



Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation  
Restoring Dignity

# *making connects...* *whatever the odds*

Annual Report  
**2020-2021**







*S-ILF staff in a meeting with residents of a leprosy colony, East Champaran, Bihar*



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**Featured on the cover (L-R)** Vishal Bagdi, S-ILF scholar (Sai Ram Awtar leprosy colony, Indore, MP); Ms Samsa Khatun, SHG member (Chhotaphul Kushth Ashram, East Champaran, Bihar) and Ms Moharmati Yadav, livelihood beneficiary (Indira Colony, Champa, Chhattisgarh)



*Ensuring continuity of education through S-ILF's After School Learning Centres*



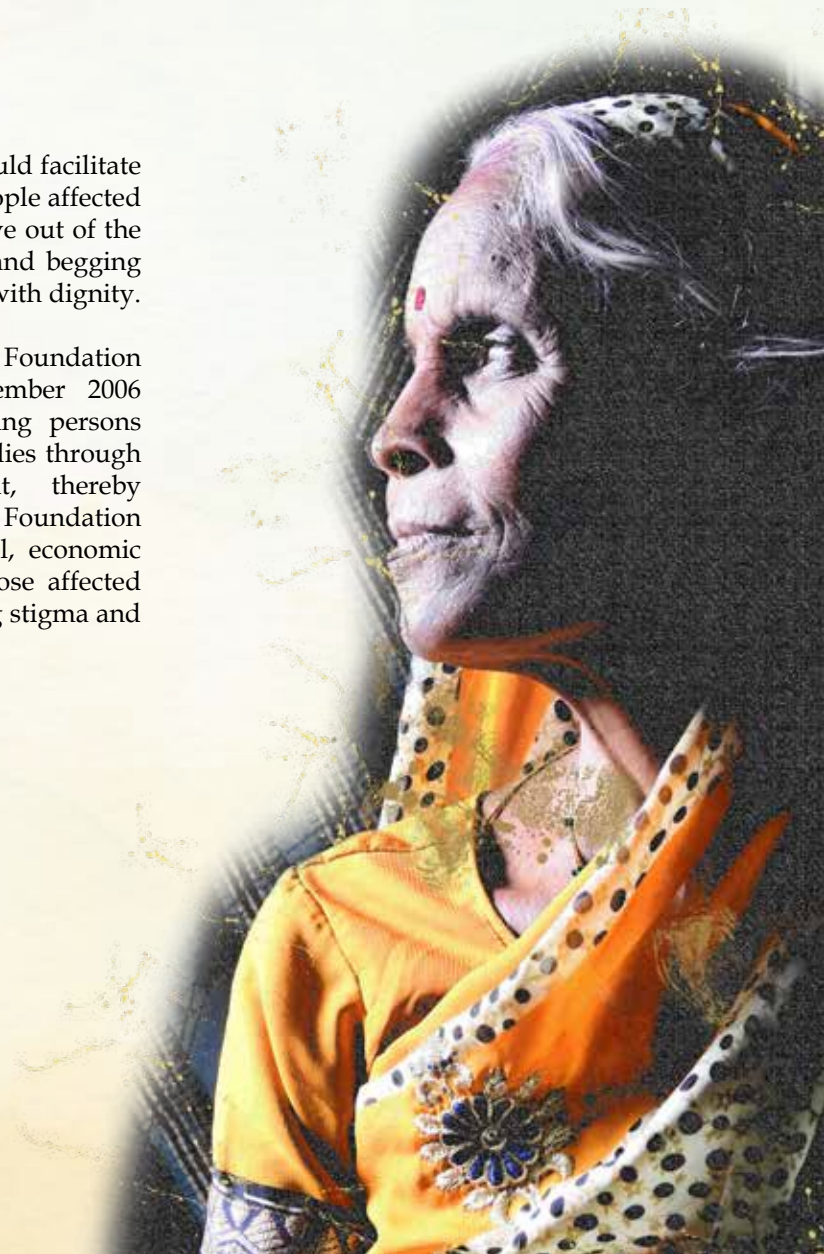
# About

## Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF)

While India celebrated the achievement of elimination of leprosy as a public health problem in the year 2005, Mr Yohei Sasakawa, the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy elimination and Chairman of the Nippon Foundation was quick to realize that his mission of eliminating leprosy would not be over unless stigma against people affected by leprosy was eradicated and they were reintegrated into society. He therefore took two visionary steps: facilitating the setting up of the National Forum of Leprosy Affected People (later renamed Association of People Affected by Leprosy)-an association of persons affected by leprosy living in colonies across the country so that they could work together to lead the fight for acceptance in society and their inclusion in the welfare schemes of the government; and two,

setting up of a foundation that would facilitate the economic empowerment of people affected by leprosy, so that they could move out of the demeaning dependence on alms and begging and begin to earn their livelihood with dignity.

The latter, Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF) was instituted in November 2006 and works towards mainstreaming persons affected by leprosy and their families through socio- economic empowerment, thereby restoring dignity to their lives. The Foundation affirms that ensuring equal social, economic and cultural opportunities for those affected by leprosy is a means of combating stigma and discrimination.







*Livelihood project beneficiaries of Bajaj Auto Ltd. supported project, Sangli, Maharashtra*



## VISION

To integrate leprosy-cured persons and their families into main-stream society by ending the discrimination faced by them.

## MISSION

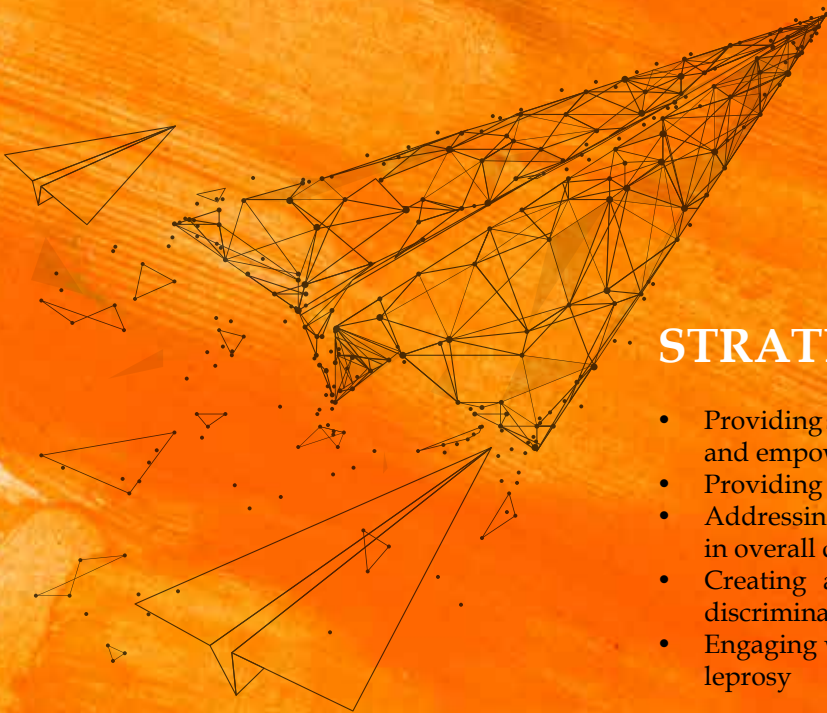
To end stigma against the disease and ensure equal social, economic and cultural opportunities to those affected by leprosy and their families.

