

**International, UK based charity are playing vital role in the distribution of Multi Drug Therapy to the most vulnerable people in the world amidst global medication shortages during COVID-19 outbreak.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain shortages have become a global issue. This has been no different for those who rely on MDT to treat leprosy.

Those affected by leprosy are some of the world's most vulnerable people; segregated by their communities, abandoned by their families and neglected by governments across the world.

Lepra, and our sister organisation known as LEpra in India, works tirelessly to improve the lives of those most affected.

COVID-19 poses a unique risk to those affected by leprosy, as the world medical community shifts its focus to creating a vaccine and studying this newfound virus. Chronic illnesses, and their treatment, run the risk of being forgotten.

Rajni Kant Singh, LEpra's state coordinator for Bihar, the Indian state that regularly ranks lowest for Public Health conditions across India, says that MDT supply remains a serious issue during these epidemic conditions.

"There is a supply chain for medications and health facilities needs to prioritise stock levels during COVID-19. LEpra is managing and monitoring this particular chain at the request of the Indian government, but it is not always simple or easy. Our referral centres deliver MDT to people affected by leprosy."

One beneficiary, severely affected by the MDT supply chain thanked LEpra profusely for her life changing medication.

"I have not had medicine for the last 12 days, it has been so difficult. I feared I would never be cured of this disease, but now I have 3 months of medicine and now have nothing to fear."

During the crisis, the numbers of people attending outpatient clinics and seeking treatment for leprosy has decreased and the need for community champions and rural outreach programmes has increased.

There remains a very tangible link between those with leprosy, and their impaired immune function, and the likelihood of contracting COVID-19. By delivering MDT to people's communities and home and minimising the need for them to travel to clinics, many of these vulnerable, ill people are spared.