

Definition of “Migrant” for the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP), India

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Introduction:

Migration of people facilitates movement of diseases between endemic and non-endemic areas and has been considered a possible factor in continued leprosy incidence and one of the important obstacles in achieving elimination of leprosy in India. While embarking on implementing a 3-year pilot study in 4 northern states of India, one of the identified gap were the absence of a definition of ‘migrant’ in India’s NLEP program.

Objectives:

1. To develop and validate a definition of a ‘migrant’ that can easily be adapted by India’s NLEP program .
2. To pilot its adaptability and use in the designated 4 project states in India.
3. To influence the NLEP programme design related to management of migrant leprosy patients and their households through evidence-based recommendations.

Methodology:

- a. All important leprosy stakeholders were invited to participate in the 4 state level consultation meetings.
- b. A draft definition was shared with the stakeholders following the consultation meetings and also successfully undertaking secondary research.
- c. Presented and influenced the NLEP program to adapt and use the definition of a ‘migrant’.

Limitations:

- Covid 19 second wave during April 2021 to June 2021

Conclusion:

An operational definition of ‘migrant’ was developed and presented to the Central Leprosy Division, Government of India for adaptability and use by different stakeholders in India. The presence of a definition of ‘migrant’ will facilitate India’s healthcare providers to provide services for people including the multidrug therapy (MDT). It also facilitated in timely recording and reporting about migrants leprosy patients in India.