

NLEP – Plan for IEC campaign towards achieving “Leprosy free India”

I. Background

India achieved leprosy elimination as a public health problem in December 2005. Since then the country is progressing with the efforts to consolidate the position in various states. Further reducing the leprosy burden has remained the main aim.

Although eradication is the final goal, the same cannot be announced at this stage because – as maintained by the WHO’s Technical Advisory Committees; Leprosy eradication cannot be certified from any region with the available diagnostic and epidemiological tools in hand, as at present.

After achievement of elimination the programme has been experiencing :

1. Complacency at various level leading to lowering of supervision and monitoring efforts due to shifting of available vertical staff.
2. New cases are being reported, which indicate that transmission of the disease is going on.
3. Deformity rate which is 2.27% of new cases detected at present indicating delay in detection and treatment.
4. To sustain the achievements made under the programme and also the status of elimination at national level, it is crucial that continuous Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities should be maintained at a high level of intensity.

Keeping the above situation in mind, it is proposed to start a vigorous IEC campaign “Leprosy Free India” on 30th January 2008. This day is observed annually as the “Anti Leprosy Day” in India.

II. Campaign Theme

Main theme of the campaign will be based on the concept that –

- The efforts for further reducing leprosy burden in the communities have to be prioritized so that visible deformity in newly detected cases is reduced to the minimum.
- Early reporting and complete treatment of leprosy cases prevent disability.
- Quality of services provided to leprosy affected persons be at optimum level to reduce suffering and prevent consequences in all cases put on treatment.
- Leprosy affected persons will not be stigmatized and discriminated and would lead a socially and economically productive life.

III. Plan for the campaign

1. The IEC campaign is to be launched centrally on the 29th January 2008.
2. The States/UTs have already been requested by letter No. P.12011/7/2006-Lep. Dt. 18th September 2007 to observe the “Anti Leprosy Day” on 30th January 2008 on the theme “Leprosy free India”.
3. Following messages on Rehabilitation, Stigma and discrimination have been developed, which are to be used during the IEC campaign.
 - Leprosy patients deserve the same respect and rights as any other person.
 - Do not discriminate.
 - Together work towards a “Leprosy Free India”.
 - Afsana (or any other name) who was rehabilitated after complete treatment with MDT.” – says
 - Do not fear leprosy.
 - Treat it!
 - “I have taken back the dignity which the society had once seized from me.”
6-12 months of treatment with MDT cures leprosy completely.
Join hands in our initiative of a “Leprosy Free India”.
 - Stop.....”Abusing Leprosy patients”
Give them.....”Social Acceptance”

Treat leprosy with MDT, available free of cost at all Govt. hospitals.

Join hands for a “Leprosy Free India”
 - What sets a leprosy affected individual”apart”.....from others
Is not his deformity but being ostracized by society.

MDT cures leprosy in just 6-12 months.
Why fear?
Treat it!
Join us in our campaign of a “Leprosy Free India”
 - Give social acceptance to leprosy affected persons and be a part of the “Leprosy Free India” initiative.
 - “Social integration” of the leprosy affected persons with the Community.....” Let’s make it a reality.
 - “No deformity, no patches and no fissures on the skin – surely I am cured of leprosy”
 - Why fear leprosy?
 - Cure it with MDT in 6-12 months.
 - Join our initiative of “Leprosy Free India”
 - Leprosy is not a curse of GOD, it is GOD’s way of testing our inner strength”
Leprosy is completely curable with MDT, available free of cost at all government hospitals.
Join our initiative of a “Leprosy Free India”

4. The IEC campaign will be carried out through out the year 2008-09 starting from 30th January 2008. The activities on the Anti Leprosy Day celebration could be as below :

The school children, Scouts and Guides, NCC cadets and NYK volunteers NGOs, CBOs could be involved to undertake the following activities :

- Rally
 - Poster/Slogan competition at the district level. First prize winner of each district to be awarded at the State level programme to be organized on Anti Leprosy Day.
 - Stage show by school children, Scouts and Guides, NGOs, NYK volunteers etc. to depict Mahatma's thoughts and attitudes towards the people affected by leprosy, disability and deformity through speeches skits and songs.
 - Folk media activities at the venue of the state level programme to supplement the above activities for the general masses.
 - Cured leprosy persons could also be invited to such programmes to share their testimonials and give motivational messages for the society.
5. At the central level, Print and Mass Media will be used extensively. The Central Leprosy Division in collaboration with The Leprosy Mission India (ILEP Partner) has developed 4 T.V. spots and Audio Spots, and Jingles for Radio coverage. In addition the "Kalyani Programme" by Prasar Bharati will also disseminate these important messages on leprosy.

IV. Advocacy

Changing the mindset of the people against a disease like leprosy is a complex problem. Even after enlightenment one may hesitate to accept the "leprosy affected persons" as one of them socially. For this a gradual change in the community can only be expected. Advocacy at various level have to be maintained throughout the year. Different groups that are planned to be covered are –

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| • Political leaders | • Media representatives |
| • Administrators | • Mahila Mandals |
| • Panchayat functionaries | • Religions leaders |
| • Teachers | • Deptt. of Tribal affairs |
| • Medical professionals –
Private and Govt. | • Dept. of labour |
| • Local NGOs | • Deptt. of Social Justice and
impairment |
| | • Any other of local importance |

V. Budget

The Budget available under NLEP for IEC annually would be adequate to carry out the campaign. The state will prepare their action plan for the year 2008-09 accordingly. In addition International Federation of Anti Leprosy Associations (ILEP) also utilize funds on IEC activities carried out from their end. These activities will be coordinated with the State/District IEC planning to get maximum benefit and to avoid duplication.

For the campaign, two advertisements have been prepared and are enclosed herewith which can be used by the States/UTs. The same may also be prepared in the local languages.