

3. Enhanced Outreach on HIV/AIDS Prevention

Prelims: Governance, Health, Diseases

Mains: GS-II- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) for enhanced HIV/AIDS outreach.

Highlights:

- ▶▶ The MoU signing took place between the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE).
- ▶▶ The objective is to reduce the incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse and Children and People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- ▶▶ The MoU will help in developing specific strategies and action plans for HIV and AIDS prevention and mechanisms for drug addiction treatment and extending social protection schemes to the vulnerable populations.

India's current situation of HIV/AIDS:

- ▶▶ The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) is a division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that provides leadership to HIV/AIDS control programme in India through 35 HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Societies.
- ▶▶ NACO has played a very big role in significantly reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country and that too faster than the global rates.
- ▶▶ More than 80% decline in estimated new infections from the peak of epidemic in 1995.
- ▶▶ Estimated AIDS-related deaths declined by 71% since its peak in 2005.
- ▶▶ As per the UNAIDS 2018 report, the global average for the decline in new infections and AIDS-related deaths from peak has been 47% and 51% respectively.

Antiretroviral Therapy:

- ▶▶ With neither a vaccine nor a cure in sight, Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) is the only option available for people living with HIV-AIDS.

- ▶▶ HIV is a type of virus called a retrovirus, and the combination of drugs used to treat it is called Antiretroviral Therapy (ART).
- ▶▶ According to the World Health Organization, standard ART consists of a combination of at least three antiretroviral drugs to suppress the HIV virus and stop the progression of the disease.
- ▶▶ Significant reductions have been seen in rates of death and suffering by the use of potent ART regimen, particularly in the early stages of the disease.

India's Role in the Global Fight against AIDS:

- ▶▶ There are 2 million new AIDS infections every year, and about 66% of the world population currently on antiretroviral therapy consumes drugs manufactured in India.
- ▶▶ Globally, the ART market is valued at .48 billion (in 2018) and is expected to reach .83 billion by 2025.
- ▶▶ Thus, Indian pharmaceutical companies, with their ability to manufacture high-quality, affordable medicines are very important in the global battle against AIDS.

