

# MODEL FOR MALARIA CONTROL

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

By prioritising malaria elimination, India, and especially Odisha, is showing the world the way. | Photo Credit: [Sushil Kumar Verma](#)

The World Health Organisation's World Malaria Report of 2018 turned the spotlight on India's recent strides against malaria. India is the only country among the 11 highest-burden countries that saw substantial progress in reducing disease burden: it saw a 24% decrease in 2017 compared to 2016. This shows that India has assumed a leadership role in advancing global efforts to end malaria. The country's success provides hope to the other highest-burden countries to tackle malaria head-on.

India's progress in fighting malaria is an outcome of concerted efforts to ensure that its malaria programme is country-owned and country-led, even as it is in alignment with globally accepted strategies. The turning point in India's fight against malaria came at the East Asia Summit in 2015, when it pledged to eliminate the disease by 2030. Following this public declaration, India launched the five-year National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination. This marked a shift in focus from malaria "control" to "elimination". The plan provides a roadmap to achieve the target of ending malaria in 571 districts out of India's 678 districts by 2022.

The plan requires more than 10,000 crore. Adequate investment combined with coordinated action between governments, civil society and philanthropic donors is imperative to achieve this goal. Since health is a State subject, State governments across the country shoulder a special responsibility in tackling the disease.

Among the States, Odisha has emerged as an inspiration in the fight against malaria. In recent years it has dramatically scaled-up efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat malaria through its Durgama Anchalare Malaria Nirakaran (DAMaN) initiative, which has produced impressive results in a short span of time. In 2017, accredited social health activists (ASHAs) helped distribute approximately 11 million bed nets, which was enough to protect all the residents in areas that were at highest risk. This included residential hostels in schools. As a result of its sustained efforts, Odisha recorded a 80% decline in malaria cases and deaths in 2017. DAMaN aims to deliver services to the most inaccessible and hardest hit people of the State. The initiative has in-built innovative strategies to combat asymptomatic malaria. DAMaN has been accorded priority in the State's health agenda. There is financial commitment for a five-year period to sustain and build on the impact created by the initiative.

The new country-driven 'high burden to high impact' plan to reduce disease burden in the 11 countries reflects the global sentiment that business as usual is no longer an option when it comes to fighting the disease. By prioritising malaria elimination, India, and especially Odisha, is showing the world the way.

*The writer is the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Odisha*

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