## GOALS

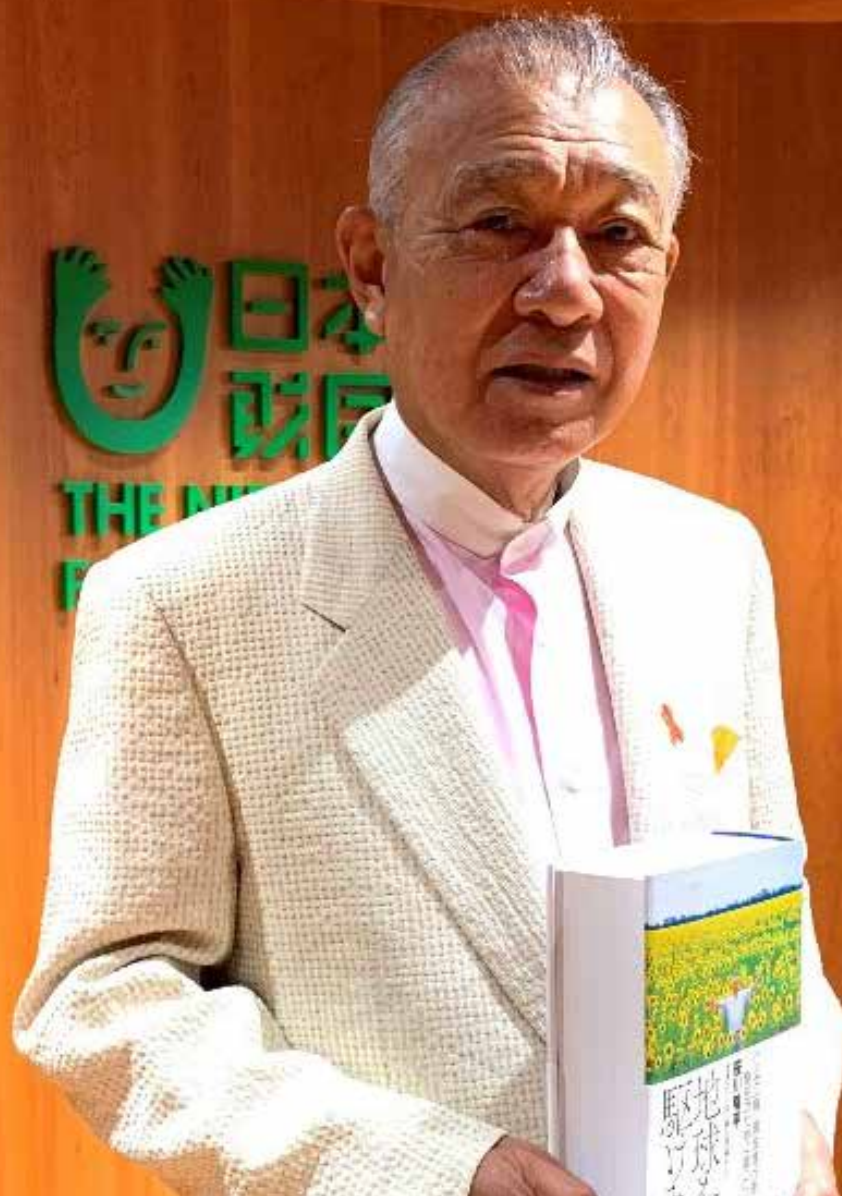
- To increase social acceptability of leprosy-cured persons and their families through dissemination of scientific information; to create increased awareness about the disease; to bust myths in people's minds about leprosy.
- To create conditions that will enable them to have equal access to economic and educational opportunities.

## STRATEGY

- Providing support-financial and technical for setting up micro-enterprises for self-employment and empowering persons affected by leprosy to access government welfare schemes
- Providing access to vocational training and higher education through scholarships
- Addressing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues in leprosy colonies for improvement in overall quality of life
- Creating awareness about leprosy among all sections of society to fight stigma and discrimination
- Engaging with opinion and policy makers for the rights and inclusion of persons affected by leprosy







*WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination, Mr Yohei Sasakawa holds a copy of a recently published book documenting his activities around the globe for a world without leprosy. An English edition of the book is due to appear by end of 2022.*



# Our guiding light - Our Patron

## In conversation with Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman- The Nippon Foundation

### Interviewer

The coronavirus pandemic has hit India hard over the past 12 months. How do you view S-ILF's activities during this time?

### Mr Sasakawa

First, I'd like to note that this year marks S-ILF's 15th anniversary, so I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations. I am very pleased with the new management structure inaugurated following the arrival of Dr Vivek

Lal last year as Chief Executive Officer and the way that the Board under Chairman Tarun Das has grown stronger and more united. It is of course very disappointing that the pandemic has prevented S-ILF from carrying out all the activities it would have liked, but I wish to thank all the Board members and all the staff for their efforts in organizing relief activities for leprosy colonies, including provision of food and educational support, while taking maximum precautions against the spread of Covid.

### Interviewer

India has the ambitious goal of eliminating leprosy, and stigma related to leprosy, by 2030. What do you expect from S-ILF in support of this goal?

### Mr Sasakawa

I know that S-ILF is ready to undertake many activities based on this objective, in cooperation with the Association of People Affected by Leprosy and others. Moreover, many experts known that S-ILF is an indispensable presence. But during the pandemic, there have been times when, regrettably, it has just not been possible to do enough in terms of respecting human life, and I have no doubt that all of you have found this frustrating. These are difficult times indeed, but as soon as the situation settles down, I intend to visit India again at the earliest opportunity. As in the past, I intend to visit different parts of the country in support of S-ILF's work, based on my conviction that "problems and answers lie in the field" and I am confident that under the guidance of Chairman Mr Das, S-ILF will achieve great things.

### Interviewer

It is 30 years since the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution to eliminate leprosy as a public health problem, which it defined as reducing the prevalence rate of the disease to below 1 case per 10,000 population. And it is 20 years since you were first appointed as an ambassador for leprosy elimination. Please remind us of what drives your enthusiasm for realising a world without leprosy.

### Mr Sasakawa

What motivates me in particular at the current time is my concern that the global coronavirus pandemic has delayed efforts against leprosy. Through webinars and other means, I have been interacting with persons affected by leprosy and I have urged WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus that we continue our activities so that leprosy is not forgotten. My heart is always with you in India and my determination to see a leprosy-free India will never waver. As soon as the pandemic is resolved, I look forward to visiting you in person and working with you all for a brighter future.

### Interviewer

Please address a few words to the S-ILF staff who have worked hard amid the difficulties caused by the pandemic.

### Mr Sasakawa

I am truly grateful to you for your dedication in the face of all the challenges. Keep up the good work!



The values you set at S-ILF will always remain with us



*In fond memory of*  
***Late Dr S K Noordeen***

*(Chairman Emeritus, S-ILF)*  
7 January, 1933 - 17 August, 2021



Your work and passion for persons affected by leprosy  
will continue to inspire



*In fond memory of*  
***Late Dr P K Gopal***  
*(Advisory Board Member, S-ILF)*  
*13 May, 1941 - 18 March, 2021*



# Review of the year

The year of the Covid pandemic, has been challenging for all. More so for S-ILF, it presented itself as a defining moment. Our new Chief Executive Officer joined in June, only to be connected with colleagues over phone and zoom calls- no face-to-face meetings, no handshakes and to be content with it, until we opened office in February this year. During this period of 'virtual engagement', two things were critically at stake- team-building and mutual trust, while maintaining continuity of interventions and keeping them relevant. We rose to the occasion- not only built ourselves stronger as a team, but also redefined our strategy and programs to strengthen ourselves as catalyst of change. In order to be better connected to the communities and enable efficient program implementation, we decentralised our interventions through opening up of **zonal offices for the states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh at Nashik and at Delhi for Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. More zonal offices are planned in the coming year.**

Engagement of persons affected by leprosy at all levels of program implementation is vital for success and sustainability; the foundation of which is built on relationships. Despite physically being distanced, S-ILF has kept itself deeply attached to the ground with processes of regular dialogue with the residents of leprosy colonies. Through our '*Samvaad*' initiative we reached out to colonies in Nashik, Indore,

Dhanbad and Delhi. An important step has been our prompt support through provision of ration and other essential supplies during the period of lockdown due to Covid and during floods. An entirely new dimension to our work in the colonies was added through 'humanitarian aid' as we realised the needs of colonies related to water, sanitation, hygiene and healthcare. All endeavours have been planned, implemented and monitored with active involvement of association of people affected by leprosy (APAL), indeed a joint 'S-ILF-APAL initiative'. We partnered with Bajaj Auto Limited in Maharashtra to initiate new livelihood projects, especially relevant in the context of covid which has resulted in loss of earning source for those residing in colonies. Providing educational support to children has been an important transformative tool in the lives of people living in colonies. This year, we increased the number of scholarships for pursuing a course in nursing. Continuity of education is at stake brought in by closure of schools during the pandemic. During this time, we have enabled access to digital educational content through our after school learning centres at ten sites.

