HIGHLIGHTS

A Message from the Country Coordinator

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

As we present the second quarter edition of ILEP India Highlights, I am reminded that the journey towards a leprosy-free India is not defined by individual achievements, but by the collective strength of partnerships.

ILEP India is privileged to stand alongside the Government of India in advancing the National Strategic Plan for Leprosy. Together, we remain steadfast in our commitment to achieving the vision of Zero Transmission, Zero Disability, and Zero Discrimination. This vision is ambitious, but it is also achievable when collaboration, innovation, and compassion guide our actions.

Over the past quarter, our member organisations have continued to demonstrate the true value of partnership. Through technical support to the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, capacity building of frontline health workers, research and innovation, knowledge sharing, community engagement, disability prevention and advocacy, we have strengthened our collective contribution towards eliminating leprosy in India.

This newsletter captures only a glimpse of the remarkable work undertaken across the country during this quarter. It reflects the diversity of expertise within ILEP India while highlighting the unity of purpose that binds us together. I hope these pages inspire continued learning, stronger collaboration, and renewed commitment among all our partners. The road ahead requires perseverance, but also offers opportunities to transform lives, influence systems, and create lasting impact.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of India, the Central Leprosy Division, WHO India, our member organisations, donors, healthcare professionals, frontline workers, and communities for their unwavering partnership and dedication.

Happy Reading!



Nikita Sarah

Country Coordinator, ILEP India

HIGHLIGHTS

ILEP India CEOs Meeting - Strengthening Leadership and Collaboration

On 28 April 2026, ILEP India convened the ILEP India CEOs Meeting in New Delhi, bringing together the CEOs from ILEP India member organisations to strengthen collaboration, review progress, and shape the future direction of collective leprosy efforts in India. The meeting included a comprehensive review of the consortium's first-quarter (Q1) activities and financial updates, enabling members to assess achievements, address emerging priorities, and align on strategic actions for the year ahead.

Important discussions focused on interstate coordination, enhancing support in high-endemic districts, improving ILEP National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) consultant engagement, and exploring sustainable opportunities for ILEP India's future.

The meeting reaffirmed the commitment to stronger partnerships, coordinated action, and collective leadership to advance the vision of Zero Leprosy, dignity, inclusion, and a stigma-free India.





ILEP–NLEP Consultant Workshop to Accelerate Leprosy Elimination Efforts

On 6 June 2026, ILEP India organised the ILEP–NLEP Consultant Workshop, bringing together ILEP India member organisations, ILEP–NLEP Consultants, and key stakeholders from the government: Dr Sunil V. Gitte (DDG Leprosy, Central Leprosy Division) and Dr Rashmi Shukla (NPO - Leprosy, WHO-India)

The workshop was convened to provide strategic direction to the consultants, facilitate technical guidance on key programme priorities, strengthen understanding of national goals, clarify expectations from the Central Leprosy Division, and discuss field-level challenges to support more effective implementation of the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP).

Among the key highlights of the day were the insightful presentation by Dr Sunil V. Gitte on **"Current Status of NLEP and Moving Towards Interruption of Transmission"** and the thought-provoking presentation by Dr Rashmi Shukla on **"Differential Strategies for Leprosy Elimination".**

Dr Gitte's presentation provided a comprehensive overview of the programme's strategic priorities and the roadmap towards interruption of leprosy transmission. Dr Shukla highlighted targeted, evidence-based approaches and innovative interventions designed to accelerate progress towards a leprosy-free future. Together, these sessions offered valuable perspectives and set the tone for meaningful discussions on strengthening elimination efforts.

Another major component of the workshop was the presentation of state-specific updates by ILEP–NLEP Consultants, followed by in-depth discussions on achievements, operational challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for strengthening programme implementation. These sessions provided a valuable platform for cross-learning and collaborative problem-solving, while reinforcing collective efforts towards achieving a leprosy-free India.

The workshop reaffirmed the importance of strong collaboration among all stakeholders. It also emphasised the need to align programme implementation with the objectives outlined in the National Strategic Plan (NSP) and the Roadmap for Leprosy 2023–2027, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach towards sustainable leprosy elimination across the country.



