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**No Leprosy Remains**

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JOURNEY TOWARDS ZERO LEPROSY

Vol. 03; Issue 12; Oct. - December 2025

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## Message from the Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to share the October–December 2025 Quarterly Newsletter of NLR India. This quarter reflects our continued commitment to a world free from leprosy and its consequences.

During this period, our teams worked closely with government partners, health professionals, and community members to strengthen early detection, treatment, disability care, and social inclusion. The Annual Staff Meeting and the stakeholder consultation in Ranchi provided an important platform to review our progress and strengthen partnerships for addressing leprosy, skin NTDs, and related disabilities.

I am encouraged by the dedication of our teams who supported Leprosy Case Detection Campaigns, trained more than 300 health personnel, and continued follow-up through our helpline initiative. Our efforts in research, particularly the Compassion Training study, are also contributing valuable insights toward reducing stigma and improving quality of care.

Equally important are our community-based activities, which support in leprosy colonies, livelihood assistance, and linking persons with disabilities to government schemes. These initiatives help ensure dignity, inclusion, and better opportunities for those affected.

I sincerely thank our partners, government officials, donors, and field teams for their continued support and commitment.

Together, we will continue moving closer to a future free from leprosy.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Ashok Agarwal**

Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

## Key Highlights (National/State Level)

NLR India conducted its Annual Staff Meeting in hybrid mode. The Virtual part of the meeting was conducted from 3rd to 5th December 2025 while in-person meeting was held at Ranchi (Jharkhand) from 15th to 17th December 2025. In the meeting project implementation in 2025 was reviewed, new strategies and future plan for NLR India were discussed. The highlight of the in-person meeting was a stakeholders' meeting titled "Strengthening Partnership for Leprosy, Skin NTDs & Related Disabilities". Shri Shashi Prakash Jha, Mission Director (MD), National Health Mission (NHM), Jharkhand was the chief guest of the event. Dr Anil Kumar, State Leprosy Officer, Jharkhand and Dr B.K. Singh, State Programme Officer, Vector Borne Disease Control, Jharkhand also participated in this event. Later two panel discussions were organized with topics:

- Interruption of Leprosy Transmission- focusing on early detection, contact tracing, preventive therapy, surveillance innovations, and engagement of private health care providers.
- Disability Care and Socio-Economic Rehabilitation (SER)- focusing on comprehensive disability management, mental health integration, access to social protection schemes, livelihoods, and rights-based rehabilitation for persons affected by leprosy and Lymphatic Filariasis (LF).

Panellists for these panel discussions comprised of state officials, representatives of partner agencies and WHO.

This stakeholder meeting reaffirmed the commitment of state of Jharkhand for achieving interruption of transmission eliminating leprosy, strengthening disability care and socioeconomic rehabilitation



NLR India monitored districts conducting Leprosy Case Detection Campaigns (LCDC) beyond its allotted states and districts. This reflects the confidence of government in NLR. In Bihar, the State Programme lead (SPL) visited Darbhanga, Madhubani & Sitamarhi for monitoring of LCDC programme. The SPL trained the field workers on job and discussed the identified gaps with relevant officials for improving the campaign. The Head of Programme of NLR India did monitoring of LCDC at Delhi along with a representative of Regional Leprosy Research & Training Institute (RLTRI), Raipur. The findings were shared with the State Leprosy Officer (SLO), Delhi.

From October to December 2025, the Compassion Training (CT) Project entered its final and most critical phase, marking the completion of endline data collection and qualitative assessments. In October, quantitative data collection for 80 healthcare workers was successfully completed, followed by the initiation of qualitative interviews with healthcare workers. November saw the completion of in-depth qualitative interviews across all three respondent groups, healthcare workers, persons affected by leprosy, and family members, along with four focused group discussions representing both male and female participants.

By December 2025, transcription and translation of all interviews and FGDs were finalized, ensuring readiness for analysis. These activities concluded the mixed-methods study aimed at assessing how compassion-focused training can reduce stigma and improve quality of care within the public health system. The learnings from this phase will contribute to evidence-based advocacy for integrating compassion-based approaches into routine healthcare practice, particularly within leprosy services. The quarter reflects a strong commitment to ethical, people-centred, and stigma-free healthcare delivery.



Under the PEP++ project the follow up of the persons who received medicine is underway. Following is the update on follow-up progress and new leprosy cases identification during October -December 2025:

Follow-up	Chandauli		Fatehpur		Total
	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	
Oct-Dec, 2025	2453	2253	3084	2606	10396
Suspect Cases	3	0	3	2	8
Confirmed Cases	2	0	3	1	6

# HEALTH Key Updates

## Training/Capacity building (CB):

Across the fourth quarter, more than 300 health personnel were trained, including Medical Officers, General Health Care (GHC) staff and other health staff. Trainings were conducted in Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal. Trainings were focused on early diagnosis, classification, treatment, disability management and mental health.



## 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 19 districts) from Rajasthan, Jharkhand & Uttar Pradesh. The feedback received from the patients is shared with concerned districts for follow up. During the quarter of October to December 2025, a total of 70 index cases were registered at the helpline center (operational from Jaipur, Rajasthan). A total of 285 calls were made to these clients to follow them up about their disease condition and any other problems.

## Support in Leprosy Colonies

Regular colony visits were conducted in Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand ,Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Activities included self-care camps and reinforcement sessions, ulcer dressing material (like cotton, bandage, antiseptic creams and betadine/ savlon along with tubs, scrubbers) distribution, ration support, WHO Quality-of-Life assessments, identification and training of peer supporters, information about various social welfare schemes, support for reduction of stigma and improve mental well-being and advocacy for infrastructure improvements (e.g., ramps, ration access). Sessions on WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) were held, highlighting the importance of sanitation and hygiene. These interventions strengthened both clinical follow-up and social inclusion.



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

### Support Facilitated:

BENEFIT	NUMBER
UDID Cards	46
Ration Cards	5
Disability Certificates	86
Disability Pensions	62
MGNREGA Cards	2
Railway Passes	1
Bus Pass	2
Motorized E-Rickshaws	59

These benefits were made available through active coordination with district government officials, stakeholders, and the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Coordinators.

# EMPOWERMENT

During October, seven students with disabilities from the Aurangabad were linked to the Pandit Dindayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Disabilities under the Free Online Coaching for Persons with Disabilities initiative. Among these students, one has a visual impairment and six have locomotor disabilities. (male students 03 and female students 04). This initiative aims to promote empowerment and capacity building among young persons with disabilities by providing them access to quality educational resources and opportunities for skill enhancement.

The resource directory of schemes beneficial for persons with disabilities is almost complete.

To support the disabled persons accessing the government's beneficial schemes, NLR India is developing an App (Resource directory App) which will contain all the relevant information of the scheme: what is the scheme, who could be benefitted, how could one apply and what is the website for application etc. This App is being piloted and will be available for broader use by mid of 2026.

## Challenges

Despite strong progress, several operational challenges were noted:

- Shortage of Para Medical Workers in select districts.
- Delays in micro-planning and logistics distribution during LCDC.
- Gaps in Single-Dose Rifampicin implementation (SDR).
- Pending State Specific Strategic Plan (SSP).

## Upcoming Priorities

- Supporting districts in developing their district action plans and its implementation
- Capacity building of health staff
- Piloting the App for accessing services by the persons with disabilities.

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