ILEP India Coordinator presented updates on ILEP India's 2025 activities that have been done throughout the year, reviewed progress and key challenges, explored potential stakeholder contributions, and further strengthened collaboration and partnerships. Additionally, Mr Arun Kumar, Programme Head (LEPROSY SOCIETY), presented the ILEP India Dashboard, highlighting indicator-wise progress under all NSP pillars.

From 2026 onwards, TLMTI will assume the role of ILEP India Coordinator. In this context, the 2026 Action Plan was discussed with members, followed by in-depth deliberations on key strategic directions and priority initiatives to further strengthen and sustain collaborative efforts.

The meeting concluded with a comprehensive summary of recommendations, action points, and commitments for 2026, underscoring the importance of strengthened coordination between ILEP India and its key partners.



## ILEP India's participation in the review meeting for high-endemic states and session on strengthening AMR services at JALMA, Agra

The Central Leprosy Division, in collaboration with the National Institute for Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial Diseases, organised a review meeting for 15 high-priority states, along with a workshop-cum-training on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) surveillance.

The review and training brought together representatives from the Central Leprosy Division, WHO consultants, and ILEP partners from both national and state teams, who actively participated and shared valuable insights.

In the first session, the Deputy Director General (DDG) and other officials from the Central Leprosy Division outlined their expectations from state programmes and ILEP partners, both for the workshop and for strengthening programme implementation overall. State Leprosy Officers further presented overviews of their respective state status in leprosy elimination, highlighting progress made and areas requiring additional support.

Technical sessions on AMR surveillance and pharmacovigilance were led by the WHO technical team and JALMA. These sessions were complemented by group activities and interactive discussions, followed by feedback from participants.

Overall, the workshop combined state performance reviews, clarity on expectations from ILEP partners, and in-depth technical discussions on AMR surveillance and pharmacovigilance, reinforcing collective efforts towards leprosy elimination.



## Fostering learning and knowledge exchange: ILEP India knowledge sharing series to strengthen the efforts

ILEP India conducted two Knowledge Sharing Sessions on 4th November and 3rd December 2025, focusing on the implementation of best practices in leprosy care, with special emphasis on DPMR services, Reconstructive Surgery, and effective service linkages across levels of care.

A session on **“Bridging Gaps in Leprosy Care: The Role of DPMR and Reconstructive Surgery in Odisha”**, led by Dr Rituparna Hota, ILEP-NLEP Consultant, Odisha, highlighted a strong approach to leprosy care through DPMR and RCS, despite a G2D rate of over 2 per million population. The state stands out with regular RCS services at all district hospitals and designated DPMR clinics at district and block levels, with every Monday observed as “Leprosy Day.” Best practices include clear referral pathways, dedicated service days, consistent follow-up, rehabilitation support, and strong interdepartmental coordination.

Another session on **“Establishing LRCs within GHC setup and linkages”**, led by Rajeev Dudhalkar, Former Head of IEC at ALERT India, Mumbai. The session highlighted the role of LRCs as key secondary-level units in strengthening early diagnosis, quality care, and referral for leprosy. It emphasised IPHS 2022–mandated SSS services, coordinated action by NLEP and district health teams, and capacity building across the system. The discussion covered diagnostic protocols, lepra reactions, and field-based case detection. Moreover, the further discussion was placed on disability prevention, rehabilitation, and effective IEC to improve outcomes and reduce stigma among the community.



### **Bridging Gaps in Leprosy Care: The Role of DPMR and Reconstructive Surgery in Odisha**



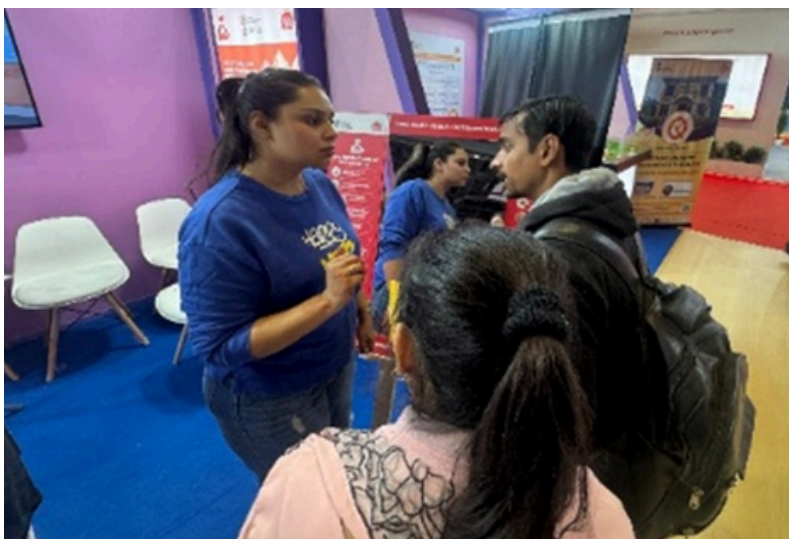
### **Establishing LRC within the GHC setup and linkages**

