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National AIDS Control Programme

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Why is in news? Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel inaugurates the review meeting of the National AIDS Control Program with Project Directors of State AIDS Control Societies at Agra, UP

The meeting is aimed to be part of the Sustainable Development Goal of ending HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

The **National AIDS and STD Control Program (NACP)** is currently in its **fifth phase** with an **aim to reduce new HIV infections as well as AIDS related mortality and** also to eliminate the stigma related to HIV/AIDS in the society.

Some steps being implemented like National AIDS toll-free helpline, lifetime free ART services, free lifelong antiretroviral (ARV) medicines for people living with HIV, free adherence counseling, diagnostic and monitoring services like baseline laboratory investigations, CD4 count testing, and regular viral load monitoring for PLHIV.

About the programme:

The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP), **launched in 1992**, is being implemented as a comprehensive programme for **prevention and control of HIV/ AIDS** in India.

Over time, the focus has shifted from raising awareness to behaviour change, from a national response to a more decentralized response and to increasing involvement of NGOs and networks of People living with HIV (PLHIV).

The **NACP I** started in 1992 was implemented with an objective of slowing down the spread of HIV infections so as to reduce morbidity, mortality and impact of AIDS in the country.

In November 1999, the second National AIDS Control Project (**NACP II**) was launched to reduce the spread of HIV infection in India, and (ii) to increase India's capacity to respond to HIV/AIDS on a long-term basis.

NACP III was launched in July 2007 with the goal of Halting and Reversing the Epidemic over its five-year period.

NACP IV, launched in 2012, aims to accelerate the process of reversal and further strengthen the epidemic response in India through a cautious and well defined integration process over the next five years.

NACP V is a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Government of India.

About AIDS:

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a **chronic, potentially life-threatening condition** caused by the Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

By **damaging the immune system**, HIV interferes with the body's ability to fight infection and disease.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

HIV is a **sexually transmitted infection** (STI). It can also be spread by contact with infected blood or from mother to child during pregnancy, childbirth or breast-feeding.

Without medication, it may take years before HIV weakens your immune system to the point that you have AIDS.

There's **no cure for HIV/AIDS**, but **medications can dramatically slow the progression** of the disease.

The main factors which have contributed to India's large HIV-infected population are extensive labour migration and low literacy levels in certain rural areas resulting in a lack of awareness and in gender disparities.

The Government of India has also raised concerns about the role of intravenous drug use and prostitution in spreading AIDS.

In India, populations which are at a higher risk of HIV are female sex workers, men who have sex with men, injecting drug users, and transgender.