We actively engaged with the government, WHO and ILEP in our effort to contribute to the cause of persons affected by leprosy. Last year, we had a signed a MoU with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); we followed it up with

sensitization of corporates through various CII platforms and engagement with them on projects related to skilling and humanitarian aid.

The year of the pandemic, changed the ways we interact, our modes of work and overall living; what remains unchanged however is our resolve and commitment towards the cause of better quality of life and dignity for persons affected by leprosy and their families. This we owe to the continued guidance from our Patron, Mr Yohei Sasakawa, the support rendered by the Board of S-ILF, the dedication and hard work of staff and the active engagement of our partners, the APAL through its leadership at the national, state and colony levels.

As we look forward, 2021 will mark the 15th Anniversary of S-ILF, with a renewed vigour and resolve to become more responsive to the needs of those affected by leprosy.





*S-ILF's 1<sup>st</sup> zonal office at Nashik*

With support from Bajaj Auto Ltd. S-ILF has been able to open its first zonal office at Nashik, Maharashtra.



*Expansion of S-ILF's activities*

In order to improve the overall quality of life of persons affected by Leprosy and to provide prompt support in emergencies.



*S-ILF Samvaad*

Our efforts towards continuous engagement in a meaningful dialogue with our beneficiaries.





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*Dr K S Baghotia, State Leprosy Officer, Delhi, addressing colony residents during S-ILF Samvaad*



## S-ILF SAMVAAD

*An Initiative to Reach out to Leprosy Colonies*



The Covid pandemic with its restrictions on movement affected field visits by the organization. In the current scenario, the world is running through online means in order to ensure continuity of work. Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation also came up with a new initiative called S-ILF *Samvaad*, to reach out to the leprosy colonies across the country and to remain connected with beneficiaries during difficult times.

S-ILF *Samvaad* is a dialogue between the residents of the leprosy colonies and S-ILF's team, where we try to understand the problems and issues faced in day-to-day living by people living in leprosy colonies. The platform provides for a strong connect with residents enabling an understanding of needs and how issues could be resolved in a participatory manner. The very first S-ILF *Samvaad* was organised in Nashik, Maharashtra on the occasion of the inauguration of S-ILF's zonal office. We have continued the initiative with

dialogues in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Jharkhand. S-ILF *Samvaad* provides opportunities for improved relations with the beneficiaries and staff. Covid has changed the way we work, the way we interact, and the way we approach life including our health. But it hasn't changed our commitment to our stakeholders. We always have, and always will remain committed to supporting and empowering persons affected by leprosy and their families.





*S-ILF Staff in the field*



# Humanitarian Aid

## Serving the Needs

*While the entire country and indeed the world suffered due to the Covid pandemic, situation in leprosy colonies were worse due to lack of basic amenities and loss of means of livelihood. These disadvantaged communities were further pushed towards being marginalized. S-ILF responded to the needs of the residents of leprosy colonies by initiating a relief program through distribution of dry ration and other essential household supplies. Also from this initiative, emerged a separate unit within the organization to deal with such crisis and challenges including relief during emergencies and natural calamities, healthcare and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).*

## Covid Relief

As a means of livelihood, those residing in leprosy colonies either do odd jobs or beg for a living. More than a year of Covid pandemic and the lockdown, forced people to stay at home for their safety, which adversely impacted their earnings.

Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation started a dry ration distribution campaign to support the people living in leprosy colonies in these difficult times. S-ILF started needs assessment of the residents in leprosy colonies by reaching out to APAL, including national, state and colony leaders. Based on the needs, S-ILF provided dry ration kits to more than 30000 people across 12 states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana and West Bengal.

These efforts by S-ILF are small beginnings towards ensuring food security and our sincere efforts to ensure that no one goes hungry.





# Flood Relief & Other Aids

## Bihar

Maa Janki Nagar Kushth Ashram, Sitamarhi district was submerged in flood waters and the residents were forced to live in tents in the railway station area which is on a higher ground near the colony. They will continue to live there until the flood waters recede and the conditions become habitable again.

As part of our immediate response and as per their desired need, 90 families were reached through tarpaulin sheets. In addition, for fear of water-borne diseases, bleaching powder and oral rehydration solutions have also been provided ready-at-hand. This was done in coordination with APAL.



## Telangana

Recent floods in Hyderabad have caused havoc in leprosy colonies of the state. It added more suffering to their lives as they were already facing problems due to the Covid pandemic. As per request from APAL, S-ILF provided dry ration and essential supplies kits for 168 households (more than 500 people) in coordination with colony leaders.





## Blanket Distribution

The Bureau of His Holiness Dalai Lama is celebrating the Year 2020-21 as the year of gratitude for which they collaborated with Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation for their Blanket donation drive. S-ILF supported the initiative through facilitating the distribution of 300 blankets to persons affected by leprosy living in Tahirpur Leprosy Complex, New Delhi.



## Educational Aids

S-ILF has been working on the various aspects of education in the leprosy colonies. The emphasis has been on improvement in quality of education to children living in leprosy colonies as well as to create an overall learning culture in the colonies. In order to ensure continuity of education during Covid pandemic, wherein classes became online, S-ILF launched a campaign for providing spare laptops. An appeal was made to corporates through the CII in this regard. Till now, 6 laptops have been provided as per request received from the children.

*Thank you, Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation (S-ILF), for providing me with a Laptop, which is very helpful for my research studies. Earlier it took me many visits to a browsing Centre to complete even one project of studies. Comes at a time when I needed it the most- Thank you!*

*-Urmila Kumari Pursuing BMC,  
(S-ILF HHDLs, Batch 6)*







## Launch of flip Chart for ASHAs

In observance of Anti Leprosy Day on 30th January 2021, the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination Mr Yohei Sasakawa,

Sasakawa Leprosy (Hansen's Disease) Initiative, National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) of the Ministry of Health

and Family Welfare of India (MoHFW), and World Health Organisation (WHO-India) jointly launched a pictorial flipchart on



leprosy for use by Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs). The flipchart printed in Hindi, Gujarati, Odia and Bengali languages has been delivered to 3,00,000 ASHAs in 6 leprosy-endemic states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal. In conjunction with this launch, WHO India released short online animation films in regional languages for ASHAs to learn how to use this flipchart effectively. This training package will strengthen ASHA's skills in facilitating early case detection and treatment which is key for further reducing disease burden.

ASHA workers are the backbone of primary healthcare in India - working resolutely at the grassroots level to make basic healthcare facilities accessible to those who live on the margins of the society. ASHA workers have been contributing to early leprosy case detection across India. They visit house to house to identify people with signs and symptoms of leprosy and refer them to the nearest government health facility for confirmation.

Lack of public awareness about leprosy is one of the major problems that India is facing in its efforts against the disease. These pictorial learning materials will assist ASHAs to develop a correct understanding of the disease and encourage community members to support their activities. It will promote self-examination and encourage people to consult an ASHA or visit a government health facility if leprosy signs and symptoms are detected.

