

Report on World Leprosy Day Awareness and Screening Programmes – 2026

Date: 31.01.2026

Organized by: Department of Community Medicine

Under the esteemed guidance of **Dr. A. Balaji**, Professor and Head, Department of Community Medicine, multiple health education and awareness programmes were successfully conducted on 31st January 2026 & 2nd February in observance of National / World Leprosy Day across the department's field practice areas.

These activities were organized with the objective of strengthening community awareness about Leprosy, promoting early case detection, preventing disability, and eliminating stigma associated with the disease.

Background

Leprosy remains a significant public health concern in certain parts of India despite major progress in elimination efforts. Early identification and complete treatment are essential to prevent complications and disability. However, social stigma and misconceptions continue to act as barriers to early reporting and treatment. In view of National / World Leprosy Day, the Department of Community Medicine undertook coordinated outreach activities to create awareness at the community level.

Objectives of the Programme

- To educate the public about the cause and transmission of Leprosy
- To create awareness about early signs and symptoms
- To promote early diagnosis and timely treatment
- To inform the community about free treatment services available at Government health facilities
- To prevent disability through early intervention
- To reduce stigma, discrimination, and social isolation of affected individuals
- To encourage community participation in Leprosy elimination efforts

Areas Covered

The awareness and screening programmes were conducted in the following areas:

➤ **Allikondapattu Village**

- General Village Area
- Parai Street

➤ **Navampattu Village**

- Subramaniya Puram
- Other identified localities within Navampattu

Team Members Involved

The National / World Leprosy Day activities were conducted by a committed team from the Department of Community Medicine, comprising faculty members, postgraduate trainees, residents, and field staff. The coordinated efforts of the team ensured effective health education delivery, community interaction, and screening activities.

➤ **Faculty Members**

- **Dr. R. Kalaivanan** – Assistant Professor
- **Dr. Bharath** – Assistant Professor
- **Dr. Janarthanan** – Senior Resident
- **Dr. Arun Vineeth** – Senior Resident
- **Dr. Jeeva Radha** – Senior Resident
- **Dr. Kavya** – Postgraduate
- **Dr. Sandhiya M** – Postgraduate

➤ **Field Staff**

Mr. Mahalingam (Health Inspector), Mr. Deiveegan (Health Inspector), Mr. Arkrishnan (Health Inspector), Mr. Vinoth (Social Worker), and Mr. Nithish (Health Inspector) actively participated in the programme. The coordinated efforts of faculty and field staff ensured successful implementation of awareness programmes, community engagement, and screening and health education activities.

Activities Conducted

Health Education Sessions

Health education sessions were conducted for the general public in all selected areas. The sessions were delivered in simple local language to ensure clear understanding.

Topics Covered:

➤ **Understanding Leprosy**

Participants were informed that Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by bacteria affecting the skin and peripheral nerves. It was clarified that the disease spreads only through prolonged and close contact with untreated cases and not through casual contact.



➤ Early Signs and Symptoms

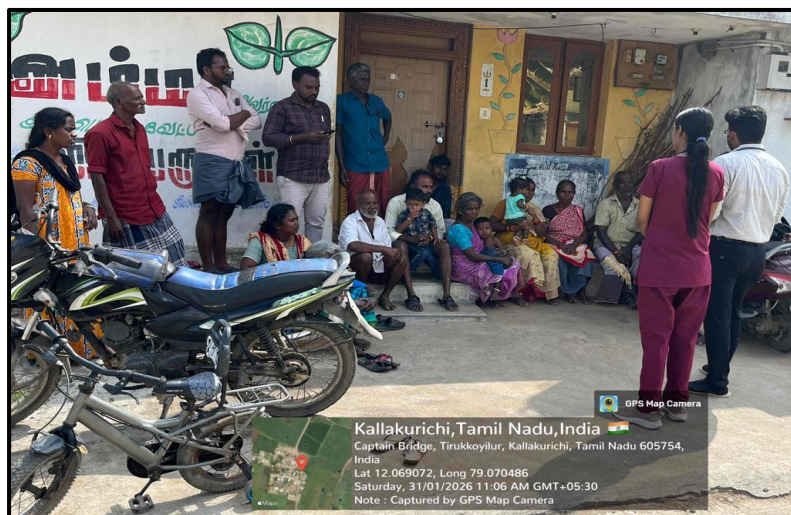
Special emphasis was given to recognizing early warning signs such as:

- Hypopigmented (white) or reddish skin patches
- Loss of sensation over patches
- Numbness in hands and feet
- Thickening of nerves

The importance of early reporting to the nearest Government Health Centre was stressed.

➤ Diagnosis and Testing

The public was educated about the availability of medical examination and diagnostic facilities at Government health institutions. They were encouraged to seek immediate medical attention if suspicious symptoms were noticed.



➤ Treatment and Prevention of Disability

It was clearly emphasized that Leprosy is completely curable. Free treatment is available under the **National Leprosy Eradication Programme**.