## ILEP India’s participation at the NLEP Stall, IITF, New Delhi

ILEP India participated in the leprosy awareness activities organised by the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) at the India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2025, held at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The event was conducted over a period of 14 days, from 14 November to 27 November 2025, and ILEP India remained actively engaged throughout the entire duration.

The activities focused on raising public awareness about leprosy, including its signs and symptoms, modes of transmission, and the availability of free treatment at government health facilities, while also addressing and dispelling common myths and misconceptions.

Audience engagement was encouraged through interactive games, participatory activities, and a nukkad natak organised by ILEP India, which effectively conveyed key messages on leprosy awareness and stigma reduction.



## Leprosy orientation sessions for block programme coordinators (BPC), West Bengal, GLRA India

GLRA India's Project, NIRAMAYA III, is strengthening early leprosy detection in West Bengal by actively engaging Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), contributing to the national goal of stopping leprosy transmission.

Following a state-level training for District Programme Coordinators (ASHA) in April 2025, held in collaboration with MD-NHM, the State ASHA Cell, and the State Leprosy Office, decentralised trainings were conducted for 62 Block Programme Coordinators across Purba Medinipur, Kalimpong, and Hooghly.

The sessions were facilitated by Dr Abhijit Nandi, ILEP State Coordinator, along with the respective District Leprosy Officers, reinforcing grassroots capacity for early identification and referral.



## The Leprosy Mission Trust India launches TLM open circle

On the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the man who advocated for care and compassion towards people affected by leprosy, The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) launched its podcast—TLM Open Circle.

In the inaugural episode of the TLM Open Circle, Dr Anil Kumar, Principal Advisor at the National Centre for Disease Control, Government of India, explains the medical and social aspects of leprosy, the challenges in eradicating leprosy, the progress India has made over the years in reducing the disease burden and the role that the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) plays in accelerating towards leprosy-free India.



## Compassion training initiative to reduce leprosy stigma, by NLR India Foundation

NLR India Foundation has been implementing a research study titled "Compassion Training for Reducing Stigma and Improving Quality of Care for Persons Affected by Leprosy" in Bokaro district, Jharkhand, since 2023.

The study focuses on strengthening compassion-based practices among healthcare providers through training within the health system. Its primary objective is to assess the extent to which stigma-responsive compassion training enhances the quality of care delivered by health workers to persons affected by leprosy and other stigmatised health conditions.

To standardise the training, three types of training modules were developed -

**Embrace Compassion, Dissolve Stigma – A Self-Help Guide for Doctors**

**Embrace Compassion, Dissolve Stigma – A Self-Help Guide for Paramedical Workers**

**Embracing Compassion and Dissolving Stigma for Persons Affected by Leprosy and their Healthcare Providers – Facilitator’s Guide**

Following the finalisation of the training modules, work began on their Hindi translation of the Stigma Module for Paramedical Workers (Stigma Module for Paramedical Workers (Open Source)-Guidebook-Hindi).

To operationalise the compassionate care for leprosy affected person, NLR India conducted a 3-day training of 73 Medical Officers and Paramedical Workers in four batches in Bokaro in partnership with the District Health Authority.