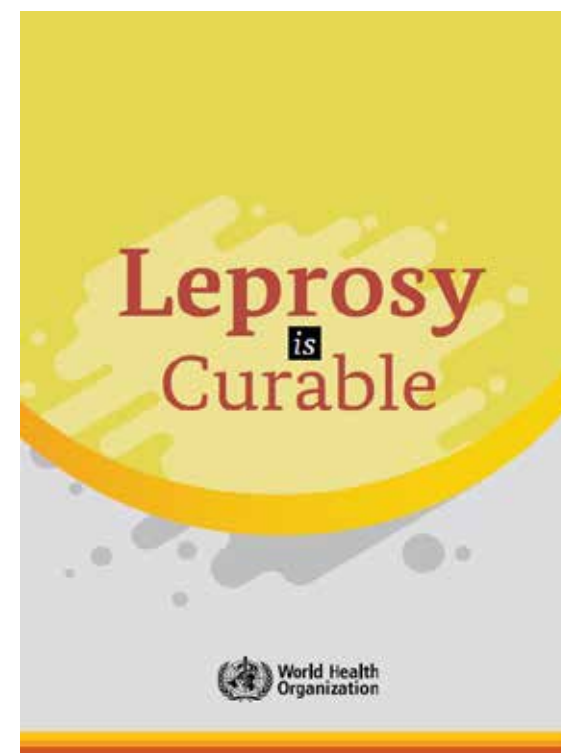
In the words of Mr Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman Nippon Foundation & WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination:

*"The activities done by ASHAs are a key to achieve leprosy-free India, a dream of Mahatma Gandhi, and I hope this flipchart can be of help for their activities,"*

Sharing her thoughts on the Flipchart and how it will aid ASHA workers, Ms Rekha Shukla, Joint Secretary, Health & Family Welfare said:

*"Government of India is committed to making India leprosy free. National Leprosy Eradication Programme is focusing on early and active detection of leprosy cases in order to ensure complete treatment, prevention of physical disabilities and to stop the community transmission. ASHAs are the main front-line workers in case detection activities, and incentives have been provided for ASHAs to even carry out the regular screening rounds in the endemic areas. ASHA flipbooks are an important IEC tool not only for ASHAs, but also for the community."*

With an aim to create general community awareness alongside the launch of flip chart, S-ILF undertook an extensive media campaign. National and local dailies and social media were engaged to disseminate the information. While the press release was disseminated all over India, special focus was on Chhattisgarh, Gujrat, Maharashtra and Odisha. The launch was well-captured by the media.







*Ms Vishakha Magdum, running a grocery shop, supported by Bajaj Auto Ltd., Swadhar Nagar leprosy colony, Kolhapur, Maharashtra*



# Livelihood

## An Attempt to Restore Dignity

*Leprosy affected families are often socially alienated and are forced to stay away in separate self-settled colonies. Limited livelihood opportunities make them dependent on donations and begging for survival. S-ILF provides financial assistance in the form of grants for setting up micro-enterprises as per the skill set of the people themselves. To ensure successful outcomes, great emphasis is laid on skill and management training and capacity building so that they are able to run profitable and sustainable enterprises.*

The Covid pandemic brought lockdowns and restrictions on the market openings, due to which many livelihood projects were adversely impacted. We undertook some activities with the beneficiaries to support them in livelihoods:

### Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

- 29 SHGs are operational in Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, with 298 female members. Meetings were facilitated as per the guidelines under Panchsstras, linked with Banks and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). One of the SHGs from the colony of Ramgarhwa, Bihar initiated goat-rearing and poultry under the scheme of Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (Jeevika).

### Capacity Building

- To build the capacities of livelihood project beneficiaries and to develop an ecosystem, week-long street plays and Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) workshops were conducted in five colonies of Bihar.

- Refresher training was conducted for nine food stall beneficiaries in Dhanbad. It helped the beneficiaries to restart their business operations post-Covid re-opening.
- Awareness sessions were conducted with SHG members on Covid-related precautions and protocols.

### Bajaj Auto Ltd- supported Livelihood Projects in Maharashtra

*The project aims at promotion of sustainable livelihoods for 108 leprosy affected families in nine leprosy colonies from four districts of Maharashtra - Amravati, Kolhapur, Sangli and Solapur districts. The project addresses a key area of livelihood needs of the colony residents.*

*The selected beneficiaries have been provided financial grant up to Rs 50,000 per potential entrepreneur. The beneficiaries are provided technical training in the*

*livelihood area selected by them. 89 project beneficiaries have been trained through 30 training programs in product development for strengthening of technical knowledge.*

*Support is also extended to SHGs through capacity building. The project formed 8 new SHGs and revived 10 existing SHGs in the nine intervention colonies. These SHGs also did inter-loaning among members for consumption and production purposes.*

*In order to address the critical need for livelihoods, Bajaj Auto Ltd has further extended its support to six more leprosy colonies in the districts of Nasik, Sholapur and Sangli in Maharashtra. The project aims at promotion of sustainable livelihoods for 108 leprosy affected families in these leprosy colonies.*



## Case Study

### Budheshwar (Kalyanpur colony, Bankura, West Bengal)



*"S-ILF has changed my life. Earlier I was forced to work for others, now I have my own shop. I have picked up the right path for my progress."*

Mr Budheshwar, 44 years old, lives in Kalyanpur colony, Bankura, West Bengal. The family of five comprises of his wife, two daughters and a son. His father who was affected by leprosy worked as a blacksmith for the sustenance of the family.

After his father's demise in 1993 in Purulia, the family faced terrible circumstances due to meagre, irregular income sources. He, therefore decided to quit studies after matriculation and started working as a daily wage worker. He received guidance and support to undergo fabrication training from ITI in Nashik. Despite successful completion of this one-year course, however, he could not get a job.

He aspired to start his own shop but due to insufficient financial resources and guidance about business skills, he could not do so. He then started working for different fabrication shops in the market on daily wages. During the next few years, he learnt a wide range of fabrication work while working for shop owners.

During one of the community mobilisation drives by S-ILF livelihood program team, he got an opportunity to discuss about his business plan. After initial one-on-one interaction and counselling, he got assured of support and decided to attend entrepreneurial development program (EDP) by S-ILF. Post-training, he gained confidence and courage and transformed from a regular worker to

a promising entrepreneur. Along with the required technical skills, he now had business management skills, as well.

S-ILF supported him financially by providing capital seed grant of Rs. 50,000 for procurement of assets, raw material and operation. He started his own fabrication shop in 2019. With this amount he could purchase all necessary assets and material to initiate business activity - welding machine, drill machine, cutting grinder, big cutting machine, big weighing machine, etc.

He utilized the learning regarding customer handling and tapping market opportunities and demand by expanding his scope from iron fabrication to steel fabrication. In a year's time his business grew and the monthly income rose to 18,000 - 20,000 per month. Not only this, he also trained seven youth from his colony and made them employable. With these skills, the youths gained jobs in the market.

With this increased income and a developed sense of financial security he was able to bear the expenses towards higher education of his elder daughter.

Although, his business got adversely affected during pandemic, he has now been able to resume it.





## Case Study

### Ravi Mahato (Baniahir Kushth Ashram, Dhanbad, Jharkhand)



*“S-ILF is doing great work in upliftment of poor people like us. I would like to thank the organisation from the core of my heart”.*

Mr Ravi Mahato, 39 years old, lives in Baniahir Kushth Ashram, Dhanbad, Jharkhand. The family of five includes his wife and three children studying in class 8th, 10th and 12th. His father who was affected by leprosy, moved to this place around 40 years ago in search of medical help and better living.

Ravi was born in the colony itself. Since his childhood he would see his father begging on the streets and in the market in order to support the family. After facing lots of hurdles and social discrimination, Ravi could somehow complete his studies till 12th standard. He was so disturbed and demotivated of the discrimination that he wanted to discontinue the studies thereafter, but he considered doing ITI - Welder course on the suggestion of his friends.

After completion of the course, he started working for some fabricators but could not continue for long because of poor wages. Amongst his friends, somebody suggested him to move to Mumbai for better wages but his mother refused. He tried many other ways and methods to earn better wages & living but nothing could match up to his expectations. Thus, because of no support and guidance his frustration and disappointment grew day by day. After marriage in 2000, he had to unwillingly join a Plastic wholesale shop as a

salesman for a monthly wage of just Rs. 1,000. Soon he quit the job and decided to join as security guard. He was still unsure of what to do. This was the time he thought of starting his own business but had no means to realize his dreams.

