

### History of NELRA

Nepal Leprosy Relief Association(NELRA) is a social voluntary organization actively involved in the welfare of leprosy patients. NELRA was founded in 1969 under the chairmanship of Her Royal Highness Princes Shanti Rajya Laxmi Devi Singh with the objectives of helping the leprosy patients, their families and ultimately aiming at solving the overall problems created by leprosy in Nepal.

There were two leprosaria in Nepal. One in the valley of Kathmandu called Khokana leprosarium and the other at Malunga in Syanja district of western Nepal. There was no effective treatment curing leprosy prior to 1982. As such, the patients used to be segregated in isolated colonies called leprosaria. With this end in view Khokana leprosarium was opened in 1857 and Malunga leprosarium in 1939. However, Malunga leprosarium was vacated in 1993 after the patients rehabilitated in the community and some disable, utterly deformed and helpless patients transferred to the newly built Pokhara nursing home with better accommodation. Likewise the handicapped and utterly deformed patients in Khokana leprosarium are also transferred to the nursing apartments built in the leprosarium premises. Three old and dilapidated barracks have been dismantled so far. Nearly 300 leprosy patients are being privileged by different facilities at the moment.

NELRA has built a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) near by Khokana leprosarium with the financial support of German Leprosy Relief Association. The centre imparts training on Carpentry and Mechanical trades to 25 trainees each year. Some 336 leprosy patients or the children of leprosy patients have received training so far and most of them have got job in their respective fields.

NELRA, since its very inception, has been taking deep interest in the wellbeing of the children of leprosy patients. The notion behind this help is that if the children become capable of earning they will not be the burden of their parents rather they help them and work as an active citizen of the country. NELRA is running two hostels, one for the boys at Pharping and another for the girls' at Mandikhatar. The boys hostel accommodating 60 boys is called Karlgerold children home and Shanti Girls Hostel accommodates 50 girls. These hostels provide accommodation,

food , schooling health care etc. free of cost. The children are also encouraged in sports and extra activities. Expenses are being met through the generous grants received from German Leprosy/T.B Relief Association, and the NELRA's internal source. Total number of beneficiaries of hostel education reached 619 so far. 161 children have been able to pass S.L.C (School Leaving Certificate Exam.) up to 2009/2010

The ex-hostel children are encouraged to get training in technical fields or the bright ones get higher education scholarships. Some 101 students have received higher education or technical education scholarships to date.

NELRA is running a Community Based Education Support Programme(CBESP) for the patients or their children going to school in their own native villages scattered all over the country. This programme allows 120 scholarships every year. Initially this programme was funded by Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation(SMHF) Japan, whereas, from the year 2010 onwards NELRA is mobilizing local donors to support it internally. Some 463 children have been benefited from this programme so far.

NELRA has started a Community Based Rehabilitation programme from the year 1988. Under this programme 257 leprosy patients from leprosaria, streets and temples have been resettled by building 179 low cost homes so far. Out of the total number 60 homes were built through the philanthropic grant of World Conference on Religion and Peace channeled through SMHF and 119 homes were built by the fund of Adventist Development and Relief Agency(ADRA) International. Although there are demands of homes by the shelterless, poor and handicapped leprosy patients living in the temples and the public places, NELRA has not been able to provide them because of lack of fund for the same.

An awareness programme concerning leprosy is of utmost importance. There is a lot of misbelief and stigma regarding leprosy prevailing in the community which has to be removed. With this end in view NELRA publishes calendar every year with appropriate messages, pamphlets, posters, and quarterly NELRA bulletins. Occasionally, it also produces especial radio and TV programmes. NELRA observes World Leprosy Day on the last Sunday of January every year on a nation-wide basis through its branches in all development regions of the country.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human rights-Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Leprosy is curable, Early treatment prevents disability.

Treatment is available in all the hospitals and the health-posts, free of charge.