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 - What is Trachoma?
 - Symptoms and Progression
 - Global Burden and WHO's Response
- Conclusion
 - QuizTime:
 - Are you Ready!
- Read the Below Instructions Carefully:
 - Please Rate!
- Mains Questions:
 - Question 1:
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 - Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:
- Prelims:
-

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Summary:

- **Trachoma Elimination:** India has been declared trachoma-free by the WHO in 2024, joining Nepal, Myanmar, and 19 other countries.
- **Historical Efforts:** The journey began in 1963 with community-based interventions, including surgical treatments, antibiotics, and WASH initiatives.
- **Significance:** This achievement highlights India's effective public health strategies and serves as a model for combating other preventable diseases.
- **Future Directions:** Continued vigilance, healthcare investment, and education are essential to prevent re-emergence and maintain public health gains.

What is the news?

- In a significant achievement for public health, the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially declared that **India has eliminated trachoma as a public health problem in 2024.**
- This announcement highlights the concerted efforts

made by the Indian government and various stakeholders to combat this preventable disease, which is a leading cause of avoidable blindness globally.

- India's successful elimination of trachoma places it alongside Nepal and Myanmar in the WHO's South-East Asia region, as well as 19 other countries worldwide, that have overcome this public health challenge.

Historical Background: Effective Country-Level Investments:

The journey towards eliminating trachoma in India began in 1963 when the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare initiated a trachoma control project with support from WHO and UNICEF. This project involved community-based interventions aimed at reducing trachoma transmission and included several critical components:

- **Surgical Treatment:** Providing surgical interventions for individuals suffering from trichiasis.
- **Topical Antibiotic Treatment:** Administering antibiotics to infected individuals to clear the infection.
- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Initiatives:** Promoting improved hygiene practices, access to clean water, and sanitation facilities.
- **Health Education:** Educating communities about behaviors that reduce transmission.

- The program expanded over the years to ensure accessible interventions, particularly in rural areas. **In 1976, the launch of the National Program for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI)** integrated trachoma control activities with broader blindness prevention efforts, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to tackling eye health issues.
- The successful elimination of trachoma can be attributed to the strong leadership of the Indian government, combined with the commitment of ophthalmologists and various health care workers. Their collaboration with international partners facilitated effective surveillance, diagnosis, and management of active trachoma. Furthermore, initiatives promoting water, sanitation, and hygiene, especially facial cleanliness, contributed significantly to creating a trachoma-free future for the population.
- **By 2005, trachoma was responsible for 4%** of all cases of blindness in India. However, due to these concerted efforts, the prevalence of trachoma had decreased dramatically to just 0.008% by 2018. A series of impact, pre-validation, and trichiasis-only surveys conducted in 2024 confirmed that the elimination targets had been met in all previously endemic evaluation units. The WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia, Saima Wazed, praised India's achievement at the Seventy-Seventh Session of the WHO Regional Committee, emphasizing the collaborative efforts that made this success possible.

Significance of the Declaration

- The WHO's recognition marks a pivotal moment not only for India but also for the global health community. Trachoma, caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis*, has long been a major public health issue, particularly in impoverished regions where access to clean water and sanitation facilities is limited. The disease leads to painful inflammation of the eye, and if left untreated, can result in blindness. With this declaration, India's achievement serves as a beacon of hope, demonstrating that with strategic interventions and persistent effort, diseases once considered endemic can be effectively controlled and eliminated.

Strategies Leading to Success

The success in eliminating trachoma in India can be attributed to several key strategies:

- **Comprehensive Public Health Campaigns:** The Indian government implemented widespread awareness campaigns focusing on hygiene and sanitation, emphasizing the importance of facial cleanliness and safe water access.
- **Strengthened Healthcare Infrastructure:** Enhancements in healthcare delivery systems, including improved access to eye care services,

have played a critical role. The establishment of eye clinics and the training of healthcare workers to identify and treat trachoma have been instrumental.

- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Collaborations between the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international bodies like the WHO have facilitated the sharing of resources, knowledge, and technology.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Focused initiatives targeting high-risk populations, particularly in rural and underserved communities, ensured that the most vulnerable groups received necessary treatment and preventive care.

Impact on Public Health and Future Directions

- Eliminating trachoma as a public health problem has profound implications for India's health landscape. It not only reduces the burden of preventable blindness but also enhances the quality of life for affected communities. The achievement is a significant step toward the broader goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all.
- Moving forward, it is crucial to maintain vigilance against potential re-emergence. Continued investment in healthcare infrastructure, ongoing education and awareness programs, and routine monitoring and evaluation will be

essential. Furthermore, India can serve as a model for other countries striving to eliminate trachoma and similar public health challenges.

Understanding Trachoma

What is Trachoma?

- Trachoma is an infectious disease that primarily affects the eyes. It is caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia trachomatis* and is transmitted through direct contact with eye discharge from infected individuals, as well as indirectly through contaminated water and flies.

Symptoms and Progression

- Initially, trachoma manifests as mild conjunctivitis, but repeated infections can lead to scarring of the inner eyelid, resulting in a condition known as trichiasis, where eyelashes turn inward and scrape the cornea, leading to severe pain and potential blindness.

