



until
No Leprosy Remains

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JOURNEY TOWARDS ZERO LEPROSY

Vol. 04; Issue 13, Jan. - March 2026

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- RESEARCH
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- LIVELIHOOD
- EMPOWERMENT



27 Years

**Advancing Health,
Inclusion
& Dignity**

**Leprosy, Skin
NTDs,
Tuberculosis &
Disability**



Message from the Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to share the January–March 2026 Quarterly Newsletter of NLR India. This quarter reflects our continued efforts towards reducing stigma, improving healthcare services, and promoting inclusion for persons affected by leprosy, lymphatic filariasis and disabilities.

During this period, we expanded digital innovation through inclusion of additional features in the Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis (LPEP) App, piloting of automation in leprosy helpline, and development of Sarkari Yojna App. We also completed the study on Compassionate Care. Our teams supported different states in conducting the Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaigns, trained health care workers and conducted other routine activities.

We continued supporting persons with disabilities and leprosy-affected families through livelihood assistance, educational support, and linkages with government schemes. These efforts are helping communities move towards dignity, inclusion, and better opportunities.

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

Together, we move closer towards a more inclusive and leprosy-free society.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Ashok Agarwal

Chief Executive Officer, NLR India

Key Highlights (National/State Level)



NLR India conducted a study on compassion training for reducing stigma and improving quality of care for persons affected by leprosy with the main research question- “To what extent can compassion training that specifically addresses stigma improve compassion and quality of care offered by health workers to persons

affected by leprosy and other stigmatizing health conditions?”. This study was conducted at Bokaro district of state of Jharkhand. To disseminate the study findings, a meeting was organized at Ranchi on 25th March 2026. Shri Shashi Prakash Jha, Mission Director (MD), National Health Mission (NHM), Jharkhand was the chief guest of the event. The staff of State Leprosy Officer along with the staff of his office, District Leprosy Officers (DLOs), Medical Officers (MOs), health staff of Bokaro involved in study, persons affected by leprosy, media, representative of Piramal Foundation (partner agency), representatives of development agencies and staff of NLR involved in study participated in the dissemination meeting. Impressed by the findings and its usefulness, Shri Jha advised to have a training for health workers. As per his instructions, on 28th March 2026, a district level compassion training was organized for Medical Officers, Community Health Officers (CHOs) and Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives (ANMs) at Koderma. Mr Shashi Prakash Jha, MD NHM Jharkhand attended the workshop. He emphasized the usefulness of care with compassion. Mr. Shivam Kumar, Program Lead – Piramal Foundation was the master trainer. Total of 53 participants were present in the training.



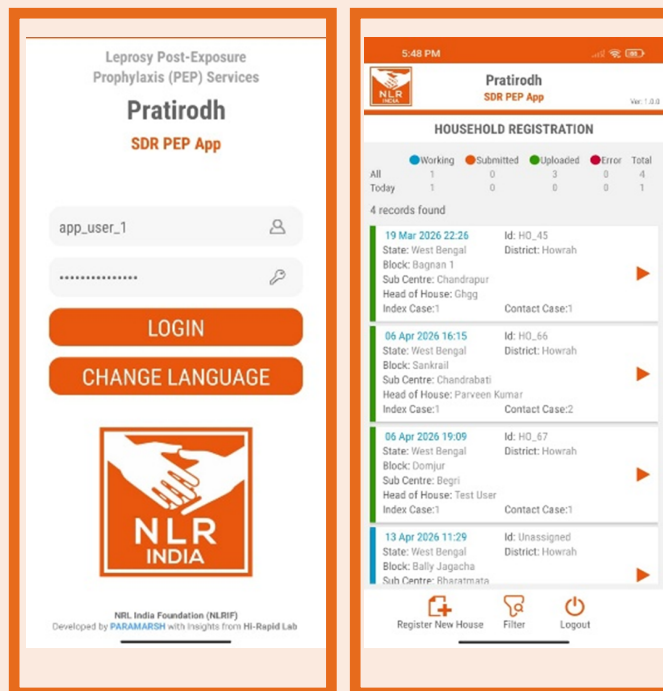
NLR India Foundation was actively involved in celebrating Anti- Leprosy Day and participated in fortnight long Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC). Multiple activities were taken up in different NLR states to make people aware about leprosy. Of note was the interview of State Programme Lead of West Bengal on Suswasthya Channel of Doordarshan (Bangla). Rallies, quiz competition, drawing competitions, school students' awareness meetings (covering more than 3,000 students & teachers) were other activities conducted during the SLAC. In Bihar, 15 government schools and 3 colleges conducted quiz competition on during the SLAC.



Scale-up and refinement of LPEP App

(LPEP) Application after being implemented as Randomized Controlled Trial in West Bengal during 2023-24 has entered a significant scale-up phase in 2025-26 following strong evidence of success from its implementation study. The refined application has been expanded across 27 blocks in two districts – Howrah and Paschim Bardhaman, covering both intervention and former control areas, enabling streamlined digital delivery of Single Dose Rifampicin (SDR) PEP services. The scale-up has been supported by capacity building of frontline workers, leading to improved confidence and routine use of the App in field settings. Real-time technical support and uninterrupted drug supply have further strengthened implementation.

