

National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Elimination of Malaria: Noted for UPSC

National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Elimination of Malaria (2017-2022) was launched by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare. India has set its goal to totally eliminate Malaria by 2027 three years ahead of 2024 which is the global deadline for elimination of Malaria. It is designed on the basis of National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016 formulated with the support of World Health Organization's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria (2016-2030).

The plan is one of many government schemes initiated by the Government of India for the welfare of the population.

Why is NSP for Elimination of Malaria needed?

Malaria is a vector borne disease caused by pathogens (parasitic protozoan of Plasmodium type) in the human population, mostly transmitted by an infected female Anopheles mosquito. India accounts for 89% of incidence of Malaria in the South-East Asian region as per the World Malaria Report 2016, the burden being heaviest in the African region.

It has the third highest Malaria cases in the world. The majority districts that report Malaria in India are the Eastern and Central regions. Six states: Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha report majority of Malaria cases in ascending order of incidence. The six states and tribal areas of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra sum up to 90% of Malaria burden in the country. Due to the high number of fatalities associated with the disease it is imperative that a National Strategy to tackle be in place.

To know more about Lymphatic Filariasis, another mosquito-transmitted vector, visit the linked article

What are the specific objectives of NSP?

The objectives of the National Strategic Plan for Elimination of Malaria are as follows:

- Achieve universal coverage of case detection and treatment services in endemic districts to ensure 100% parasitological diagnosis of all malaria cases and complete treatment of all confirmed cases.
- Improve the surveillance system to detect, notify, investigate, classify and respond to all cases in all districts to move towards total malaria elimination.
- Achieve near universal coverage of the population at risk of malaria with an appropriate vector control intervention.

- Strive for near universal coverage of population at risk of malaria with an appropriate vector control intervention
- Provide for an effective programme management and coordination at all levels to deliver a combination of targeted interventions for malaria elimination.

Features of the National Strategic Plan for Elimination of Malaria

- It is a year-wise detailed strategy with operational guidelines to each state for elimination of Malaria.
- The goal is to achieve universal detection of cases, 100% diagnosis of suspected cases and provide adequate treatment services in Malaria endemic districts.
- It aims to preserve a “Malaria-free” status in the areas where there has been an interruption in the transmission.
- The districts are categorized based on the Annual Parasite Incidence (API) with a plan to totally eliminate indigenous Malaria cases in category 1 (API < 1 per 1000 population) & category 2 (API > 1 < 2 per 1000 population) districts and to bring category 3 districts (API > 2 per 1000 population) under pre-elimination & elimination programme by the year 2022.
- Funds will be managed from government sources, Corporate Social Responsibility of the corporate sector and from international donations.

The National Strategic Plan is one of its kind in the efforts to eliminate Malaria and such a road map with breakup of targets has been formulated by the Union Health Ministry for the first time. Though meeting the 2027 targets for elimination of malaria is an uphill task, strong political & administrative commitment and a focused approach can help in meeting the targets.

UPSC questions related to National Strategic Plan for Elimination of Malaria

Why was NSP for elimination for Malaria needed?

Although malaria was once nearly eradicated in India, it came back with a vengeance in the 1970s. In 2009, India's public health system reported around 1.5 million malaria cases. About half of them were caused by the deadly *P. falciparum* parasite. At one point it even turned India into a malarial hotspot. Thus there was a need for a national plan to eliminate the disease.

Can Malaria be eliminated?

Malaria had largely been eliminated from the United States, Europe, and parts of Latin America and Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, however, the disease saw a resurgence in these regions as drug- and insecticide-resistant strains of the parasite spread and funding for treatment and research dried up.

Which country is Malaria-free?

Algeria and Argentina certified malaria-free by WHO. Algeria and Argentina have been officially recognized by WHO as malaria-free. The certification is granted when a country proves that it has interrupted indigenous transmission of the disease for at least 3 consecutive years.