ILEP India Participation in National Workshop on Strategic and Focused Action under NLEP at Raipur, Chhattisgarh

ILEP India participated in the National Workshop on Strategic and Focused Action under the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP), held on 12–13 June 2026 in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The workshop brought together key stakeholders from the Government of India, WHO India, state programme teams, and ILEP India to strengthen strategic efforts to achieve Interruption of Transmission (IoT) of leprosy.

ILEP India was represented by the ILEP Member CEO, Country Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, and ILEP–NLEP Consultants and Coordinators from high-priority states - Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh- who actively participated in the technical sessions, state-level discussions, strategic planning and group exercises. The workshop aimed to review the current leprosy situation in high-priority states and districts, identify implementation gaps, and develop focused and evidence-based strategies to accelerate progress towards the goal of Interruption of Transmission. It also provided a platform for sharing field experiences, best practices, and innovative approaches being implemented across states.

The workshop was chaired by Ms Aradhana Patnaik, Additional Secretary & Managing Director, MoHFW, along with Shri Nikhil Gajraj, Joint Secretary, MoHFW, Dr Suni V Gitte (DDG Leprosy) and attended by the Health Secretary and Commissioner, Government of Chhattisgarh, Regional Directors, senior state officials, programme managers, WHO India representatives, and other development partners.

A significant component of the workshop was the state-level group work involving SLOs, DLOs, programme teams, and ILEP India members. ILEP India representatives actively contributed to these discussions by sharing implementation experiences from their respective states and supporting the development of practical and actionable strategies.

The group exercises focused on reducing the Prevalence Rate (PR) to below 1 per 10,000 population, reducing Grade-2 Disability (G2D) cases, reducing child leprosy cases, strengthening Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) coverage, and improving active case detection and contact management systems.

The workshop underscored the importance of focused implementation, intersectoral collaboration, and a data-driven approach to accelerate progress towards interrupting transmission and ultimately eliminating leprosy as a public health concern in India.

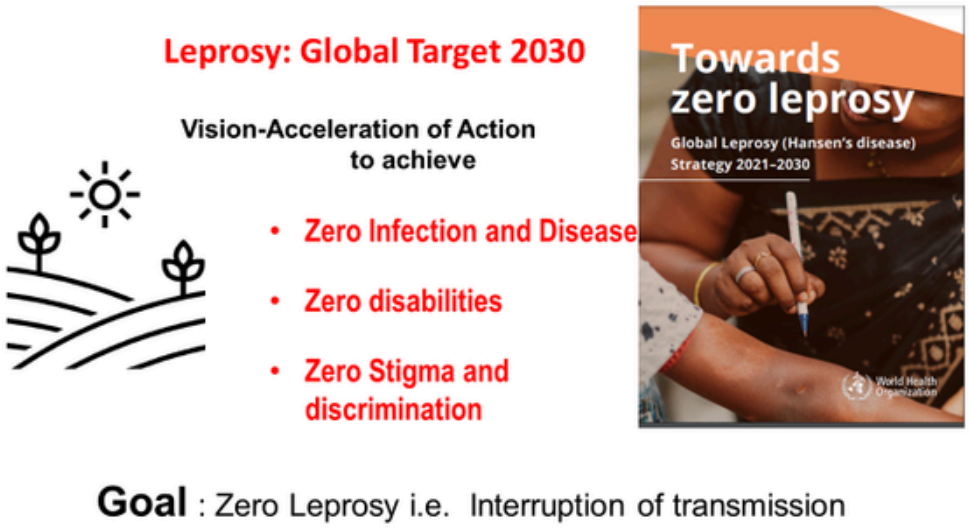


ILEP India Knowledge Sharing Series: Advancing Leprosy Elimination and Quality Care

ILEP India conducted two Knowledge Sharing Sessions on 27 April and 25 June 2026, respectively.

A session on the topic **"Interruption of Transmission and Elimination of Leprosy"**, led by Dr Rashmi Shukla, WHO India, provided valuable insights into the global vision of achieving Zero Leprosy by 2030. It highlighted the structured Leprosy Elimination Framework, emphasising key milestones such as zero child cases for five consecutive years (interruption of transmission) and zero adult cases for three years (elimination), and post-elimination surveillance. The discussion underscored the importance of robust surveillance systems, integrated program implementation, community engagement, and evidence-based monitoring tools like LEMT. As we move toward post-elimination surveillance, sustained efforts, strong health systems, and continuous vigilance remain critical to prevent re-emergence and ensure long-term impact.

