



OneHealth Approach

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Why in News

Recently, to deal with zoonotic diseases, a need to operationalize “OneHealth’ policy in India was highlighted.

Presently, India is dealing with **coronavirus (COVID-19)**. The virus appears to have its origin in bats.

OneHealth

- OneHealth is an **approach** to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which **multiple sectors communicate** and work together to achieve **better public health outcomes**.
- The **areas of work** in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include **food safety**, the **control of zoonotic diseases** (diseases that can spread between animals and humans, such as flu, rabies and Rift Valley Fever), and **combating antibiotic resistance** (when bacteria change after being exposed to antibiotics and become more difficult to treat).
- Although OneHealth, as a conceptual entity, emerged relatively recently, a stellar example of OneHealth being operationalised in the field was seen in India in the late 1950s.

Zoonotic Diseases

- The diseases, which “**spillover**” from animals to humans are referred to as zoonotic diseases
- They represent more than **60% of emerging infectious diseases** worldwide.
- The destruction of the natural environment, globalised trade and travel and industrialised food production systems have created numerous pathways for new pathogens to jump between animals and humans.

India and OneHealth Approach

- In the 1950s, the OneHealth approach helped discover the source of **Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)**, a highly dangerous haemorrhagic fever more threatening than COVID-19.

This was the result of working of several organizations such as the Virus Research Centre (now known as the National Institute of Virology), Pune, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Bombay Natural History Society.
- In **2018**, Kerala reacted quickly and efficiently to tackle the **Nipah virus outbreak** and successfully managed to confine it to 23 cases.

This success is credited to the strong public health infrastructure and the political will to quickly seek help from a multidisciplinary team of national and international experts.
- One of the components of the **National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-being** explicitly links biodiversity to human health through the OneHealth framework. However, the regulatory framework for doing OneHealth research in India with international collaboration typically requires **approvals from multiple authorities**. This hampers the country's ability to rapidly respond to emerging threats from infectious diseases.

National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-being

The mission aims to explore the neglected links between biodiversity science and human well-being across the sectors of health, economic development, agricultural production and livelihood generation, in combination with efforts to mitigate climate change and related disasters.

Way Forward

- The frequency with which new pathogens are emerging or old ones are re-emerging across the world are alarm calls for greater transparency, cross-country collaborations, and enhanced national infrastructure and capacity for integrated OneHealth science.
- India needs to leap-frog over the systemic and institutional barriers that prevent an integrated OneHealth framework from being operationalised.
- The OneHealth framework will help government and private institutions, across a range of disciplines, in collaborating to understand how zoonotic diseases can emerge, the threats they can pose, and the mechanisms by which the emergence or spread can be controlled.

Source:TH