

15<sup>th</sup> August 2019

## **RAJNI KANT SINGH WINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE (NCPEDP) MPHASIS UNIVERSAL DESIGN AWARD**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2019, Rajni Kant Singh the Bihar State Coordinator, of LEPRA Society, won the Mphasis Universal Design Award at the India International Centre, New Dheli.

The award ceremony, hosted every year to honour individuals and organizations focused on bettering the lives of those living with disabilities, is in its tenth year. The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) estimates that between 70 and 100 million people are living with disabilities in India.

The NCPEDP award aims to highlight the extraordinary work of people trying to make the world a more accessible place. Several of the awards focus, not just on physical accessibility, but on technology, transport, information and support services. The recipients of the award aim to empower those suffering with disabilities with ground-breaking concepts and ideas.

Rajni developed several innovative appliances for people affected by leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, podoconiosis and diabetes.

His work on a 'Mobile Foot Care Unit' aimed to deliver protective footwear close to the patient's location, earned him the award designated for working professionals. The mobile units allow for those in the most remote areas to seek treatment and assistance.

The work Singh conducts within LEPRA Society largely focuses on helping those affected by the disease access life changing treatment and raise awareness of the curable disease. Trained as a physiotherapist originally, he has more than 25 years' experience with leprosy.

Ashim Chowla, chief executive of LEPRA Society India, commented: "This a proud moment for LEPRA and a fantastic step forwards to help those affected by leprosy and LF. Despite being curable, people affected by leprosy continue to be marginalised and isolated from their communities.

"This award is the first time an organisation working on leprosy has been recognised alongside the work of general disability organisations from across India."

Rajni has worked with leprosy patients for more than 20 years in his capacity as Bihar State Coordinator for Lepra. He has been instrumental in raising awareness for the disease and promoting the multi drug therapy, which can completely cure leprosy.

"The mobile foot care unit is something I developed in 2015, with the support of Pavers UK and their partnership with Lepra. We began with just one mobile foot care unit and now we have been able to expand this to three units in the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states.

"This mobile foot care unit provides almost 3000 specialised pairs of shoes for those disabled as a result of leprosy. The footwear prevents ulcers from recurring and improves patient's mobility."

India continues to account for 60% of new cases of leprosy reported globally and is considered a high burden country with a risk of rapid expansion of the disease.

Despite ongoing efforts to eradicate the disease, new evidence suggests that cases of leprosy are on the rise globally.

“This award has motivated and inspired us to work harder to improve the lives’ of those affected by leprosy.”

Lepra continues to support those in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique affected by leprosy through early identification, treatment and rehabilitation.

## ENDS

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## Notes for Editors

### About Lepra and leprosy

Lepra is a UK-based international specialist charity that has been working to beat leprosy since 1924. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of Lepra in 1952, shortly after the death of her father King George VI, who had been Lepra’s Patron since the charity was founded in 1924.

Leprosy affects over 7 million of the most vulnerable people in the world, causing life-changing disabilities and attracting terrible prejudice and discrimination. **But there is a cure.**

Lepra works to beat leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique by finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by the disease. By raising awareness, pushing for early detection and supporting people living with disabilities caused by leprosy, Lepra works towards a day when this disease no longer destroys lives.

Last year, the charity reached 301,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and care. It reached a further 1.7 million people through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases.

Find out more about Lepra on its website and social media channels:

Website: [www.lepra.org.uk](http://www.lepra.org.uk)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LepraUK>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LEPRAUK/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LEPRAHinA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/LepraUK/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lepra/>