Another session on **"Sustaining Quality Care and Comprehensive Leprosy Services: Addressing Challenges to Reduce Disease Morbidity in the Community",** led by Dr Vivek Vasudev Pai, Director, Bombay Leprosy Project, highlighted strategies to strengthen quality leprosy care in line with India's National Strategic Plan (NSP) and Roadmap for Leprosy (2023–2027) and the WHO roadmap. The session underscored the importance of improving clinical expertise, early detection and management of reactions, disability prevention, routine nerve function assessment, pharmacovigilance, and long-term post-treatment follow-up. Dr Pai underscored the need to strengthen referral systems, expand physiotherapy and assistive services, improve relapse and drug-resistance surveillance, and enhance collaboration with private healthcare providers. Through practical case studies, the session reinforced the importance of timely diagnosis, comprehensive patient care, and sustained surveillance to reduce disability and accelerate progress towards leprosy elimination.





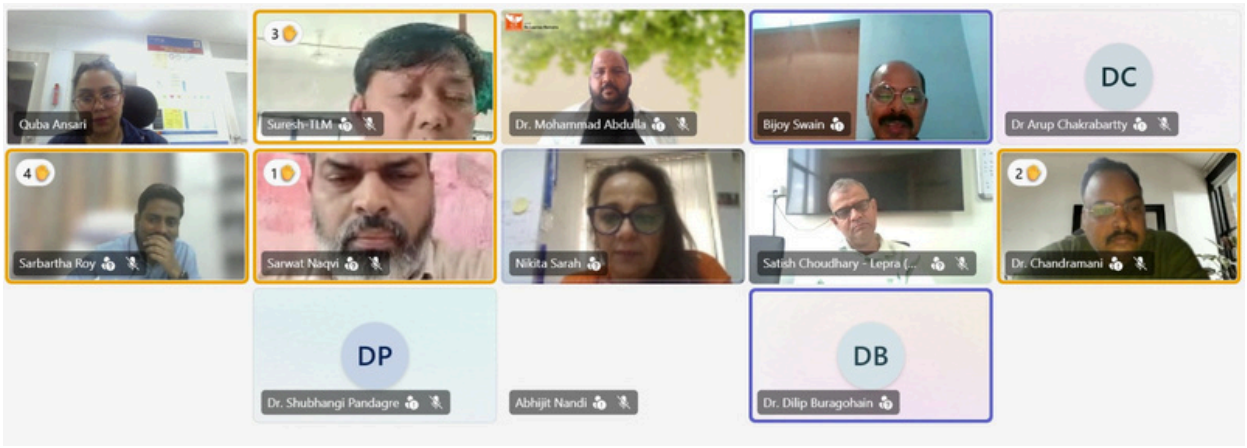
Advancing Coordination and Action: ILEP NLEP Consultant Virtual Meeting

On 7 April 2026, ILEP India hosted a virtual meeting with ILEP NLEP Consultants to strengthen collaboration and accelerate collective efforts towards leprosy elimination.

The meeting provided an important platform to discuss key strategic priorities, including the objectives of the Interstate Coordination initiative, strengthening monthly reporting mechanisms, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of ILEP NLEP Consultants to ensure greater alignment and effective coordination across states in support of the National Leprosy Eradication Programme.

The discussion also encouraged participants to share practical insights and recommendations for improving coordination, streamlining programme implementation, and enhancing collaboration across member organisations.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening partnerships and reinforcing a coordinated approach to achieving the vision of Zero Leprosy.



TLMTI in Conversation with Dr Aakash Shrivastava: Advancing Climate Action and Resilient Healthcare

On World Environment Day, The Leprosy Mission Trust India released a new episode of TLM Open Circle. In this episode, Dr Aakash Shrivastava, Additional Director, National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health, explains how state action plans are formulated to prevent and mitigate the impact of climate change on health. He touches upon the importance of climate-informed health service delivery and retrofitting existing health facilities to make them climate-resilient. He also explained how the government is exploring the possibility of including climate change in the medical curriculum to help train the next crop of doctors.

