

UNION MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, DR. MANSUKH MANDAVIYA VIRTUALLY ADDRESSES NATIONAL ANTI-LEPROSY DAY

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

“India is making progress and new leprosy cases are declining year after year. With the whole of government, whole of society support, synergy and cooperation, we can achieve the target of Leprosy Mukt Bharat by 2027, three years ahead of the SDG”. This was stated by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya during his video address at the event to observe the National Anti-Leprosy Day, here today. The theme of this year was “Let us fight Leprosy and make Leprosy a history”.



Reiterating Mahatma Gandhi’s enduring concern for people affected with leprosy, Union Health Minister noted that the concern and commitment to treat leprosy has its origin in our history. “His vision was not only to treat them but also to mainstream them in our society. Our efforts to eliminate leprosy from this country under National Leprosy Eradication Programme is a great tribute to his vision. We are successful in achieving prevalence rate 1 case per 10,000 population at national level in 2005. The need of the hour is consistent efforts to eliminate Leprosy. It is a curable disease, however if it is not detected and treated at the early stage, it can cause permanent disabilities and deformities among the affected person, leading to discrimination of such persons and their family members in the community.”

“Under the visionary leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, we have adopted comprehensive measures for prevention of development of disease. From the year 2016, renewed efforts were made for actively detecting cases under the Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC)”, he further added.



Accentuating on the efforts of National Leprosy Eradication Programme, Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar, Union Minister of State said, “Our Leprosy Programme of the country strives to detect and treat cases as early as possible, gives treatment free of cost to prevent the development of disabilities and deformities, medical rehabilitation of those with existing deformities. The Welfare allowance has been raised from Rs 8,000 to Rs 12,000 to patients for their reconstructive surgery.”

Highlighting the achievements of the programme, she also informed that the prevalence rate of leprosy has come down from 0.69 per 10,000 population in 2014-15 to 0.45 in 2021-22. Further, annual new case detection rate per 100,000 population has come down from 9.73 in 2014-15 to 5.52 in 2021-22. “The programme also work towards spreading awareness and reducing stigma attached with the disease. Surveillance was also strengthened by introducing ASHA-based Surveillance for Leprosy Suspects (ABSULS) where grassroot level workers constantly engaged in examining and reporting suspects. Special emphasis under the Focused Leprosy Campaign (FLC) was given to areas that were difficult to access or had child cases and cases with disabilities. Since 2015, with the constant efforts under NLEP, we have been able to prevent many cases of disability due to leprosy”, she added. She also emphasized on the need to spread awareness on stigma connected to leprosy.

Emphasizing on the 2027 leprosy eradication target, Shri. S. Gopalakrishnan, Special Secretary, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare noted that the last mile target of 2027 is going to be tougher than what has been achieved so far. But with the experiences, whole of government and whole of society approach, new strategies and the Nikusth 2.0 portal, we can achieve it.



National Strategic Plan & Roadmap for Leprosy (2023-27) and National Guidelines for Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) Surveillance in leprosy were also released during the event along with launch of Nikusth 2.0 Portal. The strategy and roadmap will aid in advancing the campaign against leprosy, to stop transmission, by speeding case detection efforts and maintaining a robust surveillance infrastructure. As India is progressing towards leprosy eradication, a need of strong AMR surveillance system is required to gear up the system. These guidelines will provide the technical guidance in developing and sustaining a robust surveillance system for AMR surveillance in leprosy patients. Nikusth 2.0 is an integrated portal for leprosy case management under National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP). It will aid in efficient data recording, analyzing and reporting of the data in the form of indicators and a real time dashboard at center, state and district levels.

Dr Bharati Pravin Pawar also launched a video for addressing stigma issues attached with leprosy as part of the nationwide awareness campaign.

Ms Roli Singh, AS&MD (NHM), MoHFW, Shri Rajiv Manjhi, Joint Secretary Leprosy, Prof (Dr). Atul Goel, DGHS, Dr. Roderico H Ofrin, WHO representative to India, Dr. Sudarsan Mandal, DDG along with other dignitaries and officials were present at the event.

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