

BOMBAY LEPROSY PROJECT

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Project on “Field approach for prevention of disabilities through Community Volunteers in rural areas adjoining Bombay”

(Sponsored by The German Dentist’s Association (HDZ), Germany)

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES (February to July 2004)

INTRODUCTION

In spite of effective multidrug treatment (MDT) available to cure the disease, there is a risk of developing loss of function and even incapacitating deformities in a small proportion of leprosy patients. Since the priority is mainly focused on disease control, the activities related to Prevention of Disabilities (POD) should also be practised without compromising the quality of work aimed at achieving leprosy elimination. Bombay Leprosy Project (BLP) has already gained some experience by developing simple field techniques to treat and correct the disabilities by providing services at the patients’ doorstep in urban and rural areas. With the objective of treating the disabled leprosy patients, BLP has implemented a special project with the support from The German Dentist’s Association (HDZ), Germany to offer POD services to leprosy disabled in slums of Mumbai and in remote rural areas of Thane & Raigad districts by involving local Community Volunteers. This special project since last 5 years has helped us to identify new disabled patients as well as offer POD services needed to prevent and treat the disabilities at the field level. This report summarizes the activities that were carried out during February and July 2004.

ACTIVITIES

Under this Project, retired Government field workers and community volunteers derived from local area were engaged following task-oriented training on various aspects of disability services by the senior staff of BLP. These workers along with the Supervisory staff of BLP identified new disabled leprosy patients in villages and assessed their disabilities after visiting the patients’ house and provided disability care services. Mobile Service Unit (MSU) is used extensively to enable the workers to visit more remote villages. MSU has been extremely useful in enhancing the mobility to serve a large number of disabled patients. The Primary Health Care (PHC) staff were also given brief training on the POD aspects. During this reporting period, 238 deformed leprosy patients have been contacted and offered disability care services at their doorsteps / villages by making field visits. Necessary materials for POD services were supplied by BLP based on the requirements. The services are monitored by the Medical Officers and Supervisory staff of BLP who made field visits to the villages along with the local workers to assess the compliance as well as the progress in disability status of the patient.

The following table shows the details of services provided.

Description of services	Number*	Description of services	Number*
Pre-fabricated splints	123	Special MCR footwear	99
Grip-aids (M-Seal)	4	Dressing kits	139
Pair of goggles	10	Steroid therapy	15

* No. of services will not tally with the number of patients as some patients have been given multiple services for their multiple deformities.



Deformed leprosy patients being provided with (Splints / MCR footwear) services in the villages at Raigad district



TRAINING & RESEARCH CENTRE (ST.LAZARUS APARTMENT)

BLP has been recognized by several national and international organizations for its outstanding contribution in the field of operational research that has influenced the policy of Government in implementing the leprosy control programs especially in urban areas. Our desire to have a separate unit was fulfilled by establishing a Training & Research Centre (TRC) at St. Lazarus Apartment in Bhakti Park, Wadala, Mumbai with the kind donation from HDZ. This unit is equipped fully with a library useful for medical and paramedical students. Several training programmes were also conducted at this centre.

BLP's TRAINING & RESEARCH CENTRE AT ST. LAZARUS APARTMENT



Training session for visitors from Japan

Academic meeting of Experts in leprosy



Reaching the far off rural areas using 'Mobile Service Unit'

A leprosy patient living in a tribal village situated in a hill top was served