

World AIDS Day

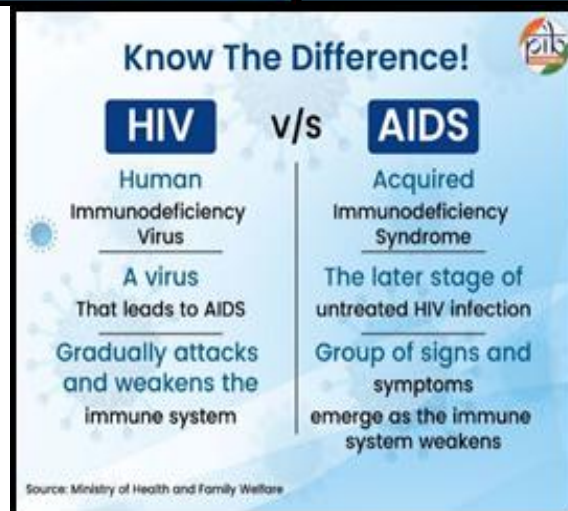
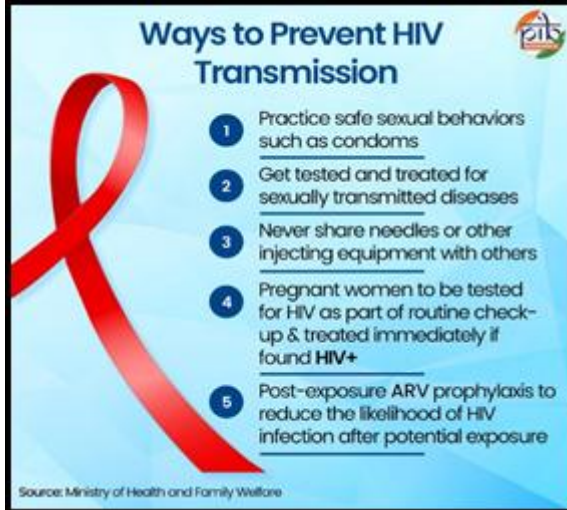
Building on India's global AIDS control success

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 30 NOV 2025 11:31AM by PIB Delhi

- World AIDS Day is **observed on December 1** every year.
- The **theme for 2025 is 'Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response'**.
- Strong Policy Framework in India: Landmark measures like the **HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017** safeguard the rights of people living with HIV and prohibit discrimination.
- Progress through the **National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP)**. India has reduced new infections and expanded access to ART through evolving strategies across NACP phases.

Introduction

World AIDS Day is a global observance held on December 1 every year to raise awareness about the HIV/AIDS epidemic, remember those who have died from HIV-related illnesses, and support people living with HIV/AIDS. It was first marked in 1988 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has since become a platform for governments, communities, and individuals to unite in the fight against the disease. The theme for this year is **"Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response."** It emphasises the need to not only preserve past progress but transform HIV services to make them more resilient, equitable, and community-led. This theme highlights the urgency of addressing disruptions caused by pandemics, conflicts, and inequalities that limit access to care. India marks World AIDS Day each year through nationwide awareness campaigns, community outreach activities, and renewed government commitments led by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.



India's Journey

There has been a decline from 0.33% in 2010 to 0.20% in 2024. At 0.20%, India's prevalence is significantly lower than the global average of 0.7%, underscoring the country's outperformance in maintaining a low-level epidemic.