In 2019, he got in touch with S-ILF Jharkhand team and shared his plan and requirements. After initial counselling and discussion on entrepreneurship he was invited to attend a three-day residential training workshop on Entrepreneurship Development organised by S-ILF. After successful completion of the training, he attended a two days' workshop on Business Operation and Planning. These training workshops filled him with great level of motivation and clarity about the business requirements - account book-keeping, business progression, customer handling and services, inventory management, etc. In addition, S-ILF provided him capital support of Rs. 52,000 for business set-up and operations. He started a shop of Consumer Services Centre (CSC) and was assisted in procuring laptop, printer, lamination machine, furniture, counter and other raw materials. Initially, he started business from a low-cost community hall at Borragarh. As the business grew in a years' time, he decided to take a shop in the main market in order to increase the business volume and profit. He, with the support from

S-ILF zonal team found a suitable location in the main market, Hanumangarhi Mor in 2020. With this development, his income rose to Rs. 10,000 per month. He later renovated his

house, added three more rooms and bought a bike for commuting.

However, during the pandemic his business

got severely affected. Though the income has gone down but his motivation to excel remained high. Post-lockdown, he has been able to resume his business activity.





## Case Study

### Saraswati Devi (Bankatti Leprosy Colony, Dhanbad, Jharkhand)



*“During the lockdown, I was afraid if all the hard work I had done to establish my enterprise, would fail. Undergoing the S-ILF organised refresher training has given me the confidence to run my business again”.*

Ms Saraswati Devi, 39 years old woman, lives in Bankatti leprosy colony situated in Jharia, Jharkhand. She is one of the four children of her parents. Her father would work as a helper in a local canteen in district Purulia and earned a mere Rs. 1,500 - 2,000 a month. With this meagre amount, survival for the family of eight was difficult. Because of this, Saraswati could not be provided any formal education.

At the age of 17, she got married to Jeevan Gorai and moved to Bankatti colony in Jharia. Her husband worked for a wood shop at monthly wage of Rs. 6,000. Life remained more or less smooth until the death of her husband due to tuberculosis. After the demise of her husband, she and her daughter had to undergo several challenges for their basic survival. She decided not to take to begging and instead started working as a domestic help with an earning of Rs. 1,500 per month. Somehow, she was able to make both ends meet for her family of two.

The direction of her life changed for good when she got to know about S-ILF livelihood program. She met the state team and expressed her aspiration to start a food stall. At the same time, she was afraid that being from the leprosy background customers would discriminate. After initial counselling and entrepreneurship training, S-ILF provided her with capital seed money to purchase all necessary assets and raw materials to start a fast food stall. She

successfully started the food stall outside the colony where her customers came from neighboring localities.

In order to support her decision for further advancement in business, S-ILF concentrated on expanding the range of food items and maintaining quality and hygiene standards. For this, three refresher trainings were given to her. In addition, she was given handholding support in account book-keeping and other business skills. Gradually, she was able to save money and renovated her house. She now plans to provide good quality education to her daughter.

Although during the pandemic, her business came to a halt, post restrictions, S-ILF organised a refresher training where she got motivated and has resumed her business.







*Scholars from Leprosy colonies of Jharia, Jharkhand (from L-R) Sanjay Das (B Tech), Vinita Gope (B Ed), Rahul Malakar (Hotel Management), Anil Mahto (B Ed), Priyatosh Shaw (Hotel Management), Vishnu Rawani (Hotel Management)*

# Education

## Bridging the Gap

*Ensuring access to education is essential to lay the foundation on which children of leprosy affected families can build a better and secure future. Often, due to discrimination and exclusion, children from families affected by leprosy. These families are constrained by poor economic situation and are unable to continue or pursue secondary and higher studies. In most cases, they are the first-generation learners, who do not get required guidance from their families. In order to create a learning culture in the colonies, S-ILF runs various educational programs to cater the needs of children and youth.*

## HiWell – Digitalising the Leprosy Colonies

The digital medium opens up opportunities for leisure, recreation and learning that may not be easily accessible in the offline world, particularly for marginalised and excluded communities.

An increased and more effective use of digital technology results in learners developing a level of digital skills that will be essential in today's increasingly digitised world. Teaching with technology engages students with different kinds of stimuli involving activity-based learning. S-ILF has initiated an innovative teaching method that attracts children towards education/ learning through our After School Learning Centres (ASLCs). When children are given opportunities in digital technology, their learning and exposure increases many folds. The opportunities are endless!

S-ILF brought Hole-in-the-Wall Learning Stations along with Digital Learning program for residents of Shri Ramavtar Kushth Colony, Indore with support from NIIT Foundation.

NIIT Foundation has run these programs successfully in Asia and Africa and has put more than 500 such learning stations. Bridging the digital divide for marginalised children between 6 to 14 years, Hole-in-the-wall learning stations provide solutions in the areas of elementary education, life skills and computer literacy. Hole-in-the-wall program is a special arrangement of combination of different subjects like mathematics, science, languages, general knowledge and digital skills which are pre-set in a non-invasive computer device available for access anytime students wish to use.

For the elderly, S-ILF runs certificate courses in basic digital learning under Digital Learning Centres (DLCs), the core agenda of this program is to promote digitally-enabled sustainable growth in the colony for a larger good and provide impetus to the Honorable Prime Minister's Digital India Dream.





## After School Learning Centers – Enabling all-round development of students

Children in colonies find difficulty in coping with curriculum and to understand what is taught in regular school. Some parents send their children to tuitions while most cannot afford to do so. When the child repeatedly fails in examination, the parents pull out the child from school assuming the child is with low intellectual capacity. In some cases, academically sound children have poor study habits due to peer group influence while others drop out or miss school due to the callous nature of their parents. After school learning centers (ASLCs) provides them an opportunity to bridge the gap and develop a habit of regular studies. ASLCs assist children in their school homework, tuition support and when required remedial classes. Apart from academics, these centers enable all-round development of

children through encouragement of sports and extra-curricular activities.

Currently S-ILF is running 10 ASLCs located in leprosy colonies of Indore, Ujjain, Dhar, Barwani (Madhya Pradesh); Bankura, West Midnapore (West Bengal); Solapur (Maharashtra); Ranchi, Dhanbad (Jharkhand) catering to the over 350 students.

During the Covid pandemic, in order to ensure continuity of studies, teachers of ASLCs gave assignments through WhatsApp messages and stayed connected with students.

While the Solapur ASLC is supported by HDFC Capital, all other ASLCs are funded by Sasakawa Health Foundation.



## His Holiness Dalai Lama - Sasakawa Scholarship Program (HHDLS-S)

For most students from leprosy colonies who have completed their Class XII, professional higher education remains a distant dream. Professional courses are expensive and scholarships offered are few.

His Holiness Dalai Lama- Sasakawa Scholarship Program was launched in 2015. Under this program, financial support is extended to meritorious children from leprosy colonies to pursue higher studies and attain professional qualifications for securing meaningful employment. The states included are Delhi, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Choosing the right course for career is the most crucial decision to make. The most popular professional field in our scholarship program is healthcare followed by hospitality.

Under its ambit, the selected students receive a monthly stipend, tuition fees, and other benefits. In the last six years, this program has provided scholarships to 124 youth from affected families.

This year (Batch VI, 2020-21), a total of 25 scholars were selected.





## Nursing Scholarships

Nursing is a noble and altruistic profession so it follows that those who pursue it are well respected and valued members of society.

S-ILF's Nursing scholarship program was started to meet a strong desire expressed by girls from families affected by leprosy to become nurses. The girls wanted to become nurses so that they could look after their family as well the other community members. Girls from leprosy colonies usually drop out after completing high school due to shortage of funds.

S-ILF's Nursing Scholarship Program bridges the gap between their circumstances and their aspirations to become dignified, responsible and financially independent women. It is a pan-India program.

Since 2011, S-ILF provided the scholarships to 115 girls. In the year, 2020-21, 15 girls were supported for doing BSc Nursing course.



## Skills to Employment Program (STEP-Up)

S-ILF's STEP-UP Program aims to motivate drop-outs and unemployed youth of communities affected by leprosy to obtain opportunities to improve their employability, productivity, and decision-making.

