



World AIDS Day

For Prelims: World AIDS Day, AIDS, HIV

For Mains: Status of AIDS Globally and Nationally, AIDS, HIV, Related Initiatives

Why in News?

World AIDS Day is observed on **1st December every year** all over the world to spread awareness about the disease and remember all those who lost their lives to it.

Why is World AIDS Day Celebrated?

- **About:**
 - It was founded in 1988 by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and was the **first ever global health** day with a motto of raising public awareness about [Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome \(AIDS\)](#).
- **Theme for 2022:**
 - 'Equalize'.
 - It encourages people to unite globally to eliminate the disparities and inequities that create barriers to HIV testing, prevention, and access to HIV care.'
- **Significance:**
 - The very day reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away and there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.
 - It is an opportunity to show solidarity with the millions of people living with HIV worldwide.

What is AIDS Disease?

- **About:**
 - **AIDS** is a chronic, potentially life-threatening health condition caused by the **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** that interferes with the body's ability to fight infections.
 - HIV attacks **CD4, a type of White Blood Cell (T cells)** in the body's immune system.
 - T cells are those cells that **move around the body detecting anomalies and infections** in cells.
 - After entering the body, HIV multiplies itself and destroys CD4 cells, thus severely damaging the human immune system. Once this virus enters the body, it can never be removed.
 - The CD4 count of a person infected with HIV reduces significantly. In a healthy body, CD4 count is between 500- 1600, but in an infected body, it can go as low as 200.
- **Transmission:**
 - HIV can spread through **multiple sources**, by coming in direct contact with certain **body fluids** from a person infected with HIV, who has a detectable viral load. It can be blood, semen, rectal fluid, vaginal fluid or breast milk.
- **Symptoms:**

- Once HIV converts into AIDS then it may **present in initial symptoms like unexplained fatigue, fever, sores around genitals or neck, pneumonia etc.**
- **Prevention:**
 - Make sure to use protective techniques.
 - Make sure to avoid using contaminated needles.
 - Prevent mother to child transmission.
 - If someone is aware of the infection in their body, make sure they are on the right treatment path.
 - Opt for the set of pre-marital tests before marriage which includes an HIV test and helps to ensure safety from other **Sexually Transmitted Diseases** as well.

What is the Global & National Status of AIDS?

- **Global:**
 - According to the Joint **United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**, as of 2021, 38.4 million people were living with HIV, out of which 1.7 million were children.
 - 54% of all people living with HIV were women and girls.
 - 85% of all people living with HIV knew their HIV status in 2021.
 - In 2021, 6,50,000 people died of AIDS-related diseases.
- **National:**
 - According to UNAIDS, an estimated 2.4 million people were living with HIV in India in 2021 (including 70,000 children).
 - **Maharashtra** had the maximum numbers followed by **Andhra Pradesh** and **Karnataka**.

What are India's Initiatives to Curb AIDS Disease?

- **HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017:** According to this act, the central and state governments shall take measures to prevent the spread of HIV or AIDS.
- **Access to ART:**
 - India has made **Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)** affordable and accessible to over 90 per cent of people living with HIV in the world.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):**
 - The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** signed a MoU with the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** in 2019 for enhanced HIV/AIDS outreach and to reduce the incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse and Children and People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- **Project Sunrise:**
 - **Project Sunrise** was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, to tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.

Source: IE