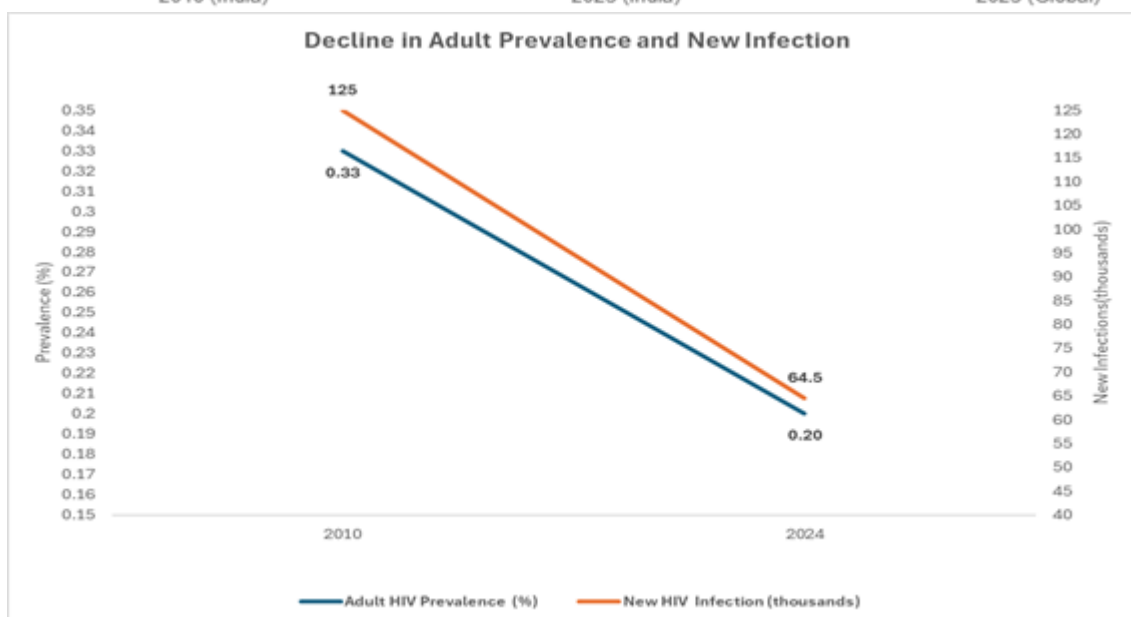
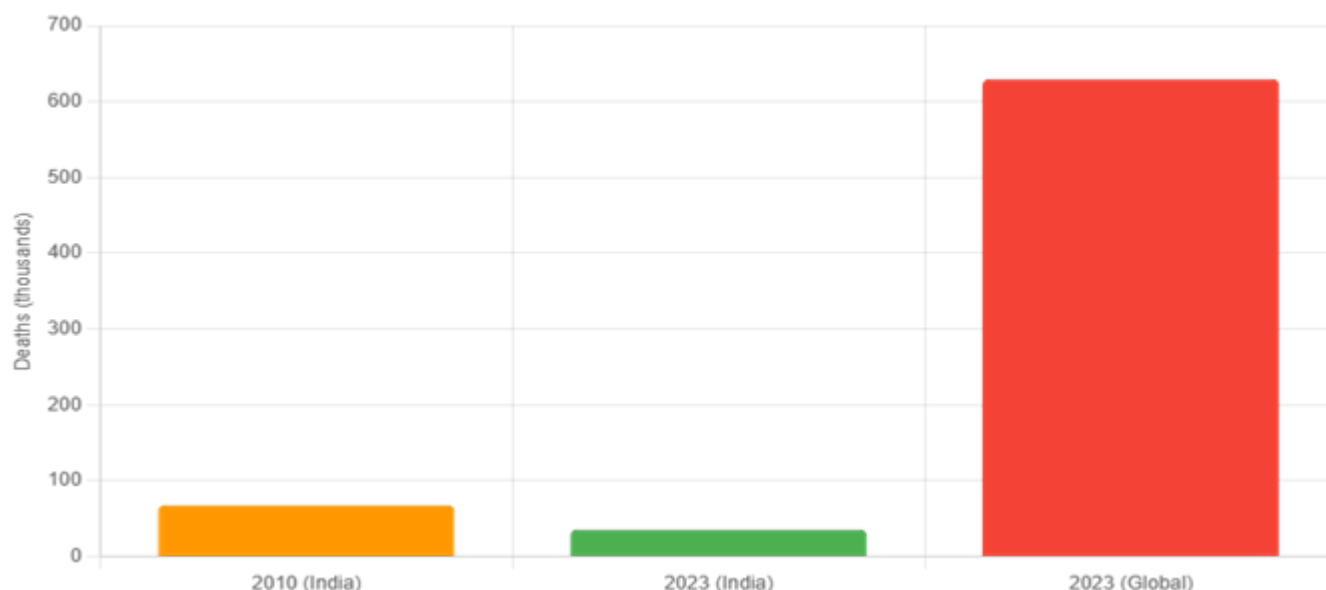
There has been steeper decline from 1.25 lakh new infections in 2010 to 64,500 in 2024, a 49% reduction when benchmarked against the 2010 baseline in NACP terms. This surpasses the global reduction rate of 40% over the same period. In absolute numbers, India's new infections represent only about 5% of the global total (1.3 million in 2024), highlighting efficient resource allocation by the Government and scale-up of antiretroviral therapy (ART) access.