Watch the podcast here:

Part 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRmPcBsoNk&t=5s

Part 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO8ZjiUcXms&t=422s



NLR India Celebrates 27 Years of Commitment Towards a Leprosy-Free World

NLR India commemorated its 27th Foundation Day on 24 April 2026 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, marking nearly three decades of dedicated efforts towards the elimination of leprosy and the promotion of dignity, inclusion, and equal opportunities for persons affected by leprosy.

The event was graced by Marisa Gerards, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to India, Nepal and Bhutan, who attended as the Chief Guest. She underscored the importance of compassion, inclusion, and collective action in addressing the challenges faced by persons affected by leprosy and other neglected communities.

The celebration brought together policymakers, health professionals, researchers, development partners, civil society representatives, and persons with lived experience of leprosy to discuss priorities for early detection, prevention, compassionate care, rehabilitation, social inclusion, and stigma reduction. Key highlights included the dissemination of findings from the Compassion Study and the introduction of NLR India Foundation's digital innovations, including the Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) App and Sarkari Yojana App, aimed at strengthening leprosy prevention and improving access to welfare services.

An update on the PEP++ Study provided insights into ongoing research aimed at evaluating enhanced preventive interventions for leprosy. A strategic consultation session facilitated dialogue among experts and programme leaders on scaling the implementation of digital tools and embedding compassionate care approaches within health systems. The event also featured a panel discussion exploring pathways for greater and more meaningful participation of persons with lived experience of leprosy in prevention, advocacy, and programme implementation.





The Leprosy Mission Hospital, Kolkata, Honoured with CII-Joyee 2026 Award

The Leprosy Mission Hospital, Kolkata, has been recognised with the prestigious CII-Joyee 2026 Award for its dedicated work in leprosy care and its wide-ranging community health services. The award, presented by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** in association with the **India Women Network (IWN)**, celebrates the compassion, resilience, and outstanding contributions of nurses and caregivers who devote their lives to serving others.

This recognition is particularly meaningful as it marks the third consecutive year that the hospital has received the award, following honours in 2024, 2025, and 2026. The achievement reflects the unwavering commitment of the hospital team to delivering quality healthcare with dignity, compassion, and excellence.

The award serves as an encouragement to continue working towards a shared vision of improving lives, strengthening community health, and ensuring access to quality care for all.



Reaching Remote Communities Through Early Detection and Disability Care

Under Project Niramaya III, funded by DAHW Germany, Dayanand Hospital, Palghar, conducted a Skin and Disability Camp in the remote area of Berasta Kaprada, Moti Palas, Gujarat.

A total of **112 individuals were screened**, resulting in the identification of 39 skin disease cases and 7 suspected leprosy cases. Further assessment confirmed two new leprosy cases with Grade 2 Disability, both of whom were initiated on treatment through the Primary Health Centre.

The camp also provided self-care education to 12 persons affected by leprosy, equipping them with practical knowledge to prevent complications and manage existing disabilities.



TLM Open Circle: A Rapid Diagnostic Tool Bringing Early Leprosy Detection Closer to Communities

Early diagnosis remains one of the most effective ways to interrupt leprosy transmission. Yet, identifying the disease at its earliest stages can be challenging, particularly in remote areas where access to specialised healthcare and clinical expertise is limited. Adding to the difficulty, many individuals may carry the infection without showing any visible signs or symptoms.

To address this gap, **The Leprosy Mission Trust India in collaboration with Molbio Diagnostics** has developed a field-friendly, chip-based rapid molecular diagnostic tool that can detect leprosy within an hour. Designed for use closer to communities, the test can also identify sub-clinical infections, cases in which the bacteria are actively multiplying in the body before symptoms appear.

In this episode of TLM Open Circle, Dr Joydeepa Darlong, Head of Knowledge Management, and Dr Itu Singh, Head of Stanley Browne Laboratory, discuss the science behind the innovation, its potential to transform early detection in the field, and the ongoing validation studies being conducted across TLMTI hospitals.

