

AIDS and India [UPSC Notes for GS I]

AIDS and India

Context

- India has achieved significant progress in containing the AIDS epidemic.
- The stigma faced by HIV positive patients is a relevant social issue

Background

- According to a World Bank report India witnessed a decline of HIV prevalence among homosexual men from 7.41 per cent in 2007 to 4.43 per cent in 2011.
- UNAIDS is working towards ensuring that, by 2020, 30 million people have access to treatment through meeting the 90–90–90 targets, whereby 90% of people living with HIV know their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV-positive status are accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment have suppressed viral loads.
- National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), implemented by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the nodal programme for AIDS prevention, treatment and awareness generation. India is committed to achieving the 90-90-90 targets of UNAIDS.
- India has also declared recently its intention to provide free secondary treatment to all patients who require it.
- Even when only 0.27 % national prevalence is reported, vast regional disparities remain.
- As per the India HIV Estimation 2017 report, by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare, Manipur has the highest estimated adult HIV prevalence of 1.22 per cent, followed by Andhra Pradesh with 0.75 per cent.
- Also, among the 2.1 million people living with HIV/AIDS about half of them are children
- As many as 116,000 new HIV infections among adults and around 14,500 new infections among children occurred in 2011.

Way forward

- Region and state wise plans must be evolved to tackle the spread of new infections.
- New policies for AIDS infected children must be integrated with Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Anganwadi infrastructure and ASHA workers must be given special training.
- Drug users must be shown compassion by the law enforcement agencies and the Police must coordinate with the medical community to ensure that unsafe use of needles by drug addicts is checked.
- Due to the stigma faced by sex workers they are not able to get access to health counsellors, medical clinics, etc. There must be a comprehensive policy to tackle this.
- National Aids Control Programme (NACP) Phase IV aims to reduce new infections by 50 per cent and also provide comprehensive care, support and treatment to all persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS sets world on the Fast-Track to end the epidemic by 2030. India must ensure achieving its targets through sustained focused campaign with renewed vigour.

