



Two-Day national meeting of health experts and activists discusses way to fight leprosy and resultant disability

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New Delhi: Representatives from the field of health, government of India, stakeholders in the fight against leprosy and the World Health Organization came together for a two-day national consultation platform to discuss the challenges and solutions to preventing disability in the people affected by leprosy.

Leprosy, an infectious disease that causes severe disfiguring of the skin and lead to nerve damage in the arms and legs is still endemic in a number of countries including India. However advances in the field of diagnosis and treatment, has helped treatment reach more people than ever. Yet, poor and marginalized communities stay at the greatest risk of acquiring the bacterial infection.

It is estimated that as many as 50 per cent of the leprosy cases in the world are still in India. Some leprosy patients suffer from deformities that can result in serious disabilities and require continued care.

A meeting on 'National Consultation on innovative approaches for Prevention of Disability' was organized here by the International Federation of the anti-leprosy Associations (ILEP) to discuss sustainable solutions to fighting disability among leprosy affected people.

In the two-day meeting, representatives from Government of India, Central Leprosy Division, World Health Organization, Associations of Persons Affected by Leprosy, ILEP, Leprosy Research Institutes, Consultant NLEP, State Leprosy Officers, Regional Directors from the States, came together to discuss the future of leprosy in India.



Dr. S. K. Noordeen, Mr. Rene Staeheli, Dr. C. M. Agrawal and Dr. M. A. Arif, at the 'National Consultation on innovative approaches for Prevention of Disability'

They were unanimous that for sustainability, awareness needs to be spread within the community and persons affected by leprosy and civil society need to be involved.

Dr. C. M. Agrawal and Dr. M. A. Arif, Mr. Rene Staeheli (President-ILEP), Dr. P. Krishnamurthy, Dr. S. K. Noordeen, lightened the lamp and graced the occasion.

Dr. Jagdish Prasad, Director General, Health Services, in his inaugural remark mentioned that he was a larger numbers of NGO's are being supported by International Federation of Anti Leprosy Associations. The rehabilitation, self-care, and livelihood of the families of the people affected by leprosy has to be taken care of, said Mr. Prasad.

Different innovative approaches for 'Prevention of Disability' were presented by ILEP member organizations that include Swiss Emmaus India, LEPRRA, DFIT, TLMTI, AIFO, NLR, GLRA and other NGOs via ALERT.

During presentations and discussions, it was agreed that involvement of ASHAs was very important in the fight to make the leprosy services sustainable.

The recommendations of this meeting will be considered by of National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP). It will help NLEP to decide what practice shall be adopted at the national level to intensify efforts to prevent disability and widen awareness and knowledge about prevention.

The National Consultation was an initiative of Mr. John Kurian George, Representative of Swiss Emmaus India (Swiss Emmaus Leprosy Relief Work India). He discussed his idea with Dr. M. A. Arif, Coordinator for ILEP in India and Dr. C. M. Agrawal, Deputy Director General, National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP), who readily consented to the meeting under the aegis of the NLEP.