India's AIDS Control Programme is globally acclaimed as a success story.[1] The initial phase (1985-1991) focused on identifying HIV cases, ensuring safe blood transfusions, and generating targeted awareness. The response gained momentum with the launch of the National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP) and the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) which was established in 1992 under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to coordinate a multi-sectoral national strategy. **Over time, the focus of NACP shifted from a national response to a more decentralised response and to increase involvement of NGOs and networks of People Living with HIV (PLHIV).**

There has been a 81.40% reduction from 1.73 lakh deaths in 2010 to 32,200 in 2024. This decline is fueled by the expansion of free ART to over 1.8 million people living with HIV (PLHIV) by 2025, achieving 94% ART retention and 97% viral suppression rates—key factors in preventing progression from HIV to AIDS.

The figure for global deaths (6,30,000 in 2024) dwarfs India's 2024 figure (32,200), with India's total representing just 5% of the worldwide burden. This disparity highlights India's superior outcomes, driven by affordable generic drug production (supplying 70% of global ART) and community engagement, exceeding global reduction trends and aligning with UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets.

India's AIDS Deaths: Reduction and Global Comparison



The National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)

It has evolved through five phases, shifting from basic awareness to comprehensive prevention, testing, treatment, and sustainability.

NACPI (1992–1999)

- Launched India's first comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention and control programme.
- Aim: **Slow the spread of HIV** and reduce **morbidity, mortality, and overall impact** of AIDS.

NACP II (1999–2006)

- Focused on two key objectives:

- **Reduce the spread of HIV** in India.
- **Strengthen long-term national capacity** to respond to HIV/AIDS.

NACP III (2007–2012)

- Goal: **Halt and reverse the HIV epidemic** by 2012.
- Strategy:
 - Scale up prevention among **High-Risk Groups (HRGs)** and the **general population**.
 - Integrate **prevention, care, support, and treatment** services.
 - Key addition: Creation of **District AIDS Prevention and Control Units (DAPCUs)** for district-level coordination and monitoring, including stigma/discrimination reporting.

NACP IV (2012–2017)

- Goal: **Accelerate reversal** of the epidemic and ensure an **integrated response**.
- Objectives:
 - **50% reduction in new infections** (compared to 2007 baseline).
 - Provide **comprehensive care, support, and treatment** for all PLHIV.
 - **Extended (2017–2021)** to advance the goal of **Ending AIDS by 2030**.
 - Major initiatives during extension:
 - **HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017**- It prohibits discrimination against people living with HIV (PLHIV), ensures confidentiality, and mandates informed consent for testing and treatment while promoting prevention and access to care.
 - **Mission Sampark**- Its purpose was to “bring back” people living with HIV (PLHIV) who had stopped antiretroviral therapy (ART) — i.e. to trace and re-engage those “lost to follow-up”. It uses a community-based testing and follow-up approach.
 - **‘Test and Treat’ policy** (initiating ART for all diagnosed cases)
 - **Routine Universal Viral Load monitoring**

NACP V (2021–2026)

Launched as a Central Sector Scheme with an outlay of Rs. 15,471.94 crore, Phase-V aims to build on past achievements and address persistent challenges. The goal of this Phase is to support the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 3.3 by helping end the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030 through comprehensive risk use of prevention, testing, and treatment services.

