



until
No Leprosy Remains

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JOURNEY TOWARDS ZERO LEPROSY

Vol.03; Issue10; April - June 2025

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Message from the Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Dear Reader,

It gives me great joy to share with you the progress of NLR India during April to June 2025. This quarter was special as we celebrated 26 years of our Foundation, a journey dedicated to serving persons affected by leprosy and disabilities. The celebrations in Delhi brought together government leaders, experts, partners, and, most importantly, the voices of people directly impacted. Their strength and courage inspire us to do more.

We also continued our efforts through training, health camps, research, and empowerment programmes. Further, we supported communities with self-care, livelihoods, and disability rights, each step takes us closer to our vision of a leprosy free and inclusive India.

I sincerely thank our partners, donors, and colleagues whose commitment makes this work possible. Together, we are proving that compassion, collaboration, and perseverance can bring lasting change.

Let us continue working together to build a future free from leprosy, stigma, and discrimination.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ashok Agarwal
Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Key Meetings & Highlights (National/State Level)

April is a significant month in the history of NLR India Foundation (NLRIF). In 1999, on 23rd April, NLR India Foundation was established. The organization celebrates its Foundation Day every year on 23rd April. In 2025, NLRIF completed 26 remarkable years of service to the persons affected by leprosy and disabilities. To celebrate this occasion, a one-day event was organized at Viswa Yuvak Kendra, Delhi on 23rd April 2025. During the event, the findings of PEP App study were disseminated. The main objective of this study was “to what extent is a mobile Application-supported SDR-PEP delivery system more effective and feasible than the present paper-based method?” Dignitaries present on and off dais, were of the view that this App can be scaled up in whole country. Apart from that, two panel discussions were also organized -one on “interruption of transmission” and other on “mitigation of suffering due to leprosy.” Eminent experts from the field of leprosy and rehabilitation were the panelists. Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Government of India (GoI) was the Chief Guest; while Justice V Ramasubramanian, Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India was the “Dignitary of the Event”. The event was attended by officials from Central Leprosy Division (CLD), experts of leprosy and public health, representatives from Non-government Organizations (NGOs), ILEP agencies, WHO, representatives from leprosy colonies of Delhi and other development partners. The highlights were address by the Chairperson, NHRC, India and the “voices of the affected persons.” A “Call to Action” was released during the event. Ensuring meaningful partnership and providing stage to express their opinions, NLR India invited about 20 residents of six leprosy colonies of New Delhi to the event. Out of them, seven expressed their feelings from the stage and shared their expectations from society and the government.



To engage more donors and collaborators for the cause of leprosy, a panel discussion was organized at the seminar hall of prestigious India International Center, New Delhi on 5th May 2025. The topic of discussion was “Leprosy in India: down but not out. What are we doing about it?” The panel comprised of Chief Medical Officer from CLD, National Professional Officer (NPO) of WHO, Coordinator of ILEP, Executive Director of Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy (GPZL) and Chief Executive Officer of NLR India. The Vice chairperson of Board, NLR India Foundation was the moderator. About 30 guests attended the panel discussion. Ms. Rajma, a resident of a leprosy colony in New Delhi, who herself belongs to a family of person affected by leprosy, described the situation of persons affected by leprosy in society and family and their plights of day-to-day life.



■ All NLEP consultants and the Head of Programmes of NLR India attended a meeting called by ILEP on 3rd May 2025.

■ On 7th April 2025, World Health Day, a self-care camp was organized by the Delhi Health Society and West District with technical support from NLR India. A total of 15 persons affected by leprosy participated in the camp, where they were briefed on the importance and process of self-care for hands, feet, and eyes. Essential logistics including tubs, scrubbers, mustard oil bottles, dressing materials, and antibiotic ointments were provided, along with small instructional booklets on self-care. Additionally, 55 women received sanitary kits containing Dettol, sanitary napkins, soaps, combs, toothbrushes, dates, and towels. The local dresser was provided with cotton rolls and gauze pieces to support ulcer care. The district team distributed MCR footwear, cotton rolls, bandages, and ointments within the colony. Beyond the camp, sanitary kits were distributed to 192 families across leprosy colonies, coupled with awareness sessions on WASH, emphasizing hygiene practices and safe drinking water.



■ In the month of April an employment fair was organized by employment office at District Disability Rehabilitation Center Aurangabad, Bihar and battery Rickshaws were distributed to the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). NLR India Foundation helped in making this program successful. A review meeting of the local forum and Divyang Self Help Group was held in the district and information was given about the objectives of the group and everyone was given information about Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 and government schemes. A camp was organized by the government in all the blocks of the district for making Unique Disability ID Card (UDID) card and disability certificate for the person with disabilities, in which all the disability inclusive development (DID) coordinators of NLR India of the district helped in mobilizing the disabled people.





From 25th to 27th May 2025, Dr. H K Kar (Co-PI, PEP++) conducted field visits in Chandauli and Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh (U.P) for case verification. He was accompanied by Dr. Arup (National Research Coordinator & State Programme lead – West Bengal), Dr. Danish (Project Coordinator, PEP++), Mr. Sanjay (District Supervisor, PEP++), and Mr. Aman (Finance & Admin Officer, PEP++).