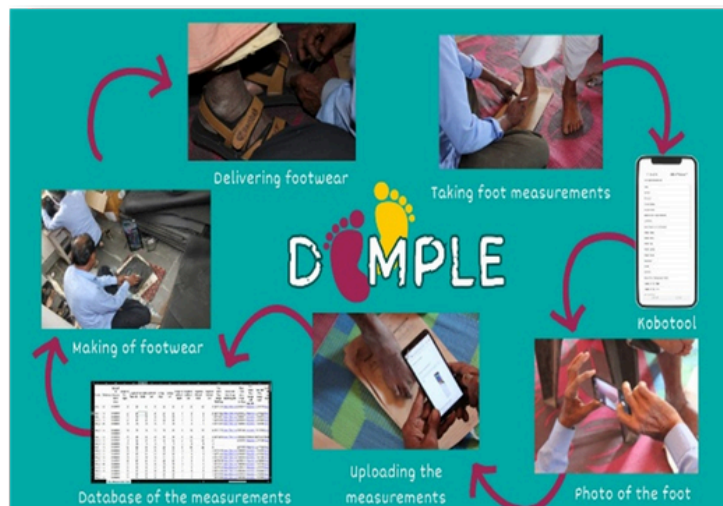
## **Dimple: Digital measurement for paduka (footwear) for persons affected by leprosy and elephantiasis, developed by LEPRA Society**

For over three decades, LEPRA Society has provided protective footwear to persons affected by leprosy and lymphatic filariasis through its referral centres. While clinically effective, the manual, paper-based foot measurement process posed challenges related to scalability, record management, and access for people in remote areas.

To address these gaps, LEPRA Society developed DiMPLE (Digital Measurement for Paduka – Footwear for Persons Affected by Leprosy and Elephantiasis), an innovative digital health solution that enables trained technicians to capture accurate foot measurements using smartphone images, reducing the need for repeated patient visits and lowering service delivery costs.

Piloted in August 2023 across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, DiMPLE supports the remote fabrication of customised MCR and EVA footwear, critical for preventing plantar ulcers, infections, and disability. By December 2024, the initiative enabled the production and distribution of over 980 pairs of customised footwear, significantly improving access for hard-to-reach populations.

In recognition of this innovation, LEPRA Society received the WHO South-East Asia Public Health Champion Award (Institution Category) in 2025. Aligned with the WHO NTD Roadmap, DiMPLE is a scalable, cost-effective, and replicable model with strong potential for integration into national health programmes, with plans to incorporate AI-driven automation for greater community-level access and self-care.



## TLMTI at International Purple Fest, Goa: amplifying voices for disability inclusion

TLMTI made its presence felt at the International Purple Fest in Goa. In this four-day event, the team engaged with government officials, police personnel, people with various disabilities, and students from across states through a quiz on leprosy. The Snakes & Ladders game also drew a sizable number of participants.

TLMTI also facilitated the participation of women leprosy champions in a stakeholder consultation organised by the partner, Rising Flame, at the Purple Fest, where the champions contributed to the discussion on the future of healthcare, education, and employment for people with disabilities.

At least 30 champions from four states converged for the National Workshop for Leprosy Champions hosted by TLMTI on the final day of the Purple Fest Goa. The event featured disability sector experts addressing the champions, and several champions took the stage to share their journeys and work in the communities.



## Beyond health, education as a pathway to empowerment, AIFO India

Recognising that the impact of leprosy extends beyond health to create significant socio-economic barriers, AIFO India provided comprehensive educational support to 57 children from leprosy-affected families.

Through financial assistance and essential learning materials, the programme helped ensure that economic hardship does not disrupt schooling. By supporting continued education, this initiative aims to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and illiteracy, enabling children to pursue social inclusion and a more equitable future.



## Voices through film: conversations on disability, inclusion, and dignity, The Leprosy Mission Trust India

In collaboration with the Footprint Film Festival, The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) hosted a disability segment featuring film screenings and a panel discussion on disability. From the festival's submissions, the jury curated six short films, which were screened during the event.

Created by young filmmakers from across India, the films portrayed the lived experiences of persons affected by leprosy and other disabilities. The screenings were followed by interactive discussions led by persons with disabilities, fostering meaningful conversations on inclusion, dignity, and awareness.

A magic show on creating awareness on leprosy enthralled the young students during the Footprint International Film Festival.



## Illness to wellness: the journey of restoration, by GLRA India

Under project NIRAMAYA III, funded by DAHW Germany and implemented by GLRA India, ASHA workers, Community Health Officers (CHOs), and state and district coordinators conducted extensive household visits in Madhya Pradesh.

The project reached 903 index patients, ensuring treatment adherence, providing counselling, and guiding self-care practices for disability management. In addition, 2,014 family contacts were screened for early case detection across the districts of Barwani, Khargone, and Jhabua.

In total, 596 Healthy contacts are referred to the Primary Health Centres for Single Dose Rifampicin (SDR) as a preventive measure to reduce transmission risk. Household visits help break down barriers to fear, increase awareness, and promote prevention within communities, while fostering trust and ensuring timely treatment.



