



## STOP USING THE WORD 'LEPER'!

**The word "leper" is derogatory and it dehumanises people affected by leprosy. It carries with it all the unfortunate associations from the days when people with leprosy were treated as social outcasts and declared unclean. Stigmatising and discriminatory, this word is hurtful and also perpetuates the idea of being rejected by society, at a time when even greater inclusion is being achieved. It indicates a lack of respect for their dignity as individuals.**

- "Leper" is a word that equates a person with the disease.
- "Leper" is more like a shaming and separating label – a category of people unfit to be called people.
- "Leper" implies an erroneous commonality among all people with leprosy.
- "Leper" as a word depersonalises and devalues all individuals, irrespective of whatever condition or disease they may have - they are first and foremost human beings.
- By using the "leper" word you are condoning and potentially encouraging the ongoing mistreatment of people affected by leprosy. You are denying them their dignity and their rights.
- The usage of the word "leper" makes it harder for us to persuade all the stakeholders involved to take the problems of leprosy seriously, to overturn discriminatory legislation and provide comprehensive care and support.

**Don't add to the injustice they experience with your thoughtless use of words. Instead, as a journalist help HEAL India with the power of your words. Give them the basic right to be called PEOPLE affected by leprosy. STOP USING THE WORD "LEPER".**



**LEPROSY CAN LEAD TO  
DISABILITY ONLY IF IT'S LEFT  
UNTREATED. BUT IT IS STILL  
THE LEADING CAUSE OF  
DISABILITY IN THE WORLD.**