Core Goals of NACP-V (2021-26)



GOAL

01

Reduce annual new HIV infections by 80%
(from 2010 baseline)

02

Reduce AIDS-related mortalities by 80%
(from 2010 baseline)

03

Eliminate vertical transmission of HIV and
syphilis (mother-to-child)

04

Promote universal access to Quality STI/RTI
services for at-risk and vulnerable populations

05

Eliminate HIV/AIDS-related stigma and
discrimination



In operational targets, this includes aiming for 95-95-95 coverage: 95% of people at risk use prevention, 95% of HIV-positive know their status, 95% of those are on treatment, 95% of those achieve viral suppression.



Also, for pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV-ensuring suppressed viral to enable elimination of vertical transmission.

Source : National AIDS and STD Control Programme Phase-V (2021-26) Booklet

Key Strategic Interventions Planned under NACP-V

To achieve the above goals and principles, NACP-V has planned a set of strategic interventions, tailored to different population groups, settings, and needs. Major ones include:

For reducing new infections

- Maintain and evolve peer-led targeted interventions (TIs) and Link-Worker Schemes for high-risk populations.
- Provide comprehensive prevention packages adapted to specific populations and geographies.
- Scale up interventions for injecting drug users (including opioid substitution therapy), measures for prisons / closed settings, and community-based integrated service delivery models.
- Sustained behaviour change communication (BCC) for general population, adolescents and youth.

For reducing AIDS-related mortality / improving treatment & care

- Expand and scale-up HIV counselling and testing services (HCTS), including active case finding.
- Ensure universal access to high-quality antiretroviral therapy (ART), rapid ART initiation, differentiated service delivery models, and regular updating of treatment guidelines.
- Strengthen linkage between screening, confirmatory test, treatment and care services; reduce loss to follow-up; optimize viral load monitoring using public-sector labs.
- Provide integrated care packages including sexual and reproductive health (especially for women), and services for children living with HIV.

For eliminating vertical transmission (mother-to-child)

- Strengthen synergy with the national maternal and child health programme for testing pregnant women for HIV and syphilis.
- Roll out and scale dual test kits (HIV + syphilis) for antenatal screening.
- Ensure prompt linkage of diagnosed women to treatment, ART adherence, retention, family planning services, early infant diagnosis, and private-sector engagement.

For universal STI/RTI services

- Maintain and strengthen Designated STI/RTI Clinics (DSRCs); integrate STI/RTI services across HIV platforms.
- Active case-finding for STIs; regular updating of STI/RTI management guidelines; strengthening laboratory capacity and supply chain.
- Engage private sector and coordinate with broader health system for STI/RTI service provision.

For reducing stigma and discrimination

- Institutional strengthening of community systems to support people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations.
- Sensitization of stakeholders; communication campaigns; social protection scheme roll-out; policy/regulation strengthening (under HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017).
- Strategic information systems to monitor stigma/discrimination; community-based monitoring; state-level ombudsman systems under the Act.

Steps Taken by the Government for HIV/AIDS Awareness

1. Strengthening Nationwide Awareness Campaigns



Figure: [Video by NACO on ending Stigma and Discrimination in the Workplace](#)

