



Leprosy

Why in news?

For months there has been an acute shortage of the key drug named Clofazimine which is used in Leprosy treatment in the private market.

- Clofazimine, along with Rifampicin and Dapsone, is **one of the three essential drugs in the [Multi-Drug Treatment of Multibacillary Leprosy \(MB-MDT\)](#)** cases.

What do we Know about Leprosy?

▪ About:

- **Leprosy** is a **chronic, progressive bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae***. It **primarily affects the nerves of the extremities, the skin, the lining of the nose, and the upper respiratory tract**. Leprosy is also known as **Hansen's disease**.
- It produces skin ulcers, nerve damage, and muscle weakness. If it isn't treated, it can cause severe disfigurement and significant disability.
- It is one of the oldest diseases in recorded history.
- It is common in many countries, especially those with tropical or subtropical climates including India.

▪ Prevalence of Disease:

- The **[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)** reports that leprosy is **endemic in several Indian states and union territories**, with an **annual case detection rate of 4.56 per 10,000 population**.
- **India reports more than 1,25,000 new patients of leprosy every year.**

What are Related Government Initiatives?

▪ National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP):

- It is a **[Centrally Sponsored Scheme](#)** under the umbrella of **[National Health Mission \(NHM\)](#)**.
- India has achieved the **elimination of leprosy as a public health problem** i.e., defined as less than 1 case per 10,000 populations, at the National level.
- The NLEP aims at **eliminating leprosy in each of the districts by 2030**.

- In 2017, **[SPARSH Leprosy Awareness Campaign](#)** was launched to promote awareness and address the issues of stigma and discrimination.

[Source: TH](#)