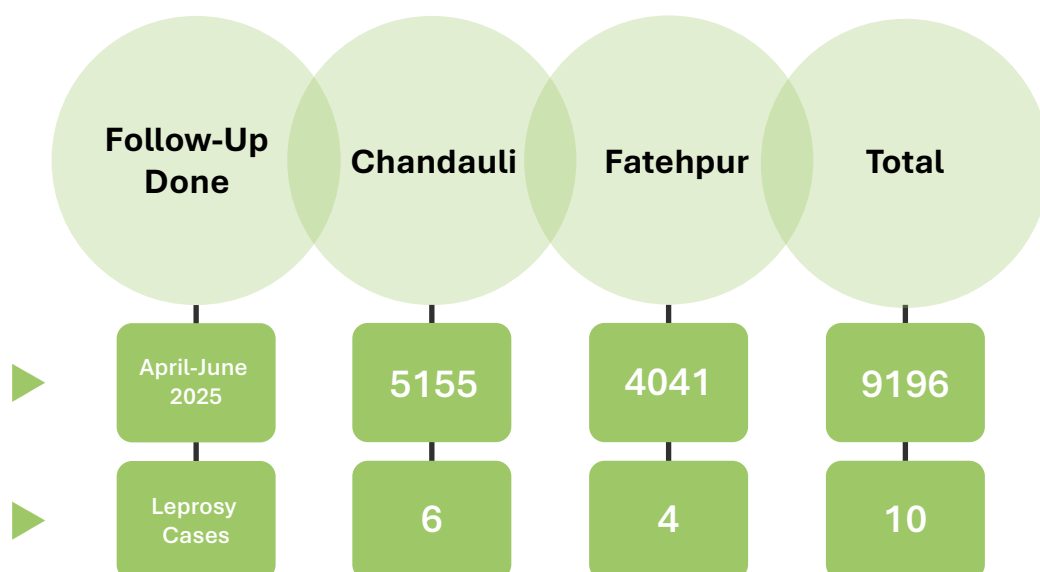
A training session on leprosy was conducted on 26th May in Varanasi, with the participation of 52 attendees. The group included Medical Officer In-Charges (MOICs), Medical Officers (MOs), Non-Medical Supervisors (NMS), Non-Medical Assistants (NMAs), Para-Medical Workers (PMWs), Health Educators (HEs), and Field Investigators (FIs).



21st National Task Force (NTF) Meeting of PEP++: 27th July 2025, Lucknow (U.P). The meeting was attended by NTF members and included key discussions on the progress of the study, follow-up activities carried out to date, qPCR testing results, and antimicrobial resistance monitoring.



Update on follow-up progress and new leprosy cases identification April -June 2025:



The Pep App-based Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis (LPEP) project in West Bengal gained further momentum through refinement of the existing application. The revised version is now being scaled up across 13 control blocks in two districts – Paschim Bardhaman and Howrah.

The Compassionate Training project in Bokaro advanced another step with the development of four modules: a facilitator's guide, a module for doctors, a module for paramedical workers (three in English), and a Hindi-translated version for paramedical workers.



Support in Developing State-Specific Strategic Plans (SSP)

In April, the Central Leprosy Division shared a template for SSP development. The State Programme Leads (SPLs) of NLR India are supporting states in revising the document.

Training & Capacity Building (CB)

Training and building capacity of health staff is a prime intervention of NLR India. During the quarter of April to June 2025, training was organized in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh & West Bengal. A total of 554 health staff were trained (including 129 medical officers and 425 General Health Care (GHC) staff) during the second quarter of 2025.



Helpline

A unique project of NLR India in which the counselor calls the patients on treatment and those who are Released from Treatment (RFT) fortnightly and quarterly respectively. The line lists of patients are received from various districts (currently from 17 districts). The feedback received from the patients shared with concerned districts for follow up. During the quarter of April to June 2025, a total of 25 index cases and seven RFT cases were registered at the helpline center (operational from Jaipur, Rajasthan). A total of 350 calls were made to these clients to follow them up about their disease condition and any other problems.

EMPOWERMENT

Key Updates

On World Health Day which is observed on the 7th April 2025, a health camp and a leprosy awareness program Lakshan along with Swachhata Ki Pathshala was organized in the Composite School, Cholahpur block of Varanasi in collaboration with Plan India and NLR India. On this occasion, teachers and the team of the Health Department were present along with 380 children. They were sensitized on various aspects of WASH.



At NLR India Foundation, we are proud to support individuals like Tarkeshwar Bhuiyan from Kosdihara village, Aurangabad, Bihar. Tarkeshwar has lived with a locomotor disability due to polio since childhood and faced many financial hardships.

In 2019, our Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Coordinator, Mr. Nandlal Rajak, met Tarkeshwar and introduced him to different government schemes and entitlements available for persons with disabilities. This knowledge gave him hope and direction.

With our support, Tarkeshwar joined a Self-Help Group for persons with disabilities. In this group, members come together to support each other socially, economically, and emotionally. Skill development and government schemes awareness sessions are also conducted. Through these activities, Tarkeshwar gained confidence, became independent, and started making bold decisions. Peer encouragement and new opportunities changed his mindset from doubt to self-belief. In 2022, Tarkeshwar married a woman with a disability. Aware of the government's marriage incentive scheme, he applied for support with our assistance. In 2025, he received ₹2,46,000 (€ 2421.33) from the Social Security Department.

This financial support has made a real difference in his life. Tarkeshwar is now moving forward with confidence and dignity.

We at NLR India Foundation are proud to be part of his journey and remain committed to empowering more individuals like him every day.



In the second quarter, NLR India with support from the members of Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), helped PWDs in getting the following benefits

BENEFIT	NUMBER
UDID Cards	42
Ration Cards	25
Disability Certificates	110
Disability Pensions	32
MGNREGA Cards	14
Railway Passes	6
Bus Pass	1
Motorized E-Rickshaws	39

These benefits were made available through active coordination with district government officials, stakeholders, and the DID Coordinator. The beneficiaries belong to various blocks across the district, ensuring equitable distribution and outreach.

Upcoming Priorities (Next Quarter)

- Supporting government in finalizing the state specific strategic plans
- Supporting planned LCDCs in the estates
- Developing the resource directory of schemes

DONATE



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