Global Burden and WHO's Response

- Trachoma remains a major public health issue in many low-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. The WHO initiated a global strategy in 1996 called the SAFE strategy (Surgery for trichiasis, Antibiotics to clear infection, Facial cleanliness, and Environmental improvement) to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem. This multifaceted approach has shown promising results in many countries, culminating in India's recent success.

Conclusion

- The elimination of trachoma as a public health problem in India is a landmark achievement that underscores the importance of comprehensive health initiatives, public awareness, and international collaboration. It serves as a testament to what can be accomplished when communities unite against preventable diseases.
- For UPSC aspirants, understanding this milestone is crucial as it reflects the intersections of public health, policy implementation, and global health partnerships, aligning with broader themes in governance and social justice. As India continues to forge ahead in its public health endeavors, the lessons learned from the fight against trachoma can inform future strategies aimed at other health challenges.



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General Studies
CURRENT AFFAIRS QUIZ

Read the Below Instructions Carefully:

- Click on - Start Quiz
 - Attempt all questions (You can attempt or leave)
 - After Attempting Last Question.
 - Enter Name & Email
 - Click on - Check Result
 - Scroll down - Check out Solutions too.
- Thank you.

Loading ...



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Category: General Studies

Which program initiated in 1976 integrated trachoma control activities into its framework?

- National Health Mission (NHM)
- National Program for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCBVI)
- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
- National Eye Care Program (NECP)

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Category: General Studies

What was a key intervention strategy employed in India's trachoma elimination efforts?

- Vaccine distribution
- Surgical treatment, topical antibiotic treatment, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) initiatives
- Mass immunization campaigns
- Importing foreign medical technology

Prev

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Category: General Studies

What significant role did the WHO play in India's trachoma elimination efforts?

- WHO provided financial aid exclusively.
- WHO conducted all surgeries for trachoma patients.
- WHO supported India with technical assistance, guidelines, and monitoring of progress.
- WHO was not involved in trachoma elimination efforts in India.

Prev

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Category: General Studies

What was the prevalence of trachoma in India by 2018, down from 4% in 2005?

- 0.5%
- 0.01%
- 0.008%
- 1%

Prev

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Category: General Studies

Which organization declared that India has eliminated trachoma as a public health problem?

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Bank
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Prev

Finish

Check Rank, Result Now and enter correct email as you will get Solutions in the email as well for future use!

Check the Result

Your score is

0%

Restart quiz

Please Rate!

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Mains Questions:

**Below Mains
Question**

Write in Comment Section



Question 1:

Discuss the strategies that contributed to India's success in eliminating trachoma as a public health problem. How can these strategies be applied to combat other preventable diseases in the country?(250 Words)

Model Answer:

India's success in eliminating trachoma as a public health problem can be attributed to several key strategies:

- **Comprehensive Public Health Campaigns:** The government launched awareness campaigns focused on hygiene and sanitation, emphasizing facial cleanliness and safe water access. This grassroots education was crucial in changing community behaviors and reducing transmission rates.
- **Strengthened Healthcare Infrastructure:** Enhancements in healthcare delivery systems, including improved access to eye care services, allowed for timely diagnosis and treatment of trachoma. The establishment of dedicated eye clinics and training programs for healthcare workers ensured effective management of the disease.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Collaborations between the Indian government, NGOs, and international organizations like WHO facilitated resource sharing, technical support, and funding.

This multi-stakeholder approach created a robust support network for implementation.

- Targeted Interventions: The program focused on high-risk populations, particularly in rural and underserved communities, ensuring that the most vulnerable groups received necessary treatment and preventive care.
- Sustainability Measures: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of trachoma cases and maintaining hygiene initiatives have been vital in sustaining the success of the elimination efforts.

Application to Other Preventable Diseases: The strategies employed in the fight against trachoma can be adapted to address other preventable diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, by:

- Conducting comprehensive public health education campaigns to inform communities about prevention and treatment.
- Strengthening healthcare infrastructure to ensure access to necessary medical services.
- Encouraging partnerships among government, NGOs, and international organizations for resource mobilization and technical assistance.
- Implementing targeted interventions that address specific at-risk populations.
- Establishing a framework for sustainability to maintain health gains over the long term.

Question 2:

Evaluate the significance of the WHO's

declaration of India eliminating trachoma as a public health problem in 2024. What implications does this achievement have for India's public health policies and its global health commitments?(250 Words)

Model Answer:

The WHO's declaration that India has eliminated trachoma as a public health problem in 2024 is a landmark achievement with several significant implications:

- **Recognition of Effective Health Policies:** This declaration underscores the effectiveness of India's health policies and intervention strategies. It showcases the country's ability to implement comprehensive health programs that address preventable diseases, thus boosting the credibility of its public health framework.
- **Improvement in Quality of Life:** Eliminating trachoma, a leading cause of preventable blindness, significantly improves the quality of life for millions. It reduces the burden of disease and enhances productivity, allowing individuals to lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.
- **Strengthened Global Health Standing:** India's achievement positions it as a leader in public health within the South-East Asia region, demonstrating its commitment to global health initiatives. It aligns with WHO's goals of reducing the incidence of preventable diseases worldwide, thereby enhancing India's reputation on

- the global stage.
- **Inspiration for Other Countries:** India's success story can serve as a model for other countries grappling with similar public health challenges. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, India can contribute to global efforts to combat preventable diseases.
 - **Implications for Future Public Health Policies:** The success against trachoma emphasizes the need for continued investment in healthcare infrastructure, ongoing public education, and the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration. This achievement encourages policymakers to adopt a holistic approach in future public health initiatives, focusing on sustainability and preventive measures.

