WHO’s Self Care Guidelines

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched its first guidelines on self-care interventions for health.

- Self-care intervention guidelines are based on scientific evidence for the health benefits of certain interventions that can be done outside the conventional sector.
- Self-care intervention guidelines are not intended to replace high-quality health services nor are they a shortcut to achieving universal health coverage.

Self-Care

- As per WHO “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider”.
- Self-care interventions have a unique potential in reducing inefficiencies in health expenditure, improving the quality of health coverage and increasing the agency and autonomy of even the most vulnerable populations to make informed decisions about their health.

- **Self Care Intervention Guidelines**: in its first volume, the guidelines focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights. Some of the interventions include:
  - Self-sampling for human papillomavirus (HPV) and sexually transmitted infections.
  - Self-injectable contraceptives.
  - Home-based ovulation predictor kits.
  - Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) self-testing and self-management of medical abortion.

Need

- Guidelines are a response to an estimate that by 2035 the world will face a shortage of nearly 13 million healthcare workers and presently at least 400 million people worldwide lack access to the most essential health services.
- According to WHO in the near future, 1 in 5 of the world’s population will be living in settings that are experiencing humanitarian crises (series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well being of a community or large group of people) hence self care interventions guidelines will act as the first line of defense and will prevent health crisis.

Significance

- **Autonomy and timely intervention**: Self-care interventions represent a significant push towards new and greater self-efficacy, autonomy and engagement in health for self-carers and caregivers.
- **Accessibility**: It could expand access to health services, including for vulnerable populations.
- **Right to health**: People will be able to access, control, and have affordable options to manage their health and well-being.
• **Equality**: Self-care is also a means for people who are negatively affected by **gender, political, cultural and power dynamics**, including those who are forcibly displaced, to have access to sexual and reproductive health services, as many people are unable to make decisions around sexuality and reproduction.