An advanced version of the LPEP App called, 'Pratirodh' (meaning, prevention of transmission) has been developed in 2026 with enhanced usability, simplified consent processes, evidenced SDR and referral system, and improved dashboards with GIS mapping. Efforts are underway to integrate the system with national platforms such as NIKUSHT 2.0, in collaboration with ICMR and Government of India, paving the way for national adoption.



The BPS-N- Neglected Tropical Diseases (BPS-N) Project by NLR India Foundation is testing the effectiveness of basic psychological support in improving mental well-being of people affected by leprosy and lymphatic filariasis (LF) in Jharkhand. Till March 2026, 312 baseline surveys were completed, identifying 158 participants for intervention. Data collection and intervention activities are progressing across Palamu and Garhwa districts, with LF surveys nearing completion in several blocks. The project has also trained peer supporters with guidance from psychologists to reduce stigma, promote social inclusion, and strengthen community-based mental health support despite operational challenges.



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 January - March 2026

Follow-up	Chandauli		Fatehpur		Total
	Control	Intervention	Control	Intervention	
▶ Jan-Mar 2026	2217	2996	2070	2500	9783
▶ Suspect Cases	0	0	1	1	2
▶ Confirmed Cases	0	0	0	1	1

Training/Capacity building (CB)

In the first quarter of 2026, more than 350 Medical Officers, CHOs, ANMs, ASHAs, physiotherapists, and other frontline workers participated in technical training and awareness sessions across Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Delhi. Self-care camps were conducted in Pali, Alwar, Jhalawar & Kota districts of Rajasthan attended by more than 130 persons affected by leprosy. In these camps, training of ASHAs & ANMs (more than 40) was also conducted on methods of selfcare. In Jharkhand 53 participants attended the compassion training at Koderma. Apart from these multiple community meetings were organized during SLAC to generate awareness.



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 (total 19 currently) of Rajasthan, Jharkhand & Uttar Pradesh. The feedback received from the patients shared with concerned districts for follow up. During the quarter of January to March 2026, a total of 58 index cases were registered at the helpline center (operational from Jaipur, Rajasthan). A total of 552 follow up calls were made to these clients to know about their disease condition and any other problems.

Self-Help Group (SHG) meetings and livelihood discussions were conducted in Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. More than 100 persons with disabilities participated in SHG meetings, advocacy sessions, and empowerment discussions. Persons affected by leprosy and persons with disabilities were sensitized regarding disability rights, government schemes, stigma reduction, and rehabilitation opportunities. SHG strengthening discussions focused on livelihood planning, revolving funds, inter-loaning, and sustainability of community-based groups. In the first quarter of 2026, NLR India with support from the members of Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), helped PWDs in getting the following benefits

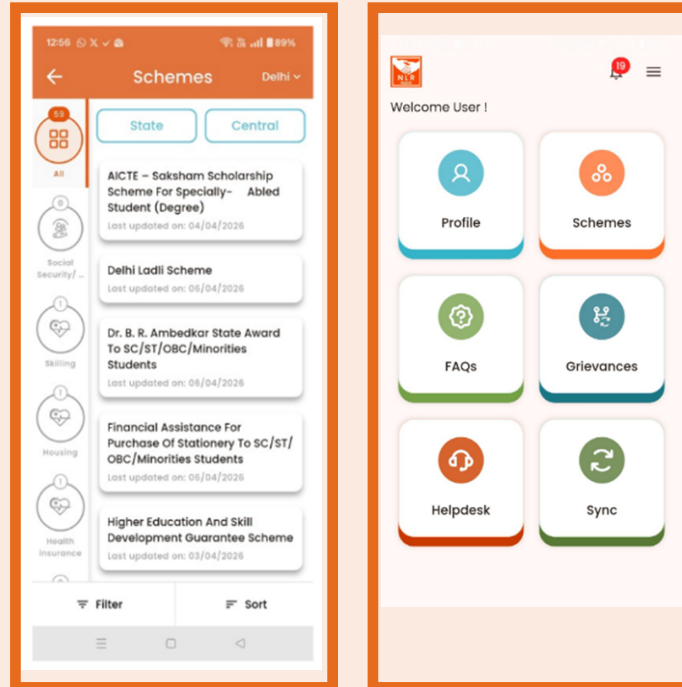
Support Facilitated

BENEFIT	NUMBER
UDID Cards	36
Ration Cards	4
Disability Certificates	50
Disability Pensions	51
MGNREGA Cards	3
Railway Passes	12
Educational support materials <small>(were distributed to childrens with disabilities and children from leprosy-affected families)</small>	70
Motorized E-Rickshaws	41

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

EMPOWERMENT

NLR India has developed a mobile App containing the government schemes beneficial for persons affected by leprosy, other disabilities and other vulnerable and marginalized people. Piloting of the App has been done and further refinement of the App is under process.



Challenges

- Shortage of Health Workers in some districts.
- Pending State and District Action Plans.

Upcoming Priorities

- Observation of the 27th Foundation Day of NLR India.
- National Dissemination of the Compassion Study.
- Supporting districts in developing their district action plans and its implementation.
- Capacity building of health staff.
- Piloting the resource directory.

DONATE



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