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## Cassia occidentalis Plant and AES

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**No child deaths** due to Japanese Encephalitis (**JE**) and **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)** have been reported in **Malkangiri** (Odisha) since the year **2017**. This is the result of precautionary measures taken by the Odisha government.

- In the year 2016, **at least 103 children died** due to JE and AES outbreak in the district.
- A majority of them had developed AES **after consuming Cassia occidentalis beans** locally known as '**bada chakunda**'.
  - **Anthraquinone**, a toxin found in the plant, was responsible for causing encephalopathy among the children in the district.
  - **C. occidentalis grows** throughout the tropical and subtropical **United States, Africa, Asia and Australia**. It is a common **weed** found throughout the **India**.
- A major preventive measure taken by the government against AES is regular clearing of bushes of Cassia occidentalis plants and motivating tribals not to let their children eat beans of the plant.
- **Vaccination** against JE and AES has been **included in the immunisation programme** for children throughout Odisha and children are being vaccinated against the same at nine months and 18 months.