

The National Leprosy Eradication Programme

September 20, 2019

Source: PIB & website of NLEP

Recently the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare wrote a letter to the Union Minister of Law and Justice and Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment seeking amendment of the existing discriminatory laws against persons affected by leprosy.

About the National Leprosy Eradication Programme

The National Leprosy Eradication Programme is a centrally sponsored Health Scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India. The Programme is headed by the Deputy Director of Health Services (Leprosy) under the administrative control of the Directorate General Health Services Govt. of India. While the NLEP strategies and plans are formulated centrally, the programme is implemented by the States/UTs. The Programmes also supported as Partners by the World Health Organization, The International Federation of Anti-leprosy Associations (ILEP) and a few other Non-Govt. Organizations.

Objectives

- Early detection through active surveillance by trained health workers;
- Regular treatment of cases by providing Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) at fixed in or centres a nearby village of moderate to low endemic areas/district;
- Intensified health education and public awareness campaigns to remove the social stigma attached to the disease.
- Appropriate medical rehabilitation and leprosy ulcer

care services.

Strategies for Leprosy elimination in India

- Decentralized integrated leprosy services through the General Health Care system.
- Early detection & complete treatment of new leprosy cases.
- Carrying out household contact surveys in the detection of Multibacillary (MB) & child cases.
- Early diagnosis & prompt MDT, through routine and special efforts
- Involvement of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in the detection & complete treatment of Leprosy cases for leprosy work
- Strengthening of Disability Prevention & Medical Rehabilitation (DPMR) services.
- Information, Education & Communication (IEC) activities in the community to improve self-reporting to Primary Health Centre (PHC) and reduction of stigma.
- Intensive monitoring and supervision at the Primary Health Centre/Community Health Centre.



Milestones in NLEP

- 1955 – National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) launched
- 1983 – National Leprosy Eradication Programme launched
- 1983 – Introduction of Multidrug therapy (MDT) in Phases
- 2005 – Elimination of Leprosy at National Level
- 2012 – Special action plan for 209 high endemic districts in 16 States/UTs

About Leprosy

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by

Mycobacterium leprae. It usually affects the skin and peripheral nerves, but has a wide range of clinical manifestations. The disease is characterized by long incubation period generally 5-7 years and is classified as paucibacillary or multibacillary, depending on the bacillary load. Leprosy is a leading cause of permanent physical disability. Timely diagnosis and treatment of cases, before nerve damage has occurred, is the most effective way of preventing disability due to leprosy.