## A story of courage beyond disease

K. Santhi, a 22-year-old from Kothuru village in Andhra Pradesh, has known loss from an early age. Her father abandoned the family when she was a child, and her mother, forced to migrate to Warangal for work, never returned. Left behind, Santhi grew up as an orphan in a crowded relative's home, learning early what it meant to live without security or belonging.

A year ago, her life took another painful turn when nodules began appearing across her body. Instead of care, she faced fear and rejection. Illiterate, without an Aadhaar card, and suffering from severe Multi-Bacillary leprosy with a Type II reaction, Santhi was pushed to the margins, completely alone.

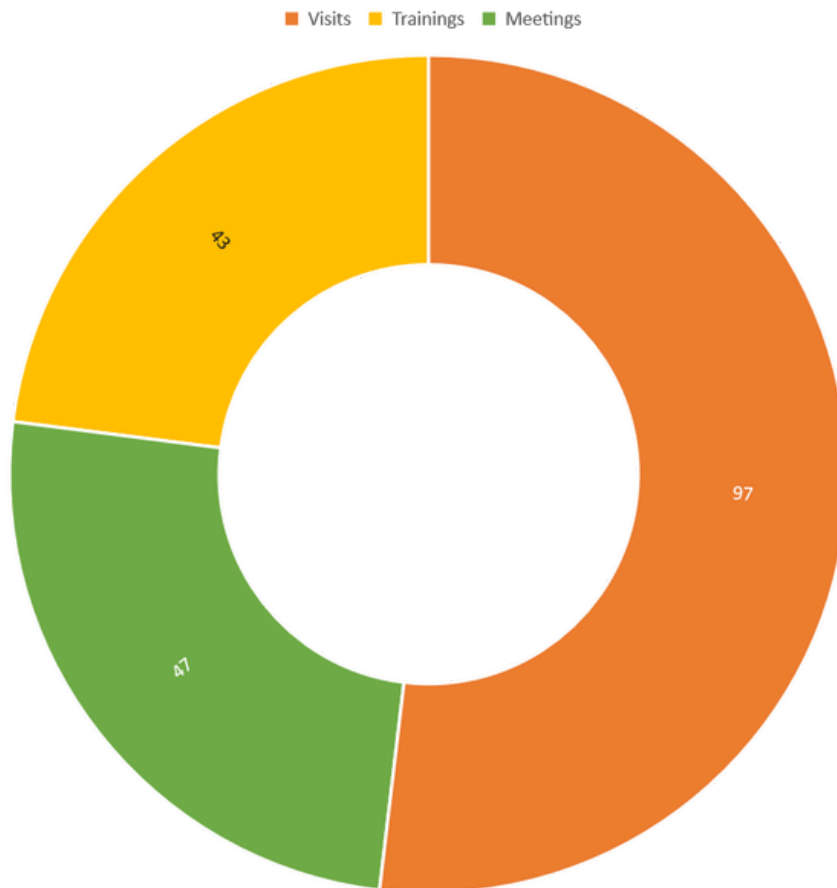
At her lowest point, local ASHA workers brought her to the **Damien Foundation India Trust (DFIT)** Hospital in Nellore. There, she received specialised treatment free of cost. Initially withdrawn and traumatised, Santhi slowly began to heal, not only through medicine but through the compassion of the DFIT staff and fellow patients. Recognising that recovery meant more than medical care, DFIT helped restore Santhi's identity by supporting her Aadhaar application and teaching her basic writing skills. She later received training in jute bag stitching, giving her the confidence and means to become financially independent. As her health improved, Santhi began helping other patients, becoming a source of comfort and hope in the ward.

Her journey came full circle when she met Raju, another person affected by leprosy who shared her experience of loss. With the support of the DFIT, they got married in their village and integrated with the community. Once an outcast, Santhi now lives a life of dignity, skill, and love, proof that with compassion and holistic support, even the most broken beginnings can lead to hope.



## From October to December 2025

**14 ILEP NLEP** consultants supported the strengthening of the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) across 14 endemic states. During this quarter, they conducted **97 field visits** to health facilities and leprosy colonies, ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of NLEP activities. In addition, **47 meetings** were held to support advocacy and coordination at state and district levels, and **43 trainings** 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.



**97 Field visits**

**47 Meetings**

**43 Trainings**

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