Watch the Podcast: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mmdz8J4J8e8&t=34s



Project NIRAMAYA III Review, Digha, West Bengal

GLRA India conducted the Annual Progress Review Meeting of Project NIRAMAYA III, bringing together management, project teams, state coordinators, partner hospitals, and technical experts for two days of reflection and planning. Teams from different project locations shared their achievements, field learnings, and challenges, offering a comprehensive view of implementation progress across regions.

Discussions centred on strengthening project monitoring, improving data quality, ensuring effective resource utilisation, and enhancing coordination to deliver quality leprosy care services. The meeting concluded with clear learnings and priority actions for the road ahead, strengthening GLRA India's commitment to comprehensive leprosy care, disability prevention, stigma reduction, and social inclusion.



State-Level Symposium on Leprosy Strengthens Private Sector Engagement in Telangana

LEPRA Society, in collaboration with the **Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL**), Telangana, organised a State-Level Symposium on Leprosy in Hyderabad to strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors for early diagnosis, case notification, disability prevention, and comprehensive leprosy care. The symposium brought together government officials, dermatologists, academicians, postgraduate students, and public health professionals from across Telangana.

Mr Prasant Kumar Naik, Chief Executive, LEPRA Society, emphasised the continued public health significance of leprosy and the need for sustained efforts in early diagnosis, disability prevention, rehabilitation, and stronger engagement of private-sector dermatologists. Dr Nazia Nausheen, Secretary, IADVL Telangana, stressed collective action to reduce stigma and strengthen collaboration between the private sector and the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP).

Dr D. John Babu, State Leprosy Officer, Telangana, presented the state's epidemiological scenario and key programme initiatives, including contact screening, Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), strengthened surveillance, and disability prevention. Delivering the theme address, Dr P. Narasimha Rao, President, International Leprosy Association, underscored the pivotal role of dermatologists in early diagnosis, prompt treatment, and timely case notification. Dr Bhumesh Kumar, Prof & HOD of Dermatology, OGH. spoke on the importance of early detection of paediatric leprosy, while Dr Khyathi Reddy P. showcased LEPRA Society's AI-based digital foot measurement technology for customised MCR footwear.

A multidisciplinary panel discussion emphasised strengthening collaboration between dermatologists, government programmes, professional associations, and civil society organisations. Key recommendations included improving private-sector case notification through the Nikusth 2.0 portal, expanding contact screening and PEP implementation, strengthening disability prevention services, and developing skilled human resources. LEPRA Society also showcased its Physio Care Assistant training programme and the Data Strengthening Project across all 33 districts of Telangana. The symposium concluded with a collective commitment to strengthen public-private partnerships and accelerate progress towards a leprosy-free Telangana.



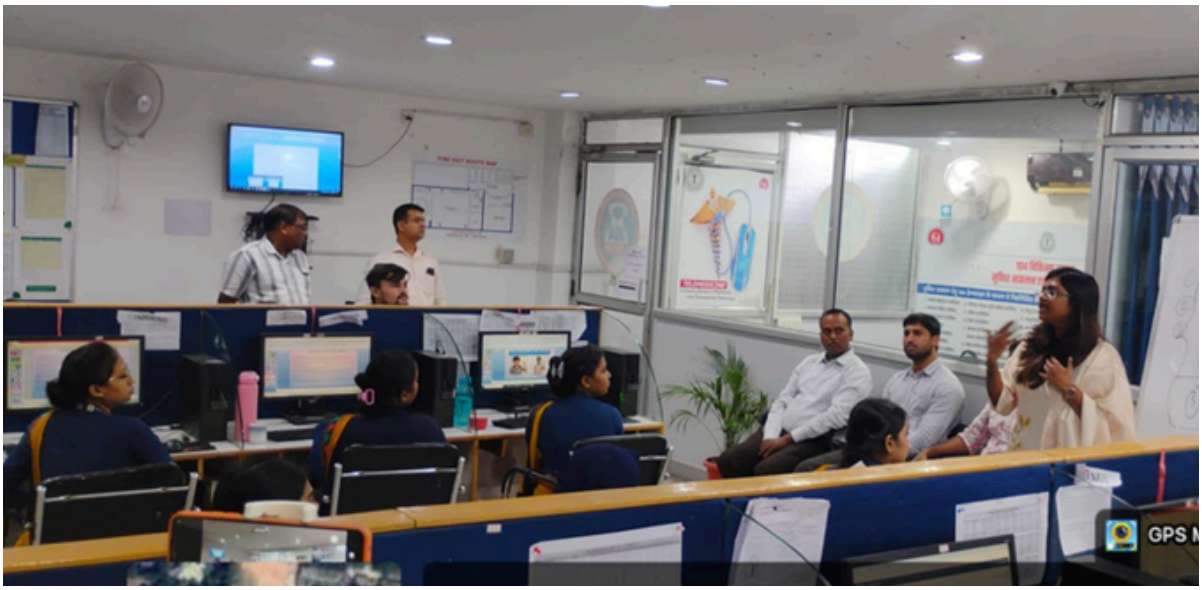
Capacity Building of 104 Health Helpline Callers Strengthens Leprosy Follow-up in Jharkhand

