

History

WORLD LEPROSY DAY

2022 Theme - United for Dignity

A Tribute to the Crusader of Leprosy
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

His role in Leprosy disease...

- Since his childhood Gandhi ji witnessed the social stigma from the society and the sufferings of people affected by leprosy.
- During his stay at South Africa as lawyer, one day while Gandhi ji was addressing a gathering on the occasion of the founding of Indian Congress, he noticed few lepers, who had lost their fingers and some their toes standing at a distance listening to him intently. On inquiry, Gandhi ji was shocked to hear that they have no one to take care of them. Hence, he came forward and cleaned their wounds, gave them food and medicines.
- While he was locked up in Yerwada Jail at Pune in 1932, Gandhi ji came to know about Parchure Shastri who was a great Sanskrit scholar, was also arrested along with the others in satyagraha campaign. Since Parchure had leprosy, he was kept in separate section in the jail and not treated properly. When Gandhi heard about this, he wanted to meet Parchure but was refused by the jail superintendent.
- Therefore, Gandhi ji wrote a letter to him, arranged cotton wool to clean his wounds and gave some books to read, which really acted as an encouragement for Parchure.
- After being released from prison, Parchure was taken care by Gandhi and he personally nursed his wounds and supervised his diet at Sevagram Ashram
- Gandhi ji also established a relief centre at Dattapur near Wardha, where many hundreds of lepers led an ashram life with rehabilitation and psychological support.
- Likewise, there are many such incidents throughout Gandhi ji's life, which showed his compassion and tenderness towards leprosy patients.
- Moreover, Gandhi ji wanted to eliminate leprosy. But regretfully said, "Eliminating leprosy is the only work I have not been able to complete in my lifetime."



- As Gandhi's dedication towards leprosy inspired the French humanitarian Raoul Follereau, he declared last Sunday of January to be dedicated as a World Leprosy Day all over the world to create public awareness about leprosy.
- Whereas in India, Mr. Follereau wanted to pay homage to the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Hence, he announced Gandhi ji's death day of 30th January as "Anti Leprosy Day".

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Did you Know

25th April 1953 is celebrated as World DNA day to commemorate the discovery of chemical structure of DNA by British molecular biologists James Watson and Francis Crick. It was on this day that the Human Genome was sequenced for the first time. Since then we have come a long way, unravelling interesting facts about our DNA.

- Around 99% of the DNA in all humans is identical and we share 96% of our DNA with primates such as gorillas, chimpanzees, and orangutans. Additionally, 5 to 8% of our DNA is from retroviruses.
- There are three billion base pairs of DNA in the Human Genome
- Rarely a person may have two completely different DNA profiles (chimera)
- Octopus can naturally edit their genes but humans cannot. Scientist have developed complex protein-based tool which can alter defective embryos.
- In addition to the double helix structure of DNA, a four stranded knot of DNA, known as I motif, is another form of DNA.
- Fully digitised DNA sequences of prominent personalities have been stored at the International Space Station in an Immortality Drive.

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