The importance of:

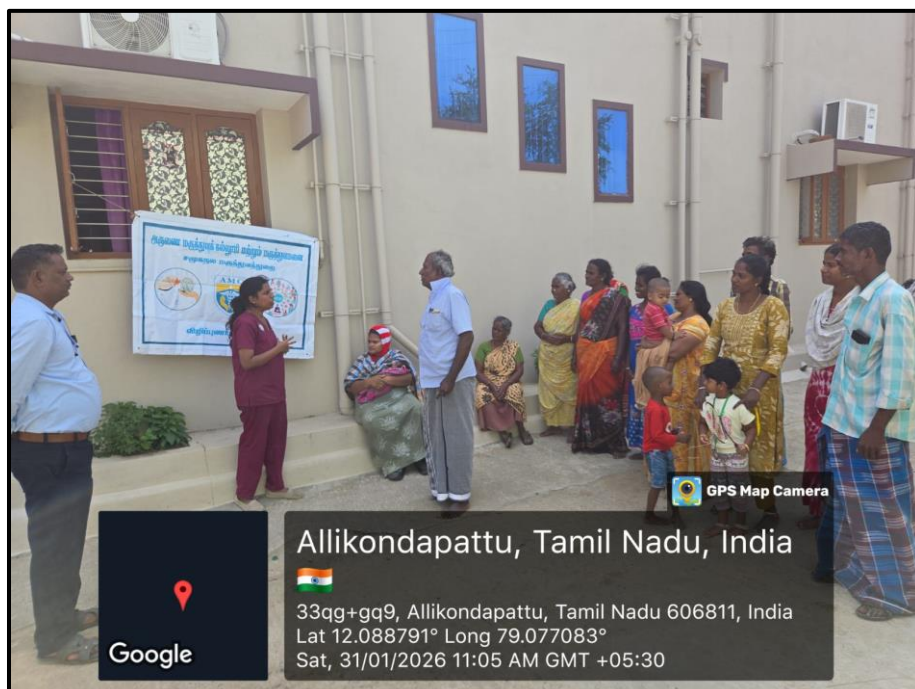
- Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT)
- Regular and complete treatment
- Early initiation of therapy
- Prevention of deformities and disability

➤ Stigma Reduction and Social Support

One of the major focuses of the programme was fighting stigma. The public was encouraged to:

- Treat affected individuals with dignity and equality
- Avoid discrimination and isolation
- Support patients in completing their treatment

In some areas, participants took a pledge to spread awareness and eliminate stigma.



Screening and Inspection Activities

In Navampattu village, screening was conducted among a few children identified with hypopigmented patches.

Clinical inspection included:

- Examination of skin lesions
- Assessment of sensation over patches
- Checking for nerve thickening

Parents were advised regarding further medical evaluation and follow-up wherever necessary.

This screening component strengthened early case detection efforts and reinforced the importance of community-level surveillance.



Community Participation and Response

The sessions witnessed active participation from the general public. Participants asked questions regarding:

- Mode of transmission
- Duration of treatment
- Risk to family members
- Possibility of complete cure

The interactive discussions helped clarify misconceptions and build confidence among community members. The positive response reflected increased awareness and acceptance.

Overall Impact

The consolidated activities conducted on 31.01.2026 resulted in:

- Increased awareness about early signs of Leprosy
- Improved knowledge regarding free treatment services
- Strengthened stigma reduction efforts
- Encouragement of early health-seeking behavior
- Enhanced community engagement in disease prevention

The combination of education, interaction, pledge-taking, and screening contributed to comprehensive community outreach.

Day 2 - Date: 04.02.2026

A leprosy awareness programme was conducted on **04.02.2026** as part of community health education activities to create awareness among the public regarding early detection, treatment, and prevention of leprosy.

The session was conducted by **Dr. Janarthanan** and **Dr. Bharath** for community members. Dr. Janarthanan initiated the programme with an introduction to leprosy, explaining its signs and symptoms, screening procedures, and ongoing campaigns aimed at early identification of leprosy cases. The importance of early diagnosis and public awareness was emphasized during the session.



Following this, Dr. Bharath explained the various treatment options available, preventive measures, contact screening, and the importance of community involvement in the eradication of leprosy. He also addressed stigma related to leprosy and clarified common myths and misconceptions associated with the disease.

The session concluded with interaction with the participants, followed by distribution of tea and snacks.

The The team thanked the Head of the Department for the opportunity and expressed special appreciation to Mr. Vinoth for organizing the community health talk.



Conclusion

The National / World Leprosy Day programmes conducted across Allikondapattu and Navampattu villages were successfully implemented under the guidance of **Dr. A. Balaji**.

The activities effectively created awareness, promoted early diagnosis and treatment, and reinforced the importance of eliminating stigma in society. Such outreach initiatives play a vital role in strengthening public health efforts and moving toward the goal of Leprosy elimination and disability prevention.