



Ayush Regional Review Meeting | Bihar | 19 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Union Minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, stressed the importance of holistic healthcare on a global scale during **Regional Review Meeting** of six states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh, which was arranged by the **Ministry of Ayush** in Patna, Bihar.

Key Points

- The Ministry of Ayush is actively supporting state and union territory governments in implementing various initiatives outlined in their **State Annual Action Plans (SAAPs)** under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the **National Ayush Mission (NAM)**.
 - With the vision of providing Ayush healthcare services across the country, the **NAM aims to strengthen and enhance Ayush healthcare facilities**, empowering the public with informed choices.
- The Ministry of Ayush has **allocated Rs 1712.54 Crores to seven states**—Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal—under the NAM.
 - It also supported the establishment of **58 Integrated Ayush hospitals**, with 14 already operational.
 - Out of the planned 12,500 Ayush Health and Wellness Centres (AHWCs), 4235 have been supported, with 3439 already functional in these states.
- The states were **urged to accelerate the construction of Ayush Educational Institutes** and integrated Ayush hospitals.
- The importance of implementing Ayush public health programs outlined in the NAM guidelines, focusing on various interventions for a holistic approach to health was highlighted.
- States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh were specifically encouraged to undertake the National Program on Ayush for **Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP) of Lymphatic Filariasis**.

National Ayush Mission (NAM)

- It was **launched in September 2014** by the **Department of AYUSH** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, during the 12th Plan for implementation through States/UTs.
 - Now, it is implemented by the **Ministry of Ayush**.
- The scheme involves **expansion of the AYUSH sector** to promote holistic health of Indians.
- The Mission addresses the gaps in health services through **supporting the efforts of State/UT Governments for providing AYUSH health services/education in the country**, particularly in vulnerable and far-flung areas.

Lymphatic Filariasis (LF)

- LF, commonly known as **elephantiasis** and is considered as a **Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD)**. It is the second most disabling disease after mental health.
- It **impairs the lymphatic system** and can lead to the **abnormal enlargement of body parts**, causing pain, severe disability and social stigma.
 - The lymphatic system is a network of vessels and specialized tissues that are essential to maintaining the overall fluid balance and health of organs and limbs and, importantly, are a

major component of the body's immune defense system.

- Lymphatic filariasis is a **vector-borne disease**, caused by infection with parasites **classified as nematodes (roundworms)** of the family Filarioidea. There are **3 types** of thread-like filarial worms which causes lymphatic filariasis:
 - **Wuchereria Bancrofti** is responsible for 90% of the cases.
 - **Brugia Malayi** causes most of the remainder of the cases.
 - **Brugia Timori** also causes the disease.
- **Drug Treatment:**
 - The **World Health Organization (WHO)** recommends **three drug treatments** to accelerate the **global elimination of lymphatic filariasis**.
 - The treatment, **known as IDA**, involves a combination of ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine citrate and albendazole.
 - The plan is to administer these drugs for two consecutive years. The life of the adult worm is hardly four years, so it would die a natural death without causing any harm to the person.
- **Scenario in India:**
 - Lymphatic filariasis poses a grave threat to India. An **estimated 650 million Indians across 21 states and union territories are at risk** of lymphatic filariasis.
 - **Over 40% of worldwide cases** are found in India.
 - The government launched the **Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF) in 2018**, and as part of intensifying efforts towards elimination, **later rolled out IDA treatment (triple drug therapy)** in a phased manner.

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