In the past, S-ILF has partnered with training institutions such as Gram Tarang, Don Bosco Tech, IIJT, Gras Academy, Pratham Education Foundation, GMR Foundation, Virohan, Wockhardt, PAN-IIT, ICICI Skills Academy and Simtej Seven Academy. More than 850 youth have been trained.

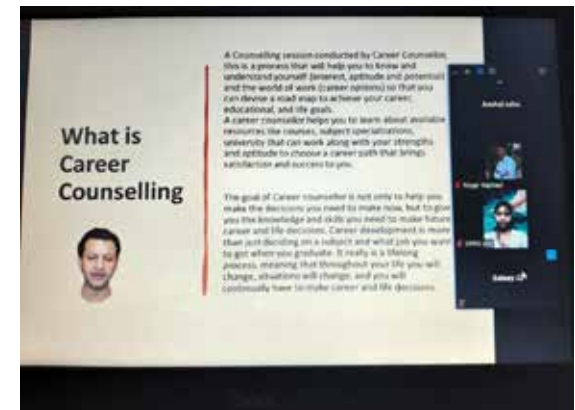
During the year, S-ILF has trained 44 youth through our training partners- Don Bosco Tech and CII. The program is funded by HSBC Skills for Life.

### Career Counselling

The families and children residing in leprosy colonies have little idea about professional courses that would be suitable for them as per education and aptitude. Also knowledge about the eligibility and recognized institutes in their vicinity is limited. S-ILF has engaged with a professional Career Counsellor to cater to the needs of students.

Webinars on career awareness with Class IX-XIIth are conducted and children are engaged in different assignments to enable them to choose a career according to interest and aptitude. The idea behind these sessions is to engage the children at an early stage so that they could have enough time to think and decide. Through these webinars, we have reached out to more

than 100 children. As parents and colony leaders also influence career-related decisions, webinar has also been conducted with them. Around 95 people from different leprosy colonies have participated.







*Engaging with School children*

# Communications & Advocacy

## Changing Mind-sets

*S-ILF is working towards making an inclusive society for persons affected by leprosy and their families.*

## Foundation Day

An online event was organised to celebrate the 14th Foundation Day of S-ILF. With new leadership, S-ILF has started expanding its activities and geographical reach and decentralising to enable closer connect with the communities we work for. The event witnessed the inauguration of S-ILF's first Zonal office at Nashik for the states of Maharashtra and MP. S-ILF's scholars added colours to the celebrations with their cultural performances. S-ILF announced the recipients of higher

professional scholarships at the event. The event was attended virtually by residents of various colonies, APAL leaders, S-ILF's Board & staff members. Prof Takahiro Nanri, Executive Director of Sasakawa Health Foundation was the Guest of the Honour and Dr N K Singh, Chairperson, 15th Finance Commission of India was the Chief Guest.



*Dr N K Singh, Chief Guest at 14<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day*

## Empowerment Workshop

Lack of basic amenities like housing, drinking water, sanitation, electricity and ration is common in these colonies. As a part of its advocacy activity, S-ILF sought to make the colony residents aware of the various government welfare schemes that are available. Through intensive workshops, S-ILF empowers them to identify their needs, write petitions and approach relevant local authorities for access to welfare schemes.

The first phase of the workshop in Dhanbad, Jharkhand received an overwhelming response from nine colonies of the area. Groups of women, youth and elderly along with their

respective colony leaders came forward and participated in the workshops.

A visit to these colonies was made by S-ILF staff to observe the changes. Two colonies have received water supply from the municipalities along with permanent water connections.

Three colonies reported better electricity after the lines were changed. *One colony has renamed itself removing the word 'leprosy' from it.* S-ILF is looking forward to organise more such sessions in other colonies in the near future.



*Mobilisation drive at Leprosy colonies, Dhanbad, Jharkhand*



## Awareness Program

Despite its curability, leprosy still strikes fear in the minds of people. Lack of knowledge about the disease has led to the perpetration of misinformation and misconceptions resulting in a deep-rooted and widespread stigma against the disease and those affected. This is true not only among the uneducated but also among the educated. The negative perception of the disease is manifested in discrimination against and exclusion of not only the leprosy-affected but also their families and a denial of their basic human rights. Special and concerted efforts need to be made to eradicate social stigma. Societal mind-set has to be changed through awareness generation and advocacy. As part of the Awareness Program, S-ILF reaches out to various stakeholders like school and college students, medical institutions, lawyers, social activists, policy makers, media houses and corporates to raise awareness.



## College Sensitisation

As part of the Awareness Program, S-ILF has organised two webinars for pharmacy students in Universities of Indore in MP and Kota in Rajasthan. The webinars were attended by more than 400 undergraduate and postgraduate students and faculty members on zoom platform. Each webinar covered the medical, socio-economic and legal issues related to leprosy. Several myths and misconceptions were busted in the Q&A sessions with the participants and the sessions were aptly christened 'Demystifying leprosy'.

These interactive sessions exposed the students to the different aspects of leprosy and sought to generate academic interest to study the stigma and its impact. The participants took an oath

to end the stigma and joined hands to take this initiative forward. The sessions were well covered in local media and newspapers.

### Young Partners Program

S-ILF started its Young Partners program to reach out to the students of class 8th to 12th in various government and private schools. We partnered with institutions like Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and conducted awareness workshops on leprosy among school children. In the previous year, S-ILF took the initiative to another level and partnered with Routes 2 Roots NGO for sensitising students via digital means.

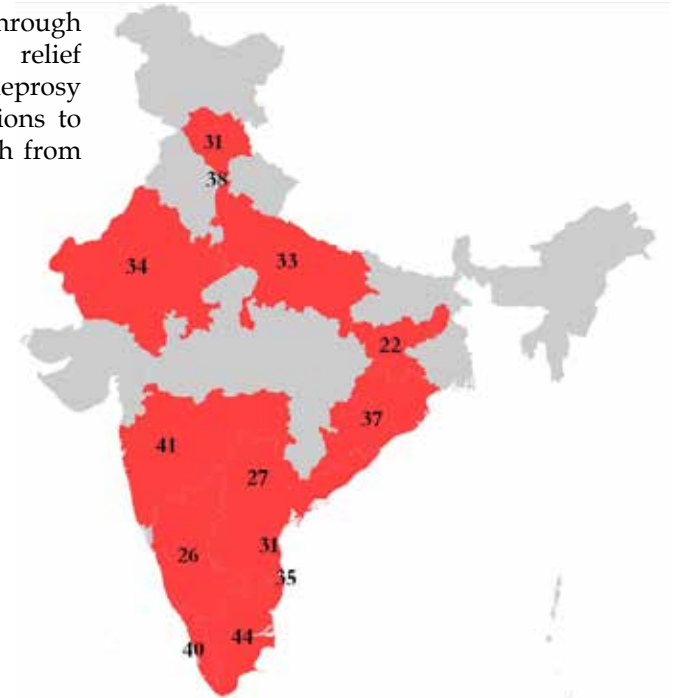


## Corporate Sensitisation Program

Sasakawa-India Leprosy Foundation signed an MoU with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 30th Jan 2020. The key objective of this MoU was to seek CII partnership to communicate and build awareness about Leprosy to the corporate sector. S-ILF was provided an opportunity to engage with CII membership in the Regions through an interaction with the Chairman, Mr. Tarun Das and CEO, Dr. Vivek Lal. A short presentation is made via virtual platform followed by Q&A at Regional, State and Zonal committee meetings

of CII. Through 16 meetings of the Regional and State Councils, S-ILF has been able to reach out to more than 500 corporate members. State wise numbers are reflected in the map.

CII members have contributed through humanitarian aid support for covid relief and response for persons affected by leprosy in colonies and through laptop donations to ensure continuity of education to youth from these underprivileged colonies.







*SHG members, supported by S-ILF, Chhotaphul Leprosy Colony, West Champaran, Bihar*

# Stories that Inspire



Suvajit Mahato hails from Monipur Leprosy Colony, Adra, Purulia, West Bengal. Since childhood, he observed his parent's financial struggle in the absence of good employment opportunities to the residents of his colony.

