

Nilayam Report

TO THE EDITOR:

May I take pleasure in sending you our report for 1984–1985 with which is incorporated an account of the visit of the Vice-President of India to our Nilayam on 24 February 1985, and the messages received for the occasion? There is also a section giving the growth of the Nilayam year by year.

It will be observed that the total number of cases in the area and the number of new cases has been greatly reduced. Deformity is a thing of the past, except for the few old cases who have established deformity. It is important, however, to avoid complacency and to work hard and proceed with our costly multidrug therapy for another five to ten years, so that we may completely eradicate leprosy. It will also be observed that in the meanwhile we are developing eye work, dental work, and primary health care and training our boys and girls with leprosy as well as those without leprosy in spinning, weaving, and other occupations. The attempt is twofold: 1) to push the process of leprosy control in which we have had notable success to the point of complete eradication, and 2) to develop side by side other health and development work, so that in time the Nilayam will serve the larger pur-

poses of rural health and development, and thereby fulfill the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi.

We have still, on an average, some 70 to 80 inpatients, of whom nearly 50 are on a long-term basis, for most of whom we have the responsibility of taking care on a permanent basis. Cure of leprosy patients is one thing, care of leprosy patients is another. Long after we have cured all leprosy patients and killed the last leprosy bacillus, there will still be a need to care for quite a number of patients, especially those with foot ulcers, eye damage, deformity, destitution, etc. Though we have had the very clear central objective of eradicating leprosy, we have right from the beginning placed an equal emphasis on the human side of the problem and the care of those who have been disabled or who have been rejected by society.

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