

Role of NACO in fighting HIV

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In news

Many gains in fighting HIV

Key highlights

- It has been released by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)/Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the technical support of UNAIDS
- As per this estimation there has been a **66.1% reduction in new HIV infections among children and a 65.3% reduction in AIDS-related deaths** in India over a nine-year period
- The number of pregnant women living with HIV has reduced from 31,000 in 2010 to 20,000 in 2019.
- Overall, antenatal coverage has expanded, and HIV testing has increased over time and within target range. Treatment coverage has also expanded.
- **From 2010 to 2019, India made important progress in reducing the HIV impact on children through prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.**
- This was done through education and communication programmes; increased access to HIV services with innovative delivery mechanisms for HIV testing (community-based testing, partner testing or index testing); counselling and care; and treatment and follow-ups.
- **India made HIV testing for all pregnant women free and HIV treatment is offered the same way nationwide** without cost to pregnant mothers living with HIV through the national '**treat all**' policy.
- Even UNICEF has worked with WHO and NACO to identify high burden districts with respect to pregnant women living with HIV

'Fast-Tracking of EMTCT (elimination of mother-to-child transmission) strategy-cum-action plan

- It was outlined by NACO by 2019 in the run-up towards December 2020: the deadline to achieve EMTCT
- The plan entailed mobilisation and reinforcement of all national, State and partners' collective efforts – in a strategic manner, with district-level focus, and considering latest evidence – so that the States/Union Territories and the country as a whole achieve the EMTCT goal

Since 2002, when the EMTCT of HIV programmes or prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV were launched in India, a series of policy, programmatic and implementation strategies were rolled out so that all pregnant women can access free HIV testing along with other services at antenatal clinics, and free treatment regimens for life to prevent HIV transmission from mothers to babies.

However, there remains a need for increased treatment saturation coverage and for early HIV testing and treatment initiation to become the normal