To enhance patient-centred support and strengthen the National Leprosy Elimination Programme (NLEP), an orientation was conducted for **53 staff members** of the 104 Health Helpline in Ranchi, Jharkhand, organised in collaboration with the State Leprosy Cell and NLR India Foundation. The training equipped medical officers, ANMs, psychologists, and counsellors with skills to support persons affected by leprosy through effective telephonic engagement.

The members were oriented on compassionate and stigma-free communication, the use of a standardised telephonic assessment tool (104 caller questionnaire and self-assessment checklist) for consistent follow-up, monitoring of suspected leprosy cases to ensure timely diagnosis and treatment initiation, and tracking the delivery of the Government of India's nutritional support incentive of Rs. 500, disability-related welfare schemes to enable appropriate referrals and improve access to social protection services.

The initiative leverages the Government's 104 Health Helpline to strengthen patient support, improve treatment adherence, reduce stigma, and enhance access to care and welfare services for persons affected by leprosy.





MLSM Supports Maharashtra's 100-Day TB and Leprosy Screening Campaign



As part of the Government of Maharashtra's 100-day campaign to identify and address Tuberculosis (TB) and Leprosy, **Maharashtra Lokahita Seva Mandal (MLSM)**, a partner organisation of GLRA India in Mumbai, actively participated in community-based screening activities across the slum areas of Malad, Santacruz, and Dharavi.

A total of **382 individuals were screened** during the campaign. Through these efforts, 14 presumptive leprosy cases were identified and referred to designated Leprosy Referral Centres for further clinical examination, diagnostic testing, and appropriate treatment.

In addition to screening activities, MLSM conducted health education sessions and group discussions to raise awareness about the signs and symptoms of leprosy and TB. Community members were also informed about the availability of free testing and treatment services at Government health facilities, encouraging early diagnosis and timely care.

Strengthening Early Detection Through Community Health Worker Training



Ahead of the launch of the Mission Transmission Free project on 1 July 2026, The Leprosy Mission conducted orientation programmes for **694 ASHA workers and 45 ASHA supervisors** in collaboration with the Additional Director of Health Services (Leprosy) to provide ASHA workers and supervisors with essential knowledge and skills for community awareness, case identification, referral, and follow-up. The orientations were held across three districts, Amravati and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra, and Sarangarh in Chhattisgarh, to prepare frontline health workers for large-scale community-based leprosy screening activities.

Under the project, frontline workers will undertake door-to-door surveys to identify and refer suspected leprosy cases, contributing to early detection and timely treatment. Approximately 1.5 million people are expected to be screened for leprosy across the project areas during 2026.

Mission Transmission Free will continue its screening activities through 2028, supporting ongoing efforts to interrupt transmission and move closer to a leprosy-free future.

Reviving Dreams, Restoring Dignity: Laxmi's Story of Transformation

For years, Laxmi Sada worked as a daily wage labourer to provide for his wife and three children. However, leprosy gradually affected the sensation in his hands and feet. Without treatment in the early stages, the condition progressed, resulting in deformities in his hands and painful ulcers on his feet. Eventually, he could no longer continue working, placing immense financial strain on the family. Although treatment and surgery helped address the complication, Laxmi was left with permanent disabilities that affected his mobility, confidence, and ability to earn a livelihood. With his wife becoming the sole earning member, the family struggled to make ends meet.

