



IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HEALTH – GS III MAINS

Q. Enumerate the impacts of climate change on health and bring out the steps taken by national and international stakeholders to reduce the same. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *Recognizing the impact of climate change on health*

What's in the news?

- The 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change mainly focuses on negotiating the climate change impacts on human health.

Health impacts of Climate Change:

- **Vector-Borne Diseases:** Warmer climates favour the spread of diseases like malaria and dengue fever, as they create more hospitable environments for vectors like mosquitoes.
- **Water and Food-Borne Diseases:** Flooding and higher temperatures can lead to outbreaks of diseases like cholera and diarrhoea.
- **Increased Sickness and Deaths:** Extreme weather events, like the record heat waves in India in 2023, directly contribute to higher rates of illness and mortality.
- **Nutrition and Food Security:** Climate change affects agriculture, leading to reduced food availability and quality. This can cause malnutrition, especially in vulnerable populations.
- **Exacerbation of Chronic Conditions:** Increased pollution and heat can worsen respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, and other chronic conditions.
- **Urban Heat Islands:** Dense urban areas with minimal greenery can become significantly hotter than surrounding areas, intensifying the health impacts of heatwaves.
- **Mental Health:** The stress of dealing with climate change impacts, including financial strain and displacement, can exacerbate mental health issues.

Government initiatives:

- **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC):** Aimed at fulfilling India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the action plan addresses various dimensions of climate change.
 - This plan encompasses missions focused on solar energy, water management, sustainable agriculture, sustainable habitats, greening initiatives, etc.
- **Climate Change and Health Hub in Delhi:** India, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, launched this hub with an aim to enhance knowledge sharing,



foster partnerships, and drive innovations in managing climate-related health challenges.

- **National Health Mission:** Targeted at underserved areas, this mission combats communicable and non-communicable diseases, including those exacerbated by climate change, through prevention and control measures.
- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):** In 2018, the government introduced the AB-PMJAY, a major health initiative aimed at providing universal healthcare coverage to the economically weaker sections. This scheme seeks to revolutionize healthcare in India, with goals of reducing poverty, boosting productivity, and enhancing social justice.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Proper implementation of policies:** Implementing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as the National Biofuel Policy and Vehicle Scrappage Policy.
- **Strengthening Disease Surveillance:** Enhancing technologies for real-time tracking of disease outbreaks and adopting a One Health approach.
- **Socio-Economic Support Systems:** Develop systems for social support and health services, considering the socio-economic factors that accentuate climate change impacts.
- **Research and Development:** Researchers should focus on creating policy options to combat the health impacts of climate change.
- **Government Support:** National, state and local governments need to act on the policy options provided by research.