



## World AIDS Day

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2018 marks the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day.

- The theme of 2018 World AIDS Day is “**Know your status**”.
- World AIDS Day takes place on the **December 1st, every year**. Initiated by **World Health Organization (WHO)** in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.
- World AIDS Day is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.
- WHO advocacy and communication for World AIDS Day 2018 will aim to achieve the following objectives
  - Urge people to know their HIV infection status through testing, and to access HIV prevention, treatment and care services.
  - Urge policy-makers to promote a “health for all” agenda for HIV and related health services, such as tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis and noncommunicable diseases.

## National Aids Control Program

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- The National AIDS Control Organization, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the first phase of **National AIDS Control Programme in 1992**.
- Over time, the focus has shifted from raising awareness to behavior change, from a national response to a more decentralized response and to increasing involvement of NGOs and networks of Person Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV).
- Subsequently, second, third and fourth phases have been launched in 1999, 2007 and 2014 with better implementation and improved strategy.

## HIV/AIDS Act, 2017 Implemented

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Recently, The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, enforced the Human

Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 (HIV/AIDS Act, 2017) in force from 10th September 2018.

## India's HIV Burden

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- With an **HIV prevalence of 0.26% in the adult population**, India has an estimated 2.1 million People living with HIV (2015). **India has third largest number of cases in the world.**
- Bio-behavioural surveys confirm that HIV prevalence is high or 'concentrated' among 'key populations' (KPs) who have unprotected sexual contacts with multiple partners or who engage in injecting drug use.
- These populations include **female sex workers (FSW), men who have sex with men (MSM), hijra/transgender (TG), people who inject drugs (PWID), long-distance truck drivers and migrants.**

## National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) 2017 – 2024

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- The National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) has now revised the national approach to reach '**the last mile**' – in order to ensure a more effective, sustained and comprehensive coverage of AIDS related services.
- This approach is being implemented by the NACO through a seven-year National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and STI, 2017-24.
- By 2020, the focus of the national programme will be on achieving the following fast track targets:
  1. **75% reduction** in new HIV infections,
  2. **90-90-90:** 90% of those who are HIV positive in the country know their status, 90% of those who know their status are on treatment and 90% of those who are on treatment experience effective viral load suppression
  3. **Elimination of mother-to-child transmission** of HIV and Syphilis
  4. **Elimination of stigma** and discrimination

By 2024, the further achievements envisaged are:

1. **80% reduction in new HIV infections**
2. Ensuring that 95% of those who are HIV positive in the country know their status, 95% of those who know their status are on treatment and 95% of those who are on treatment experience effective viral load suppression

## The HIV

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- The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) **targets the immune system** and results in increased susceptibility to a wide range of infections, cancers and other diseases that people with healthy immune systems can fight off.
- As the virus destroys and impairs the function of immune cells, infected individuals gradually become immunodeficient.
- The **most advanced stage of HIV infection is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)**, which can take from 2 to 15 years to develop depending on the individual.
- HIV infection is diagnosed through **rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs)**, which detect the presence or absence of HIV antibodies.
- There is **no cure for HIV infection**. However, effective antiretroviral (ARV) drugs can control the virus and help prevent transmission so that people with HIV, and those at substantial risk, can enjoy healthy, long and productive lives.
- **Antiretroviral medicines/antiretroviral (ARVs)/antiretroviral therapy (ART)/ HIV treatment:** These are medicines that are used for treating HIV infection. They are highly effective in **suppressing HIV virus** and slowing the progress of HIV disease.

### **The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)**

- The **Global Fund is a 21st-century partnership organization** designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics.
- Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a **partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases**.
- The Global Fund raises and invests nearly US\$4 billion a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities.
- GFATM play a significant role in India's health sector It contribute a substantial portion of the external development assistance to the health sector.

### **Project Sunrise**

A new initiative called 'Project Sunrise' was launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, to tackle the **rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states in India**, especially among people injecting drugs

### **The Red Ribbon**

- The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV.
- Wearing a ribbon is a great way to raise awareness on and during the run up to World AIDS Day.