

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
(August 2004 to January 2005)

The German Dentists Sponsorship (HDZ)
Report: Aug' 04 – Jan' 05

“Field approach for prevention of disabilities through Community Volunteers in rural areas adjoining Bombay”
(Sponsored by The German Dentist’s Sponsorship (HDZ), Germany)

INTRODUCTION

One of the issue that is often over sighted as a part of achieving the goal of leprosy elimination programme is the occurrence of physical disabilities. These deformities develop either due to late reporting or delayed detection of the disease accumulated over a period of time in a considerable number of leprosy patients. The disabilities and deformities developed due to leprosy greatly interfere with the ability of the affected individuals to work efficiently resulting in economic loss necessitating a huge problem of rehabilitation of leprosy patients. In fact, while achieving the elimination of leprosy, it is necessary that prevention and deformity should be given utmost importance. The essential impact of MDT programme over several years has been a phenomenal decline in leprosy prevalence, providing opportunities to deliver disability care services to leprosy patients and to expand the coverage of the programme, particularly in rural areas. However the underutilization of available disability care services and other aspects of treatment for disabilities can only be improved by using community based approaches. At the community level, volunteers should be identified and they should be involved in the process of delivery of disability care services in a sustainable manner. To achieve this, Bombay Leprosy Project has been running a special project with the support from The German Dentists Sponsorship (HDZ), Germany to offer disability care services to leprosy disabled in slums of Mumbai and in remote rural areas of Thane & Raigad districts by involving local Community Volunteers. The following are the activities that were carried out from August 2004 to January 2005.

ACTIVITIES

The methodology used in this project is essentially community based and necessary measures were taken into consideration basically to adapt to the needs of the disabled leprosy patients living in urban and rural areas. With the help of a team of community volunteers derived from local area and a few retired Government field workers who were engaged for this Project helped to deliver disability care services under the supervision of the senior staff of BLP. The local volunteers in Raigad district involved in POD service delivery were provided training by the supervisory staff and the physiotherapist at our POD center and as well as in the field area. The training focused mainly on the simplified information system needed to evaluate the outcome of the interventions and the impact of the services. These workers along with the Supervisory staff of BLP identified 98 new disabled leprosy patients in villages and assessed their disabilities

after visiting the patients' house and provided disability care services including supportive drugs. The Mobile Service Units (MSU) are being used extensively to enable the mobility of the field workers thereby enhancing the reach to serve a large number of disabled patients living in 110 remote villages. Wherever possible, the local Primary Health Care (PHC) is also involved following a brief training on the POD aspects.

During this reporting period, 269 deformed leprosy patients have been contacted and offered simple aids supplied by BLP for providing disability care services at their doorsteps / villages through house visits including follow up of patients, who required specialized services for their disabilities were referred to the general hospitals in Mumbai. The Supervisory staff of BLP monitored the POD services by field visits to the villages along with the local workers and assessed the compliance as well as the progress in disability status of each disabled leprosy patient.

The following table shows the details of services provided:

Description of services	Number*	Description of serviceAs	Number*
Pre-fabricated splints	343	Special MCR footwear	137
Grip-aids (M-Seal)	8	Dressing kits	491
Pair of goggles	16	Prednipac	80





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