

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 226
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 4TH AUGUST, 2023**

NATIONAL LEPROSY ERADICATION PROGRAMME

***226. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRI SELVAM G.:**

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether with various interventions introduced under National Leprosy Eradication Programme, the number of new leprosy cases detected have come down drastically during each of the last eight years and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the challenges faced by the Government while achieving the said target of reducing leprosy cases;
- (c) whether the Government has devised a strategic road map for achieving zero cases of leprosy by 2030 and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to achieve the said target;
- (e) the details of the achievements made by National Leprosy Eradication Programme since its inception and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to make the programme more effective;
- (f) whether the Government has conducted any survey to ascertain the socio-economic conditions of the leprosy patients in the country and if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) whether any assistance is being extended including free medicines to leprosy patients considering their pathetic condition of living and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)**

(a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 226 FOR 4TH AUGUST, 2023**

(a): The National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) is a centrally sponsored scheme operating under the umbrella of the National Health Mission (NHM) in India.

Over the past eight years, the Government of India has implemented various interventions, resulting in a decline in the Prevalence Rate (PR), Annual New Case Detection Rate (ANCDR), and Grade 2 Disability (G2D) cases per million population. The progress made in this regard is evident from the indicators mentioned in **Annexure-I**.

(b): Despite the achievements, the program faces several challenges, including:

1. **Stigma and discrimination:** Leprosy has been historically associated with deep-rooted social stigma, leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment-seeking behavior due to fear of societal rejection.
2. **Drug resistance:** Prolonged and inconsistent use of Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) may lead to drug resistance, making treatment more challenging.
3. **High-risk populations:** Certain vulnerable populations, such as migrants and homeless individuals, are at higher risk due to limited access to healthcare and poor living conditions and limited health seeking behaviour.
4. **Monitoring and follow-up:** Ensuring that the patients complete their treatment regimen and receive appropriate follow-up, especially in areas with poor healthcare infrastructure and low literacy rates.
5. **Co-infections:** Leprosy can occur alongside other diseases, such as tuberculosis, complicating diagnosis and treatment strategies.

(c) to (e): To address these challenges and achieve zero transmission of leprosy by 2027, three years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3, the Government of India launched the National Strategic Plan (NSP) & Roadmap for Leprosy (2023-2027) on January 30, 2023. This plan includes various initiatives such as awareness campaigns to combat stigma and discrimination, promoting early case detection, Leprosy Post Exposure Prophylaxis to prevent disease transmission, and a web-based information portal (Nikusth 2.0) for reporting leprosy cases.

The NLEP has also introduced initiatives such as Leprosy Case Detection Campaigns, ASHA Based Surveillance for suspected Leprosy cases, Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign, Active Case Detection and Surveillance, and more to strengthen its activities. Furthermore, the program aims to accelerate case detection, provide quality services, enhance prevention measures, and digitize surveillance systems under its strategic pillars to achieve its goal.

National Leprosy Control Programme (NLCP) was launched in 1955, with the primary objective of controlling leprosy transmission. In 1983, the program was renamed as the National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) with the introduction of a more effective and globally accepted treatment regimen called Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT). This led to India achieving the status of eliminating leprosy at the National level, defined as Prevalence Rate (PR) of less than 1 leprosy case per 10, 000 population, in 2005.

India has made significant progress in reducing new leprosy cases, and the NLEP's vision is to create a "Leprosy free India," where leprosy care services are accessible and available at all government healthcare centers.

(f) to (g): Under the NLEP program, no survey has been conducted to assess the socio-economic status of leprosy patients in the country. Nonetheless, all leprosy patients receive free-of-cost diagnostic and treatment services at all Government Healthcare Facilities without any discrimination. Reconstructive Surgery (RCS) is conducted free of cost for eligible disability cases, and welfare allowances of Rs.12,000/- are provided to compensate wage loss during RCS. Furthermore, Self-care kits and Micro Cellular Rubber (MCR) Footwear are distributed free of cost to all cases of disability/at risk of developing disability, under NLEP.

Annexure-I

Year	Number of New Leprosy Cases Detected
2015-16	127334
2016-17	135479
2017-18	126164
2018-19	120334
2019-20	114451
2020-21	65147
2021-22	75394
2022-23	103819

Indicators related to leprosy are also showing **consistent reduction** in prevalence of incidence as can be seen from the table below:

Financial Year	Prevalence Rate (PR)	Child Cases percentage	Grade 2 Disability (G2D)%	Grade 2 Disability (G2D) Per million
2014-15	0.69	9.04	4.61	4.48
2015-16	0.66	8.94	4.60	4.46
2016-17	0.66	8.69	3.82	3.89
2017-18	0.67	8.15	3.61	3.34
2018-19	0.62	7.67	3.05	2.65
2019-20	0.57	6.87	2.41	1.96
2020-21	0.40	5.76	2.41	1.10
2021-22	0.45	5.52	2.47	1.36
2022-23	0.57	5.38	2.28	1.7
