



Elimination of Malaria in India

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In News: India has achieved a **major public health milestone**, recording an **over 80% reduction in malaria cases and deaths between 2015 and 2023**.

What is Malaria Elimination?

- **Malaria Elimination:** Interruption of **local transmission**, resulting in **zero indigenous malaria cases** in a defined geographic area.
- **Different from Eradication:** Eradication implies **permanent global elimination** of malaria, which has not yet been achieved.

Key Trends in Malaria in India

1. Sharp Decline in Disease Burden

- **Cases:** Reduced from **11.69 lakh (2015)** to **~2.27 lakh (2023)** - **80.5% decline**
- **Deaths:** Fell by **78.3%**, reaching an all-time low of **83 deaths in 2023**

2. Strengthened Surveillance

- **Annual Blood Examination Rate (ABER):** Increased from **9.58 (2015)** to **11.62 (2023)**
- Indicates **expanded testing and surveillance**, even as cases declined.

3. Changing Parasite Profile

- **Plasmodium vivax** now causes **~40% of cases**
- Poses challenges due to **dormant liver stages (hypnozoites)** causing relapses.

4. Geographic Concentration

- Over **85% of malaria cases** are concentrated in:
- Odisha
- Chhattisgarh
- Jharkhand
- West Bengal
- These are largely **tribal, forested, and hard-to-reach areas**.

Initiatives for Malaria Elimination

National Initiatives

1. National Framework for Malaria Elimination (2016–2030)

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- Categorises states into **four groups** based on transmission intensity.
- Enables **tailored, state-specific strategies**.

2. National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2023–2027)

- Target: **Zero indigenous cases by 2027**.
- Focus on “**3Ts**” Strategy:
 - **Test**
 - **Treat**
 - **Track**

3. Integrated Vector Management (IVM)

- Large-scale distribution of:
- **Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs)**
- **Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS)**
- Emphasis on **tribal and forest regions**.

4. MERA India

- **Malaria Elimination Research Alliance** (ICMR-led).
- Promotes **operational research, innovation, and evidence-based policy**.

Global Initiatives

- **WHO Global Technical Strategy (GTS)**: Target: **90% reduction in malaria incidence and mortality by 2030**.
- **WHO E-2025 Initiative**: Supports countries with the potential to eliminate malaria by 2025.
- **Malaria Vaccines: RTS,S and R21** vaccines rolled out in Africa, strengthening global prevention efforts.