In conclusion, the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem not only enhances India's domestic health landscape but also strengthens its role in global health initiatives, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing among nations in the fight against preventable diseases.

Remember: These are just sample answers. It's important to further research and refine your responses based on your own understanding and perspective. Read entire UPSC Current Affairs.

Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:



Prelims:

- General Studies Paper I: Current Events of National and International Importance
The announcement of India's achievement in eliminating trachoma falls under current affairs, focusing on significant health developments and public health initiatives in India and globally.
- Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations
This paper includes topics related to health policies, initiatives taken by the government, and the role of international organizations like the WHO in public health issues.
- Economic Development, Agriculture, and Sustainable Development
Topics related to health and nutrition, as well as government programs aimed at improving health outcomes, fit within this framework, emphasizing the importance of health in economic development.

Mains:

- **General Studies Paper II:** Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations This includes the analysis of various government policies and initiatives aimed at improving public health. The success of the trachoma elimination program can be examined in terms of governance, health policy formulation, and implementation at both state and national levels.
- **General Studies Paper III:** Technology, Economic Development, Bio-diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management The Mains syllabus focuses on the role of technology and innovation in health programs, as well as the impact of health issues on development. Discussions around the impact of trachoma on public health and measures taken to combat it fit well within this context.
- **General Studies Paper II:** Social Issues relating to Health, Poverty, and Nutrition Understanding how diseases like trachoma affect populations, particularly in rural areas, and the socio-economic factors influencing health outcomes, is vital for discussing health-related issues in the exam.



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Hindi.***

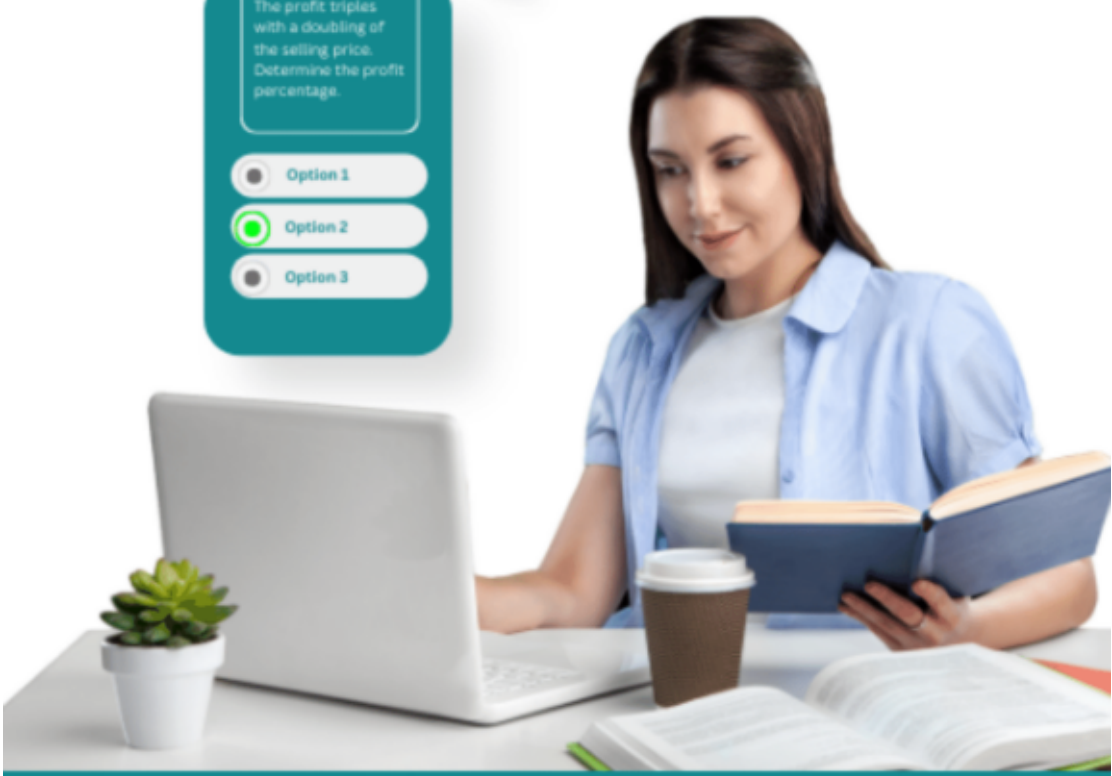
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Quiz Time

The profit triples with a doubling of the selling price. Determine the profit percentage.

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3



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