During a home visit, the **Damien Foundation India Trust (DFIT)** field team provided self-care guidance, exercises, and protective footwear to help Laxmi manage the condition and prevent further complications. In the course of their interaction, Laxmi shared his dream of reopening the small fast-food and grocery shop he once ran before financial difficulties forced him to shut it down.

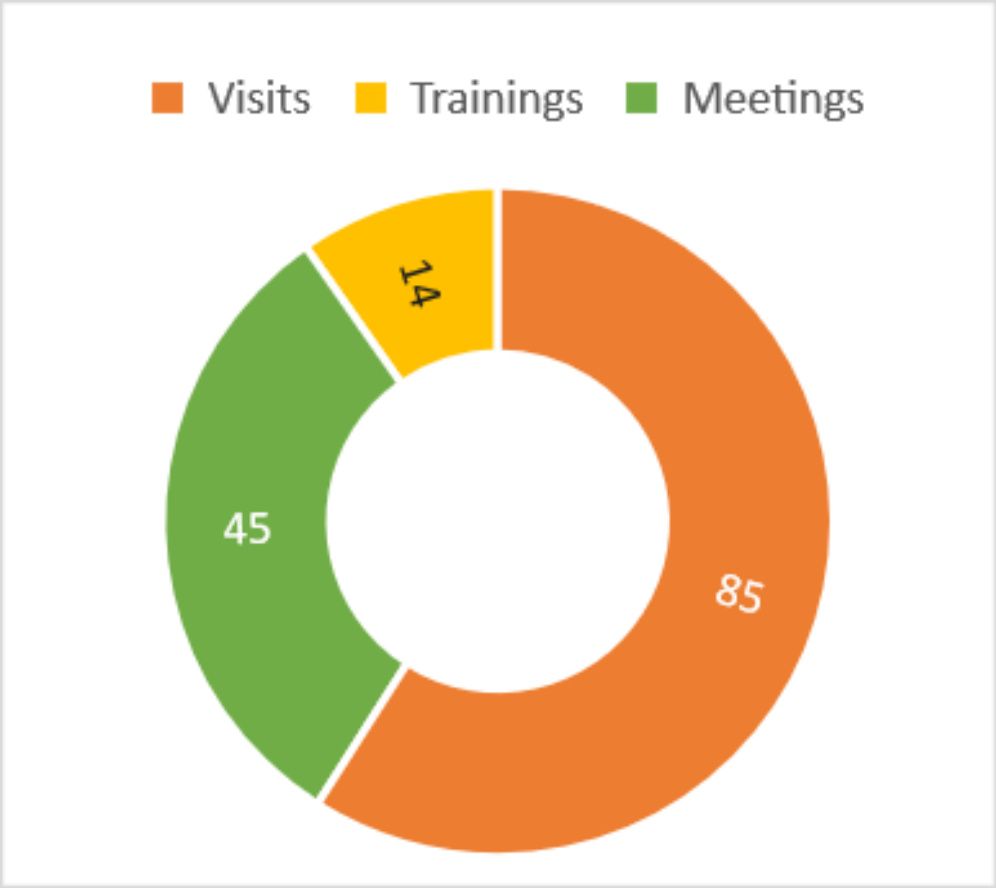
Recognising his determination to become self-reliant once again, support was extended by DFIT to help him restart the business.

Today, Laxmi's shop is gradually bringing back financial stability to the family. More importantly, it has restored his sense of dignity, purpose, and hope, and once again he is able to contribute to his household and look ahead to a brighter future.



From April to June 2026

10 ILEP NLEP consultants supported the strengthening of the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) across 14 endemic states. During this quarter, they conducted **85 field visits** to health facilities and leprosy colonies, ensuring effective implementation and monitoring of NLEP activities. In addition, **45 meetings** were held to support advocacy and coordination at state and district levels, and **14 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.



85 Field visits	45 Meetings	14 Trainings

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