The year 2018 was challenging for Suvajit's family as his father had retired and soon after that, his mother was diagnosed with a tumour. Being the only child, Suvajit had the responsibility of taking care of his mother. He struggled between family responsibilities and continuity of his education.

From his childhood, Suvajit dreamt of working in the hospitality sector. With sheer determination and dedication, he appeared for the interview conducted by S-ILF for students under His Holiness Dalai Lama Sasakawa scholarship (HHDLSS). With a strong academic record and his exceptional performance in personal interview, he was selected for the scholarship.

He opted for Hotel Management course from NSHM Institute of Hotel Management, Durgapur. Owing to his outstanding academic performance, he was offered a job by Oberoi-Trident Nariman Point, Mumbai with a monthly salary of Rs 14,000/- during on-the-job training. After completing the course, he continued to work at the Oberoi Trident to establish himself professionally and to secure a good future for himself and his family.

However, the arrival of the pandemic shattered his dreams. He had to resign as the hotel industry was under immense pressure due to the lockdown.

While staying at home, he witnessed the plight of the community. Before the pandemic, most of his community members were either doing odd

manual jobs or begging. Once, the lockdown was announced, in the absence of any source of income they struggled for everyday living. The predicament and plight of the people led Suvajit to help them to the best of his capability. He came across a student group from Kolkata that was supporting the marginalized members of society. With the help of the group, Suvajit started a community kitchen in the colony. He ran the community kitchen for almost 4 months. This way he helped over 200 people on a daily basis.

The month of May was even harsher as cyclone Amphan added to the difficulties of the colony. Suvajit ensured that sufficient help was provided to those in dire need. Again, with support from the student group, he arranged tarpaulin sheets to provide temporary shelters to those in need.

Identifying the need of educating the students during the pandemic, Suvajit along with the student group initiated Prithvi Pathshala to cater to the need of the students of nearby villages near Purulia as schools were not operating and there was no arrangement for online classes.



While working for the community during the testing time, Suvajit kept on applying for jobs and appeared for online interviews. Soon, he received an offer from Hotel Novotel, Goa. He was about to accept the offer, fortunately, he got another good opportunity with a cruise line operating from Mumbai.

*He is in the process of joining the Cruise Line. His good deeds and efforts paid off. He is the new generation from the leprosy colony who led by example and helped his community members in the most difficult circumstances. With his hard work, determination and dedication to serve the community, Suvajit has brought a new wave of hope to leprosy colonies.*

*This is true empowerment which S-ILF strives for.*





This is the story of Ramkanya Nargave, who hails from Dhar leprosy colony in Madhya Pradesh. Her parents are affected by leprosy and are settled in a tribal area. Therefore their means of earnings are very limited. She has two siblings, who are into low-paying jobs. It was not easy for her to develop her career as a professional. Her family has gone through a lot of challenges and faced stigma from the society. Ramkanya Nargave studied in a boarding school run by missionaries. She has been always interested in serving the people and helping alleviate their sufferings. But due to stigma and financial problems, she was unable to pursue her dreams.

It is during this time that S-ILF came forward to support her. Ramkanya applied for S-ILF Nursing Scholarship and got selected. She

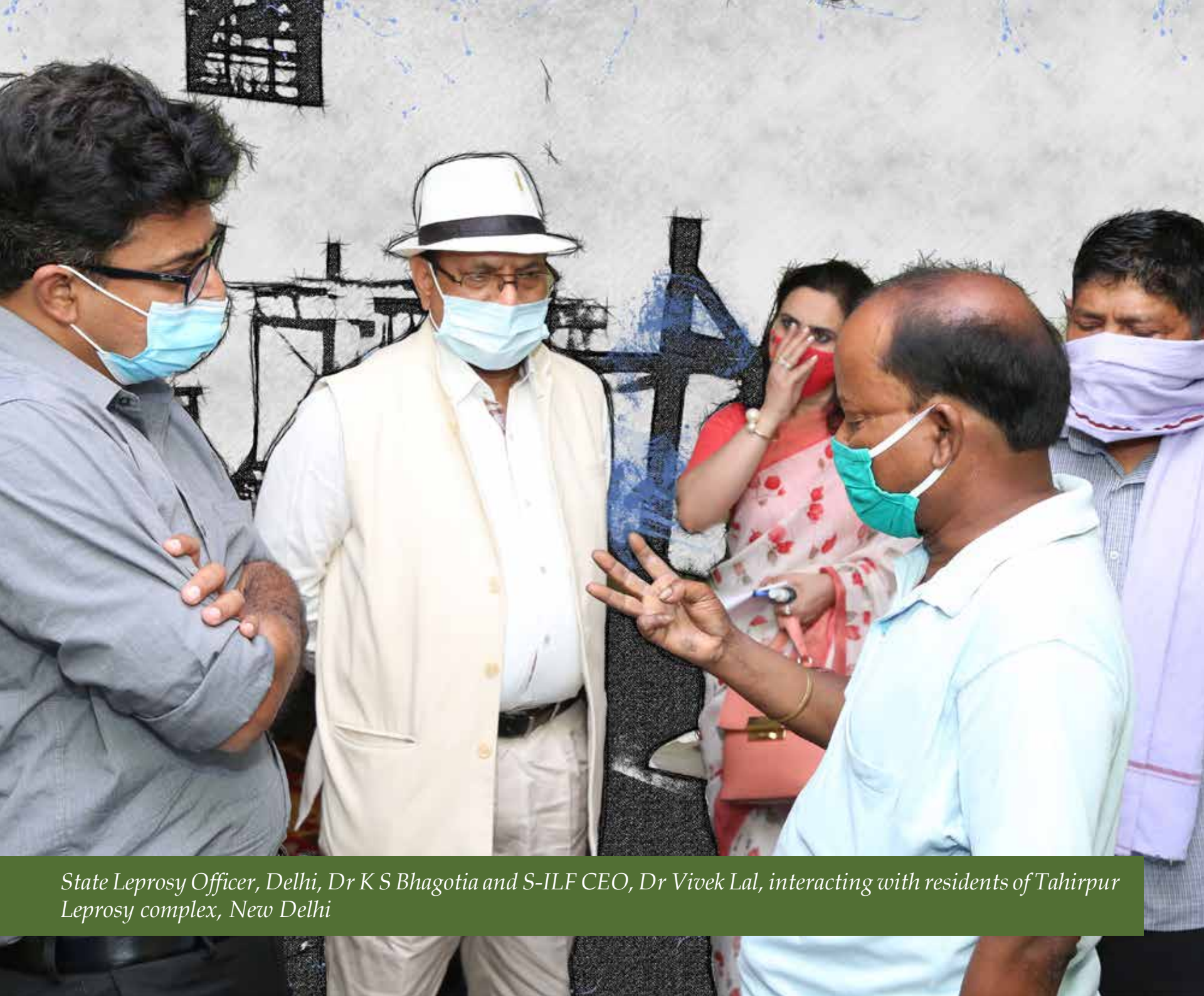
secured her admission in General Nursing Midwifery (GNM) at Sanjeevani School of Nursing, located in Dhar. With financial support from S-ILF combined with dedication and her father's positive attitude towards education, she overcame all the challenges.

She did well in her course and completed it in 2019. She started her first job with Bombay Hospital in Indore as staff nurse with a starting salary of Rs.12000/- per month. Recently she has got selected as staff nurse to Government Hospital in Reva, MP.