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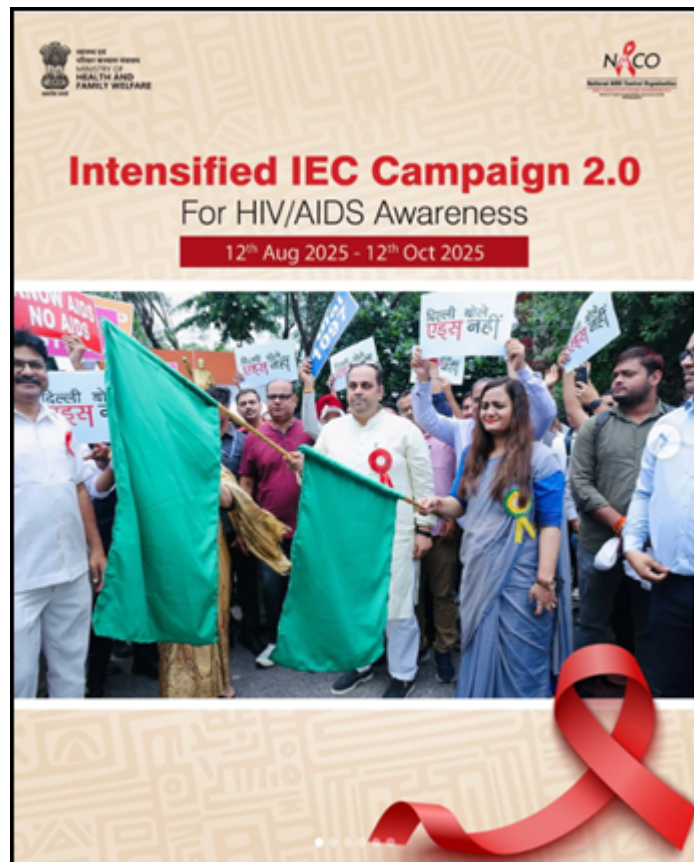


Figure: [Stop HIV Stigma & Discrimination - Awareness Campaign | Advertising Campaign #AbNahiChalega](#)

Figure: Stop HIV Stigma & Discrimination - Awareness Campaign | Advertising Campaign #AbNahiChalega

NACO leads national HIV/AIDS awareness efforts through comprehensive multimedia campaigns. Mass media, digital platforms, and social media are used to reach broader and younger audiences.

2. Expanded Outdoor Outreach



Awareness strengthened through hoardings, bus panels, information kiosks, folk performances, and IEC vans. These tools help promote services and facilities available across the country.

3. Community-Level Awareness Programs

- Training and sensitisation conducted for Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Anganwadi Workers, ASHAs, Panchayati Raj members, and others. These grassroots initiatives promote behavioural change and overall community awareness.

4. Targeted Interventions for High-Risk Groups

- 1587 Targeted Intervention projects rolled out across the country as on October 2025. This ensures equitable access to prevention, testing, treatment and care services.

5. Thematic Campaigns Against Stigma and Discrimination



Nationwide thematic campaigns launched to reduce stigma and promote inclusion of People Living with HIV (PLHIV). These campaigns are also implemented across workplaces, healthcare settings, educational institutions and communities.

6. Appointment of Ombudsmen in States/UTs

- Under the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, Ombudsmen have been appointed in 34 States/UTs, who address complaints related to discrimination against PLHIV. This reinforces government's commitment towards protecting dignity and rights of PLHIV.[4]

Conclusion

India's journey in combating HIV/AIDS embodies a compelling narrative of resilience, innovation, and shared dedication. From the foundational efforts of the early National AIDS and STD Control Programme phases to the forward-looking ambitions of NACP-V, the nation has exemplified leadership via rights-focused policies, community-driven prevention strategies, and extensive media initiatives. India's AIDS decline is more prominent than the global average, supported significantly by broadened testing, enhanced access to antiretroviral therapy, focused outreach to high-risk groups, and initiatives to combat stigma, all

implemented through collaborative state and community actions. This enduring battle against HIV/AIDS illustrates a resolute evolution from immediate crisis management to enduring strength, safeguarding human rights, and empowering community voices at the forefront.

References:

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:

- UNAIDS Estimates 2025
- Sankalak 7th Edition
- India HIV Estimates 2025

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[1] <https://naco.gov.in/nacp>

[2] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, Annual Report 2024-25 and NACO HIV Estimates 2023

[3] <https://naco.gov.in/sites/default/files/NACO%20Stigma%20Handbook.pdf>

[4] Steps taken by the Government for HIV/AIDS awareness | Ministry of Health and Family Welfare | GOI

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2196475) आगंतुक पटल : 8461

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