The Experience of Leprosy Affected People in Inclusive Self Help Group

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Changing concept of leprosy rehabilitation

• Rehabilitation of Leprosy Affected People has taken a shift from SER to CBR

• Rehabilitation of leprosy affected people is included in most CBR projects and leprosy services are open to people with other disability
CBR as inclusive development

• CBR is a strategy for disability inclusive development
• Self-help groups are one important component of CBR
• SHGs facilitate inclusion and development of persons affected by leprosy and disability
CBR and inclusive SHGs

• SHGs are becoming more inclusive of all types of persons with disability, leprosy and non-disabled people

• Leprosy only SHGs may increase stigma and support exclusion from the rest of the community
BIKASH Nepal’s work with SHGs

Combination

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leprosy affected persons</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persons with disability</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons without leprosy and disability</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total members</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>Total groups</td>
<td>5</td>
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Main support provided

- Group management training
- Book keeping, maintaining ledgers and pass books
- Micro business
- Rights and advocacy
- 1 month CBR for each group leader (all leprosy affected)
Results from FGD with the groups

• All persons affected by leprosy, disability and non-disabled people were happy in the group
• No stigma or discrimination were found in the group
• Leprosy affected people felt supported and respected in the group
• Self esteem of leprosy affected people increased
Testimony

• “I am happy to be in this group, the group members do not treat me like I have leprosy. They ask me not to drink alcohol and check if I am drinking. I feel like I am valued in this group”

• Male 50, Rupandehi
Testimony - 2

“ I am currently having medicine. Even after knowing that I am leprosy affected the members chose me as the chairperson of the group. The members keep me reminding me that I am taking medicine regularly. I feel like I am respected and valued in the group and do not think that I am a leprosy affected person.”
• Non-disabled members of the group also think that leprosy is not the only problem in the community. They all have one or more problems and this type of group can help to collectively work to address their problem.
Conclusion

• Inclusive SHGs are a source of social support and increase the self-esteem of leprosy affected people.
• It helps to include the issues of leprosy affected people in the mainstream disability rights movement.
• It increases the participation of leprosy affected people in decision making.
• The issues of leprosy affected persons should be well considered in CBR
• Awareness and capacity building about leprosy within CBR is essential.
QUESTIONS

COMMENTS