*She is immensely proud of being the first person from her village who is a part of the noble profession. Children and youth of her village look up to her as their role model. Ram kanya is able to contribute to her family's income. She believes that S-ILF has changed her life and she is very thankful to the organisation and its timely support.*







*State Leprosy Officer, Delhi, Dr K S Bhagotia and S-ILF CEO, Dr Vivek Lal, interacting with residents of Tahirpur Leprosy complex, New Delhi*

# Partnerships

## Together for the Cause

*We at S-ILF believe that the fight against leprosy cannot be waged alone or in silos. To end stigma and discrimination we have been working with allies to make every effort count- be it on the field for program implementation, at policy level or in spreading awareness. Our partners have been constant companions all these years. We would like to acknowledge those, without whom, this year would not have been as great.*

## Association of People Affected by Leprosy (APAL)

APAL is the national networking organization of persons affected by leprosy. Founded in 2006 with active encouragement and help from The Nippon Foundation, Japan, APAL is an essential part of Mr Sasakawa's vision of mainstreaming the affected population and their families to restore dignity. APAL provides a platform for persons affected by leprosy to discuss their issues and take up matters pertaining to their rights and entitlements at various levels of State and Central Government. To mention a few, issues pertaining to their land rights, pension, and specific schemes for disabled people, human rights issues, education and employment, housing, sanitation etc. Currently, the APAL head office is in Hyderabad and the leaders have respective state forums to address the issues of their communities.

*"Let us unite to end the agony associated with leprosy"*

*Leprosy brings psychological trauma which is often worse than physical pain. We realized that leprosy could break down the relationship among friends, between mother and children, wife and husband, brother and sister. Most of the persons affected by leprosy have endured loneliness due to separation from family and society; the world around us often appeared to us as two separate different entities- one world which comprised normal people and another which had people like us.*

*Leprosy is curable; what needs to be changed is the mindset of the society. I encourage everybody to support us by raising their voice against leprosy-related discrimination and stigma. Let us work towards living a dignified life in a just, equitable society.*



– Mr V. Narsappa, President, APAL





*Beneficiaries of S-ILF supported Poultry farming, Teesra Para leprosy colony, Champa, Chhattisgarh*



## Other Partners







## जरूरतमंदों को अनाज वितरण



अनाज लेने के लिए जुटी भीड़।

**इश्रिया।** इश्रिया कोपला अंचल में अंतरराष्ट्रीय संस्था सस कवला ने बनिपाहोर कुष्ठ कालोनियों में भूख एवं कुपोषण से बचने के लिए 22 लोगों एवं नई दुनिया के लोगों को 15 दिनों का अनाज वितरण किया गया। इश्रिया चार नंबर में 70 घरों में चावल, आटा, तेल, रिफाइन, आयु, प्याज, चीनी, चापती, बिस्कुट, नमक, दूध, साबुन, सेनेटाइजर एवं बांटा। मौके पर को-ऑर्डिनेटर रवेकत एवं स्टेट लीडर शैलेन कुमार यादव, समा जसेवी प्रेमचंदन वीर, अब्दुल हमीद साहू एवं इलखंड प्रदेश अध्यक्ष किशोर, नवीन, श्रवण तानी व रवि महतो थे।









Shaping her thoughts to the Fifth Circuit and how it will aid ASHA workers, Rakhi Sengul, chief secretary of the National Leprosy Eradication Program, says the government of India is determined in making India leprosy free. National Leprosy Eradication Programme is focusing on early and active case detection, case management, and providing complete treatment, prevention of physical disabilities and to help the community transcendence. ASHAs are the main front line workers in the community. They are the first responders to the people. They have been provided for ASHAs to cover every part of the regular screening rounds in the endemic areas. ASHA workers are an important key player for ASHA workers. For the community, "we

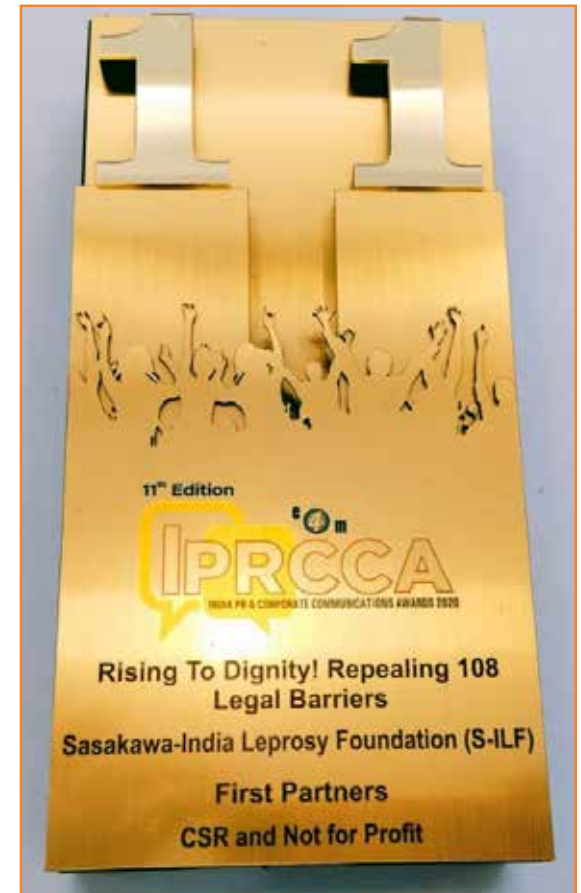
# Awards & Recognition

S-ILF in collaboration with First Partners have been the winners at the Exchange 4 Media (E4M) & India PR & Corporate Communications Awards (IPRCCA) 2020. The initiative won two Golds, one Silver and one Bronze in Not for Profit, Healthcare Providers, Issue management and Healthcare marketing categories respectively.

We won SABRE Gold for 'Not for profit campaign' and 'Certificate of Excellence in the Healthcare' categories and also won two Gold awards at Fulcrum Awards 2020 in the categories of "Best use of Community Relations" and Best use of Public affairs".

S-ILF's 'Rising to Dignity Awards' have been acknowledged for bringing about a

transformational change in the lives of persons affected by leprosy and their families. We received recognition for our advocacy with ministers followed by letter to Hon'ble Prime Minister for repealing discriminatory laws and a press release on 'Repealing 108 Legal Barriers'





# Engage with us

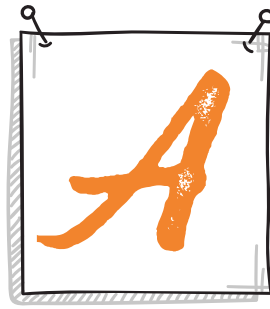
S-Ilf is committed to the socio-economic empowerment of persons affected by leprosy and their families residing in leprosy colonies. This is an important tool for combating stigma and discrimination against the disease.

There are various ways in which you could contribute to the cause.

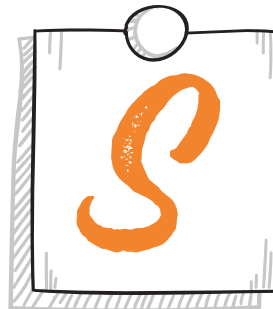
- a. Reduce vulnerability to poverty through support of sustainable livelihoods
- b. Support for higher professional education to children from families affected by leprosy
- c. Support for vocational training to youth
- d. Support for disability prevention activities such as ulcer care and provision of customized footwear
- e. Support for infrastructural development through improved access to quality water and sanitation
- f. Become an Ambassador for the cause- It's EASY



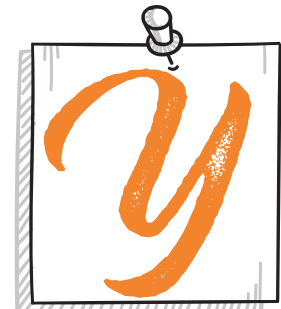
*End  
Discrimination-  
focus on abilities  
of affected  
individuals rather  
than disabilities*



*Acknowledge  
Persons  
affected by  
Leprosy as  
equal members  
of the society*



*Spread  
the word-  
'Leprosy  
is curable'*



*You can bring  
a significant  
change  
through  
partnership!*

# Team S-ILF



From Top (clock wise) in alphabetical order-  
Aftab Pasha, Charu Gaba, Darshan Singh,  
Ganesh Prasad, Gaurab Sen, Irudaya Kumar,  
Mohd Zaid, Nidhi Singh, Payal Gadhiok,  
Praveen Kumar, Rakesh Jha, Ramesh Pandey,  
Ram Autar, Rajni Sharma, Ruchira Shree,  
Sachin Patidar, Sujatha Krishnamachari,  
Tanzeel Khan, Tehseen Zaidi





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